

AWF Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2009

MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, November 12, 2009 — 7:30 pm
Manzano Mesa Center (map p4)

Program: **Wildlife Refuges—PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE**
Guest Speaker: **Jim Hubert**

The National Wildlife Refuge System, managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, is one of America's greatest conservation success stories: it has helped save our national symbol, the American bald eagle, from extinction and has protected hundreds of other wild species, including fish, migratory birds, and many other plants and animals and the habitats that support them.

Jim Hubert, who retired from a career working within the Wildlife Refuge System, will take us on a "trip through the years" with a slide series. Together, we can search for the answers to the questions, "What started over a hundred years ago, was overwhelmingly modified in the mid 1900's, and shines brightly into the future?"

Jim grew up on a dairy farm in Northwestern Wisconsin. After graduation from South Dakota State University in 1958, he worked as a habitat biologist with the Nebraska Game Commission. Earlier, he had worked in habitat development with the South Dakota Game and Fish Department. Jim transferred to the federal Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin in 1962, and from there, consistently with the National Wildlife Refuge System, to Minnesota, Illinois, Washington D.C. Office, Texas, and finally to New Mexico. He has been an AWF member for several years, and was a Board member for many of them. Jim also provides our monthly "Notable Quote."



Jim Hubert with wife Margie

NEXT MONTH: Join us for the AWF Annual Meeting and Year-End Celebration on Thursday, December 10!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am delighted to report that two of our members have volunteered to act as Project Leaders in 2010. Phil Carter and Kristina G. Fisher had been considering a venture into directing an outing even prior to the plea in my October Message, so the timing was fortuitous.

Phil and Kristina have been very active participants at AWF projects. They've assisted with camp management, built fencing, and have become skilled builders of rock structures...Phil is especially good with large rocks (see picture, page 3). Kristina has also written an excellent letter (see page 4) encouraging the BLM to reassess its grazing management practices at Cebolla Canyon, following our project there in October.

We are very pleased that they are willing to take on the planning and execution of an AWF project. Thank you, Phil and Kristina.

Glenda Muirhead

Jim Hubert's
NOTABLE QUOTE
of the month

"The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem it will avail us little to solve all others."

— *Theodore Roosevelt*
October 4, 1907

LAST PROJECT OF THE YEAR!

PIEDRA LISA TRAIL IN PLACITAS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2009

The Albuquerque Wildlife Federation invites you to our final Volunteer Service Project of the year in the northern Sandia Mountains—followed by a celebration at Anasazi Fields Winery in Placitas!

THE PLACE: From the Sandia Mountains to the Bosque to the abundant Open Space areas, Albuquerque is fortunate to have many opportunities to get out and explore nature. As we do every year, we will finish off the project season with a trail project in the Albuquerque area. Then, continuing with tradition, we will head over to the Anasazi Fields Winery (www.anasazifieldswinery.com) in Placitas. They have generously agreed to open their beautiful winery for an end-of-the-year gathering where we can try a variety of wines, look at art, and mix and mingle. If you can't make both, you are welcome to come to one or the other.

THE PROJECT: We will team up with Bill Velasquez to do trail work. Bill is an active volunteer who believes in the upkeep of trails for the benefit of hikers. We will meet at the Piedra Lisa Trailhead at 8:30 am to get a safety talk and project overview. Then we'll head up the mountain and spend the day improving the trail tread.

Bring work clothes, work gloves, sturdy shoes, your lunch, plenty of water, and gear appropriate to the weather of the day.

THE GATHERING: Starting at 3:00 pm, we will meet at Anasazi Fields Winery to celebrate a successful year of projects. There will be short presentations on conservation issues affecting our region. Las Placitas Association and other conservation groups will join us there. We will be at the winery until early evening. Please join us there even if you cannot make the project!

CONTACT: If you have questions or would like to sign up, contact Michael Scialdone at rioscial@gmail.com, 505-232-8756. Further details and directions will be sent out once you do. We look forward to seeing you there!

DRIVING DISTANCE: 20 miles north of ABQ

We are already working on the project list for 2010. We will head to many familiar places, but also a couple of new ones. We'll keep you posted, and hope to see you on a project soon!

STATE LEGISLATURE RAIDS OHV FUND

The New Mexico legislature has passed a budget bill that transfers \$800,000 from the trail safety fund, leaving the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish with an unfunded mandate to manage off-road vehicle use and enforce laws designed to protect the environment.

The Department of Game and Fish cannot be expected to educate the public and enforce new laws on public lands without proper funding. In House Bill 3, page 4, line 9, the bill reads, "eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000) is transferred from the trail safety fund."

