

THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque
WILDLIFE
Federation

conservationists since 1914

April 2023

Protecting Avi Kwa Ame & Castner Range National Monuments

Last week, on March 21, President Biden issued proclamations creating two new national monuments in the southwest: Avi Kwa Ame and Castner Range.

Avi Kwa Ame or Spirit Mountain encompasses just over half a million acres stretching across much of the southernmost tip of Nevada. The monument contains some of the largest and oldest Joshua trees in the U.S. and provides critical habitat for desert tortoises, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, western screech owls, and Gila monsters. It also forms a corridor connecting the Mojave National Preserve and Castle Mountains National Monument in California with Sloan Canyon and Lake Mead national recreation areas in Nevada and Arizona, protecting migratory paths for species including desert bighorns.

Avi Kwa Ame is only the second national monument, after Bears Ears, to center the tribal nations that advocated for its protection. Spirit Mountain is the site of the creation story of Yuman-speaking tribes including the Fort Mojave, the Cocopah, the Quechan, and the Hopi. The area is also sacred to other tribes including the Halchidhoma, Havasupai, Hualapai, Kumeyaay, Maricopa, Pai Pai, Yavapai, and Zuni.

Castner Range National Monument consists of 6,672 acres in the Franklin Mountains outside El Paso. The area is known for its carpet of golden poppies in the springtime. Since the 1920s, these lands have been part of the Ft. Bliss army installation, and they still contain unexploded ordnance that must be remediated before the monument fully opens to the public.



Local advocates like the Frontera Alliance have been pushing for the protection of the Castner Range for the last 52 years, as it will provide opportunities for outdoor recreation to many low-income families in the region who currently lack access. The area also contains at least 41 archeological sites and provides habitat for wildlife including peregrine falcons, golden eagles, black-tailed prairie dogs, and Texas horned lizards.

It is to be hoped that Avi Kwa Ame and Castner Range are now permanently protected – but that is no longer as certain as it once was. The president's power to establish national monuments dates back to the 1906 Antiquities Act, and has lately become the subject of a political tug-of-war. In his final weeks in office, President Obama designated Bears Ears and Gold Butte National Monuments; then President Trump for the first time sought to unilaterally shrink Bears Ears, Grand Staircase Escalante, and the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Monuments. In 2021 President Biden restored them to their original boundaries (and slightly expanded Bears Ears). Already the Republican governor of Nevada is complaining that the new monument designation is preventing potential mining of rare earth minerals in Avi Kwa Ame.

So while we celebrate these remarkable new monuments, we must also remain vigilant about the need to defend them from new threats in the years to come.

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Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Secretary

APRIL 13, 2023 MEETING: Civilian Conservation Corps in NM

Thursday, April 13, 2023, 7:30 pm

Location: *In Person at the Friends Meeting House!*

This month we are excited to be holding our first in-person educational presentation since February 2020!

Topic: The Civilian Conservation Corps in New Mexico

Of all the New Deal agencies of the Great Depression era, the Civilian Conservation Corps was the most popular and, many would argue, the most successful. Richard Melzer's lecture will focus on the importance of the CCC in New Mexico as a whole, and especially on the lives of the 54,000 young men who enrolled in the program and served in the state. Most considered their CCC experience the turning point of their lives, and they left behind a physical legacy that we can see across the state to this day.

