

THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque
WILDLIFE
Federation

conservationists since 1914

March 2016

Conservation vs. Extraction on Our Public Lands

While some of the biggest fights over public lands lately have been who owns them (the federal government or states, public vs. private interests), there is also always tension over what uses should take precedence on multiple-use federal lands. This year has brought some interesting developments in that perpetual tug-of-war between conservation and extractive industries.

First, in January the Wilderness Society released a new report showing that more than 3 million acres of BLM land, including over 80,000 acres in New Mexico, are tied up in inactive oil and gas leases. Companies have filed leases to drill on these lands, never developed them, and then asked for the leases to be suspended – meaning that they do not have to pay rent to the federal government, but the BLM cannot manage those lands for any other uses. In some cases, the leases go back as far as the 1960s. If the leases were allowed to expire, rather than being indefinitely suspended, the BLM could manage those lands for conservation, recreation, or renewable energy development.

Meanwhile, on January 15, 2016, the Obama administration announced a moratorium on new coal leases on federal public lands. The move will not stop mining from moving forward on existing leases (which are anticipated to produce enough coal to supply the country's needs for the next 20 years), but it will allow for the first compre-



hensive review of the environmental and health impacts of the nation's coal mining program since the 1980s.

Finally, discussions about setting aside new wilderness and protected areas are heating up in New Mexico. A coalition of wilderness advocates is seeking to add another 78,000 acres of national forest lands to the Pecos Wilderness, increasing the size of that wilderness area by about 30%. The proposal has support from Santa Fe, San Miguel and Mora counties, as well as Nambé, Picuris and Pojoaque pueblos and the City of Santa Fe. But some residents of the village of Peñasco worry about how the new designation might affect traditional land uses.

A similar conversation is occurring around the idea of setting aside La Bajada Mesa, south of Santa Fe, as a national monument. This proposal is also supported by many local residents and environmental groups, who are concerned about recent proposals to strip mine the mesa, but some ranchers and farmers in nearby La Cienega and La Cieneguilla are concerned about possible limits on their ability to graze, harvest, and hunt on those lands.

As New Mexicans who care deeply about the fate of our public lands (and the wildlife that depends on them), we encourage you to add your voice to the ongoing conversation about how they should be managed. We'll be talking about one part of that management at this month's meeting (see page 2) – join us!

Kristina G. Fisher
AWF President

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MARCH 2016 MEETING: Oscar Simpson

Thursday, March 10, 2016, 7:30 pm
Albuquerque Friends Meeting House
1600 5th Street Northwest

Topic: Conservation & Management of New Mexico's Forests

At this month's meeting, Oscar Simpson will explain how New Mexicans can help protect wilderness areas and important wildlife habitat in our national forests.

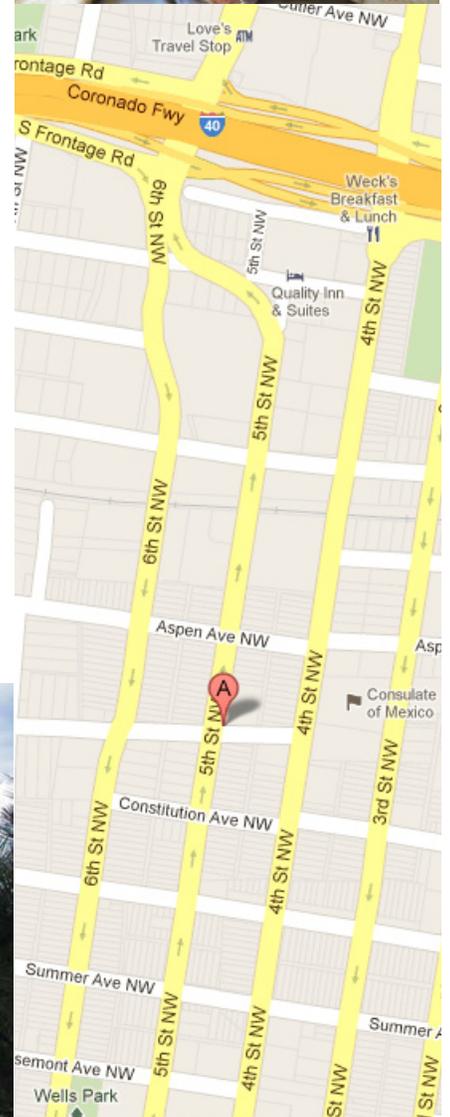
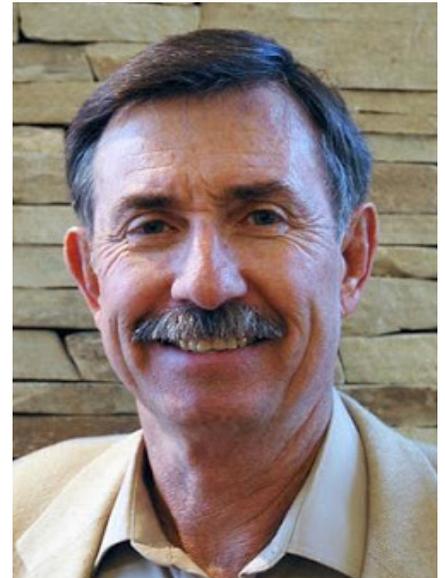
As a result of the 2012 Forest Planning Rule, the Forest Service is working to update its forest plans. Conservationists are participating in this process with the goal of securing a network of interconnected protected areas that help forests achieve ecological integrity, species diversity, sustainable recreation and protection of watersheds, wildlife corridors, rare habitats, and bird migration areas. The primary strategy is to seek protective designations for specific areas, such as wilderness or wild & scenic rivers. Oscar will discuss specific examples of protected areas being proposed in the Cibola, Carson, Santa Fe, and Gila National Forests, and how New Mexicans can become involved in this process.

