

THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque
WILDLIFE
Federation

conservationists since 1914

July 2017

Water Wars

New Mexico's water wars are heating up again.

On June 7, the Bernalillo County Planning Commission voted to exempt the proposed Santolina development from the requirement to prove that there is enough water to support the development before it goes forward. Santolina is proposed to house 90,000 residents over an area that would double the existing size of Albuquerque and use as much water as Rio Rancho: over 14,000 acre-feet (4.5 billion gallons) a year. With the Middle Rio Grande already over-appropriated, any new uses of water must come at the cost of ending existing uses (like the acequias of the South Valley). Yet if the Bernalillo County Commission agrees with the recommendation of the Planning Commission, that will not be a consideration as the development moves forward.

One idea of where that water might come from is the San Agustin Plains, where the State Engineer is considering an application by an out-of-state company to drill 37 wells and pump out 54,000 acre-feet of water a year (48 million gallons a day). This water would be transported to population centers like Albuquerque through 140 miles of pipeline. Local ranchers and environmentalists have filed several hundred protests against the application, citing the impacts on wildlife, livestock and potential land subsidence. The first hearing on the project is coming up July 19.

Meanwhile, along the eastern border of the state, the Ogallala Aquifer has become so depleted that Land Com-



missioner Aubrey Dunn is requiring hydrological reviews before renewing oil and gas leases on state land that use any fresh water from the aquifer. Dunn stated that "the rapid rate of depletion of the Ogallala aquifer and lack of alternative sources of fresh water is not only threatening drinking water within the Great Plains, but it is also devaluing state trust lands and negatively impacting trust beneficiaries." The Land Office is pushing oil and gas developers to use non-potable water instead of fresh drinking water

Looming over it all is the Trump administration's move to roll back water quality regulations, specifically the "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS) rule that protects the drinking water sources of 117 million Americans. WOTUS clarified that the Clean Water Act applies to ephemeral or intermittent streams that do not flow constantly—like 90% of the rivers and streams in New Mexico. Unfortunately, unlike many states, New Mexico does not have a state regulatory structure that can step in to protect our water if the EPA stops enforcing the Clean Water Act on our rivers.

Last Tuesday, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt released a

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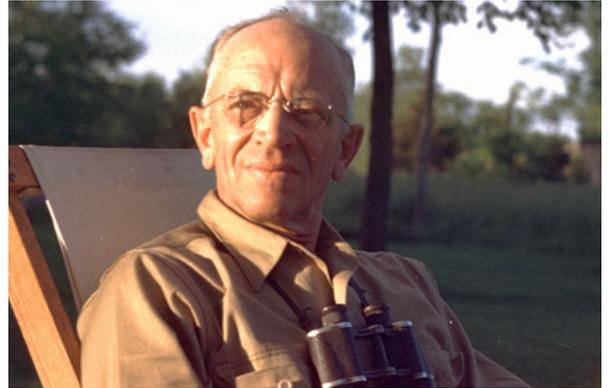
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NO AWF MEETING IN JULY – SEE YOU IN AUGUST!

AWF traditionally takes a break from our monthly meetings in July. On July 21, 2017, we will mark 103 years since Aldo Leopold and AWF's other founders met and decided that the time had come to form an organization dedicated to protecting New Mexico's wildlife for future generations.

We hope you will join us in celebrating AWF's legacy and helping us carry it forward.



Action Alert: Speak Up for Wolves!

Last week, the federal government released a draft revision of its Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Plan which would allow states to determine when, where, and whether wolves are released and permitted to live within their borders. Under Governor Martinez, New Mexico has withdrawn from participation in the recovery effort and sued to stop releases of wolves into the state, so if this revision takes effect, no more wolves will be reintroduced into New Mexico at this time.

We will have more information on this issue in next month's newsletter, as the public comment period extends through August 29, but if you would like to speak up for wolves in person, there is a hearing coming up in a couple of weeks. Public comments will be accepted at the event.

Saturday, July 22, 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Crowne Plaza Albuquerque
1901 University Blvd NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

There is also a hearing on July 20 in Truth or Consequences. For more information on the hearings, how to comment, or other ways you can help defend wolves, [visit MexicanWolves.org](http://MexicanWolves.org).



JULY 14-16, 2017 SERVICE PROJECT: Valles Caldera

LOCATION: Valles Caldera National Preserve

THE PROJECT: This month, we will be partnering with Los Amigos de Valles Caldera to complete restoration work at a new site, the Rito de Los Indios. As usual, our activities will involve building rock restoration structures, and we may also dig, move, and place sod to spread water across the landscape. Volunteers will camp inside the beautiful Valles Caldera. Details and directions to the campsite (including the gate code) will be sent out to volunteers who RSVP.

Please note that children are welcome but **no pets are permitted on the Preserve**. Campfires are also not allowed inside the Preserve. Tents and pickup campers are permitted.

SCHEDULE: Friday, July 14 – Sunday, July 16

GEAR: Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping. For the work, don't forget gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. Warm clothes for the evenings and plenty of water are essential, and be prepared for rain showers.

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
Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.