Speaker Bio: Dr. Richard Melzer

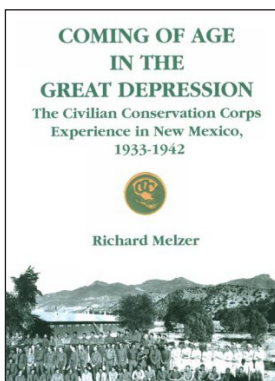
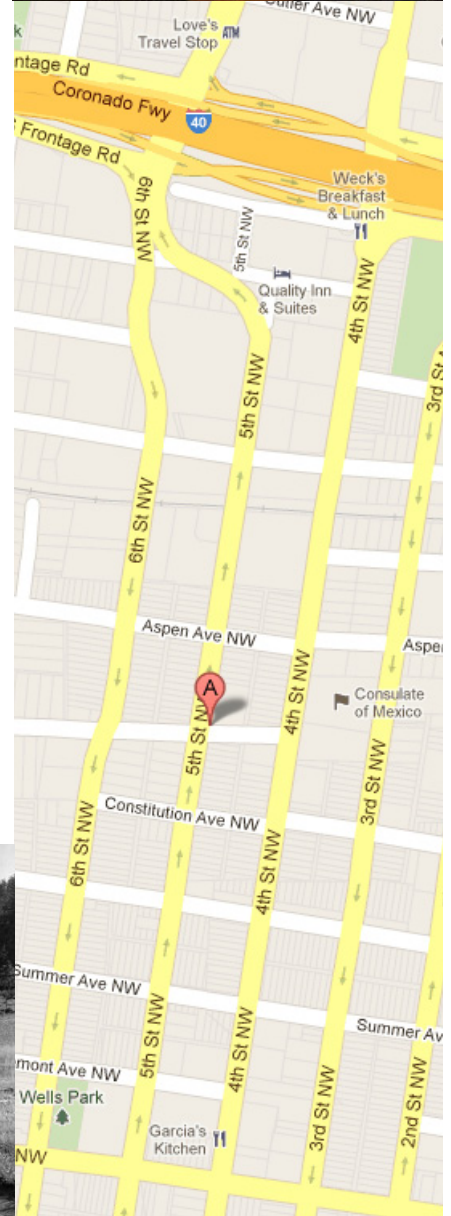
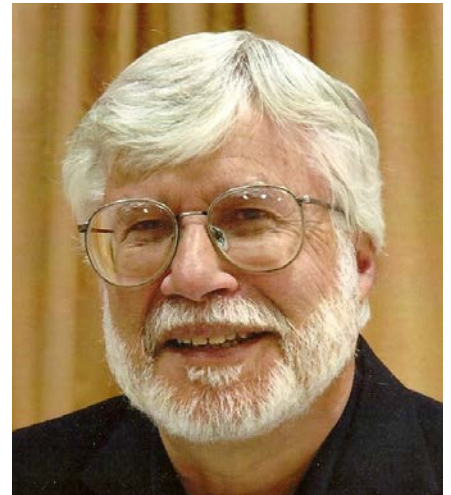
Dr. Richard Melzer is originally from Teddy Roosevelt's hometown of Oyster Bay, New York. He has lived in New Mexico since 1973.

Dr. Melzer earned his Ph.D. in History at UNM in 1979. He taught history at the University of New Mexico's Valencia Campus from 1979 to 2019, retiring as a UNM Regents professor of history.

Dr. Melzer is a past two-term president of the Historical Society of New Mexico. He is the author, co-author, or editor of over a hundred articles and chapters as well as over 30 books about New Mexico history. Ten of his books have won major book awards.

Directions to the Meeting

The Albuquerque Friends Meeting House is located at the corner of 5th and Bellamah. From I-40, take the 6th street exit, then South to Bellamah.



APRIL 7-9, 2023 SERVICE PROJECT: Ft. Union Ranch

LOCATION: Ft. Union Ranch near Watrous, NM

THE PROJECT: Join us for AWF’s first weekend-long restoration project of the season, where we will continue our work restoring Higgins Canyon on Fort Union Ranch. During this project, volunteers will hand-build rock restoration structures designed by Bill Zeedyk to help heal a gully created by the old wagon highway to Mora. During the Saturday workday, we may also send a small crew of volunteers over to the nearby Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge to assist the Hermit’s Peak Watershed Alliance with some willow plantings.

SCHEDULE: Friday, April 7 – Sunday, April 9

Volunteers do not need to be present for the entire weekend to participate. You are welcome to join us just for the work day Saturday, or camp for just one of the two nights.

GEAR: Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping and restoration work, including work gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. We recommend bringing a change of shoes, and waterproof boots or boots you don’t mind getting wet. Rain gear, layers, warm clothes for the evenings and plenty of water are essential. **Note that we will have access to the Marshall House at Ft. Union Ranch, which provides for indoor “camping” and gathering options.**

FOOD: AWF will provide breakfast burritos on Saturday morning and bison or veggie burgers on Saturday evening. Please bring a dish to share for the Saturday potluck dinner, along with your own lunches, Friday dinner, Sunday breakfast, and lots of water!

TO SIGN UP: Email Kristina at abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com
Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.



