

THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque
WILDLIFE
Federation

conservationists since 1914

September 2014

A Voice for Wildlife and Wild Lands

In April 1916, Aldo Leopold published the second edition of the *Pine Cone*. In the four months between the first and second newsletters, the platform of principles for AWF and the other New Mexico game protective associations had grown from six items to ten, and one of the new additions was the simple statement: “We are not in politics.”

This declaration did not mean the organization was politically disengaged. Far from it, since the same newsletter called on game protective association members to urge their senators to support the federal Migratory Bird Treaty and the establishment of a system of game refuges, among other things.

By stating that they were “not in politics,” AWF’s founders meant that they were not interested in ideology or partisanship. They vocally opposed the appointment of officials like state Game Commissioner based on political favoritism rather than merit, and called for the selection of the most qualified candidates, rather than the most politically connected. Fundamentally, the early members of AWF believed that public policies should be focused on what was best for wild animals and the habitat they depend on—not on what was most politically expedient.

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SENATORS, STAND UP FOR THE CANADIAN TREATY!

THE GREATEST MOVE IN YEARS ABOUT TO GO
THROUGH UNLESS DEFEATED BY
SPRING SHOOTERS.

A special wire to the PINE CONE states that the Canadian treaty for the protection of migratory birds will come up in the Senate very soon.

This treaty will bind Canada to give the birds the same protection as we do, and will obviously be of tremendous benefit to both countries.

It will also settle forever the constitutionality of our Migratory Bird Law.

It is hard to believe, but the spring shooters announced their opposition to this treaty in February, 1914. We earnestly hope they have changed their minds since. They have loudly complained against the slaughter of ducks in Canada. Here is their chance to stop it. Canada is willing.

In the face of common opportunity, as in the face of common danger, let all sportsmen, all senators, all citizens, pull together for decent protection of American migratory game from THE GULF TO THE ARCTIC CIRCLE!

Guided by this philosophy, AWF became a strong voice in favor of policies that protect wildlife and habitat, including helping to draft the legislation that created the New Mexico Game Commission. This advocacy work has continued through the decades, with AWF regularly weighing in on state and federal proposals for managing land and wildlife in New Mexico.

In the past year, AWF has joined coalitions of conservation and sportsmen’s groups opposing the proposed diversion of the wild Gila River and the thoughtless development of the Rio Grande bosque. On pages 5-6 of this newsletter, we provide an update on the Mexican gray wolf recovery plan, and we hope you will take advantage of an opportunity to comment on that proposal between now and September 23.

Last month AWF also wrote to the BLM in support of a

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SEPTEMBER 2014 EDUCATIONAL SPEAKER: Christopher Rustay

Thursday, September 11, 2014, 7:30 pm
Albuquerque Friends Meeting House
1600 5th Street Northwest

Topic:

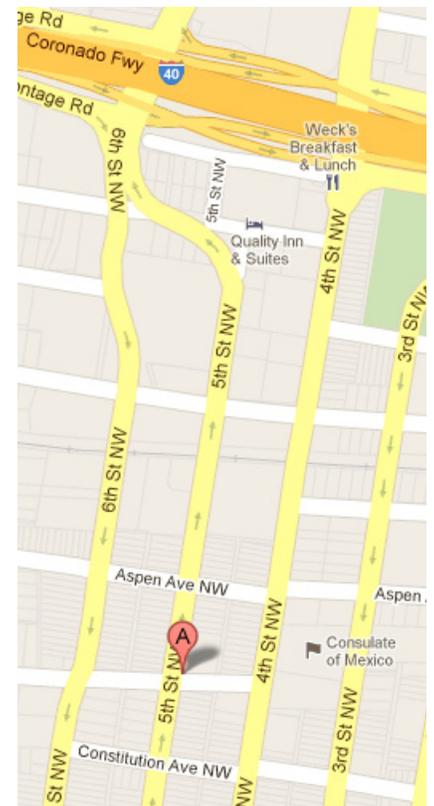
Christopher will discuss the work of the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) to conserve the playas, prairies, and landscapes of the western Great Plains through partnerships for the benefit of birds, other wildlife, and people. PLJV is active in New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Speaker Bio:

