

ALBUQUERQUE WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Founded by Aldo Leopold in 1914 to protect and perpetuate our wildlife and natural resources

AWF Newsletter

AUGUST 2010

MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, August 12, 2010 — 7:30 pm
Manzano Mesa Center (map p7)

Equines, Wolves, and Bears — A Working Perspective Phil Carter, Animal Protection of NM



Horses and their relatives (donkeys, mules, and burros) have played an integral role in New Mexico's history. From the Spanish mustangs to the settlers' pack mules to today's working and pleasure-riding horses, it is impossible to conceive of the present-day Southwest without the influence of equines. Animal Protection of New Mexico, which operates the state's animal cruelty hotline, has seen a dramatic increase in the number of equine neglect and abuse calls in recent years. Current economic hardships have impeded the ability of many horse owners to adequately care for their animals.

Phil Carter is Equine Campaign Manager for APNM and also works on wildlife policy issues for the organization. **His program at our August meeting will discuss his group's campaign to improve welfare for domestic and wild horses and other equines. Additionally, he will speak on upcoming policy changes in the Mexican wolf recovery program and on bear and cougar hunting quotas** by the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish and how AWF members can get involved.

Phil is a longtime participant in AWF projects and is a valuable, hard-working member of our Projects Committee. His work has involved him in a number of conservation campaigns, including Mexican wolf recovery. A native Missourian, Phil marks in August 2010 the fifth anniversary of his moving to New Mexico.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the past week, I've received a good bit of information from parties interested in the Travel Management Plan being created by the Santa Fe National Forest. As most of you know, the US Forest Service has been charged with evaluating and modifying existing roads and trails within their oversight. The Travel Management Rule requires each national forest or ranger district to designate which roads, trails, and areas will be OPEN to motor vehicles. Once designation is complete and published in a motor vehicle use map for each Forest, motorized vehicles will be prohibited from driving off the designated system, i.e., all other routes will be CLOSED.

As you can imagine, and as we've pointed out periodically in this newsletter, there are battle lines in place that separate some very polarized positions. On one hand is the conservation community which is hoping to see closure of many routes that have been allowed to propagate for nearly 40 years, since the 1972 Executive Order which called upon public land agencies to manage off-road vehicles. The virtual "do nothing" policy which has reigned during those years has resulted in heartbreaking resource damage, fractured wildlife habitat, and disrupted wildlands quietude.

Jim Hubert's
Notable Quote
of the month
"What we do today, right now, will have an accumulated effect on all our tomorrows."
— Alexandra Stoddard, author

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

On the other hand are the user groups (and very well-organized groups they are) and the OHV industry, all of whose interests are obviously best served by keeping open as many trails as possible, including all those illegal, user-created trails that blight public-lands terrain and disrupt the natural cycles of wildlife.

Now comes the battle of the editorials. Late in July, one day apart, columns appeared in the *Albuquerque Journal* [at right] and the *Santa Fe New Mexican* [on page 3] addressing the Santa Fe National Forest's Travel Management Plan options. Please take a few minutes to read through both of these editorials, and see what you think.... Now here's what I get from them:

The *Journal* supports the necessity of curtailing off-road vehicle usage, closing trails, and restricting access as a forward-looking action to protect our forests.

The *New Mexican* warns against federal interference in the traditional uses of our public lands. In a somewhat muddled piece, the writer, while acknowledging that irresponsible OHV use can cause damage, claims that removing mileage from motorized travel will likely disadvantage those for whom the woods may be the only choice for recreation.

And in what is to me a baffling statement, prompted by who knows what kind of shoddy research or slanted influence, the *New Mexican's* writer states:

“ATVs...don't travel that well over brush, bushes, fallen trees or boulders, and their beachball tires don't do much damage anyway.”

Huh? A simple internet search of “ATV tire” images will return a much different picture. Below are the first, second, and eighth results displayed by my Google query. (Notice the tire on the right is labeled “Mudhog.” Harmless? I don't think so.)



