

THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque
WILDLIFE
Federation

conservationists since 1914

July 2023

New Rule Would Elevate Conservation & Restoration on BLM Lands

A profound change is currently under consideration for the vast lands overseen by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, including approximately 13.5 million acres in New Mexico – about half of all of the state’s federally managed public lands.

Since 1976, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act has called for these lands to be managed for “multiple uses,” including conservation and recreation. Yet in practice, extractive uses such as mining, oil and gas development, timber, and grazing have often taken priority over non-extractive activities.

The BLM has recently proposed a new rule that would change that.

The new Public Lands Rule would put conservation on an equal footing with other uses by allowing tribes, nonprofits, individuals, and private groups to lease BLM lands in order to conserve them, something that is not permitted under the current law. The rule also calls for some BLM lands to be maintained in their natural, undeveloped state in order to support wildlife habitat and migration, ecosystem health, and resilience in the face of climate change.

The new rule also emphasizes the importance of restoration, directing BLM land managers to identify lands that should be a high priority for restoration. The BLM



would then develop plans to restore those lands based on input from local communities and partner groups.

This is an exciting development that could open up new possibilities for enhancing vital wildlife habitat. Historically, AWF has had fewer restoration projects on BLM lands relative to lands managed by agencies like the U.S. Forest Service and Fish & Wildlife Service. Yet those BLM project sites provide clear illustrations of what restoration can accomplish.

One example is AWF’s longtime legacy site in Cebolla Canyon, managed by the BLM in the El Malpais National Conservation Area. In this extremely dry landscape, AWF’s restoration work has expanded the Cebolla Spring wetland from seven acres to 40, supporting an increasing array of migratory birds and other wildlife species. There is immense potential for further restoring ecosystem health in Cebolla Canyon and on other BLM lands across New Mexico. We hope that this rule, if adopted, will facilitate that essential work.

The BLM is currently seeking public input on the proposed rule. The public comment period has been extended until next **Wednesday, July 5**, and we encourage you to take a few minutes to express your support. Conservation Voters New Mexico has put together some potential talking points, and a form to submit your comments can be accessed at:

<https://actnowforpubliclands.org/take-action>

Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Secretary

Inside this Issue:

July Project in Gallinas Canyon.....	pg 2
July Project in the Valle Vidal.....	pg 3
Recap of June Restoration Projects.....	pg 4
Events of Interest.....	pg 7
Membership Form.....	pg 8

JULY 14-16, 2023 SERVICE PROJECT: Gallinas Canyon

LOCATION: Gallinas Canyon, near Las Vegas, NM

THE PROJECT: For this project, AWF is partnering with the Hermit’s Peak Watershed Alliance to assist a landowner in the Gallinas Canyon whose property was burned in last year’s Hermit’s Peak-Calf Canyon Fire. We will be seeding, mulching, and building rock and log structures to help mitigate erosion and flooding and encourage the recovery of vegetation. We will be camping on the property near the worksite.

SCHEDULE: Friday, July 14 – Sunday, July 16

Volunteers do not need to be present for the entire weekend to participate. You are welcome to join us just for the work day Saturday, or camp for just one of the two nights.

GEAR: Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping and restoration work, including work gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. We recommend bringing clothes you don’t mind getting very dirty (including soot & ash), as well as a change of shoes and waterproof boots or boots you don’t mind getting wet and muddy. Rain gear, layers, warm clothes for the evenings, and plenty of water are essential.

FOOD: AWF will provide coffee and 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, plate, cup, and eating utensils and lots of water!

TO SIGN UP: Email **Kristina** at abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com
Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.



2023 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

- March 11.....Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge
- April 7-9.....Ft. Union Ranch
- May 19-21.....Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
- June 2-4.....Manuelitas Creek
- June 16-18.....Rolling Hills Ranch
- July 14-16.....Gallinas Post-Fire Restoration
- July 28-30.....Valle Vidal
- August 18-20.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
- September 1-4.....Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
- September 15-17.....Cebolla Canyon, El Malpais
- October 20-22.....Gutierrez Family Ranch
- November 4.....Rio Grande Bosque, Albuquerque

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JULY 28-30, 2023 SERVICE PROJECT: Valle Vidal

LOCATION: Valle Vidal in northern New Mexico

THE PROJECT: AWF is excited to return to one of our oldest legacy sites, the Valle Vidal, where we have been engaged in restoration activities for 41 years. This year, we will be working on the east side of the Valle Vidal, where we will continue building rock structures and fence enclosures in the Ring Place Meadow to protect wetlands from cattle grazing impacts.

SCHEDULE: Friday, July 14 – Sunday, July 16

Volunteers do not need to be present for the entire weekend to participate. You are welcome to join us just for the work day Saturday, or camp for just one of the two nights.

GEAR: Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping and restoration work, including work gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. We recommend bringing a change of shoes, and waterproof boots or boots you don't mind getting wet. Rain gear, layers, warm clothes for the evenings and plenty of water are essential.