Christopher Rustay joined the Playa Lakes Joint Venture in January 2003 and currently serves as the Conservation Delivery Leader. Previous roles have included the New Mexico Partners in Flight coordinator from 1999-2002, where he compiled and wrote the first New Mexico Flight Plan and developed partnerships and habitat projects throughout the state. While in New Mexico, he also worked for Hawks Aloft as their songbird coordinator, organizing bird surveys for agencies such as the USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Christopher has mapped nesting raptors and conducted raptor counts at potential wind power generation sites in Texas, and he has conducted more than 50 USGS Breeding Bird Surveys in New Mexico since 1988. Christopher has been involved with Audubon New Mexico since 1986. He has served as a member of the New Mexico Bird Records Committee and on the board of the New Mexico Ornithological Society.

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.



SEPTEMBER 26-28, 2014 SERVICE PROJECT: Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge

LOCATION: Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge near Las Vegas, NM

THE PROJECT: This September, AWF volunteers have a unique opportunity to camp and work inside the Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge. This 4,200-acre refuge was formerly the Wind River Ranch, owned and managed by the Thaw Charitable Trust, which donated it to the public in 2012. The refuge aims to protect and restore riparian and grassland habitat for the benefit of species including long-billed curlew, loggerhead shrike, burrowing owl, mountain plover, Southwestern willow flycatcher, a number of aquatic species, and migratory grassland and woodland birds. AWF volunteers participated in restoration activities on the ranch before it became a national wildlife refuge, and we are excited to return, see how our structures have performed, and work to repair and enhance them.

SCHEDULE: Friday, September 26 – Sunday, September 28

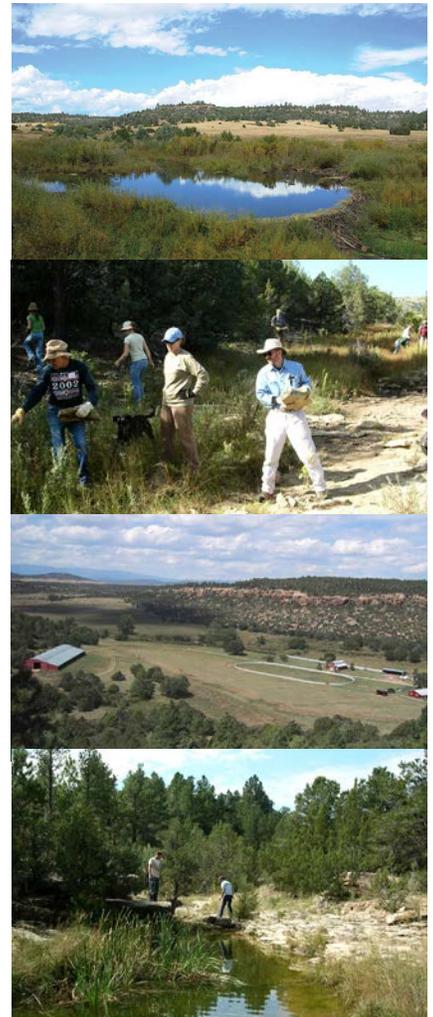
GEAR: Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping. For the work, don't forget gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. Warm clothes for the evenings and plenty of water are essential.

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 or 505-480-2906.

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



2014 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

March 22.....Day project at Los Padillas Wildlife Sanctuary
April 25-27.....Cebolla Canyon near Grants, NM
May 16-18.....Zuni Mountains near Gallup, NM
May 30-June 1.....Valles Caldera I
June 27-29.....Glorieta Mesa near Santa Fe, NM
July 19.....AWF 100th Birthday Celebration!
Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge, Albuquerque
July 25-27.....Valles Caldera II
August 22-24.....Valles Caldera III
September 26-28...Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge
October 18.....Day project in the Sandia Mountains

AWF BOARD 2014

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Bill Zeedyk

RECAP OF AUGUST 22-24, 2014 RESTORATION SERVICE PROJECT

Thanks, Volunteers!

