THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation

Albuquerque WILDLIFE Federation
conservationists since 1914

September 2019

We Are Still Learning to Think Like Mountains

Over the past few months, an old battle has flared anew about how to manage New Mexico's wildlife.

In the very first edition of the *Pine Cone*, in December 1915, AWF's founder Aldo Leopold wrote a column titled "The Varmint Question," arguing that we needed to kill off more predators like wolves and mountain lions in New Mexico so that hunters would have more game animals like deer to hunt.

But by the time he authored his seminal essay, *Thinking like a Mountain*, in 1944, Leopold had changed his thinking. He wrote that after seeing "the fierce green fire die" in the eyes of a wolf he had killed, he began to realize that "just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer," because the wolves keep the deer from denuding the mountain of all of its vegetation.

Seventy-five years later, the debate over how to manage predators on our landscapes continues.

In late June, the Grant County Commission voted to renew its decades-long contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to control predators like coyotes and mountain lions – but without the use of lethal leg-hold traps and exploding M44 cyanide canisters, both of which kill many non-targeted species. Two weeks later, after pressure from the USDA and the

ranching community, the commission brought the issue back up for reconsideration and one commissioner changed his vote, allowing the continued use of both lethal methods.

Meanwhile in Doña Ana County, the Southwest Environmental Center waged a vigorous effort to end lethal predator control in that county. In April, the Doña Ana County Commission voted to prohibit lethal methods of predator control. Then, under pressure from the USDA, the commission changed its policy to permit the use of lethal methods after the agency had made at least two attempts to resolve the conflict with non-lethal methods. The USDA objected and threatened to withhold federal funds from the county, so in mid-August, the commission gave in and allowed lethal predator control to continue with essentially no restrictions.

Progress toward improving the way we treat our wildlife is slow and jagged, with many steps backward for every step forward. But the hard work of citizens who are raising these issues into the light and questioning what we have been doing for so long, matters deeply. Those who care about wildlife will keep pressing the case with local and national elected officials until more of our leaders learn to think like mountains.

Kristina G. Fisher
AWF President

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Action Alerts: Protect the Endangered Species Act & Comment on Forest Planning

ACTION 1: PROTECT THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Last August, we reported in this newsletter that efforts were underway to undermine the Endangered Species Act, and we told you we would let you know how to get involved.

Last month, the draft regulation to weaken the ESA were released, and they are now open for public comment. Many environmental groups have made it easy for you to weigh in: here are draft comments you can submit through the **Center for Biological Diversity** or **Wilderness Watch**.

ACTION 2: COMMENT ON FOREST PLANS

Every 20-30 years, the Forest Service completes major updates of its forest management plans. Draft plans have recently been completed for the Cibola National Forest, the Carson National Forest, and the Santa Fe National Forest. Now we have a chance to weigh in with our comments on these plans!

New Mexico Wild has provided draft comments you can submit for each forest plan:

Carson National Forest
Cibola National Forest
Santa Fe National Forest

Amigos Bravos has also provided draft comments on the Carson National Forest which include support for special protection for "wetland jewels" like Midnight Meadows.

SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2019 PROJECT: Cebolla Canyon

LOCATION: Cebolla Canyon in the El Malpais National Conservation Area, south of Grants, NM

THE PROJECT: This project will build on work that AWF volunteers have completed at this site over the past nineteen years. Our work will focus on hand-building rock structures to restore and expand a spring-fed wetland.

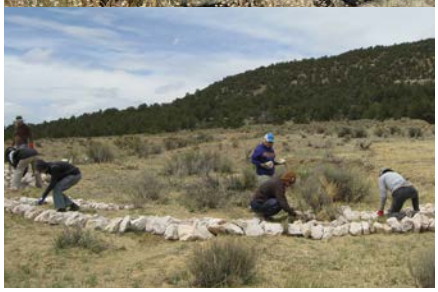
SCHEDULE:
Friday, September 20 - Sunday, September 22

Volunteers are always 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, including warm clothes for the chilly evenings. For the work, don't forget gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

FOOD: AWF will provide breakfast burritos on Saturday morning and bison or veggie burgers on Saturday evening. **Please bring something to share for the Saturday potluck dinner**, along with your own lunches, Friday dinner, and Sunday breakfast. Plenty of water is also essential!

TO SIGN UP: Contact Scial at rioscial@gmail.com or 505-480-2906.
Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.



2019 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

March 2.....Day project at Valle de Oro
March 15-17.....Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
April 19-21.....Wolf Creek, Ft. Union, NM
May 17-19.....Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
June 7-9.....Valles Caldera
July 19-21.....Valle Vidal
August 16-18.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
Aug 30-Sept 1.....Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
September 20-22.....Cebolla Canyon near Grants, NM
October 19.....Day project at Cedro Creek

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Phil Carter
Michael "Scial" Scialdone
Bob Tilley
Kristin Van Fleet
Bill Zeedyk - Director Emeritus

RECAP OF AUGUST 16-18, 2019 MIDNIGHT MEADOWS PROJECT

Thanks, Volunteers!