2017 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

April 1.....Day project at Valle de Oro
~~April 28-30.....Cebolla Canyon near Grants, NM~~
May 12-14.....Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
July 14-16.....Valles Caldera I
August 11-13.....Valles Caldera II
August 18-20.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
September 8-10.....Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
October 14.....Day project in the Sandia Mountains

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42-page proposal to rescind WOTUS, allowing unregulated pollution into all of these water sources. Just about every riparian area where AWF works would lose its protection, from the growing wetlands around Cebolla Spring to Limestone Creek winding through the San Mateo Mountains.

But the fight to protect these critical waterways is only beginning. The Trump administration must go through a full, public rule-making process in order to undo WOTUS, and our friends at Amigos Bravos are just one of many local and national environmental that will be fighting them the whole way—and then bringing challenges in the courts if needed.

As active volunteers who devote several weekends a year to restoring New Mexico's precious riparian areas, I encourage you to speak up during this process. We'll include updates in future newsletter about opportunities for public comment so that you can make your voice heard about why it is important to you (and to the wildlife that cannot submit comments) to keep New Mexico's water clean.

Kristina G. Fisher
AWF President



Last Chance to Speak Up For Your National Monuments!

The Department of the Interior is "reviewing" the status of 27 national monuments, including the Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains Desert Peaks.

Members of the public may submit comments until **July 10**. Let's tell them how much New Mexicans value our natural heritage!

You can find suggested talking points and links to submit your comments at:

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
New Mexico Wildlife Federation



UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST



Rio Capulin Survey Hike in the Pecos Wilderness

NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 2017, 8:00 a.m.

Enjoy a beautiful summer hike in the Pecos and lend your support to wilderness stewardship at the same time. Participants will assist in assessing the route and making notes for a forthcoming service project involving cross-cutting and clearing the trail. For more information

<https://www.nmwild.org/events-outings/76-rio-capulin-survey-hike-in-the-pecos-wilderness?date=2017-07-06-08-00>

Solitude Monitoring Workshop

NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE

SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2017, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude is an important characteristic of wilderness and we need your help monitoring these opportunities! This training on the La Luz Trail in the Sandia Mountains will allow you to volunteer for any solitude monitoring opportunities for the remainder of the season. Monitoring will be offered in the Sandia Wilderness, Manzano Wilderness, Apache Kid Wilderness, and others throughout New Mexico.

More info: <https://www.nmwild.org/events-outings/83-solitude-monitoring-workshop?date=2017-07-08-09-00>

Public Hearing on Sandoval County Oil and Gas Ordinance

TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2017, 6:00 p.m.

Sandoval County Administration Building, 1500 Idalia Road, Bernalillo

The Sierra Club is encouraging local residents to attend the commission hearing to express their concerns about the draft ordinance, which would put in place weaker oil and gas safeguards for Northwest Sandoval County than for Rio Rancho. The draft ordinance describes the Northwest area as including Counselor, La Jara, Regina, Torreon, Cabezón, La Cueva, San Luis, Gillman and Ponderosa. For more information and to read the draft ordinance: <http://www.riograndesierraclub.org/sandoval-county-oil-and-gas-ordinance/>

Los Amigos de Valles Caldera Anniversary Celebration

JULY 22, 2017, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Come help Los Amigos celebrate their 10-year anniversary and be part of the grand opening of the Valle Grande Bookstore. Proceeds from the bookstore will support the educational, scientific, historical, and interpretive programs of Valles Caldera. There will be music, refreshments, artist demonstrations, a face painter for children, wildlife from the New Mexico Wildlife Center, a 10% discount at the bookstore, a drawing and souvenirs for those who attend. A ribbon cutting will be held at the new bookstore at noon. Visitors will have access to the preserve facilities and are encouraged to hike, fish and enjoy other recreational activities at the preserve. For more information: <http://losamigosdevallescaldera.org/>



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

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST *continued*

Los Amigos de Valles Caldera Geology Tour

JULY 30, 2017, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Experience the magnificent Valles Caldera on this unique tour led by geologist Kirt Kempter in support of Los Amigos de Valles Caldera. Kirt will provide a geologic history of the caldera since the massive eruption that occurred 1.2 million years ago -- a dynamic story that involves multiple volcanic eruptions within the caldera, and several caldera lakes over the past million years. Cost is \$75 per person, children under 12 free. For more information, please contact Jim Counce: jcounce1111@gmail.com

Medicinal and Edible Plants of the Bosque

JULY 30, 2017, 5:30 p.m.

Take a walk with Herbalist and Geographer, Dara Saville of Albuquerque Herbalism to discover the edible and medicinal plants of the Albuquerque Bosque. We'll explore the multitude of useful plants that are commonly used in natural healthcare practices and sample a few herbal remedies from the Bosque. Along the way, we'll also discuss how these wild plant populations are changing and what that means for the health of our riparian ecosystems. Meet at 5:15pm at the Westside Community Center (1250 Isleta Blvd SW, south of Bridge) for a short carpool to the trail head. For more information, contact Dara at albuquerqueherbalism@gmail.com



Quivira Coalition Annual Comanche Creek Watershed Restoration Workshop

AUGUST 3-6, 2017, Valle Vidal

Join the Quivira Coalition for its 16th annual restoration workshop in the Valle Vidal Unit of Carson National Forest! Volunteers will be moving sod, logs, and rocks to plug small headcuts and shore up the larger restoration structures. **REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS JULY 31.** For more information and to register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/comanche-creek-annual-volunteer-work-weekend-tickets-35788925640>



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 (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: \$ _____