

THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque
WILDLIFE
Federation

conservationists since 1914

December 2023

Wildlife Without Walls

In October, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that the federal government would be waiving 26 environmental laws in order to build 20 more miles of wall along the southern border, including through fragile habitat near the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

In response, 120 conservation and social justice organizations sent a letter to the Biden administration to “again underscore the profound and irreparable harms border walls have inflicted on border communities and wildlife.” The groups urge the administration to rescind the waiver of environmental laws and consider the needs of the species whose survival hangs in the balance.

The new walls are somehow even worse for wildlife than the existing ones, as they are being built on large concrete footers that make it impossible for even the smallest animals to cross.

These walls would likely never be permitted to be constructed if normal environmental reviews had to be completed, as they threaten the extinction of at least one plant species (the Zapata bladderpod). With the accelerating pace of climate change, it is more urgent than ever to ensure that wildlife have corridors through which they can move to seek out more suitable habitat and outrun extinction.



A striking example of an alternate path we could take can be seen in the latest chapter of the ongoing saga of Asha, a Mexican gray wolf whose name means hope in Sanskrit.

Critically endangered Mexican gray wolves were reintroduced to New Mexico and Arizona in 1998 as an “experimental, nonessential” population whose range restricted to an area south of Interstate-40.

Asha ignored this artificial boundary. Born in 2021 to an Arizona pack, by December 2022 she had dispersed and headed north, eventually being captured by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service near Angel Fire, just south of the Colorado border. In July 2023, she was released back into the designated lobo territory, but by November she had crossed I-40 again and was exploring the Jemez and beyond.

Advocates have mobilized to allow her to roam, and in mid-November, the Fish and Wildlife Service said they would allow her to do so for now. Her future remains tenuous, but hopefully free.

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DECEMBER 14, 2023: Annual Members Meeting, Potluck, & Board Election

Join us for our annual holiday potluck to celebrate another successful year of restoring our public lands!

Date: Thursday, December 14, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

Location: Albuquerque Friends Meeting House
1600 5th Street Northwest

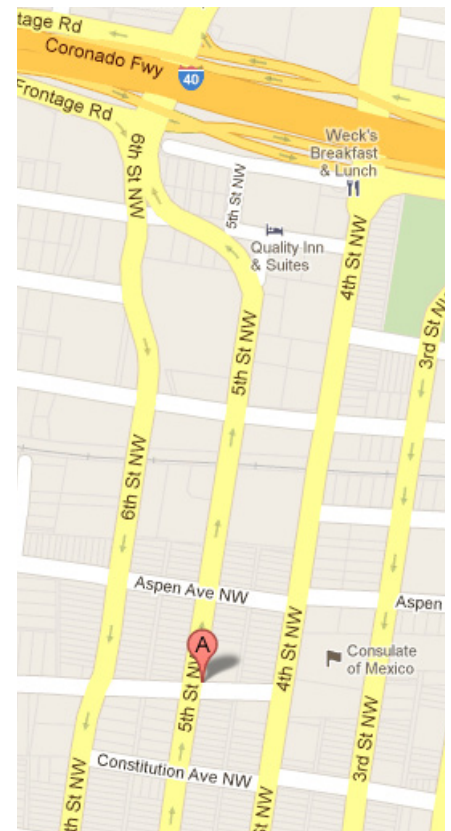
We are looking forward to seeing everyone at AWF's annual members meeting and holiday potluck! Please bring a dish to share, and come help us celebrate a successful year of restoration projects, educational presentations, and advocacy.

The annual members meeting is also when we elect our board for the coming year. All dues-paying AWF members are eligible to vote for and serve on our all-volunteer board. If you are interested in helping organize AWF's volunteer restoration projects and recruiting speakers for our meetings, we hope you'll consider running for the board!

Feel free to email us at abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com if you have any questions about serving on the board.

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.



Time to renew your AWF membership!

Annual memberships expire in December, so please renew yours today! You may pay at the meeting, fill out and mail in the form on the last page of this newsletter, or renew online at abq.nmwildlife.org. Your dues pay for restoration tools and supplies and make it possible for AWF to provide snacks at meetings and meals at projects. Thank you!

AWF BOARD 2023

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President – Cameron Weber
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RECAP OF NOVEMBER 4, 2023 PROJECT: BOSQUE CLEAN-UP



Once again this year, AWF closed out our projects season by teaming up with Jaguars for Positive Change, a high school community service club at Atrisco Heritage Academy High School. An enthusiastic group of adult and student volunteers gathered at the Rio Bravo Open Space to clean up a portion of the Rio Grande Bosque. Volunteers removed trash and dug out invasive Ravenna Grass, carefully cutting and bagging the seed heads to prevent them from spreading further. This effort will give the native vegetation more space to grow and provide a more diverse habitat for local wildlife.