2023 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

- March 11.....Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge
- April 7-9.....Ft. Union Ranch
- May 19-21.....Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
- June 2-4.....Manuelitas Creek
- June 16-18.....Rolling Hills Ranch
- July 14-16.....Gallinas Post-Fire Restoration
- July 28-30.....Valle Vidal
- August 18-20.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
- September 1-4.....Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
- September 15-17.....Cebolla Canyon, El Malpais
- October 20-22.....Gutierrez Family Ranch
- November 4.....Rio Grande Bosque, Albuquerque

AWF BOARD 2023

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RECAP OF MARCH 11, 2023 PROJECT: VALLE DE ORO



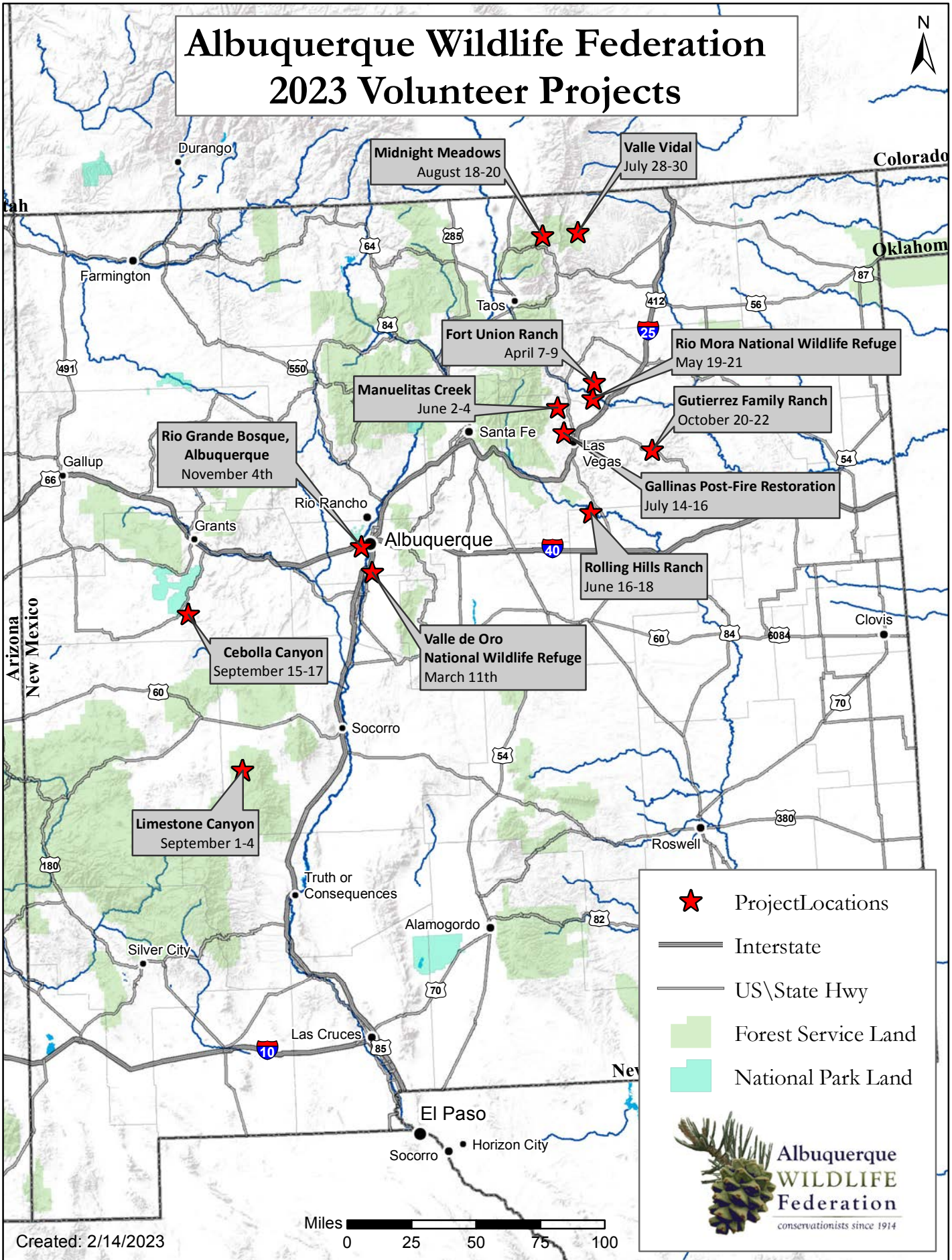
On Saturday, March 11th, AWF kicked off its 2023 project season with a volunteer planting project at the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge. This annual tradition started in 2014, when AWF held its 100th anniversary party held at the Refuge, and it has continued as an annual volunteer event with many community partners. Rio Grande Return helped to coordinate and prepare for the planting and Refuge staff provided volunteer coordination and support. Other partner groups included two student groups from Atrisco Heritage High School: Jaguars for Positive Change and the Black Student Alliance, as well as Albuquerque Interfaith Power and Light and Boy Scouts of America Troop 285.