“Beachball” tires? Who has this writer been listening to, anyway? Let's get this person out onto our public lands to witness the harm these four-wheeled “fun machines” with ground-chewing tires can cause. A mere few hours of mud play can damage a sensitive riparian area almost beyond repair.

Waving a banner of tradition and hinting at political repercussion, the *New Mexican* cautions against federally-imposed change.

Editorials are opinions, of course. You've read what the editors of two of our state's newspapers think. And you've just read my opinion, too...I guess you can figure out whose sentiments I share.

Glenda Muirhead

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL

Editorial — July 30, 2010

Forest Service Right To Scale Back Vehicle Use

It's not about keeping everyone out of the forest. It's about keeping the forest healthy for everyone.

That's what the U.S. Forest Service's Travel Management Plan is—and has to be—about. What current policy and practice is about—a free-for-all that allows damage to watersheds, destruction of wildlife habitats and desecration of cultural resources—isn't working. The Forest Service considers such “unmanaged recreation” one of the top four threats to its forests.

So as part of a 2005 national initiative, Santa Fe National Forest officials are weighing five alternatives to managing motorized-vehicle use. They range from status quo, recognized as a non-option, to various levels of limited access. Surprisingly, many informed hunters and anglers as well as environmentalists and wilderness advocates are rallying around the most restrictive option, No. 3.

That option still allows motorized vehicles on almost 2,000 miles of roads and more than 50 miles of trails, but according to the analysis on the Forest Service website, it also does the most to protect wildlife and fish habitats, water and watershed quality, riparian recovery and native plants.

The support for option No. 3 from groups as disparate as hunters and wilderness advocates is in no small part because much of what would be restricted is not only duplicative of other sources of access, but damaging to the forest or disruptive to other users.

The changes would not take away any existing opportunities for an elderly or disabled person to spend a weekend camping or for a parent to take a child hunting. They don't ban groups of friends on all-terrain vehicles or dirt bikes from public lands. Many of the roads and trails being proposed for removal from the approved motorized grid either aren't now used, were never approved for motorized use or have a better alternative.

The biggest change—a blanket ban on all off-road driving that would require on-foot game retrieval—is actually being embraced by hunters who want the watershed protected and say they have spent weeks mapping out a site only to arrive on hunting day to watch someone on an ATV blaze through and scare off all the wildlife.

Eight meetings are scheduled... [turn to page 3 for list] to give the public another chance to weigh in. Forest users should avoid getting lost in the false drama of “restricted use” and see the changes for what they are—a much needed system for protecting the forest now and for future generations.

The Santa Fe NEW MEXICAN
 Editorial — July 31, 2010

Public-land limits? Feds, tread carefully

The wide-open spaces of our state aren't what they once were: A growing urban-suburban population pours out of our cities nearly every weekend to get in touch with Nature. Most of them do it in genteel fashion—but then there are the blockheads who treat ownership of monster-tired trucks and increasingly powerful all-terrain vehicles as license to let 'em rip.

The extent of their damage to public lands is debatable—but it's plenty noticeable the closer that land is to town. Glorieta Mesa, near Pecos, has taken a terrific beating; so have several stretches of the Jemez Mountains, easily accessible to Santa Fe, Los Alamos and Albuquerque.

It isn't just the makeshift roads they carve across the grasslands, sage and chamisa; it's the headwater erosion they leave in their wake that's got state Environment Secretary Ron Curry calling on the federal Environmental Protection Agency to exercise enforcement powers separate from those of the thin-spread Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

For years, the federal agencies have realized that they've got to draw tougher rules—and clearer maps—to tell folks where it is and isn't OK to go motoring in the boonies.

BLM last week was collecting comment on its updated resource-management plan for 600,000-odd acres in Río Arriba and Taos counties, while the Santa Fe National Forest is airing a travel-management plan—the stricter versions of which could close half the 5,000-plus miles of roads and trails now used by motor vehicles of one kind or another.