The trail safety fund is a tool not only for education and enforcement of important environmental laws in New Mexico, but also a source of job creation for the state's rural areas. Quiet recreation activities such as hunting, fishing, and backpacking generate millions of dollars for New Mexico's economy. A failure to properly invest the trail safety user fees is very likely to negatively impact New Mexico's economy by driving away quiet recreationists.

Urge the Governor to do a line item veto to protect the department's ability to conduct the enforcement, education and management tasks they were directed to do last February by the NM Legislature. Phone the Governor: 505 - 476 - 2200 or email: special.session@state.nm.us.

PROJECT RECAP IN PHOTOS : CEBOLLA CANYON II

CEBOLLA CANYON II PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Marcie & Vincent Amendolagine
 Stephen Bohannon & Michelle Miano
 Peter Callen
 John & Monica Canaris
 Phil Carter & Kristina G. Fisher
 Steve Ginsberg
 Patricia Hester & Gene Tatum
 Jodey Kougioulis
 Doug Loescher
 Dewey Moore & Shelley Roberts
 Dennis & Glenda Muirhead
 Karen Orloff
 Toby Rosenblatt
 Matthew Rotuuno
 Hannah Sadwith
 Jenn Schramm, BLM
 Matthew Schultz, NMED
 Michael Scialdone
 Jesse Slocum & Hamish Thomson
 David & Shannon Van de Riet
 Jim Wilson
 Jen Zawacki
 Bill Zeedyk
 Adam Zipkin

National Indian Youth Leadership Program:

Raelynn Cachini
 Alex Begay
 Tina Billie
 Raymond Manuelito
 Nicole Gene
 T'Neale Barney
 Ethan Tayah
 Robert Shortey
 Ashley Taylor
 Adam Russell

Sorry for omissions or misspellings

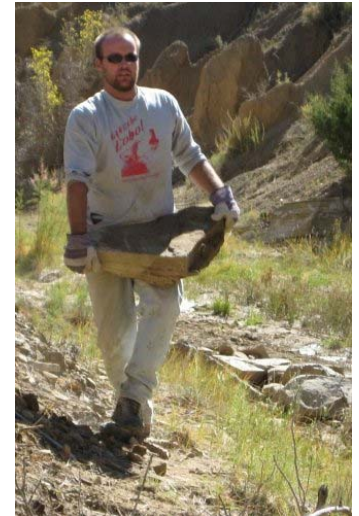
Built Rock Structures | Removed Salt Cedar
 Transplanted Bullrushes | Obscured Unauthorized Trails



Pat Hester keeps the supply of fresh coffee topped off at breakfast.



With chairs still circling the Friday night campfire, the group gathers for a safety talk and to learn the plan for the weekend's work.



Phil Carter has found just the right rock.



It's rest time for Michelle Miano after a constructive day in the arroyo.



Steve Ginsberg practices the art of perfect placement.



John Canaris (l) and Stephen Bohannon use a rock litter to haul building materials to the edge of the arroyo.

CATTLE GRAZING IN THE CEBOLLA WILDERNESS?

Gene Tatum has long been troubled by the BLM's management of cattle grazing at the location of one of AWF's favorite projects, Cebolla Canyon. At his urging and with suggested points to address, several participants from our October project at Cebolla have written letters to the agency to express their concerns about current practices. Here is one of them.

I am writing to inquire and comment about some of the management practices of the riparian pastures of the Cebolla Wilderness area in the El Malpais National Conservation Area.

Earlier this month, I spent a weekend in the Cebolla Wilderness volunteering on an environmental restoration project in the riparian pastures. Although I had not visited the Cebolla Wilderness before, I was impressed by its beauty and the excellent opportunities it provides for recreation. For example, after we finished our work we hiked over to the nearby petroglyphs and spent some time watching birds and other wildlife. In addition, we camped near some hunters who bagged an impressive elk, nicely demonstrating the diverse recreational experiences available in this unique area.

Working in the riparian pastures of the Cebolla Canyon raised a number of questions for me. The difference between the fenced riparian pastures and the pastures outside the fence was striking: in the more protected riparian pastures, native vegetation was coming back, and the stream was retaining substantially more water -- indeed, though the streambed was bone-dry downstream of the fence, upstream there were a number of pools of water, enhancing the habitat for both plants and animals.

It was clear that resting the riparian pastures from grazing, in combination with years of environmental restoration efforts by volunteers like our group, have made a real difference and begun to heal a very damaged landscape. Yet even within the apparently protected riparian area, there were numerous troubling signs of recent livestock grazing (trampled streambanks, cow dung, etc.).

