

# THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque  
WILDLIFE  
Federation

conservationists since 1914

June 2015

## Water, Water Everywhere, But Is It Safe To Drink?

Thanks to a remarkably rainy May, much of New Mexico is out of drought conditions for the first time in years.

But along with breathing new life into vegetation and keeping forest fires at bay, the rain has brought big pulses of stormwater runoff. In cities like Albuquerque, that runoff comes loaded with a heavy dose of pollution.

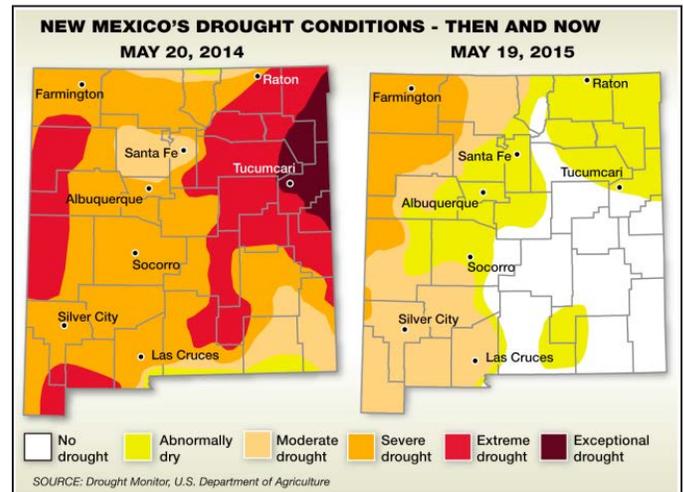
Last month, the U.S. Geological Survey released a nine-year study of Albuquerque's stormwater (you can read it [here](#)), finding relatively high levels of E. Coli bacteria and chemicals called PAH's that have been linked to cancer. The levels of suspended solids, phosphorus, and bacteria in storm runoff are higher in Albuquerque than in larger cities like Denver and Phoenix.

The good news is that the EPA and local governments are working on a plan to reduce pollution from stormwater and improve water quality in the middle Rio Grande.

The even better news is that the EPA has just released a new rule to protect thousands of miles of tributary streams in New Mexico. A few years ago, a Supreme Court ruling on the Clean Water Act drastically reduced the number of streams and rivers that the Act protected. The EPA's new rule restores protections to some intermittent and ephemeral streams that feed major rivers like the Rio Grande.

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Over 93% of New Mexico's surface waters are intermittent or ephemeral. The new rule means that industrial activity in and around many of those waterways will be required to comply with Clean Water Act provisions designed to reduce pollution in stormwater runoff.

Another way to keep some sediment out of the rivers is with restoration structures like the ones AWF volunteers build during our monthly projects. One-rock dams are designed to slow water and catch sediment, and seasons of bountiful rains like this one put those structures to the test. If they work well enough, they may be buried by the time we return to a site the following year, allowing us to add new layers of rock and continue the progress of raising streambeds and reconnecting them with their historic floodplains.

Between the efforts of volunteers and improved public policies like the new Clean Water Act rule, we can hopefully keep our dry rivers healthy and thriving through both wet and dry years.