Ahh—the return of peace and quiet to the woods? Restrictions on often-obnoxious ATVs and mud-boggers? Restoration of streams, wildflowers and shrubbery? Secure habitat for wildlife? It's a tree-hugger's dream.

But it could also amount to wholesale closing of public land to all but the hardest of hikers. For every thoughtless motorhead, there are hundreds of people who respect the great outdoors—and they're not all enviro-elitists with the good health and leisure to emulate John Muir or Aldo Leopold.

Many a Northern New Mexico family has long had favorite little spots for family reunions, picnics, camp-outs and privacy; some of them places with special meaning, others scouted out over the years as somewhere to gather piñon or cut a few latillas. The woods might be the main—maybe the only—source of recreation.

Some of the better-off families might bring more than their pick-up trucks—but, more often than not, the ATVs they roll off the beds are being driven along two-track trails or roads; **they don't travel that well over brush, bushes, fallen trees or boulders, and their beachball tires don't do much damage anyway.** [*emphasis added*]

Are dirt-bikers similarly harmless? No—and they're a leading reason for so much official attention to backwoods travel. Within a couple of weeks, there'll be public meetings on the Santa Fe forest's travel plans—including a morning one Aug. 14 at forest headquarters. Those who can't make the meetings should consider e-mailing to sftravelmgt@fs.fed.us; your advocacy of keeping open or closing one stretch or another could be crucial to the forest supervisor's final decisions.

Whatever limitations are issued, enforcement will remain a problem; thus foresters' plans to issue maps of what's open and closed, relying on citizens' consciences being their guides. But where rangers' boots are on the ground, there could be lots of resentment from the public; lose them as constituents, and how much will they care if or when—perish the thought—the next wave of privatizers washes over Washington?

While federal alternatives always include no-change, it's pretty clear there will be changes to the woodland-motoring rules; some are definitely needed. But officials should find ways of curtailing the worst of the abuse while resisting the urge to close off terrain so many New Mexicans properly consider public property.

Public Meetings Schedule

Santa Fe National Forest Travel Management Plan

Community	Date	Time	Location
Abiquiu	Thursday, 8/5	6-8:30 pm	Rural Events Center State Road 554, Abiquiu
Los Alamos	Tuesday, 8/10	6-8:30 pm	White Rock Town Hall 139 Longview, White Rock
Pecos	Wednesday, 8/11	6-8:30 pm	Pecos High School Cafeteria State Road 63, Pecos
Rio Rancho	Thursday, 8/12	6-8:30 pm	Grace Outreach Center 2900 Southern Blvd, Rio Rancho
Santa Fe	Saturday, 8/14	9:30 am-12 noon	Supervisor's Office 11 Forest Lane, Santa Fe
Jemez	Monday, 8/16	6-8:30 pm	Valles Caldera Conference Room State Road 4, Jemez Springs
Las Vegas	Tuesday, 8/17	6-8:30 pm	NMHU Sala de Madrid University Ave., Las Vegas
Cuba	Wednesday, 8/18	6-8:30 pm	Cuba Senior Center 16A Cordova St., Cuba

