Wildlife Bills Before the Legislature

This year’s legislative session began on January 21, and even though it is a thirty-day session primarily focused on passing a state budget, there are several wildlife-related bills we are keeping an eye on.

First, Senate Bill 75 (Senator Mimi Stewart), the Wildlife Trafficking Act would make New Mexico the 10th state to ban the sale of endangered species or products made from them. This bill passed the New Mexico House and Senate unanimously in 2017 but was vetoed by then-Governor Martinez. The bill passed the Senate again last year before running out of time in the House. This year’s bill has the support of Governor Lujan Grisham, so hopefully the third time’s the charm!

Second, Senate Bill 102 (Senators Steve Neville and Mimi Stewart) and House Bill 223 (Representative Nathan Small), the Agricultural and Natural Resources Trust Act would create a new state endowment fund to support conservation easements and restoration work. Grants from this endowment could support the sort of wildlife habitat and watershed restoration that AWF engages in, and AWF has joined with a coalition of other organizations in signing onto a letter in support of this legislation.

Third, Senate Bill 33 (Senator Bill Soules) would appropriate $200,000 for a study of potential new funding sources for the Department of Game and Fish to support the conservation of threatened and endangered wildlife species. Currently, the Department is funded solely by fees paid by hunters and anglers, and wildlife conservation has been chronically underfunded.

Along with these bills, the main focus of the session – the budget – is also critically important for New Mexico’s wildlife and wild lands. Our friends at New Mexico Wild have just published an interesting report documenting how the budgets for New Mexico’s energy, environmental, and public lands agencies have been cut dramatically over the past decade. The report explains what needs to be done to get those critically important agencies fully funded and staffed so they can effectively protect New Mexico’s air, land, and water. Click here to read the report, Recovering Lost Ground.

If you want to help turn these good ideas into laws, contact your legislators or the governor before the session concludes February 20. We encourage you to speak up and help make New Mexico a national model for good wildlife policies!

Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Secretary
Thursday, February 13, 2020, 7:30 pm
Albuquerque Friends Meeting House
1600 5th Street Northwest

**Topic: Conserving Bighorn Sheep in New Mexico**

Join us for a presentation on the big threats facing bighorns throughout the West – primarily contagious respiratory disease spillover from domestic sheep – and the ongoing citizen science efforts in Southwestern Colorado to protect and promote bighorn sheep, inspired by Aldo Leopold's vision.

**Speaker: Dan Parkinson**

Dan Parkinson is a retired small animal veterinarian from Durango, CO. He has a BS in Wildlife Biology and an MS in Physiology (Mule deer fawn mortality in captivity) from Colorado State University. Dan is also a life member of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) and he serves as the Southwest Colorado BHA Regional Director – Volunteer. For the last four years, Dan has led an effort by a coalition of conservation groups to protect and promote bighorn sheep in Southwestern Colorado through a citizen science program. BHA is joined in this effort by the Mountain Studies Institute, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, and the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society. The coalition's efforts are now expanding throughout Colorado. Dan and his wife Laurie have a second home in Albuquerque a few blocks from Aldo Leopold’s house on 14th Street.

**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.
Please mark your calendars for this year’s AWF ecological restoration volunteer service projects!

In 2020, we’ve planned an exciting schedule of projects at legacy sites across the state, from Midnight Meadows to Limestone Canyon. During each of these projects, we’ll see the difference that we’ve made through our past projects and we’ll build on that work to continue healing these beautiful landscapes. We are very pleased to be planning these projects in collaboration with a wide array of partners, including Amigos Bravos, Defenders of Wildlife, Hermit’s Peak Watershed Alliance, and WildEarth Guardians, among others, as well as the agencies that manage our public lands, including the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

As you know if you’ve joined us in the past, AWF’s volunteer restoration projects are terrific opportunities to discover remarkable places and work side by side with enthusiastic conservationists to restore them. We always have lots of fun, and it is inspiring to see how our work can transform the landscape.