*Kristina G. Fisher*  
AWF Vice-President

## JUNE 2015 EDUCATIONAL SPEAKER: Kevin Cobble

**Thursday, June 11, 2015, 7:30 pm**  
**Albuquerque Friends Meeting House**  
**1600 5th Street Northwest**

### Topic:

### Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge

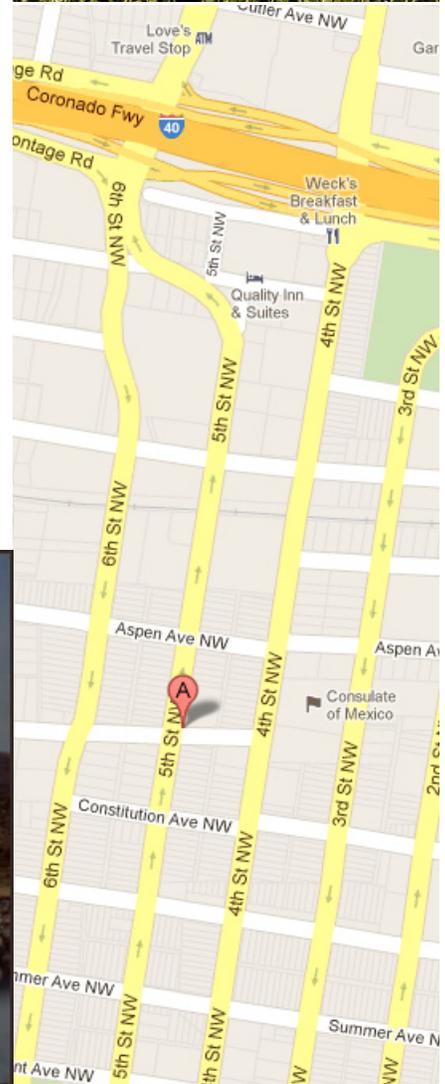
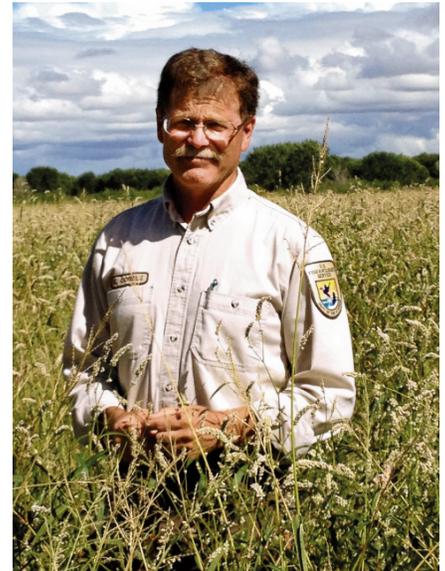
Bosque del Apache Refuge Manager Kevin Cobble will give us an insider's view of what it's like to oversee one of the nation's most spectacular wildlife refuges.

### Speaker Bio:

Kevin graduated from New Mexico State University with a degree in Wildlife Science and has served as refuge manager of three wildlife refuges: San Bernardino NWR near Douglas, Arizona; San Andres NWR near Las Cruces, New Mexico; and now Bosque del Apache. An active member of Ducks Unlimited, Cobble is an advocate of the conservation of wetlands and associated upland habitats for waterfowl, other wildlife and people.

### 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.



## JUNE 19-21, 2015 SERVICE PROJECT: Midnight Meadows

**LOCATION:** Midnight Meadows in the Carson National Forest near Questa, New Mexico.

**THE PROJECT:** AWF will be partnering with our friends at Amigos Bravos on this project. Our work will focus on repairing a fence enclosure that is protecting a high meadow stream, planting native vegetation, and developing an inventory to identify sites in need of restoration structures.

**SCHEDULE:**

**Friday, June 19** - Meet at campsite. Dinner on your own.

**Saturday, June 20** - Breakfast burritos and coffee/tea provided by AWF. Safety talk, project overview, and begin work on project. Lunch on your own; potluck dinner with burgers provided by AWF.

**Sunday, June 21** - Breakfast on your own (leftovers often available). Short work day for those who can stay until noon; leave as you need to.

**GEAR:** Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping. For the work, you'll want gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. We will be high in the mountains, so bring layers and warm clothes.

**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](mailto:rioscial@gmail.com) or 505-480-2906. *Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.*



### 2015 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

March 7.....Day project at Valle de Oro

April 17-19.....Cebolla Canyon near Grants, NM

May 15-17.....Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge

June 19-21.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM

July 17-19.....Valles Caldera I

August 14-16.....Valles Caldera II

September 11-13...Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns

October 3.....Day project on Glorieta Mesa

October 17.....Day project in the Sandia Mountains

#### AWF BOARD 2015

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## RECAP OF MAY 15-17, 2015 RESTORATION SERVICE PROJECT

### *Thanks, Volunteers!*

Daniel AuBuchon  
 Kaiya AuBuchon  
 Jonathan AuBuchon  
 Shawn Blaisdell  
 Stephen Bohannon  
 Phil Carter  
 Micah Daboub  
 Jonathan Davis  
 Barb Diver  
 Rich Diver  
 Kristina G. Fisher  
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 Toby Rosenblatt  
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 Marilynn Szydowski  
 Hamish Thomson  
 Bob Tilley  
 Kristin Van Fleet  
 Cameron Weber

One of the best parts about participating in AWF projects is getting the chance to spend time in beautiful places we might not otherwise see. Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge is one such spot. Formerly the Wind River Ranch, it is one of the nation's newest wildlife refuges, and it is not yet fully open to the general public.