Over 60 volunteers helped across the full western side of the Refuge, where the bosque is being extended from the Rio Grande. The day began with presentations on the history and context for the Refuge and the work accomplished through volunteer projects in the past. Then the volunteers split into two groups, with one heading south to water hundreds of native habitat shrubs and clear weeds from planting areas, while the other group went north to plant approximately 1,500 coyote willow trees, 50 Rio Grande cottonwoods, and 50 black willows. The planting work wrapped up around 2:00 p.m. We look forward to seeing the plantings thrive and the Refuge habitat continue to develop in the years to come!



See more photos of AWF's restoration projects at: abq.nmwildlife.org!

Albuquerque Wildlife Federation 2023 Volunteer Projects



UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Native Plant Symposium and Discovery Field Day

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Cerrillos

Hacienda Dominguez & Chelenzo Farms, 48-B Rainbows End, Cerrillos, NM 87010

This workshop aims to educate agricultural, ecological and conservation stakeholders and producers in NM about how to identify and cultivate native plants as well as to increase awareness about the role and benefits of native plants in regenerative agriculture, ecosystem restoration and permaculture/polyculture development. For more info contact Lorenzo Dominguez at lorenzo@haciendadominguez.com.



Rio Fernando de Taos River Clean-Up

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Taos

Rio Fernando de Taos Revitalization Collaborative

Volunteer for the Rio Fernando de Taos Spring Cleanup and help clean up the wetland areas and river. Work until noon, stay for free lunch, and learn about upcoming projects. Please contact the Rio Fernando de Taos Revitalization Collaborative coordinator, Flor Serna, with any questions at:

RFdTCollaborative@gmail.com or 505-850-7578. To sign up: <https://www.riofernando.org/events>

Know Your Air: A Community Air Monitoring Toolkit

MONDAY, APRIL 17, 5:30-7:00 P.M., online via zoom

NM ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER

Ennedith Lopez, a Xicana who was born and raised in Albuquerque's International District and served as the 2021-2022 New Mexico Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, invites the community to the final project presentation for her NMELC internship. The toolkit includes a synthesized guide on the EPA's recommendations for developing and initiating at-home air monitoring projects. Please register to obtain the zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom-join-link>



Celebrate Earth Day on the Caja del Rio!

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 9:00-2:00, Caja del Rio Plateau

For years, the Caja del Rio has suffered from illegal dumping, vandalism, and improper use from off-highway vehicles that leaves lasting scars on a land so many of us love and cherish. By dedicating our time, resources, and energy towards investing in our beloved New Mexico lands, we create a path forward towards a more sustainable, healthier future. During this event, volunteers will enjoy a guided hike and then pick up trash. For more info: <https://cajadelrio.org/earthday/>

Earth Day Celebration on the Pecos River

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Pecos Benedictine Monastery

In July of 2022, nearly 180 miles of New Mexico streams and 43 acres of wetlands in the upper Pecos watershed were protected as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRWs). Join the Upper Pecos Watershed Association and others for a two-part community event on Earth Day, including a river clean-up in the morning and celebration in the afternoon. To RSVP: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c094bafa92aa4fbc34-earth#/>

2023 BEMP Crawford Symposium: Community Science, Education, and Stewardship

FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

The Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program's Crawford Symposium is an annual conference held in honor of BEMP's co-founder Dr. Clifford Crawford to celebrate and showcase environmental research by both students and professionals along the Middle Rio Grande. For more info: <https://bemp.org/crawford-symposium/>

JOIN US!

Become a Member of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation

The Albuquerque Wildlife Federation is an all-volunteer organization founded by Aldo Leopold and dedicated to protecting and restoring New Mexico's wildlife and habitat resources.

Our work is only possible thanks to the generous support of our members.

If you like the work we do, we hope you will help keep this legacy going by becoming a member or renewing your membership.



AWF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Albuquerque Wildlife Federation | P.O. Box 20225 | Albuquerque, NM 87154

Yes, I'd like to join AWF! This is a gift membership from: _____

name(s): _____

address: _____

city, state, zip: _____

phone: _____ email: _____

- Student _____ \$10
- Individual _____ \$25
- Family _____ \$35
- Sustaining _____ \$50-99
- Patron _____ \$100
- Lifetime _____ \$500 (*one-time payment*)

Dues: \$ _____
 Extra Contribution: \$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____