Volunteer Project #7

VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL PRESERVE

Weekend Project: August 20-22, 2010

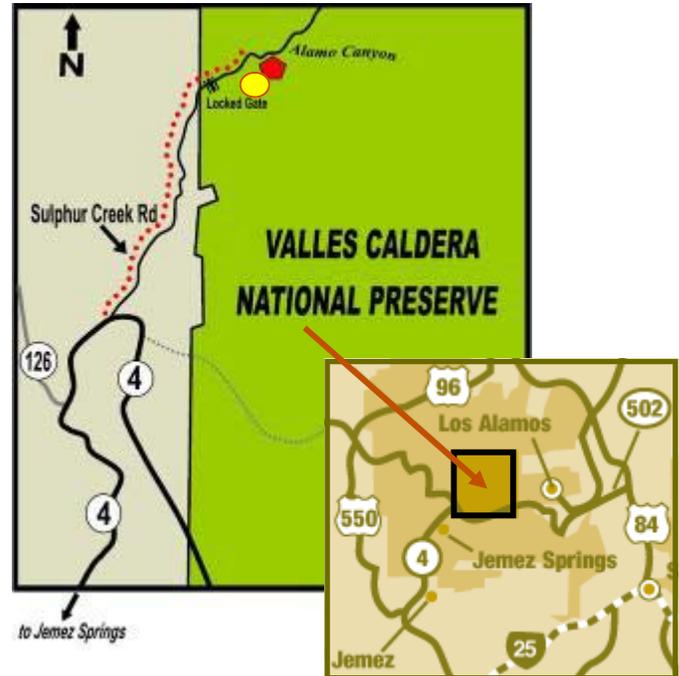
THE PLACE: The Valles Caldera National Preserve was created by Congress from the private Baca Ranch in New Mexico's volcanic Jemez Mountain Range. Access to this 89,000 acre property featuring Redondo Peak (11,254 feet) is strictly controlled, and AWF and our friends have been privileged to camp on the preserve and see areas not generally open to the public.

THE PROJECT: We have the opportunity to return to Alamo Canyon, maybe for the last time. We have been able to camp, work and enjoy this unusual, beautiful part of the Preserve because of a federal wetlands grant. This grant is almost fulfilled, with rock work, media lunas, zuni bowls, one rock dams, and step downs being the final components. This is also an excellent opportunity to learn more about media lunas, the most aesthetic of the rock structures. One more enclosure needs to be constructed to protect a rare stand of bog birch in Alamo Bog. If time permits we may also do some trail work.

EQUIPMENT: Wear sturdy boots/shoes and bring gloves, hats, and sunscreen, and appropriate gear for camping. Be prepared for rain. Knee-high wading boots will be useful, as this is a wet area. Bug repellent is a good idea, too.

FOOD: AWF will supply snacks during the project day. Please bring food and water for the duration of your stay. There will be a potluck meal on Saturday evening: AWF will grill burgers and sausages (veggie options also), so bring along an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share.

DRIVING TIME: 2 hours north of ABQ; 2 hours west of Santa Fe.



TO SIGN UP: Contact

Glenda Muirhead — 505-281-2925 or
g.muirhead@usfamily.net

*Additional details will be provided
during the week before the project.*

2010 PROJECT SCHEDULE

February 20	Tree Planting at Aldo Leopold Forest (Albuquerque Bosque)
March 20	[Cedro Creek — CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER]
April 16-18	Cebolla Canyon I
May 14-16	Limestone Canyon (San Mateo Mountains)
June 18-20	Rio de las Vacas
July 16-18	Valle Vidal
August 20-22	Valles Caldera National Preserve
September 17-19	Cebolla Canyon II
October 16	Cedro Creek (East Mountains) and End of Year Celebration

To sign up for any of these projects, please contact Glenda Muirhead at 505-281-2925 or g.muirhead@usfamily.net by Monday prior to the project weekend.

Attendance at this project is limited by the Preserve to 40 people camping at Alamo Canyon, and 50 people participating in project activities.

If you'd like to be one of them, please let us know soon before the spaces fill up!



Nora Love and Matt Schultz listen as project plans and instructions are described on Saturday morning.



One of many clogged sections interfering with water flow in the irrigation channel feeding a wildlife pond.

Project Recap

VALLE VIDAL in July

Back we went in July to Valle Vidal, the AWF site with what must be the longest-running history in our project annals. A location of AWF focus since 1982, the Valle continues to attract volunteers of all ages to its beauties, both obvious and hidden.

