A young Aldo Leopold told the crowd at the 1920 National Game Conference: “It is going to take patience and money to catch the last wolf or lion in New Mexico. But the last one must be caught before the job can be called fully successful.”

But by 1937, after years of careful observation, Leopold had changed his opinion on predator control. “Would not our rougher mountains be better off and might we not have more normalcy in our deer herds, if we let the wolves and lions come back in reasonable numbers?” he wrote in his essay *Conservationist in Mexico*.

Sadly, too many of Leopold’s hard-learned lessons are being neglected today.

On August 27, the New Mexico Game Commission will consider changes to the state’s bear and cougar hunting rules that threaten to significantly reduce the populations of these essential animals in New Mexico.

Among the proposals being considered are an increase in the number of bears that may be killed annually, from 640 to 804. This proposal comes despite the fact that last year saw a 28% drop in the number of bears killed by hunters. Since the number of hunting licenses issued has not decreased, this decline indicates that bears are likely growing scarcer.

The commission is also considering raising the number of cougars that can be killed each year. That number currently stands at 749, although hunters have never bagged more than about 300 a year.

The new cougar rule would also eliminate the requirement that landowners get permits to set leg-hold traps and snares, and would open all public lands in the state to cougar trapping. Currently, cougar trapping is only permitted in Texas, where cougars are an unprotected “varmint” species. In addition, removing the permit requirement means the state will no longer be able to track how many cougars are killed on private land.

Aldo Leopold came to value carnivores not for sentimental reasons, but because he learned that they play an essential role in keeping complex ecosystems healthy. The new rules under consideration by the Game Commission are not based on scientific evidence that more bears or cougars need to be killed for the sake of ecological management; rather, they appear to reflect the ancient, anti-predator sentiment that Leopold sought to overcome in his later writings.

If you are interested in reviewing and commenting on the proposals, they are available here. In addition, a number of organizations have come together to oppose these proposed changes, and you can learn more about their position at: http://stopcougartrapping.org/petition/

Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Vice-President
AUGUST 2015 EDUCATIONAL SPEAKER: Luis Ramirez

Thursday, August 13, 2015, 7:30 pm
Albuquerque Friends Meeting House
1600 5th Street Northwest

Topic:

Restoring Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge

Luis Enrique Ramirez will give a presentation on grassland ecology and the restoration work the Denver Zoo has done on the Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge.

The 4,200-acre Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge is one of the nation's newest refuges. It was formerly the Wind River Ranch, owned and managed by the Thaw Charitable Trust, which donated it to the public in 2012. The refuge aims to protect and restore riparian and grassland habitat for the benefit of species including long-billed curlew, loggerhead shrike, burrowing owl, mountain plover, Southwestern willow flycatcher, a number of aquatic species, and migratory grassland and woodland birds.

Speaker Bio:

Luis is originally from Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico. He holds a BSc in agriculture engineering and animal husbandry from Monterrey Tech, a MSc on Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, and a PhD in applied ecology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. During graduate school he worked for almost 6 years as a land manager and plant ecologist for The Crane Trust in south-central Nebraska. Later, he moved to California to work with the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research as a postdoctoral research associate in the education division.

During his professional career Luis has had the opportunity to work internationally in Cuba, Mexico, Australia, Peru, Mongolia, and the Dominican Republic on a wide variety of conservation projects. Currently he works with the Denver Zoological Foundation as the director of its Rocky Mountain/Great Plains Program, and manage, in collaboration with the USFWS, the Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area in northern New Mexico.

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.
AUGUST 14-16, 2015 SERVICE PROJECT: Valles Caldera

LOCATION: Valles Caldera National Preserve

THE PROJECT: This month we will be returning to Valle Seco for a restoration project in partnership with Los Amigos de Valles Caldera. Similar to last month, volunteers will dig narrow/shallow worm ditches to re-wet drying meadow. We will transport and place sod clumps to plug and stabilize small headcuts and erosion gullies in three small tributaries in the far southern part of the Valley. We will also build rock structures in headcuts. Finally, this month we hope to be able to complete an elk exclosure to protect the remnants of old willow stands as well as several short wildlife friendly fences to control cattle trailing in marshy areas along the creek.

Children are welcome but no pets are permitted on the Preserve. Tents, pickup campers, small RV’s and tent or travel trailers are allowed.

SCHEDULE: Friday, August 14 - Sunday, August 16. (Volunteers are welcome to camp Friday and/or Saturday nights or just join us for the Saturday work day.)

GEAR: Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping. For the work, you’ll want gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. We will be high in the mountains, so bring layers and warm clothes.

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: Contact Scial at rioscial@gmail.com or 505-480-2906. Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.

2015 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

March 7..............Day project at Valle de Oro
April 17-19...........Cebolla Canyon near Grants, NM
May 15-17............Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
June 19-21..........Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
July 17-19............Valles Caldera I
August 14-16.........Valles Caldera II
September 11-13...Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
October 3.............Day project on Glorieta Mesa
October 17...........Day project in the Sandia Mountains

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RECAP OF JULY 17-19, 2015 RESTORATION SERVICE PROJECT

Looking back on last month’s terrific project in the Valles Caldera, we couldn’t put it any better than Jack and Darlene Crane of Los Amigos de Valles Caldera, who partnered with us on this project. They write:

“Once again we want to extend our sincere thanks to Albuquerque Wildlife Federation members for their outstanding work on the wetlands restoration workshop held on the Valles Caldera National Preserve on July 17-19.