**Participants in AWF's
August 2014 Service Project:**

- Steve McCool Bain
- Dan Bastion
- Stephen Bohannon
- Mark Bundy
- Phil Carter
- Scott Compton
- Rodney Conant
- Dale Counce
- Jim Counce
- Darlene Crane
- Jack Crane
- Jim Davis
- Hunter Earl
- Kevin Earl
- Kristina G. Fisher
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- Liz Rose
- Toby Rosenblatt
- Peter Rothfeld
- Kevin Schaus
- Marilynn Szydlowski
- Joe Thompson
- Lois Thompson
- Bob Tilley
- Kristin Van Fleet

AWF volunteers returned to Valles Caldera in late August, camping at the historic San Antonio Cabin and waking in a remarkable fog bank Saturday morning! The fog soon gave way to sunshine and a perfect day for restoration work in this uniquely beautiful landscape.



We partnered with Los Amigos de Valles Caldera and volunteers from the National Wild Turkey Federation to construct two large exclosures to protect sensitive wetland areas on the slopes leading to San Antonio Creek. Within those exclosures, volunteers built numerous sod dams to plug gullies, create pools, and allow water to spread across the meadows rather than quickly running off. It was gratifying to see our work yield measurable results by the end of the afternoon!



See lots more photos of this and other restoration projects at: abq.nmwildlife.org!

UPDATE ON MEXICAN GRAY WOLF RECOVERY

By Dave Parsons

Former Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

About 35 years ago the Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*, a.k.a. the Lobo) came within seven animals of going extinct. Had it not been for the 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA), the species surely would have gone extinct. The Mexican wolf was listed as an endangered species in 1976 after it had been exterminated from the Southwestern US by our federal government. A few remained in the wild in Mexico, but they were being rapidly eradicated with the help of poisons supplied by the U.S.

After its listing as an endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) hired a trapper to live-capture remaining wolves. He caught five, which were placed in breeding facilities and eventually bred with a few other Mexican wolves already captive. Mexican wolves went extinct in Mexico in the early 1980s. Their howls could no longer be heard anywhere in the wild, only emanating from their cages.

The breeding program has successfully produced a captive population of about 300 Mexican wolves. Following a lengthy process of planning and public involvement, releases of captive Mexican wolves back into the wild began in 1998.

As you might expect, the reintroduction was extremely controversial, and the reintroduction plan was shot through with political considerations to appease various opponents and address potential conflicts, especially livestock depredation, with a special designation and regulations allowing the removal of wolves for various behaviors. In addition, releases were only allowed in a portion of the Apache National Forest in eastern Arizona and wolves were only allowed to occupy the Apache and Gila National Forests. Wolves that attempt to set up territories outside those boundaries are trapped and returned, either to the wild or to captivity.

The reintroduced population was designated a “nonessential experimental” population under Section 10(j) of the ESA. That designation can only be used if the Secretary of the Interior determines that a reintroduction under that designation will “further the conservation” of the species. What this means is that various management measures to resolve conflicts can only be applied to the extent that the



population still grows and makes steady progress toward recovery goals set forth in an approved Recovery Plan.

In actual practice, USFWS lost sight of its “duty to conserve” Mexican wolves, delegated management authority to state game and fish departments, and the wild population plummeted by 24% from 2003-2009. A lawsuit filed by conservation groups reversed that trend and the wild population has slowly increased to 83 at last count—still short of the initial objective after 16 years.

Today USFWS is proposing to replace the 1998 regulations for the wild population of Mexican wolves living in the Apache and Gila National Forests. Some changes will help, such as expanding the area in which Mexican wolves will be allowed to live to include all suitable habitats in Arizona and New Mexico between Interstate 40 and the border with Mexico. On the downside, the USFWS is proposing more liberal provisions for killing or permanently removing wolves, delegation of management authority to states and other agencies, and has not formally affirmed its “duty to conserve” through a specific provision in the rule. This is a recipe for history to repeat itself and for recovery of Mexican wolves to again falter.

Public comments are being solicited on this proposal through September 23. This is our last opportunity to provide constructive input for consideration by USFWS, as the next step in the process is a final decision. If we don't ask for what our Lobos need, they will not likely survive.