Bill Zeedyk was unfortunately unable to join us, so Gene Tatum directed project efforts, and we met the very capable Alyssa Radcliff, who stood in for Wildlife Biologist George Long, our usual USFS contact at Valle Vidal. We set to a variety of tasks over the weekend. One small group joined a USFS archaeologist at the rather obscure original Shuree Lodge, hidden by trees. (This is NOT the two-story building near which we sometimes set up our campsite.) Our volunteers sifted through debris at the old Lodge site, looking for relics at this historic building which was half-burned by careless campers a few years ago. Streaks from charred wood marked their clothing and faces when they returned to camp, evidence of a truly hands-on effort.

Others worked not far from the campsite, building an additional enclosure at Ring Place Meadow to protect vegetation from grazing cattle, and expanding an existing fence structure to increase its very obvious effects.

A third crew tackled long-ignored irrigation channels feeding a wildlife pond. Ten years' worth of accumulated debris — branches, rocks, surprising quantities of pine needles and duff — was dug, dragged, and hand-lifted up and out to clear the way for water to run again. And when this crew had exhausted their muscles and their water bottles, reinforcements arrived (the fencing group that had completed as much as it could) to continue the digging-out. Some people don't know when to quit!

Only a brief smattering of rain accompanied by some strong winds, which threatened to lift our canopies and Gene and Pat's tent, marred the otherwise serene and surprisingly warm weather. The token campfire on Saturday night was all about S'mores for the kids, rather than conversation and heat. Some of the group ventured out to Shuree Ponds or nearby rivers to throw in a line...success varied, but all reported a good time fishing. And, as always, the evening potluck meal was delicious!

VALLE VIDAL Participants

Peter Blemel
 Tammy Connell
 James Cooley and Susan Mendel
 Rory, Taran, and Aidan Cooley
 Patricia Hester
 Leslie Kryder
 James, Destini and Ignatius
 Kuropatwinski
 Nora Love
 Trudi Martinez
 Cliff Mendel
 Joyce Mendel
 Dennis Muirhead
 Glenda Muirhead
 Jim O'Donnell
 Alyssa Radcliff, USFS
 Toby Rosenblatt
 Matt Schultz
 Marilyn Szydlowski
 Gene Tatum



Antelope A-PLUS Task Force Meetings

By Larry Dwyer

AWF – Wildlife Issues Committee Chair

This summer I was asked to represent AWF at the Department of Game and Fish Antelope Private Lands Use System (A-Plus) taskforce meetings. The department tasked the group to rewrite the A-Plus guidelines so the rule could be implemented based on science.

Also, the intent was to make the A-Plus rule more equitable, as currently a disproportionately large number of permits are issued to landowners as “transferable tags.” Transferable tags are sold for profit, often thousands of dollars, to mostly out-of-state hunters, leaving those New Mexicans utilizing the public draw system with slim chances of drawing a tag to hunt antelope in New Mexico. I have had no luck drawing an antelope tag for the last 15 years and I was anxious to be part of a taskforce to make the rule better for resident hunters.

Progress during the initial meetings was very slow. I was encouraged that the third meeting started with a video about how the wildlife in the United States are not privately owned and are held in trust for all citizens using the “North American Wildlife Conservation Model.”

Following the video, we were told that we would now finalize a rule that is *completely contrary to this model*.

By the end of the meetings I was wondering why AWF had been invited to participate in the task force at all. Task force participants were overwhelmingly landowners plus a few guide/outfitters, with only a handful of sportsmen in attendance. Not a single suggestion by anyone other than groups that financially profit from antelope hunting was accepted. Comments from sportsmen were summarily dismissed as unfeasible.

At the end of the final meeting I expressed my concern that the Game and Fish Department would tout the results of the task force as a collaborative effort and claim that all agreed to the new A-Plus rule. Sure enough, when the official report was issued, there was no mention of any dissent in the process or any concerns with its result.

When posted on the Game and Fish website, there were two options for the Game Commission to consider: (1) the A-Plus rule which the department designated as the “preferred option,” and (2) no change.

Only after being prompted by sportsmen’s groups did the department add a third option: (3) all tags allocated through the public draw. This system would incorporate the North American Conservation Model.