The volunteers who braved the rainy weather enjoyed a fun and productive weekend building erosion control structures in this remarkable place. We camped at the headquarters area along the Mora River, where we were able to socialize inside the cozy main building when the rains came. After a brief shower Saturday morning, the weather cooperated and we built a number of new one-rock dams as well as repairing ones AWF volunteers had built back in 2007. As we gathered rocks for the structures, we discovered several collared lizards that had not quite come out of hibernation. Saturday afternoon we explored the ghost town of Loma Parada, and Sunday morning, we finished up with two Zuni bowls and a rock rundown. In the weeks since, the refuge has received two more inches of rain, and the staff reports that all the structures we built are holding up and helping all this water soak into the landscape for the benefit of plants and wildlife!



See lots more photos of this and other restoration projects at: [abq.nmwildlife.org](http://abq.nmwildlife.org)!

## UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Restoration Project with Los Amigos de Valles Caldera

**JUNE 26-28, 2015**

There's no more beautiful place to be in summer than the Valles Caldera! Join Los Amigos for a camp-out and volunteer weekend focused on enhancing water quality in the San Antonio Creek, a major tributary to the Jemez River. Volunteers will dig shallow "worm ditches" to re-wet a drying meadow and will use sod clumps to plug and stabilize small headcuts in two small tributaries. Volunteers may also build rock structures in larger headcuts and complete wildlife-friendly fence enclosures to keep cattle out of spring-fed meadows.

For more details and to RSVP, contact Jack Crane at [jdcrane@valornet.com](mailto:jdcrane@valornet.com) or 575-829-3648. Please RSVP by June 19.



### Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2015, 7:30 a.m.**

**NEAR CORONA, NM**

Volunteers will add water collection wings and plumb the Schartzler trick tank near Corona, NM. If enough volunteers are available, the enclosure fence will also be rebuilt. Interested participants will need to meet at 7:30 a.m. at the U.S. Forest Service office in Tijeras, NM. Please bring lunch, water, gloves, fence pliers, and 9/16" ratchets if you have them. District Wildlife Biologist Amanda Rael is coordinating the project. For more information, contact Amanda at: 505-281-3304 x107, [amandarrael@fs.fed.us](mailto:amandarrael@fs.fed.us)



### Gila National Forest Wilderness Inventory

**JUNE 12-14, 2015**

**NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE**

Join New Mexico Wilderness Alliance staff for an inventory outing in Frisco Canyons. Learn how to properly perform an inventory documenting wildlife, naturalness, and opportunities for primitive forms of recreation.

More info: <http://www.nmwild.org/event/gila-nf-wilderness-inventory-2/>

### Landowners: Apply for the Quivira Coalition Land Health Workshop!

**APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 15, 2015**

The Quivira Coalition is seeking to engage new audiences by conducting a Land Health Workshop anywhere within a 10 hour drive of Santa Fe, NM. Any land owner/manager with a specific land health "need" is invited to submit a short proposal to apply for a Quivira Land Health Workshop on their property in 2015.

For more information: contact Mollie Walton, [mwalton@quiviracoalition.org](mailto:mwalton@quiviracoalition.org) or (505) 820-2544 extension 6#.

Send your event information to: [abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com](mailto:abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com)!

## Senators introduce bills to create more Taos County wilderness

[http://www.taosnews.com/news/article\\_f2733cf6-f503-11e4-bcc3-cfcfed265982.html](http://www.taosnews.com/news/article_f2733cf6-f503-11e4-bcc3-cfcfed265982.html)

By J.R. Logan, The Taos News, May 7, 2015

New Mexico's senators are co-sponsoring a bill that would establish two wilderness areas inside the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

Tom Udall, D-NM, and Martin Heinrich, D-NM, announced on May 7 the introduction of the Cerros del Norte Act, which would create a combined 21,420 acres of wilderness in far northern Taos County.

The act proposes to create the 8,000-acre Rio San Antonio Wilderness on the west side of US 64, as well as the 13,420-acre Cerro del Yuta (Ute Mountain) Wilderness just west of Costilla.

Both areas would fall within the 242,000-acre Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, which was created by executive order in 2013.

While the president has the power to designate a national monument, any new wilderness must get congressional approval.

"It's another one of those examples of a long process that has really had incredible community support," Heinrich told The Taos News in an interview Thursday afternoon. "These two areas are just really unique in terms of resources within the context of the overall monument."