Speaker Bio: Oscar Simpson

Oscar Simpson is a native New Mexican who has spent the last 20 years working on numerous conservation campaigns to preserve and protect New Mexico's majestic landscapes, wildlife & habitat. He is currently state chair of New Mexico chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, and he is a former member of the state game commission and a past president of the New Mexico Wildlife Federation.

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.



MARCH 12, 2015 SERVICE PROJECT: Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge

LOCATION: Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in the South Valley of Albuquerque

THE PROJECT: For AWF’s first volunteer project of the 2016 season, we will be partnering with our friends at the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in the South Valley of Albuquerque.

Valle de Oro was formerly a working dairy farm, and it is now one of the nation’s newest wildlife refuges. This year, in preparation for lots of habitat restoration work over the coming months and years, AWF will be helping to complete two shade structures and plant some vegetation.

SCHEDULE: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Saturday, March 12, 2016.

GEAR: For this project, you will need gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. Bring layers as it will likely start off cool and warm up towards lunch.



PROJECT FULL!

Due to overwhelming early interest, this project is at capacity. Please contact Scial at rioscial@gmail.com with any questions and we hope you will join us next month at Cebolla Canyon!

2016 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

- March 12.....Day project at Valle de Oro
- April 15-17.....Cebolla Canyon near Grants, NM
- May 20-22.....Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
- June 17-19.....Valles Caldera I
- July 22-24.....Valles Caldera II
- August 19-21.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
- September 9-11.....Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
- October 8.....Day project on Glorieta Mesa
- October 15.....Day project in the Sandia Mountains

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Thanks to our renewed and lifetime members!

Your dues make AWF's volunteer restoration projects and monthly educational presentations possible.
If you haven't yet renewed your membership for 2016, it's not too late!
Just complete the membership form on the last page of this newsletter
or on our website (<http://abq.nmwildlife.org/>).

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Bill Zeedyk & Mary Maulsby

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST



La Mancha Wetland Restoration Volunteer Work Weekend

MARCH 5-6, 2016

SOUTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER, Mesilla, NM

The La Mancha wetland restoration project is nearing completion! Now volunteers are needed to help plant native trees and wetland plants; remove salt cedar and other invasive plants; install bat houses; install piezometers (simple groundwater monitoring wells); install vehicle barriers; and lay out trails. Join the Southwest Environmental Center for a work and camping weekend.

For more information: <http://www.wildmesquite.org/news/plant-trees-swec-march-5th-and-6th/021816>

Annual Cutthroat Trout Restocking: Volunteers Needed!

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH, Questa, NM

Volunteers are needed to pack and stock fingerling Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout down into the Rio Grande Gorge. This year, Seven Spring State Fish Hatchery has about 2,000 lively native trout ready for a new home. Volunteers will pack 2-4 gallons of water with 50-150 trout in plastic bags down one of the many Wild River trails near Questa, NM. For more information, please contact NMGF at Laurence.Dalessandro@state.nm.us.

On Keeping Wild BLM Lands Wild:

Protecting New Mexico's Wild Lands through the BLM's Planning Process

SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016, 11:00-11:45 a.m.

Collected Works Bookstore, 202 Galisteo Street, Santa Fe

Joelle Marier, BLM Grassroots Organizer with the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance will give a talk about the approximately 13.5 million surface acres of public land that is managed by the BLM in New Mexico. While these lands can be managed for multiple uses, many remain wild despite increasing pressure for extractive uses and other development. The talk will explain how these lands can be protected through the Bureau of Land Management planning process and highlight some key areas the Alliance is working to protect.

