New Mexico Commits to Protecting 30% of Our Lands by 2030

“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” – Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

On August 25, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed an executive order committing New Mexico to conserving at least 30% of our lands by 2030, with an additional 20% of lands designated as climate stabilization areas.

This executive order is part of a global effort to protect at least 30% of the world’s land and 30% of its ocean areas by 2030. The goal is to address both catastrophic climate change and the accelerating extinction crisis, both of which are driven in large part by the human development and destruction of natural ecosystems.

In 2020, former New Mexico Senator Tom Udall introduced a Senate resolution on 30 x 30, explaining that “the scientific community, including scientists like E.O. Wilson, say that we need to protect half the planet to save the whole.”

President Biden signed an executive order pledging the U.S. to the 30 x 30 initiative in January of this year. New Mexico is only the third state to make a similar commitment, following California and Nevada. Our executive order convenes a committee of state agencies to come together to support and implement programs to conserve, protect, and enhance lands across the state, reporting quarterly on their progress.

The federal government manages just over one-third of New Mexico’s land, and the State Land Office manages another 12%. Yet much of that public land is already developed for oil, gas, mining, or other human uses. Only about 6% of the state’s public land is currently shielded from development with protections like wilderness status. Achieving the ambitious goal of 30 x 30 will require both expanding the protected areas of public lands, and partnering with private landowners to conserve areas important for wildlife migration, carbon sequestration, and watershed protection.

Conserving 30 x 30 will also require the work of organizations like AWF, which work to restore degraded landscapes for the benefit of wildlife, climate, and future generations. When we bring back lost wetlands, their lush vegetation captures carbon, sustains topsoil, stores water from extreme precipitation events, and supports a diverse array of wildlife.

New Mexico’s 30 x 30 Executive Order is merely a first step, but it is an important recognition that the land we live on is indeed a community to which we all belong, and we owe it to our fellow members of this community to make space for them to live and roam and thrive.
SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2021 SERVICE PROJECT: Rio en Medio

LOCATION: Rio en Medio watershed in the Santa Fe National Forest

THE PROJECT: Last year, the 4,000-acre Medio fire burned this section of the forest, creating the risk of eroding sediment that could damage the Rio en Medio and the wildlife habitat it provides, as well as threatening communities downstream. AWF volunteers will hand-build rock restoration structures to protect the stream and improve habitat after the fire. We are excited to be working at this new location and learning how to adapt our restoration techniques to post-fire remediation work!

SCHEDULE: Friday, September 17 – Sunday, September 19
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 or muddy. Rain gear, 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 as part of a potluck meal 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 once you sign up.

Click here to review AWF’s current COVID-19 safety protocols.

2021 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

April 23-25.................Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
May 14-16..................Ft. Union Ranch
June 4-6.....................Ft. Union Ranch
July 16-18....................Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
August 13-15.............Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
August 27-29.............Valle Vidal
September 17-19........Rio en Medio, near Santa Fe, NM
October 22-24..............Martinez Ranch, near Anton Chico
October 30...............Day project at Cedro Creek

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RECAP OF AUGUST 13-15 PROJECT: MIDNIGHT MEADOWS

It was wonderful to partner once again with our friends at Amigos Bravos and continue the work of restoring the wetland gem of Bitter Creek, which winds through Midnight Meadows high in the Carson National Forest.

AWF and Amigos Bravos volunteers built and repaired a series of rock structures to help halt erosion in the creek and store more water in the meadow. Volunteers also shored up the fence exclosures designed to keep cattle out of the sensitive wetland areas. After the work wrapped up on Saturday afternoon, many volunteers went mushroom foraging, and some of their harvest was included in the evening’s delicious potluck dinner. Next year, we plan to continue the work into a new section of the creek and meadowlands.

See lots more photos of AWF’s restoration projects at: abq.nmwildlife.org!
RECAP OF AUGUST 27-29 RESTORATION PROJECT: VALLE VIDAL

One of the first places AWF engaged in restoration work was Valle Vidal, in far northern New Mexico, where we began organizing these projects about four decades ago. Last month, we returned to Ring Place Meadow, on the east side of Valle Vidal, where we have been working for the past few years to restore a 73-acre wetland. Our rock structures have spread water across broad sections of the meadow, and we have worked with the Forest Service to build targeted exclosure fences to protect wetland vegetation from over-grazing.

This weekend, we continued that work, completing a series of new and re-built rock structures and putting up posts for a new exclosure at the upper end of the meadow. Volunteers also removed some invasive musk thistle, making room for more native plants. A lovely monsoon storm gave us a break in the early afternoon, and the sunsets were spectacular. We look forward to continuing AWF’s legacy of restoration in this special place in future years.

Thanks, Volunteers!

Betty Bastai
Shawn Blaisdell
Brandon B.
Peter Callen
Phil Carter
Linda DeGeest
Leo DeGeest
Candace Duran
Russ Duran
Shaunna Justus
Kristina G. Fisher
George Long
Polly Long
Laurie Marnell
Scott Mozeley
Toby Rosenblatt
Paul Ross
Nancy Shane
Marilynn Szydlowski
Hamish Thomson
Alexcia Trujillo
Cameron Weber
Mara Yarbrough

See lots more photos of AWF’s restoration projects at: abq.nmwildlife.org!
UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

The West is Burning: Film and Discussion
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 6:30 P.M., online
Join the Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition and local experts Dennis Carril, Alan Hook, Laura Paskus, Michael Martinez, and Matt Hurteau for a virtual screening of The West is Burning followed by a panel discussion to situate the film within the Fireshed landscape. For more info: https://www.facebook.com/events/865578224090113/

Gila River Festival
SEPTEMBER 16-19, Silver City, NM
The Gila Conservation Coalition presents the 17th annual Gila River Festival (Re)Connect with the River September 16 - 19, 2021 in Silver City, NM, the Gila National Forest, and along the Gila River. This year’s hybrid (in-person and virtual) event explores our connection to Nature, how the environment shapes human identity, and celebrates our connection to one another and to the Gila River watershed. For more info: https://www.gilariverfestival.org/

Red Canyon Restoration Workshop: Water for Land and Wildlife
SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 2, near Socorro, NM
QUIVIRA COALITION
This workshop at the Quivira Coalition’s Red Canyon Ranch will teach participants about: conserving rangeland water for livestock and wildlife; improving drainage, harvesting water, and reducing erosion with improved low maintenance road drainage systems; making livestock water catchments safer and more accessible to wildlife; erosion control structures and techniques; and a nighttime bat monitoring demonstration, among other topics. For more info: https://quiviracoalition.org/events/fall-red-canyon-2021/

Outdoor Economics Conference
SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 2, Farmington, NM
Join the New Mexico Outdoor Economics Conference to help advance economic development strategies and opportunities connected to protected public lands. This conference will highlight successful community economic development efforts within and outside of New Mexico that are connected to protected lands and focus on the development of governmental policies and local entrepreneurship connected to these opportunities. For more info and to register to attend: https://www.outdooreconomics.com/

Gila Wild & Scenic: Rivers of Opportunity Conference
OCTOBER 7-9, Silver City, NM
NEW MEXICO WILD
A conference to celebrate the Wild Gila River and call for federal legislation to permanently protect the river as Wild and Scenic. For more info and to register: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gila-wild-and-scenic-rivers-of-opportunity-conference-tickets-166102327533

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: $__________