All of the land to be designated as wilderness is currently administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Wilderness protection essentially prevents future development, including the construction of roads as well as motorized travel, in areas deemed unique because of their wilderness characteristics. It's famously defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor and does not remain."

"One of the main reasons people visit the Taos area is to marvel at and venture into our magnificent wilderness areas and public wild lands," said Stuart Wilde, a local outfitter, in a press release on the bill's introduction from the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. "Protecting wilderness within the incredible Río Grande del Norte National Monument will only enhance our tourism and outdoor recreation."

Like other local conservation initiatives, this effort has enjoyed the support of a broad coalition of sportsmen,



businesses and traditional communities. The proposal for a wilderness area on Ute Mountain has met some resistance from a handful of Costilla residents worried it could affect nearby ranching operations.

The wilderness bill introduced Thursday mirrors failed legislation co-sponsored by the same Senators in 2013.

While that bill died, a separate bill to create the Columbine/Hondo Wilderness (also in Taos County) was lumped into a massive public lands package in late 2014. The package breezed through Congress attached to a defense spending bill.

However, some conservationists felt the designation of the Columbine/Hondo was made bittersweet by industry-friendly provisions also in the package, such as easing regulation of grazing and fast-tracking the approval of oil and gas leases on public lands, including areas near Chaco Canyon.

Some environmental groups worry these sorts of unbalanced trade-offs will become more common in Washington, where gridlock has essentially put an end to the viability of a stand-alone wilderness bill.

Heinrich challenged that criticism.

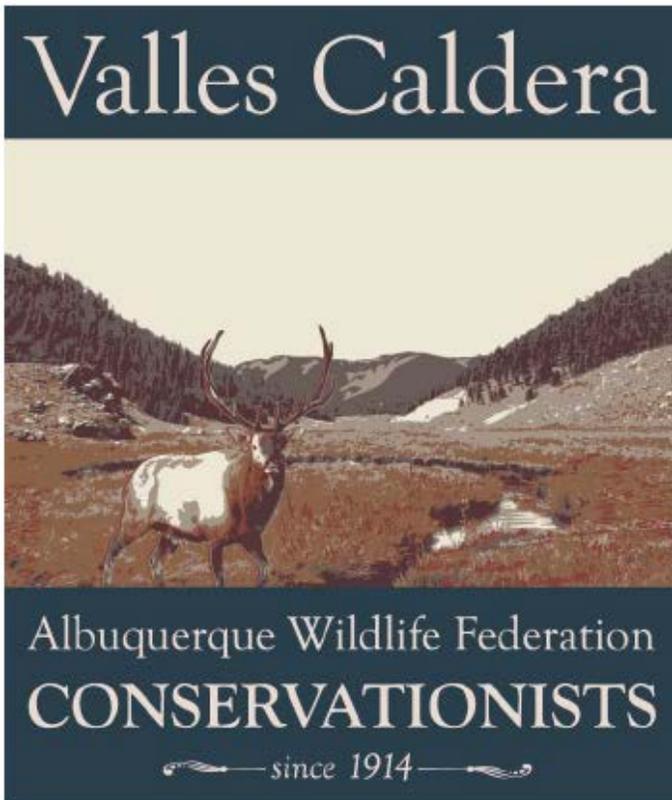
"I think you've to be flexible these days," he said, asserting that last year's public lands package was "on balance, a very good piece of legislation."

Heinrich said he'd try to get the bill passed on its own, but would be willing to get it through as part of another package.

Heinrich said the two proposed wilderness area don't currently face the threat of development or industrial activity, but he said that was no reason not to act. "I prefer to do the conservation work before there's an imminent threat," Heinrich said.

# MAKE THE NEXT 100 YEARS POSSIBLE: JOIN THE ALBUQUERQUE WILDLIFE FEDERATION!

The Albuquerque Wildlife Federation has survived and thrived for over a century thanks to the dedication and generosity of generations of members. We encourage you to join this proud legacy by becoming a contributing member and helping support AWF's restoration service projects, monthly environmental education presentations, and other special events.



Along with becoming a member, you can support AWF's work by purchasing one of our Valles Caldera commemorative T-shirts, designed by graphic artist and AWF board member Stephen Bohannon. It is printed on an organic cotton shirt and available in sizes S, M, L, & XL.

**Price: \$20 Shipping: \$5**

To order, mail in the form below or email your order to: [abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com](mailto:abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com)



## 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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**