

# THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque  
WILDLIFE  
Federation

conservationists since 1914

June 2022

## Preparing for the Floods that will Follow the Fires

Two of the largest fires in New Mexico's history are still burning, and will likely continue to smolder until the summer rains arrive. Those rains should quiet the flames, but they will also open the next chapter of destructive change on our landscape: post-fire flooding.

We know from recent megafires like the 2011 Las Conchas fire in the Jemez that this flooding can be even more devastating than the fires themselves. As vegetation is incinerated, it leaves behind a waxy layer on the soil, preventing the land from absorbing water. This hydrophobic effect, combined with the loss of trees and shrubs that once held and slowed water, means that rain runs rapidly off burned surfaces, gaining erosive force with its speed. One study found that, after the Las Conchas fire, soil and rock eroded 1,000 times faster in burned watersheds than in unburned watersheds nearby. The majority of that erosion occurred during the first year after the fire, tearing through sacred Santa Clara Pueblo lands and obliterating the Dixon Apple Orchard.

Now the approximately 500 square miles that have burned in the Calf Canyon-Hermit's Peak fire, and all the communities within and downstream of the fire's footprint, face similar risks.

Initial analyses by the U.S. Forest Service's Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team have found that about half of the Gallinas and Tecolote watersheds



*Flood damage after the Las Conchas fire*

sustained moderate to severe levels of burning, which in turn means a moderate to high likelihood that they will experience serious floods and debris flows during the coming monsoon season.

We are not helpless to alleviate that risk, however.

AWF intends to support the Hermit's Peak Watershed Alliance, the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute at Highlands, and other local groups as they work with landowners to put in place restoration treatments that can reduce the risk of flooding. (More information about some of these post-fire land treatment techniques are described in the Forest Service's *After Wildfire* guide.)

**If you are interested in volunteering to help landowners who have been impacted by this year's fires implement restoration projects on their land, please email Kristina at [abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com](mailto:abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com) and we will let you know about opportunities to join fellow volunteers at restoration projects organized by those local groups. These won't be full-scale AWF projects, but they will be valuable opportunities to learn about and participate in post-fire remediation work.**

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If you have land that has been directly impacted by this year's fires, the Hermit's Peak Watershed Alliance (HPWA) is beginning to organize site visits to assess damage and connect landowners with resources for restoration work. To get on HPWA's list, please email your name, phone number, email, contact information, and your location at [hpwa@hermitspeakwatersheds.org](mailto:hpwa@hermitspeakwatersheds.org). There are also legal resources available [at this link](#) to assist landowners with FEMA and insurance claims.

Living in a world altered by climate change requires community-building above all else. If you have been lucky enough to escape this year's conflagrations, please lend a hand to those who haven't. Together, we will build our knowledge, our mutual aid and support networks, and the resilience we need to survive in this painfully changing world.

*Kristina G. Fisher*  
AWF Secretary



## Action Alert: Speak Up For New Mexico Rivers by June 14!

Last month, the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) held a hearing on designating the Upper Pecos watershed as an Outstanding Natural Resource Water (ONRW), the most protective water quality designation under the Clean Water Act. There was near-unanimous public support for the proposal, and the WQCC's decision should be announced soon.



This month, on **June 14**, the WQCC will hold another hearing to consider similar protections for over 100 miles of the Upper Rio Grande, the Rio Hondo and its tributary Lake Fork, and the Jemez River Headwaters (San Antonio Creek, East Fork, Jemez River, and Rodondo Creek).

Our friends at Amigos Bravos and Conservation Voters New Mexico have drafted public comments in support of this proposal:

[Click here to read and sign onto comments from Amigos Bravos](#)

[Click here to read and sign onto comments from Conservation Voters NM](#)

## JUNE 9, 2022 MEETING: Wildfire and Climate Change in the Western U.S.

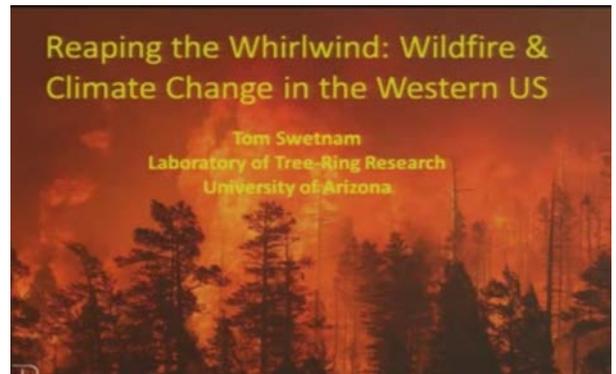
**Thursday, June 9, 2022, 7:30 pm**

**Location: Online via Zoom**

### **Reaping the Whirlwind: Wildfire and Climate Change in the Western United States**

At this month's meeting, we will watch a pre-recorded lecture from Dr. Thomas Swetnam, made available by the University of California, explaining how and why climate change is increasing the frequency of wind-driven fires like the mega-fires New Mexico is experiencing during the current fire season. Extraordinarily large crown fires have burned during recent decades in many western U.S. forests as a consequence of forest and climate changes. Wind events have played important roles in driving major runs during many of these wildfires, including the most rapid burning rates yet recorded in some forests, at more than 40,000 acres

per day, over multiple days. Dr. Swetnam provides a clear and compelling perspective on how changing atmospheric circulation patterns have impacted drought, winds and extreme fire behaviors. Although it was recorded eight years ago, the lecture paints a prescient picture of the world we are living in today. We will have time to discuss the talk as a group after the approximately 1-hour presentation.