It was about a century ago that AWF's founder Aldo Leopold helped lead a successful effort to set aside the Albuquerque Bosque as a natural space, open to the public and protected for perpetuity. We are proud to care for this special place that represents one piece of Leopold's legacy in New Mexico. It is always inspiring for us to see the next generation of restorationists in action, and we hope that many of them – and you! – will join us again next spring when AWF's 2024 projects begin again!



2023 ACTIVITIES REPORT

Ecological Restoration Service Projects

March 11, 2023 – Tree-planting at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

April 7-9 – Riparian restoration at Ft. Union Ranch

May 19-21 – Wetlands restoration Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge

June 2-4 – Riparian restoration at Manuelitas Creek

June 16-18 – Fence-building to protect wetlands at Rolling Hills Ranch

July 14-16 – Post-Fire Restoration in Gallinas

July 28-30 – Wetland restoration at Valle Vidal

August 18-20 – Wetland restoration at Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM

September 1-4 – Riparian restoration at Limestone Canyon in the San Mateo Mountains

September 15-17 – Riparian restoration at Cebolla Canyon, El Malpais National Conservation Area

October 6-8 – Riparian restoration at Manuelitas Creek

October 20-22 – Gully restoration at Gutierrez Family Ranch

November 4 – Clean-up and invasive vegetation removal in the Albuquerque Bosque



Educational Presentations & Meetings

February 9, 2023 – “The Importance of Caves and Karst,” Devra Heyer & Issam Bou Jaoude, National Cave & Karst Research Institute, *via zoom from Carlsbad, New Mexico*

April 13, 2023 – “The Civilian Conservation Corps in New Mexico,” Dr. Richard Melzer

June 8, 2023 – “Tribal Forest Management Practices, Wildfire, and the Mexican Spotted Owl,” Dr. Serra Hoagland (Laguna Pueblo), Tribal Relations Specialist for the Rocky Mountain Research Station of the USDA Forest Service

August 10, 2023 – “Restoring the Colorado River by Removing Glen Canyon Dam,” Aparna Banik

October 12, 2023 – “Paid Following in the Middle Rio Grande: A Look at the MRGCD’s Environmental Water Leasing Program,” Jared Wood

Advocacy & Outreach

January 2023 – Signed on as a supporter of the Green Amendment to New Mexico’s constitution

September 15, 2023 – Led tour of Cebolla Canyon restoration work with representatives of the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, New Mexico Game and Fish, and New Mexico Environment Department

October 23, 2023 – Submitted letters in support of NMED proposals to map springs in New Mexico, create an Arid Land Springs Restoration Technical Guide, and expand its Rapid Assessment Method for Sub-Alpine Riverine Wetlands



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Soon, Colorado will be joining New Mexico and Arizona in reintroducing its own “experimental, non-essential” population of wolves, following the passage of a 2020 ballot referendum in which voters supported bringing back this iconic species after decades of absence from the landscape.

Generations ago, Mexican gray wolves likely encountered northern gray wolves along that porous border zone where their territories met. Perhaps one day soon they may do so again, thanks to people speaking out for their freedom to return and to roam. ([Click here to contact the governor and wildlife officials](#) on Asha’s behalf.) May we do the same for the species being trapped on either side of the lengthening border wall.



Asha in transport

Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Low-Tech Stream Restoration for Landowners: The Benefits, Water Rights Issues & Reducing Risks FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 12:00-1:15 p.m., online WESTERN LANDOWNERS ALLIANCE

This webinar will feature an informative presentation by Jackie Corday, a Colorado-based water and land attorney and natural resources consultant. Jackie will provide a deep-dive into key considerations for landowners and water rights holders as they evaluate and implement these techniques on their lands. Topics discussed will include: increased water availability and forage for agricultural producers, 2023 Colorado legislation (SB270) to support stream restoration, and reducing risk and increasing project success. Kenyon Fields, co-owner of Mountain Island Ranch, will also discuss his experience with the extensive process-based riparian restoration projects they have completed on their ranch. To RSVP: <https://westernlandowners.salsalabs.org/ltpbr-webinar/index.html>



Annual Christmas Bird Count DECEMBER 14, 2023-JANUARY 5, 2024 AUDUBON NEW MEXICO, Statewide

As participants in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, you can be one of more than 70,000 counters at more than 2,300 locations stretching from the Arctic Circle to the tip of South America. Since 1900, the Christmas Bird Count has provided scientists with critical data about bird populations in the Americas. For more information: <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>

Send your event information to: abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com!

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: \$ _____