FOOD: AWF will provide coffee and 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, plate, cup, and eating utensils and lots of water!

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RECAP OF JUNE 2-4, 2023 PROJECT: MANUELITAS CREEK

Thanks, Volunteers!

Charlie Alcorn
Abe Aufdermauer
Aparna Banik
Brent Bonwell
Phil Carter
Simon Doone
Robin Elkin
Kristina G. Fisher
Kathleen Gygi
Jan Willem Jansens
Jamie Knutson
Emery Kurth
Jess Lanham
Laurie Marnell
Mary Maulsby
Peter O'Brien
Shantini Ramakrishnan
Toby Rosenblatt
Heather Sharpe
Marilynn Szydlowski
Hamish Thomson
Joshua Wagner
Cameron Weber
Bill Zeedyk



At the start of June, AWF volunteers enjoyed having the opportunity to assist with some post-fire restoration work on Bill Zeedyk and Mary Maulsby's property along Manuelitas creek. Much of the forest around and upstream of the property was burned in last year's Hermit's Peak-Calf Canyon fire, and the land has since experienced repeated extreme flooding events. Volunteers drove juniper posts into the bed of Manuelitas Creek and wove willow branches between them to build three Beaver Dam Analogs (a.k.a. wicker weirs) to slow and spread the water and prevent downcutting; the middle structure lifted the creek high enough that it re-connected with a section of wetland that the creek had historically fed.

In addition to the post-and-willow structures in the creek, volunteers also repaired fences protecting the wetlands and built one-rock dams and Zuni bowls in drainages on the northern and southern slopes above the creek. These structures will capture sediment running off the burned slopes and prevent deep gullies from forming.

Volunteers camped in the meadow and enjoyed spectacular sunset skies thanks to the "maysoons" that brought scattered showers throughout the weekend. We look forward to returning to the property to continue the restoration work and help this land flourish in the aftermath of fire and flood.



