



MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, January 13, 2011 — 7:30 pm  
Manzano Mesa Center (map p2)

## Prairie Dogs: A Keystone Species

Guest Speaker: Andrea Chavez, BLM



Some people like them. Some people hate them. Attitudes notwithstanding, estimates show prairie dog population numbers have declined by approximately 98% of their historical range. Sylvatic plague, habitat loss, and their reputation as range and agricultural pests have led to this decline. Prairie dogs have long been controlled on Federal, Tribal, State and private land without any regard for their inherent ecological value as a keystone species. This decline in prairie dogs has been correlated with declines in other species such as the endangered Black-footed Ferret.

The BLM has a specific interest in prairie dogs due to the agency's obligation to protect habitat for special status species. In an effort to enhance habitat for possible future reintroduction of the endangered black-footed ferret onto public lands, the Rio Puerco Field Office has begun a prairie dog population augmentation project in El Malpais National Conservation Area. The black-footed ferret is an obligate species to the prairie dog and depends wholly on prairie dog colony structure for its habitat and prairie dogs as its primary source of nutrition.

Our guest speaker, Andrea Chavez, will discuss the role of prairie dogs (specifically Gunnison's prairie dog) as a keystone species, their importance to recovery efforts of the black-footed ferret, and the BLM's effort to conserve these species on public land.

Andrea has been with the BLM for almost two years and runs the wildlife, riparian and special status species programs for the Rio Puerco Field Office. Her previous experience consists of scientific research during her undergraduate years at the University of New Mexico. Some of her research includes phylogenetic analysis of the Mexican vole, *Microtus mexicanus*, at UNM and activity level analysis with respect to temperature and elevation on the American pika, *Ochotona princeps*, at the Rocky Mountain Biological Lab in Gothic, CO.

*Andrea's presentation was originally scheduled for the November 11th AWF meeting, but because of a mixup with facility scheduling, that meeting had to be cancelled. Andrea has graciously agreed to come back this month.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First, I would like to thank Glenda for serving as President for the last two years. In addition, she prepares the newsletter and is a key member of AWF's committees.

It was six years ago when I first became President of AWF. I am as honored today as I was then. However, I must admit that I had not expected to serve as President again. But I am committed to AWF and look forward to this coming year's work. My goals for AWF are to:

- Continue outreach to the conservation community to raise awareness of AWF and its mission.
- Engage with New Mexico Wildlife Federation and other organizations on issues affecting wildlife.
- Increase attendance at our monthly programs.
- Continue restoration projects, one of our most important tools for promoting the Leopold Land Ethic.
- Expand circulation of AWF's newsletter, one of the best local conservation publications.

(Continued on page 2)

Jim Hubert's  
*Notable Quote  
of the Month*

A visitor at the Mount St. Helens-Naches Ranger Station once asked, "At what elevation do deer turn into elk?"

*The question was probably asked with tongue-in-cheek, but it was reported to be in all seriousness.*

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** *(Continued from page 1)*

On another note—I swore off (or at) the New Mexico Game Commission (Commission) several years ago. Quoting from Glenda's November President's Message, "It seems we can't prevail. Kinda makes me wonder why we bother." After two years of attending Commission meetings, I had drawn the same conclusion, and disengaged.

But as a result of the 2010 rules for hunting Bear and Cougar, and the Commission's approval of the Antelope Private Land Use System (A-PLUS) for allocating antelope licenses, I am compelled to attend the dreaded Game Commission meetings once again. If we do not participate, we give up and our fates are determined by others. Influence and money sway the politics which in turn persuades decisions. These rules adopted by the Commission favor private interests at a cost to the general public.

New Mexico Wildlife Federation is very outspoken about the politics of the Game Commission. Please follow this link to the NMWF Special Report: *(Also summarized on p4)*  
<http://tracking.etapestry.com/t/14519172/360342248/54257766/0/>

At the February 2010 Game Commission meeting, the Department presented a proposal to revise the A-PLUS rule. "The Commission gave the Department directive to develop an antelope private land use system based on the following parameters: put pronghorn management on a sustainable foundation to provide equity between public/private hunters; provide transparency and professionalism; increase hunting opportunity if at all possible to provide longer hunter opportunities and distribute hunting pressure; provide landowners with clear hunt options and incentives for public access to give folks access to public/private lands." Tod Stevenson, Director of the NM Department of Game and Fish, concluded this meeting agenda item stating that the next step was to go public.

Finally after much foot shuffling and providing lip service to the 6000 comments from outdoorsmen, the Department of Game and Fish at the December Commission meeting made their proposal for the A-PLUS rule. Although the recommended rule did not comport with their directive, the Commission passed the rule. Most interestingly, the vote was 3 to 3, leaving Commission Chairman McClintic to break the tie.

"Chairman McClintic said he was only voting for the A-PLUS proposal because it contained a few hundred additional licenses for youth, though he apparently misunderstood that those additional youth licenses were actually contained in a separate proposal." (Source: NMWF Game Commission Report December 15, 2010.) Either Mr. McClintic was disingenuous or was not well informed. In either case, the question is clear regarding Mr. McClintic: Why is he on the Game Commission? Pay to play, maybe? I am curious about the criteria that our new Governor will apply to selection of future Commissioners.