News from New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Game Department presents Options for antelope license allocation

New Mexico hunters are starting to weigh in on proposed changes to the controversial A-PLUS program, which gives control of the vast majority of antelope licenses to a relative few landowners in antelope territory. Public comment is being taken on three options posted last week, including one that would allocate most licenses to the Big Game Draw, known as Option 3.

In contrast, Option 1 would maintain the transferable license program, but according to a preliminary analysis by NMWF would continue to give A-PLUS landowners about 65 percent of licenses to sell, give away or not use.

The remaining Option 2 is status quo, which in recent years has taken about 70 percent of antelope hunting opportunity out of the Big Game Draw and given it to A-PLUS landowners.

The department has offered no analysis of how any of the options would affect hunter opportunity in New Mexico, but **NMWF believes Option 3 is the best solution for resident hunters.** It would put all or most licenses (the department could give one tag to landowners who allow hunting on their ranches) into the Big Game Draw, ensuring that 78 percent of licenses went to New Mexico residents. Landowners who allow hunters on their land could charge trespass fees or participate in access programs.

Sportsmen are urged to ask the department to analyze Option 3 and determine its effect on department revenues and on hunter distribution on public and private land (similar programs in other western states such as Montana, Wyoming and Arizona could provide examples).

The department has planned public meetings to receive comments on the proposed options. Many are this week:

- Farmington and Estancia on Wednesday, August 4; and
- Albuquerque, Roswell and Clayton on Thursday, August 5.

Meetings are set for later in August for Roy, Taos, Tucumcari, Las Vegas, Las Cruces, Silver City and Socorro.

It was disappointing to see the department offer two—not three—options when the proposals were posted on Wednesday, July 28. Only options 1 and 2, which are essentially versions of the status quo, were put out for public comment.

Missing was the option the department had promised for nearly a year (including as late as March), which would put all or most antelope licenses in the Big Game Draw. That option did finally appear around 10 a.m. the following day. Department Deputy Director Bob Jenks called the omission “an oversight.”

Joel Gay
NM Wildlife Federation

Estella Leopold Recognized for Lifetime Achievements in Conservation

The 2010 International Cosmos Prize has been awarded to Estella Leopold, daughter of Wisconsin's famed conservationist [and AWF founder] Aldo Leopold. The prize, now in its 18th year, recognizes outstanding conservation leaders from around the world, and honors those who further the "harmonious coexistence between nature and mankind."

"Dr. Estella Leopold has made tremendous achievements by continuing and further developing the Land Ethic, which was initiated by her father, Aldo Leopold... and she is still pursuing activities that weave the Land Ethic into the fabric of people's lives and society," the statement from the Prize Committee said.



Leopold, 83, was born in Madison and graduated from the University of Wisconsin. Now living in Seattle, Leopold is a University of Washington professor emeritus of botany, forest resources and quaternary research, and has been teaching and conducting research for more than 60 years. She pioneered the use of fossilized pollen and spores in North America to understand how plants and ecosystems respond over eons to such things as climate change.

Leopold also acknowledges the importance of reaching children. "I was raised outdoors. You'd go out to play, get on your bike and just go everywhere--out all day. But kids now are more restricted. How are they going to learn to love nature and to protect it?"

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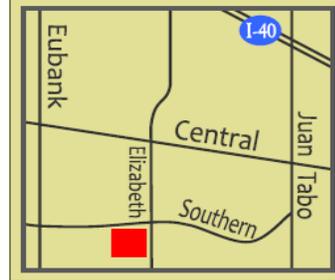
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ALBUQUERQUE WILDLIFE FEDERATION

PO Box 1234 ■ Albuquerque, NM 87103
<http://abq.nmwildlife.org>

AWF MEETING LOCATION

Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center
 501 Elizabeth SE at Southern



Thank You!

NEW MEMBER

Nina Wells

Membership Application

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

An affiliate of New Mexico Wildlife Federation

I'd like to belong to AWF ONLY or I'd like to belong to AWF + NMWF: 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 \$ _____
 Contribution \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____