We are also experimenting with something new this year that we hope will make for an even better experience for everyone. We have heard that some folks would like to join us, but they aren’t physically able to participate in the rock work. At the same time, we could really use more hands to help with camp and kitchen duties (washing dishes, assisting with food prep, and looking after the group camp during the work day) and documenting the work (taking photos and recording data about all the structures that were completed during the project). So we are putting out a call for volunteers who will come out on a project specifically to assist with these tasks.

If you think you might be interested in trying out one of these new roles, please let us know! We’ll be announcing each month's project as usual in this monthly newsletter, so you can RSVP to attend as a regular volunteer or as a camp/kitchen or data collection volunteer. If you have any questions or want more information, feel free to email abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com.

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MARCH 7, 2020 SERVICE PROJECT: Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge

LOCATION: Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in the South Valley of Albuquerque

THE PROJECT: Join AWF for our first volunteer project of the 2020 season! We will be partnering with Rio Grande Return, WildEarth Guardians, Friends of the Valle de Oro, and others on this project at the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge. Valle de Oro was once a working dairy farm, and it is now one of the nation’s first urban wildlife refuges. Lots of work is underway to improve habitat and visitor resources at the refuge.

During this year’s project, volunteers will be planting cottonwood and willow seedlings, removing invasive vegetation, and assisting with various other needs around the refuge.

SCHEDULE: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Saturday, March 7, 2020

GEAR: For this project, you will need gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. Wear layers as the day may start off cool and warm up towards lunch.

FOOD: Please bring snacks and plenty 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.
UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

**Aldo Leopold Writing Contest for Students**
**ENTRIES DUE FEBRUARY 21, 2020**
AWF is a proud supporter of the Aldo Leopold Writing Foundation’s student essay contest. Students in grades 6-12 are invited to submit an essay on ecology and the economy. Learn more about the details of contest and how to participate at: https://www.leopoldwritingprogram.org/writing-contest.html

**Aldo & Estella Leopold Residency for Writers**
**APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 28, 2020**
An inspiring retreat for professional environmental writers at “Mi Casita”, Aldo and Estella’s first home in northern New Mexico, the Aldo and Estella Leopold Residency provides a one-month residency with stipend for writers and respected thinkers interested in reshaping the cultural story about the relationship between humans and Nature. Learn more and apply at: https://www.leopoldwritingprogram.org/residency.html

**Telluride Mountainfilm Festival on Tour**
**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2020, Lensic Theater in Santa Fe**
WildEarth Guardians presents Mountainfilm on Tour, a selection of culturally rich, adventure-packed and inspiring documentary films curated from the Mountainfilm festival in Telluride, CO. For more info and to purchase tickets: https://www.mountainfilm.org/tour/ stops/mountainfilm-on-tour-sante-fe-nm-2020

**Wildlife Wednesdays: Protect the Pecos**
**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 5:30 p.m., Marble Brewery, 9904 Montgomery Blvd. NE, Albuquerque**
Join the New Mexico Wildlife Federation for their monthly meeting and hear a presentation from environmental attorney Charles de Saillan about what you can do to help oppose an Australian company’s push to develop a mine near the headwaters of the Pecos River in the Santa Fe National Forest.

**Habitat Restoration Day at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge!**
**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**
Join Audubon New Mexico for a habitat restoration and enhancement field day at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. Volunteers will plant native trees like cottonwood and Gooding’s willow and further restore the river-floodplain connection on the Refuge. A shuttle will be available from Albuquerque and lunch is provided for those who RSVP. To sign up: https://act.audubon.org/onlineactions/gYEr8SIdjEOBPH-M5sN6zQ2

**3rd Annual Bosque Planting Day**
**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**
Partners for Fish and Wildlife has teamed up with MRGCD and Albuquerque Open Space to host a community planting day as part of our efforts to reforest and revitalize the Albuquerque bosque. We will be planting over 300 trees to continue to heal and restore our connection as a community to this part of the bosque. Please RSVP so that we have an idea of how many volunteers will attend this event. You can RSVP by emailing Alejandrina at alyons01@unm.edu. For more info: https://www.facebook.com/events/493824524562951/

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: $ __________