For more information: <http://www.journeysantafe.com/sundayprograms0316.php#13>

Planting for Pollinators

MAY 6-8, 2016

SKY ISLAND ALLIANCE, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument

Sky Island Alliance is teaming up with the National Park Service and Borderlands Restoration to restore a recently-burned slope near the main ruin loop at the Monument. Volunteers will be planting native pollinator plants like milkweeds. The slope sits just above the riparian zone of the scenic Gila River and these efforts are essential to make sure these fragile soils are not lost via erosion. All tools will be provided by Sky Island Alliance. We'll be bending, digging, and hauling materials on uneven surfaces and participants need to be prepared to get dirty.

For more info: <http://www.skyislandalliance.org/event/planting-for-pollinators-at-gila-cliff-dwellings-nm/>



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

2016 POST-LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

In last month's Pine Cone, we included a list of wildlife-related legislation that had been introduced during the 2016 legislative session. That session concluded on February 18, 2016, and here is a summary of what happened to those bills:

House Bill 107, Representative Strickler

Senate Bill 34, Senator Kernan

Reduces taxes on certain oil and gas wells to incentivize owners to keep them in production.

Died due to lack of funds.

House Bill 111

Representative Townsend

Excludes above-ground pesticide tanks used for crop-dusting from the Hazardous Waste Act and the Ground Water Protection Act.

Passed the House 38-30, died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

House Bill 140

Representative Larrañaga

Directs the PRC to promote natural gas infrastructure expansion.

Died in the House Appropriations Committee.

House Bill 149

Representative Gomez

Compensates landowners for any property damage caused by big game.

Died in the House Appropriations Committee.

House Joint Memorial 3, Representative Fajardo

Senate Joint Memorial 4, Senator M. Sanchez

Declares a week in April "Environmental Education Week" to encourage outdoor learning experiences and studies the feasibility of a grant program to support environmental education.

House version passed both chambers unanimously.

House Memorial 33

Representative Rehm

Requests Congress to design and build an aqueduct from the Mississippi River to New Mexico.

Passed the House Agriculture, Water & Wildlife Committee, died in the House Government, Elections & Indian Affairs Committee.

Senate Bill 72

Senator Ingle

Exempts existing agricultural operations from nuisance lawsuits ("right to farm").

Passed both the Senate and House, now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Senate Bill 110

Senator Cisneros

Expands the potential funding and eligible uses of the Forest Land Protection Revolving Loan Fund.

Passed both the Senate and House, now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Senate Bill 128

Senator Shendo

Enacts the Interstate Compact for the Prevention and Control of Forest Fires.

Passed both the Senate and House, now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Senate Bill 173

Senator Cisneros

Makes New Mexico a member of the Interstate Mining Compact Commission.

Passed both the Senate and House, now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Senate Bill 223, Senator Griggs

House Bill 289, Representative Townsend

Enacts the Geothermal Resources Development Act.

Passed both the Senate and House, now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Senate Bill 224

Senator Cisneros

Creates the Advanced Mapping Fund to support the development of the Rio Grande Trail.

Passed both the Senate and House, now awaiting the Governor's signature.

Senate Memorial 11

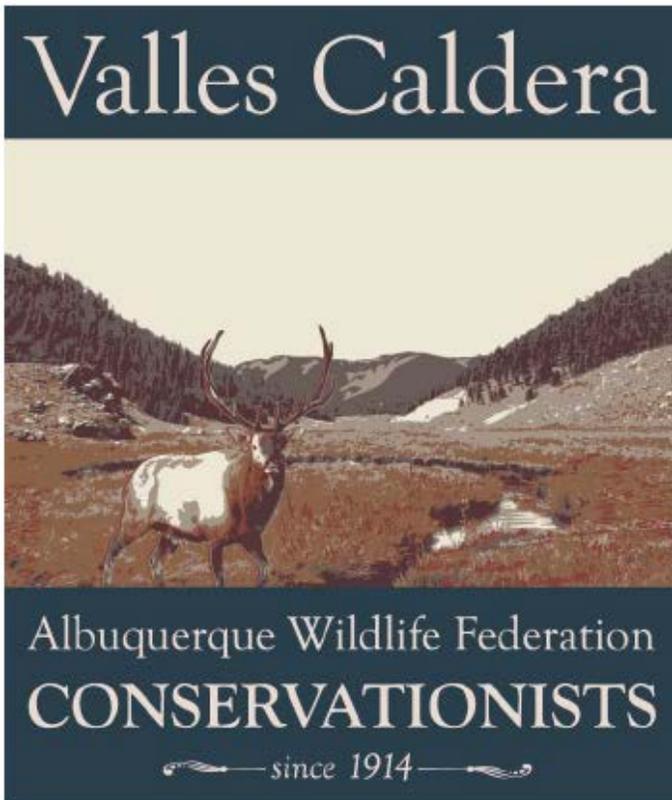
Senator Soules

Honoring the legacy of public lands in New Mexico.

Passed unanimously.

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.

Get one while they last - supplies are limited!

Price: \$20 Shipping: \$5

To order, mail in the form below or email your order to: 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: \$ _____