

THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque
WILDLIFE
Federation

conservationists since 1914

January 2022

Funding Conservation for the Long Term

Funding for conservation and environmental protection in New Mexico has suffered from the same problems facing the rest of the state's budget: because about a third of our public revenues come from taxes on oil and gas production, the state experiences boom and bust years. Some years, New Mexico has so much revenues available that state lawmakers struggle to spend it all productively; other years, when oil prices or production fall, the state ends up cutting vital public services – including the budgets of its environmental agencies.

In the past couple of years, we have been in an oil and gas boom, and the state's revenue situation has been made even stronger thanks to unprecedented investments from the federal government. During the special session last month, state legislators and the governor put \$43.5 million of federal dollars into conservation.

However, just over the horizon we face a profound dilemma: the fossil fuel industry is on its way out, and we need to sustain our investment in conservation and environmental protection (among other vital public goods) over the long term.

Last month, the governor proposed one solution that is well worth considering: issuing \$50 million of general obligation bonds to invest in maintaining healthy watersheds, reducing wildfire risk, enhancing biodiversity and protecting imperiled species, with special focus on responding to climate change.



New Mexico already issues bonds for things like libraries, higher education, and senior citizen's centers, and cities and counties issue bonds for local parks, trails, and open space, but this would be the first statewide bond ever issued for conservation purposes.

General obligation bonds are essentially loans that the state takes out that are repaid with property taxes. In this case, property taxes would increase by an amount that would cost the average homeowner \$2 over the next 25 years. Because general obligation bonds are issued regularly every two years, this proposal creates the potential for a recurring funding stream for environmental purposes in New Mexico, and it is one that makes enormous sense. After all, the value of our homes here is tied directly to the health of our natural environment, including healthy forests and grasslands and a clean and sustainable water supply.

The only catch is that, in order to become a reality, the governor's bond proposal must pass the state House and Senate and then be approved by a majority of New Mexico voters. Some legislators are already objecting to signing off on any sort of tax increase.

For generations we have taken what we needed from the environment, and in doing so, we impoverished and polluted our air, water, and soil. Now the time has come to invest in those natural systems so that they can continue to sustain us for generations to come. The conservation bond proposal from Governor Lujan Grisham would be an excellent start.

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Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Secretary

2022 VOLUNTEER ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

The AWF Projects Committee will be meeting later this month to develop the schedule for this year's volunteer ecological restoration service projects. If you have ideas for projects or would like to be involved in the planning process, please contact our President Cameron at cameron.weber@gmail.com. Look for the 2022 project calendar in next month's newsletter!



NO AWF MEETING IN JANUARY — SEE YOU IN FEBRUARY!

Do you have ideas about speakers, topics, or educational workshops you would like to see at AWF's public meetings this year? Please email any suggestions to abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com! AWF plans to return to in-person meetings this year if the pandemic situation permits.



CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS TO THE 2022 AWF BOARD!

As an all-volunteer organization, AWF's board is responsible for organizing our restoration service projects and educational presentations, as well as carrying forward the legacy of this 107-year-old organization.

AWF continues to thrive thanks to the energy, care, and dedication of our volunteer board, and we are grateful to all of last year's board members and officers for their willingness to continue their service for another year.



AWF BOARD 2021

OFFICERS

President – Cameron Weber
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ACTION ALERT & BOOK NOTE: “HOMESCAPE REWILDING”

Action Alert: Speak Up For Lobos by January 27!

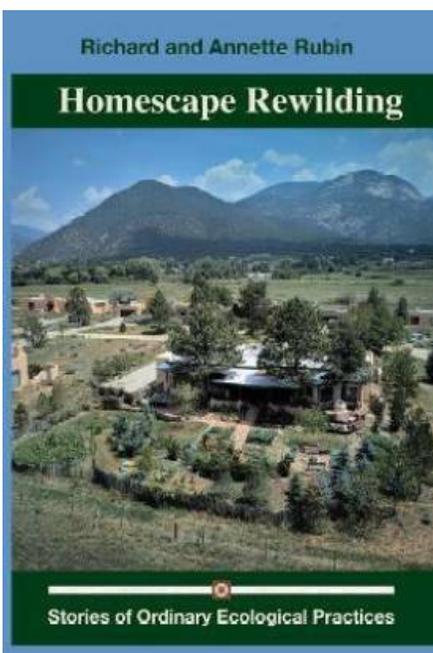


This January, advocates for the Mexican gray wolf have a unique opportunity to influence the direction of lobo reintroduction in the southwest. In 2018, the U.S. District Court in Arizona ruled on behalf of environmental plaintiffs, ordering the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to revise its “10(j) rule” to better reflect best available science and the Endangered Species Act. The agency is currently taking public comment for its final draft Environmental Impact Assessment.