I personally support the multiple use ethic, and I believe that our public lands need to meet the diverse needs of the nation's citizens. I have no objection to livestock grazing as one use of our public lands. However, as with any use, it must be carefully managed so that it does not impair other uses of the land. In this particular area, I am concerned that the grazing has been mismanaged and resulted in serious degradation of the landscape.

The riparian pastures appear to be the only major wetlands in the El Malpais NCA, and they seem to make up a very small proportion of the overall NCA. Much research has shown that riparian areas like these support the majority of the Southwest's biodiversity -- as such, these areas deserve enhanced protections.

...

Considering that the Cebolla Wilderness riparian pastures make up such a small part of the El Malpais NCA and that they provide such unique habitat and wildlife values, it seems to me that more stringent regulations would be justified to adequately protect them. There are many public lands open to livestock grazing; it does not seem overly burdensome to require permittees seeking to graze the lands around the Cebolla Wilderness riparian areas to take responsibility for keeping their livestock out of those protected pastures.

Sincerely,
Kristina G. Fisher

NEW MEMBERS

Dewey Moore and Shelley Roberts — Patron

AWF MEETING LOCATION

Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center
501 Elizabeth SE at Southern



AWF OFFICERS AND BOARD

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ALBUQUERQUE WILDLIFE FEDERATION
PO Box 1234 ■ Albuquerque, NM 87103

"TIME OUT" A CHANCE TO DEFEND ROADLESS RULE

Santa Fe New Mexican—Op Ed
September 26, 2009

By Kathy Holian

Five National Forests are contained in the state of New Mexico: Carson, Cibola, Lincoln, Santa Fe, and Gila. These forest lands are among the most important of our state treasures. Most people are aware of the recreational opportunities that they afford: hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, among other activities. But it is also important to recognize that they help serve as our community lungs by cleaning our air, and as our community kidneys by cleaning our water. Fifteen communities in New Mexico... depend on the National Forest land for their watersheds. As such, they are an integral part of our life, and our health.

About a third of the National Forests across the country are in a special category called "Roadless." It is critical to have some areas that are unfragmented and pristine. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule, or "Roadless Rule," was created in 2001, not only to

safeguard a significant fraction of America's National Forests from logging and other commercial development, but also to protect unbroken areas from the ravages that roads can cause. Roads always cause fragmentation, but moreover, they can cause erosion and drying of vegetation that borders the roads, leading to increased fire danger.

In developing the Roadless Rule, the federal government garnered an almost unprecedented amount of public involvement. It received more than 1.6 million comments from the public, and it held some 600 public hearings. Federal, state, tribal, and other public agencies were involved in drafting the rule

More than 95 percent of the comments were favorable toward establishing roadless areas in our National Forests. Unfortunately, in the eight years since the inception of the Roadless Rule, it has been challenged in court on a number of occasions, and the federal government has been deliberately recalcitrant to defend against those challenges until now.

President Obama and his administration have recently taken a step toward protection of these areas. On May 28, the Department of Agriculture issued an interim directive requiring secretarial-level review of any projects that might be inconsistent with the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. This, in essence, is a time-out for the legal challenges.

Additionally, Sen. Jeff Bingaman and Reps. Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan have all signed on as original co-sponsors of the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2009. This legislation would make the roadless rule the law and ensure permanent protection for wild areas of our National Forests and the vast wildlife, recreation, and economic benefits they provide. I urge our entire congressional delegation to support the act vigorously, and I urge everyone to take a moment to think about how National Forests contribute to our lives in so many ways, and how they are a priceless legacy to our future generations.

Kathy Holian is a Santa Fe County commissioner in District 4. She lives in Santa Fe.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ALBUQUERQUE WILDLIFE FEDERATION, PO BOX 1234, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87103

An affiliate of New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Please choose between **AWF MEMBERSHIP ONLY** or **AWF + NMWF MEMBERSHIP**. **AWF MEMBERSHIP ONLY** does **not** include membership in NMWF. **AWF + NMWF MEMBERSHIP** includes **one** voting membership in NMWF. For Family Membership, if a second person* desires NMWF voting rights, an additional \$10 payment is required.

➔ **PLEASE ✓ ONE :** **AWF MEMBERSHIP ONLY** **AWF + NMWF MEMBERSHIP** ↴

Designate NMWF member(s*) _____

name(s) _____

address _____

city, state, zip _____

phone _____ email _____

Gift membership from: _____

✓ MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- Student [under 18] \$10 ← [AWF Membership Only]
- Individual \$25
- Family \$35
- Sustaining \$50-\$99
- Patron \$100
- Lifetime \$500 ← [One-time Payment]

Dues \$ _____

*Second NMWF Member \$10 _____

Contribution \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____