Betty Bastai
Braden Belliveau
Joshua Berman
Phil Carter
Rachel Conn
Silas Conn
Wendy Cox
Kristina G. Fisher
Roderick Flores
Frances Foma
Lucy Foma
Okwen Foma
Marie Gonzales
Gillian Green
Pete Haraden
Jock Jacober
Jean Kenin
Steve Kenin
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Catch Sediment
Tara Sieber
Cody Smith
Marilynn Szydlowski
Hal Thureson
Bob Tilley
Art Vollmer
Cameron Weber
Daryl Woolems
Ben Wright

Nearly 40 volunteers of all ages came out to participate in last month's project organized by AWF and Amigos Bravos at Midnight Meadows, high in the Carson National Forest.

Bitter Creek, which runs through Midnight Meadows, is one of several "wetland jewels" identified by Amigos Bravos. These wetland jewels play key roles in protecting water quality, streamflow, and fish habitat in the larger rivers that they feed. In past years, we have built three large exclosures to keep cattle and ATVs out of these sensitive wetlands.

This year, we built a series of rock structures in Bitter Creek inside these protective exclosures. These rock structures will prevent the stream from further downcutting and raise the streambed to push more water out onto the meadows. Our long-term goal is to restore the healthy functioning of these spongy wetlands, so that they can effectively store and slowly release each year's snowmelt , providing cool, fresh water to the rivers downstream.

RECAP OF AUG 30-SEPT 1, 2019 LIMESTONE CANYON PROJECT

Thanks, Volunteers!

Betty Bastai
Braden Belliveau
Stephen Bohannon
Peter Callen
Phil Carter
Paul Cheng
Candace Duran
Russ Duran
Kristina G. Fisher
F. Fistdandantales
Jamie Head
Laurie Marnell
Kaitlyn Meissner
Rachel Moore
Toby Rosenblatt
M. Scialdone
Marilynn Szydlowski
Hamish Thomson
Bob Tilley
Kristin Van Fleet
Cameron Weber

This was AWF's 12th year of organizing restoration projects in Limestone Canyon, and the difference our work has made is obvious and inspiring: when we began, Limestone Creek had eroded far below the meadows that were its old floodplain, and the creekbed consisted of large rocks and cobble, with no soil for vegetation to grow. Over the years, AWF volunteers built dozens of one-rock dams, baffles, and other restoration structures designed to slow the flow of water, induce meanders, raise the streambed, and reconnect the water with its old floodplain.

This year, we noted how much of the streambed has vegetation growing all the way across it, rooted in the soil that our structures have captured. The stream is much higher throughout the sections where we have worked, so that when it is flowing, the waters can reach their old floodplain. We noticed the presence of many more water-loving plant species, like horsetail (*Equisetum*), and the young narrowleaf cottonwoods that first appeared several years into our work have continued to grow and spread.

During this year's project, we repaired and added rock layers to old structures in Limestone Canyon and its tributary Fisher Canyon and did some maintenance on the exclosures we have built around several of the cottonwood saplings. We are already looking forward to returning next year to continue our restoration work in this special place.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Global Climate Strike

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

On September 20th, millions of adults across the world will walk out of workplaces & homes to join young climate strikers on the streets to demand an end to the age of fossil fuels. Events are planned in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, as well as many other communities around the world.

For more infomation on the Albuquerque event: https://www.facebook.com/events/2331438687173308/
For more information on the Santa Fe event: https://www.facebook.com/events/365948240937807/

15th Annual Gila River Festival

SEPTEMBER 19-22, 2019

GILA CONSERVATION COALITION

The Gila Conservation Coalition hosts the 15th annual Gila River Festiva, featuring field trips, speakers, and events for the whole family.
For more info: https://www.gilariverfestival.org/

Species in Peril Along the Rio Grande

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 6:00 p.m.

516 ARTS, Albuquerque

516 ARTS and partners present Species in Peril Along the Rio Grande, an exhibition and series of regional public programs responding to the global extinction crisis. For more info:
http://516arts.org/exhibitions/species-in-peril-along-the-rio-grande-contemporary-artists-respond

Tree Planting in Bandelier National Monument

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 & SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

PAJARITO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

On September 28 and 29, staff from Bandelier, the US Geological Survey, New Mexico State University, and volunteers will plant over 18,000 Ponderosa and Douglas Fir seedlings in areas of the park affected by the Las Conchas fire of 2011. For more info: https://peecnature.org/events/details/?id=32445

OUTDOOR ECONOMICS CONFERENCE
NEW MEXICO

Outdoor Economics Conference

OCTOBER 3-4, 2019, Las Cruces

Join the New Mexico Outdoor Economics Conference to help advance economic development strategies and opportunities connected to protected public lands. For more info: https://outdooreconomicsnm.com/

New Mexico Wildlife Center Open House

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

NEW MEXICO WILDLIFE CENTER, 19 Wheat Street, Espanola, New Mexico 87532

Both open house days include live ambassador animal demonstrations, family friendly activities, refreshments and more! For more info: https://www.facebook.com/events/2363695910511237/

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: $_____