TAKE ACTION!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service invites your comments on the proposal for Mexican gray wolf management before the September 23, 2014 deadline.

Comments may be mailed to:

Public Comments Processing
Attn: FWS-R2-ES-2013-0056
Division of Policy and Directives Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters
MS: BPHC, 5275
Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

Or you may submit your comments electronically at:

<http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=FWS-R2-ES-2013-0056-6056>

You can view the Proposed Rule and its supporting Draft Environmental Impact Statement at:

http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/Mexican_Wolf_Proposed_10j_Revision-July_25_2014-17587.pdf
http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/Mexican_Wolf_DEIS_July_2014.pdf

Below are some suggested talking points. More information can be found online at:

<http://www.mexicanwolves.org/index.php/news/1278/51/Act-Now-US-Fish-and-Wildlife-Service-Proposes-to-Doom-Mexican-Wolves>

SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

- 1) The agency proposals include an expansion of allowable “take” (reasons for removal of wolves from the wild). The Mexican wolf is a critically endangered species and allowable take must be restricted further, not expanded, for wolves to survive and thrive in the wild.
- 2) Proposals also maintain arbitrary boundaries on the wolves’ range. Mexican wolves must be allowed to return to the Grand Canyon region and southern Colorado to achieve true recovery. The removal of wolves who venture outside arbitrary boundaries is traumatic and impedes wolves’ natural social structure.
- 3) Direct releases of wolves into the wild must occur in New Mexico as well as Arizona. Currently, releasing wolves solely in eastern Arizona is severely hindering recovery of the species.
- 4) Mexican wolves must be listed as “essential” by USFWS. The current designation as “nonessential” is contrary to scientific management as well as our heritage as New Mexicans and Westerners.
- 5) USFWS must stop stalling on a new recovery plan for Mexican wolves, which has not been updated since 1982.

You may also want to contact your Senators and ask them to influence USFWS to make the changes above to improve Mexican wolf recovery. New Mexico Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich may be reached at:

Senator Tom Udall: ABQ: (505) 346-6791 * Santa Fe: (505) 988-6511

Senator Martin Heinrich: ABQ: (505) 346-6601 * Santa Fe: (505) 988-6647



UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

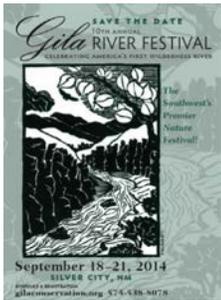
Gila Wilderness Inventory

SEPTEMBER 13-14, 2014

NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE, Gila Wilderness

In honor of the 90th anniversary of America's first wilderness, NMWA is hosting a series of workshops to train citizens on how to conduct wilderness inventories in the Gila National Forest, as well as how to conduct citizen monitoring in wilderness areas. In this two-day workshop, participants will receive detailed training and spend a full day conducting fieldwork in the Gila National Forest.

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



10th Annual Gila River Festival

SEPTEMBER 18-21, 2014

GILA CONSERVATION COALITION, Silver City

The Gila River Festival attracts an audience of nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts eager to learn about and experience the Gila's natural wonders. Among other attractions, the festival features a variety of expert-guided field trips in the Gila National Forest and along the Gila River and a keynote talk by author and conservationist Dave Foreman.

More info: http://www.gilaconservation.org/wp/?page_id=1004

Call for Volunteers! Assist with the Valles Caldera's Fall Forage Study

SEPTEMBER 23-27, 2014

Valles Caldera National Preserve

The Plant Ecology crew is seeking volunteers to help with the Fall Forage Utilization Study on the Preserve. The study measures biomass availability for livestock, elk and other grazing animals. The data collected will be combined with current and predicted climatological data to determine the grazing capacity of the Preserve next year. Volunteers can sign up for one or all four scheduled sampling days which will run from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with halfhour lunch breaks. For more information contact Martina Suazo at: msuazo@vallescaldera.gov



Celebrate the Second Birthday of the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2014, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, Albuquerque

Come celebrate the second birthday of the Valle de Oro with food vendors, live music, tours, booths from partner organizations, games and activities, and FREE cake and ice cream!