We are always amazed at the skill, determination and hard work that each of you performs. The ‘worm ditch’ diggers had mud two inches deep on their shovels and shoes but continued to work until the job was completed letting the water flow into a completely new area and wetting another critical sloped area as well as the plug and pond structure diverting the water to wet more ground.

The seven, yes, count them, 7 rock structures on the spillway are again works of art; we keep saying that but it is so true. The rocks were big enough that machines should have moved them but you all placed them just so to effectively control the flow of water. Great job and kudos to all of you who worked on these projects. Special thanks to Bill Zeedyk and Keren Menetrey for being there and leading this project.

Thanks again and we hope to see your smiling faces in August, same place—different work sites and hope it doesn’t rain!”

Jack & Darlene

See lots more photos of this and other restoration projects at: abq.nmwildlife.org!
VALLES CALDERA RESTORATION PROJECT CONTINUED
UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Fence Removal Project in the Valles Caldera  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2015, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is seeking volunteers to help remove unneeded fences. The goals of this project are to increase access, decrease impacts to wildlife and engage the community in stewardship with the National Park Service as its 100th Anniversary celebration approaches. More info: http://www.nmwild.org/event/valles-caldera-fence-removal-project/

Coyotes in Our Midst  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2015, 7:00 p.m.  
PAJARITO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER, Los Alamos, NM  
Come learn from NM Project Coyote representative Judy Paulsen and Project Coyote Science Advisory Board Wildlife Biologist Dave Parsons about the remarkable adaptability and resiliency of this successful predator and the challenges and opportunities coyotes provide to both urban and rural communities. This presentation reveals the fascinating and complex world of Canis latrans— their keen intelligence, amazing resourcefulness, and importance as keystone carnivores in many ecosystems. For more information: http://peecnature.org/events/details/?id=9410

Celebrate Valle de Oro’s Third Birthday!  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2015, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
VALLE DE ORO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, Albuquerque, NM  
The celebration will include music, kids’ activities, speakers, a photo booth, food trucks, free cake and giveaways, and information tables from partner nonprofits (including the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation!). Valle de Oro is also planning to offer several tours: a hay-ride tour, birding with Audubon, a youth-led birding tour, an interpretive tour of the Camino Real, a photography walk, and lizard/herpetology walks. More information to follow in next month’s newsletter, but put it on your calendar today!

Send your event information to: abqwildlife@gmail.com!
Register for this year’s Quivira Coalition Conference
The Next Wave: Cultivating Abundance
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11 - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2015, Albuquerque, NM

Plentiful, ample, bountiful, generous, fertile, rich, replete - these are words that describe both the attitude and the goals of the next wave of agrarians. In this conference, we will hear from ranchers, farmers, scientists, activists and others who are leading the next wave. We’ll look down the road with them and share their thoughts on how to flourish amidst the emerging conditions and challenges of the twenty-first century. This conference does sell out so please purchase your tickets soon! Speakers include Paul Hawken, Christine Jones, Scott Black, Breece Robertson and many more.

Conference Website: http://quiviracoalition.org/2015_Quivira_Conference/

Participate in Next Year’s Tamarisk Coalition Conference
FEBRUARY 9-11, 2016, Grand Junction, CO

Despite its name, the Tamarisk Coalition is not just about tamarisk! The group’s 2016 Conference will be held February 9-11, 2016 at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, CO. Anyone interested in sharing their work on topics in the riparian restoration field are encouraged to submit an abstract for an oral and/or poster presentation. Please refer to the Call for Abstracts flyer for more details. Deadline to submit is October 1, 2015.

Click here to view the 2016 Conference page:
http://www.tamariskcoalition.org/about-us/events/2016-conference-submit-your-abstracts

Click here to view the call for abstracts flyer:
http://www.tamariskcoalition.org/sites/default/files/files/Call%20for%20Abstracts(1).pdf

Contact Cara at Ckukuraitis@tamariskcoalition.org with any questions.
MAKE THE NEXT 100 YEARS POSSIBLE: JOIN THE ALBUQUERQUE WILDLIFE FEDERATION!

The Albuquerque Wildlife Federation has survived and thrived for over a century thanks to the dedication and generosity of generations of members. We encourage you to join this proud legacy by becoming a contributing member and helping support AWF’s restoration service projects, monthly environmental education presentations, and other special events.

Along with becoming a member, you can support AWF’s work by purchasing one of our Valles Caldera commemorative T-shirts, designed by graphic artist and AWF board member Stephen Bohannon. It is printed on an organic cotton shirt and available in sizes S, M, L, & XL.

Price: $20  Shipping: $5

To order, mail in the form below or email your order to: abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com

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 (under 18) ___ $10
☐ Individual _________ $25
☐ Family ____________ $35
☐ Sustaining __________ $50-99
☐ Patron _____________ $100
☐ Lifetime ____________ $500 (one-time payment)

Dues: $_________

Extra Contribution: $_________

T-shirt & Shipping: $_________

TOTAL ENCLOSED: $_________