RECAP OF JUNE 16-18, 2023 PROJECT: ROLLING HILLS RANCH

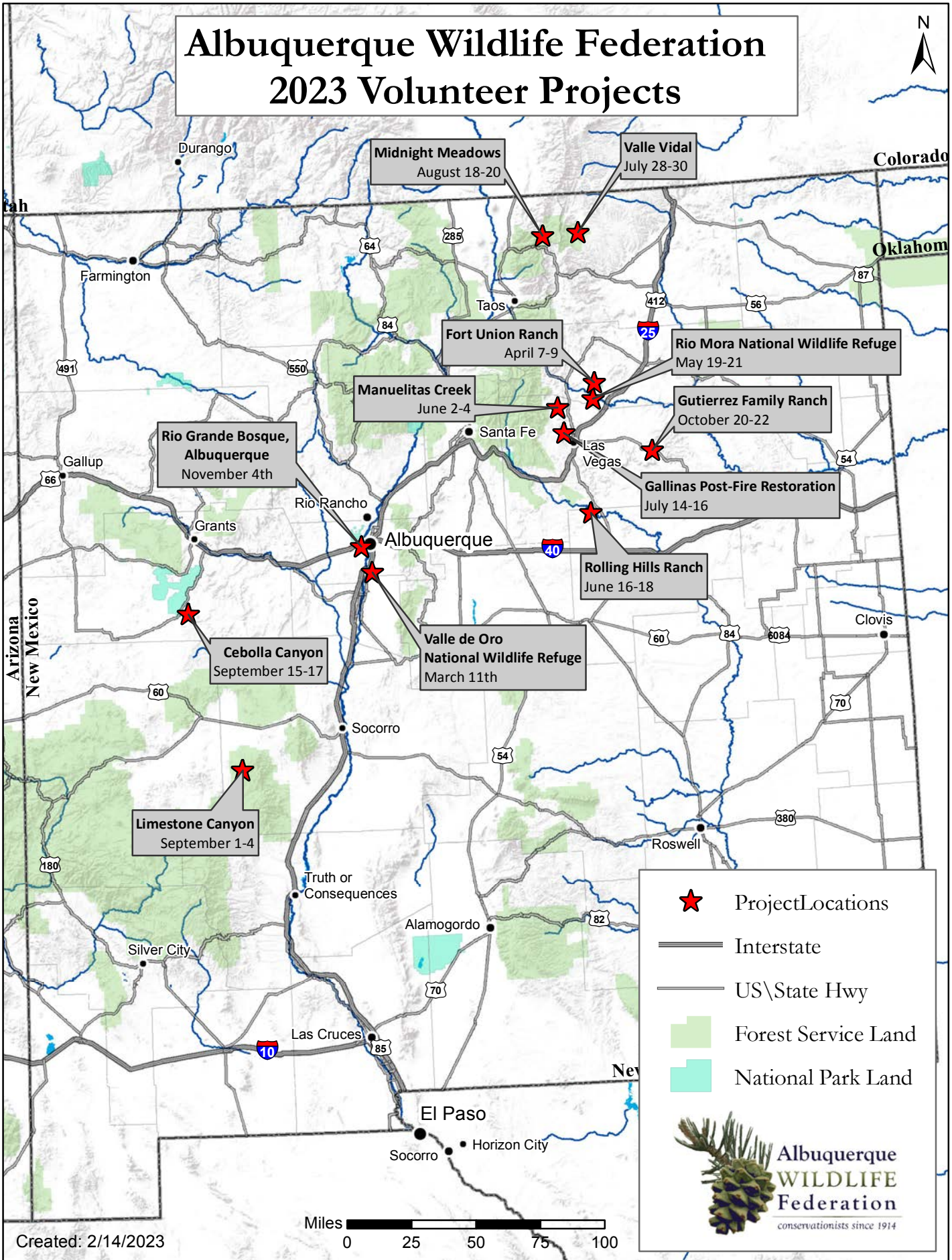


In mid-June, AWF volunteers partnered with Impact Outdoors for our third project on the Martinez family's Rolling Hills Ranch near Anton Chico, NM. Volunteers repaired rock restoration structures that we had built during the past two years to halt erosion and enhance wetlands. This year, a major focus was putting up fencing to keep cattle away from the creek banks and riparian areas. This will allow the wetland vegetation to flourish and improve habitat for fish and other aquatic wildlife. Meanwhile, Impact Outdoors mentored youth volunteers in how to inventory native and non-native species and capture frogs.

As in prior years, volunteers were well-fed throughout the weekend with delicious New Mexican food cooked by the Martinez family and game and fish dishes from the Impact Outdoors hunters and anglers, ranging from elk and oryx casserole to venison enchiladas! A major highlight of this year's project was cooling off in the gorgeous waterfall located on the ranch, along a tributary of the Pecos River. It is always a pleasure to partner with Impact Outdoors and landowners like the Martinez family to help cultivate the skills and knowledge about how this sort of restoration work on private lands can make them healthier for both livestock and wildlife.



Albuquerque Wildlife Federation 2023 Volunteer Projects



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UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST



Restoration Workday with the Santa Fe Conservation Trust

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Galisteo Basin

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust seeks volunteers to assist with wetland restoration at the Conservation Homestead. Participants will help with our dryland wetland restoration in the Galisteo Basin by helping to construct a rock rundown and several juniper weirs. Volunteers will meet at the Cottonwood trailhead at the GBP off Thornton Ranch Road, Lamy, NM 87540. Lunch will be provided. Email melissa@sfct.org with name, contact number and sandwich choice (Turkey, Ham, Veggie or Vegan) to sign up.

Rio Costilla Cutthroat Trout Celebration

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.,

Along the Rio Costilla and Comanche Creek, NM-196 near Costilla, NM

The NM Department of Game and Fish, U.S. Forest Service & partners have completed a 30-year project to restore Rio Grande cutthroat trout, our state fish, to approximately 120 miles of stream, 16 lakes and one reservoir near Costilla, New Mexico. On Saturday, July 1, 2023, they will host a celebration to officially welcome the public to their improved recreation area. A new interpretive sign will be unveiled at 10 a.m. to share information about the project and its benefits. The focus of the event will occur at noon when the public will have the opportunity to stock Rio Grande cutthroat trout and other native fish into the Rio Costilla and Comanche Creek. Partner groups will simultaneously host a youth and family Angler Education Expo at the adjacent Shuree Ponds. The expo will include youth angler education with fishing, informational booths and exhibits running until about 4 p.m. Contact Darren Vaughan, NMDGF communications director, at 505-476-8027 or by email at Darren.Vaughan@dgf.nm.gov with any questions. Event map: <https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/Costilla-Celebration-Map-Reduced.pdf>



New Mexico Bats - Family Night at PEEC

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, Los Alamos, NM

PAJARITO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

Join Justin Stevenson for a celebration of North American bats and learn about their life history, behavior, and biology. Several native species will be on hand to provide a unique opportunity to see these beautiful and amazing mammals up-close and in person! For more info: <https://peecnature.org/events/details/?id=48888>

Canoeing the Valles Caldera in Search of Algae, Moss, and Dragonflies

THURSDAY, JULY 20, Los Alamos, NM

PAJARITO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

Relf Price has been studying the Valles Caldera as a volunteer scientist for almost twenty years. In that time, two major fires and a long drought have affected the area. Relf will describe and show examples of the algae, moss, and dragonflies found in the Caldera. For more info: <https://peecnature.org/events/details/?id=48893>

Assist with Post-Fire Restoration in the Gallinas and Sapello Watersheds

Throughout the summer 2023

HERMITS PEAK WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Volunteers are welcome to join the Hermit's Peak Watershed Alliance work crews who are completing post-fire restoration projects in the Gallinas and Sapello watersheds throughout the summer. For more info and to sign up to participate: <https://hermitspeakwatersheds.org/3501-2/>

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: \$ _____