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/819753564735933/>

Wilderness 50: A Conference Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act

OCTOBER 15-19, 2014, Albuquerque

The National Wilderness Conference will be filled with diverse plenary sessions, presentations, panels, exhibits, field learning, and skill development workshops, all culminating in the public, outdoor 'Get Wild' Festival.

More information: <http://www.wilderness50th.org/conference.php>

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

MORE UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Participate in Next Year's Tamarisk Coalition Conference!

**Tamarisk Coalition's 12th Annual Conference: Advancing Riparian Restoration in the West
February 10-12, 2015, Albuquerque, NM**

Now accepting abstracts, exhibitors, and sponsors

Despite its name, the Tamarisk Coalition's 12th Annual Conference is not just about tamarisk... Come learn about the latest advancements, including riparian restoration case studies, success stories, regional riparian management initiatives, and the challenges of funding, planning, and implementing riparian restoration, as well as hearing presentations on novel tools, techniques, and research. Through concurrent sessions, panels, Q&A, and field trips, you will discover new information about wildlife and habitat, biological control, biomass removal/use, native plants, streambank bioengineering, and more.

Abstract Details:

Individuals interested in submitting an abstract for an oral and/or poster presentation to the 2015 Advancing Riparian Restoration in the West Conference will need to send an abstract via email to Cara Kukuraitis at Ckukuraitis@tamariskcoalition.org.

Abstracts must be submitted no later than October 1, 2014 to be considered.

Please see our website for abstract submission and other conference information:

<http://www.tamariskcoalition.org/about-us/events/2015-conference>



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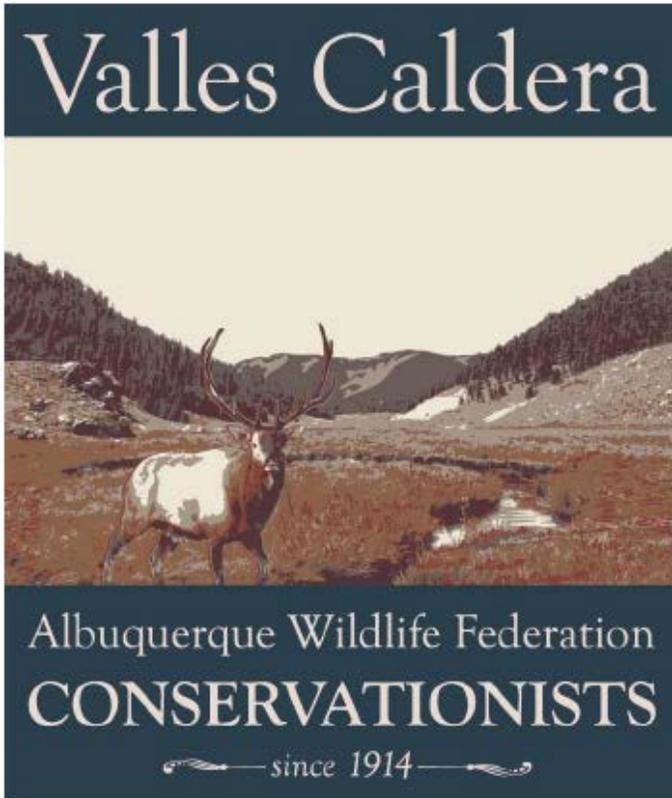
new proposal to strengthen and expand the enclosure protecting the Cebolla Canyon wetland area from overgrazing. AWF volunteers have worked to restore this area for many years, and we can attest that an improved enclosure is badly needed in order to allow our restoration efforts to have their intended effect.

AWF is proud to continue its legacy of actively advocating for New Mexico's wildlife. Through this newsletter, our website, and our monthly meetings, we hope to keep you informed about our actions and encourage you to join us in being a voice for New Mexico's wildlife and wild lands.

*Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Vice-President*

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

The Albuquerque Wildlife Federation has survived and thrived for a full century thanks to the dedication and generosity of generations of members who responded to the call to contribute. We encourage you to join this proud legacy by becoming a contributing member and helping support AWF's restoration service projects, monthly conservation education presentations, and this year's special 100th anniversary 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: \$25 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: \$ _____