### **Presenter Bio: Dr. Thomas W. Swetnam**

Dr. Thomas Swetnam received his bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from the University of New Mexico and subsequently received his Master's and PhD from the University of Arizona in watershed management and dendrochronology. He is the Regents' Professor Emeritus of Dendrochronology at the University of Arizona, studying disturbances of forest ecosystems across temporal and spatial scales, and he served as the Director of the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research from 2000-2015. Dr. Swetnam is currently studying disturbance and climate histories in western North America and the Central Plateau of Siberia, Russia.

### **Directions to the Online Meeting**

**To join this presentation from your computer, click this link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86303724624?pwd=NUlXSdQ5eWFQOGNsaGhPYi9tMUFrUT09>

The Meeting ID is: 863 0372 4624

The Passcode is: 072114

**To join by phone, dial either of the following numbers:**

1-253-215-8782 or 1-346-248-7799

Then enter the Meeting ID: 863 0372 4624

Then enter the Passcode: 072114

## JUNE 10-12, 2022 SERVICE PROJECT: Gutierrez Ranch

**LOCATION:** Gutierrez Family Ranch, near the Sabinoso Wilderness

**THE PROJECT:** This month, AWF will be working on the Gutierrez family ranch east of Las Vegas, NM. This ranch has been in the family of Patrick Gutierrez, whom we have worked with at the Hermit's Peak Watershed Alliance, since the 1700s. Our activities will include building rock structures to address erosion, thinning vegetation, and putting up protective fencing around a spring.

**SCHEDULE:** Friday, June 10 – Sunday, June 12

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, and lots of water!

**TO SIGN UP:** Email **Kristina at [abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com](mailto:abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com)**  
Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.  
*Please RSVP by Tuesday, June 7!*



### 2022 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

March 5 & 6.....Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge  
April 1-3.....Ft. Union Ranch  
April 22-24.....Red Canyon Reserve  
May 20-22.....Ft. Union/Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge  
June 10-12.....Gutierrez Family Ranch  
July 22-24.....Valle Vidal  
August 12-14.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM  
September 2-5.....Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns  
October 7-9.....Cebolla Canyon  
October 28-30.....Rolling Hills Ranch  
November 5.....Day project at Cedro Creek

### AWF BOARD 2022

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST



### **Help Fix Fences to Facilitate Wildlife Migration!**

**JUNE 3 & 4, Taos area**

Did you know that there are only FIVE high elevation pronghorn herds in the United States and one of them regularly migrates through northwest Taos County? The current fencing situation is devastating not only for our pronghorn herd but for elk, mule deer, and big horn sheep too! These fences contribute significantly to the mortality of our migratory wildlife.

**You can help!** Taos Soil & Water Conservation District, the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, BLM, and NM Association of Conservation Districts are hosting a two-day volunteer event on June 3rd and 4th to replace existing harmful fencing with wildlife-friendly fencing in areas most traveled by our pronghorn herd. Replacing these sections of fence will allow our pronghorn and other migratory herds safe passage to critical habitat! Volunteer for a day or two (or just part of a day)! Refreshments, gloves, tools and fencing materials will be provided. For more information or to sign up, please contact Tanya Duncan at Taos SWCD (575) 751-0584 or [tduncan@tswcd.org](mailto:tduncan@tswcd.org).

### **Water and Wildlife Management on Working Lands**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Encino, NM**

**QIVIRA COALITION**

During this workshop, participants will learn all about grazing practices for water and wildlife conservation, creek restoration, supporting local bird populations, and building water tanks and water conservation practices. The workshop and lunch are free! Lunch is being sponsored by the Ute Creek Cattle Company, with omnivorous and vegetarian options available. You can also bring your own. This field day is meant for producers, agency representatives and anyone interested in grazing to support water and wildlife. For more information and to register to participate: <https://quviracoalition.org/events/ute-creek/>

### **Soil Health Workshop**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tucumcari, NM**

**QIVIRA COALITION**

This workshop is for landowners who want to learn about soil health principles and the chemical, biological and physical characteristics of soil. The day will be spent outside focused on discussions and field demonstrations to learn about compaction, infiltration, surface cover, aggregate stability, and other soil health indicators. There is no cost to this workshop. Light breakfast, lunch, water and snacks will be provided. More workshop logistics information will be provided a week prior to the workshop. For more information and to register to participate: <https://quviracoalition.org/events/tucumcari/>

### **New Mexico Wild Launches New Wilderness Defenders Program!**

This new program will organize volunteers to provide New Mexico Wild and public land agencies with current information regarding selected locales that are often difficult to reach without a good hike. For example, volunteers will visit Wilderness Study Areas that may warrant new designations or protections. For more information and to sign up as a Wilderness Defender: <https://www.nmwild.org/wilderness-defenders-program/>

*Send your event information to: [abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com](mailto: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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**