Please submit your comments to USFWS before January 27, 2022 for lobos at:
<https://www.regulations.gov/document/FWS-R2-ES-2021-0103-0001>

If you like, feel free to personalize the following points in your comment:

- Managing for an average of 320 Mexican gray wolves in Arizona and New Mexico is inadequate for long-term recovery when the most prominent scientific opinion recommends a population of 750-1000 animals. Additionally, the Mexican gray wolf should not be managed based on population average but instead for ecological effectiveness.
- USFWS should eliminate the arbitrary and harmful Interstate 40 boundary of the wolf reintroduction area, as vital habitat for the species’ recovery exists north of this line. Any wolves roaming north of I-40 should not be relocated and should receive full Endangered Species Act protections.
- USFWS must incorporate firm requirements to prevent conflicts between lobos and livestock and support non-lethal resolution of conflicts, including many existing avoidance techniques.
- Genetic diversity of Mexican gray wolves is key to the species’ survival and USFWS should take all necessary and productive steps to ensure genetically robust distribution.



AWF friend Richard Rubin has published a new book with his wife Annette, titled *Homescape Rewilding*, and he kindly provided us with a copy.

Full of wise quotes from Aldo Leopold and others, *Homescape Rewilding* describes Richard and Annette’s pursuit of rewilding practices at their home on the high plains of Taos. They first explain the rewilding philosophy and the human and natural history of their homescape. The heart of the book consists of engaging stories about how Richard and Annette have pursued rewilding through cultivating tree communities, horticulture and husbandry, welcoming wildlife, and rewilding their foods (including some tasty-sounding recipes for dishes based on local foods), as well as describing other ways that anyone can put rewilding into practice in their own lives. (AWF gets a shoutout as a group that people can join to engage in rewilding at a larger scale.)

Proceeds from purchases of *Homescape Rewilding* are currently going to the Wisconsin-based Aldo Leopold Foundation. The book can be purchased directly from the Taos publisher, Nighthawk Press, at <http://nighthawkpress.com/titles/> or wherever you buy your books.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Walking 4 the Climate

MONDAY, JANUARY 17, 11:30 a.m., Santa Fe Roundhouse

Please join Walking 4 the Climate, a special event on Martin Luther King Day, the day before the state legislature convenes. New Mexico residents will walk from the four directions to the Roundhouse, arriving together at noon for a rally to encourage New Mexico to take brave action to combat the climate crisis. For more info on the event and how to participate:

<http://www.takeresponsibility.us/Walking%204%20the%20Climate.pdf>



Backcountry Film Festival

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21-MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 6:00 p.m., Online

PAJARITO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

Join the Pajarito Environmental Education Center for the 17th season of the Backcountry Film Festival! This year's festival will be hosted virtually and can be enjoyed from the comfort of home. For more info:

<https://peecnature.org/events/details/?id=37743>



Solitude Monitoring in the in the Sabinoso, Cerro Del Yuta, and Rio San Antonio Wilderness Areas

JANUARY-OCTOBER 2022

NEW MEXICO WILD

Do you like hiking and want to volunteer to help our Public Lands? NM Wild is seeking volunteers to collect data on visitor use in these BLM Wilderness areas. This data informs us on the level of use in each of these areas, which is key to better management. Volunteers must complete a 30-minute phone training with

NM Wild's Wilderness Rangers. Email will@nmwild.org to sign up!

Aldo Leopold Writing Contest for Students

ENTRIES DUE FEBRUARY 15, 2022

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 an environmental topic. 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 25, 2022

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>



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: \$ _____