We need to turn our attention to the State Legislature's 60-day session beginning January 18th. Budget issues will be high on their list. But we should press our local representatives to consider and reform depredation legislation to prevent wanton slaughter of New Mexico's wildlife. As a reminder, the following is something I wrote for the AWF April 2008 Newsletter:

**DEPREDATION RULE ABUSE SEEN IN NORTHERN N.M.**

About two weeks ago, I found out about an abuse of the NM State Wildlife Depredation Law 17-2-7.2. The law is implemented under NM Game Commission Rule 19.30.2. In accordance with this law and rule, private land owners have the right to kill wildlife that damages their property. Recently, a farmer in the northern part of the state has killed close to 30 antelope for grazing his winter wheat field. The NMDG&F has been negotiating with the man for fencing intervention. The farmer appears not to be negotiating in good faith. Apparently he would like an expensive game fence as opposed to a more reasonably priced fence which will block antelope ingress.

This may not sound appalling to you. Well, the devil is in the details. The NMDG&F has repaired part of this individual's fence, but he will not agree to repair of the rest of it. It was explained to me that the antelope enter the property through the damaged fence. The antelope are then herded by ATV—not off the property, but to the side of the property where the fence has been repaired and the animals cannot escape. The animals are then shot with a shotgun using a variety of shot size ranging from double 0 to 7. Several of the animals have still been alive several hours later when the NMDG&F field personnel arrive to retrieve and dispose of the carcasses. In accordance with the Rule, this individual is within his rights and his means of control are acceptable.

Gene Tatum

**AWF OFFICERS AND BOARD**

**PRESIDENT** — Gene Tatum  
**VICE PRESIDENT** — Michael Scialdone  
**SECRETARY** — Patricia Hester  
**TREASURER** — Glenda Muirhead

**DIRECTORS**

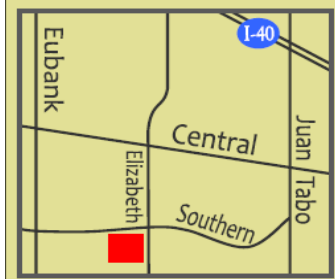
Stephen Bohannon    Kurt Nolte  
 Larry Dwyer        Linda Patterson  
 Brian Gleadle      Luke Shelby  
 Dennis Muirhead    Bill Zeedyk

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



**HAPPY  
 NEW YEAR**

## DECEMBER ANNUAL MEETING BOARD ELECTIONS AND GOOD FOOD!

Our traditional potluck dinner was a definite highlight of AWF's Annual Meeting on December 9th at the Manzano Mesa Center. To the accompaniment of holiday music and a slide montage from several years of projects, a group of 30 members and friends enjoyed some excellent dishes provided by attendees, including two varieties of smoked salmon, wild game sausage, and javelina *carne adovada*, as well as lots of tasty "ordinary" fare.

The business part of the evening involved electing officers and Board members for 2011. Gene Tatum was elected President. He returns to this position after having served from 2005 through 2008. Michael Scialdone ("Scial") will be Vice President. Pat Hester continues as Secretary, and Glenda Muirhead will act as Treasurer. Serving on the AWF Board for 2011 are Stephen Bohannon, Larry Dwyer, Brian Gleadle (appointed), Dennis Muirhead, Kurt Nolte, Linda Patterson, Luke Shelby, and Bill Zeedyk.

## PRICE'S DAIRY COULD BECOME HOME TO WILDLIFE

From an article by Andrea Schoellkopf  
Albuquerque Journal Staff Writer  
January 3, 2011

The federal government plans to pursue the creation of an urban wildlife refuge out of the former Price's Dairy land in the South Valley. Bernalillo County commissioners set aside \$5 million for the 570-acre riverfront farm this fall, which is contingent on the land being designated as a wildlife refuge. Supporters, including the federal government, must come up with the remaining \$15 million. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recent approval of a Preliminary Project Proposal for the property means the South Valley land is one step closer to becoming the first urban wildlife refuge in the Southwest.

"What we're seeing more and more is the importance of instilling an environmental awareness to the general public: urban dwellers," said Jose Viramontes of the Fish and Wildlife Service, adding the closest refuge to Albuquerque is Sevilleta, which is 20 miles north of Socorro. There are currently seven refuges in New Mexico.

Public hearings will be scheduled starting early in 2011 to discuss the refuge concept and give input, said Viramontes. Key will be how the land could help with education in New Mexico, including hosting regular visits by school groups. The process, including gathering the input and issuing a recommendation to the Fish and Wildlife Service, should take about a year.

Ultimately, the proposal for the refuge would include its impact and partnerships with other protected lands along the bosque, including the Rio Grande Nature Center, the Rio Grande State Park and county open space. The land, last used as a dairy 12 years ago, is still a working farm that sells bales of hay. The Price family has indicated that, while the land could be sold for homes, they would prefer to sell it to the community.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE PAYABLE NOW

Just a reminder that AWF dues run on a calendar-year schedule, so it's time to renew your membership. If you're not sure when you made your last payment, please check with treasurer Glenda Muirhead (505-281-2925 or g.muirhead@usfamily.net) to determine the amount payable; dues will be prorated based on month of joining.

AWF became an official 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization in 2010, so your dues are tax-deductible.

Dues become delinquent after January 31, 2011.

**THANK YOU FOR BEING AN AWF MEMBER!**

## RENEWED MEMBERS

Larry & Mathew Blair - *Sustaining*  
Phil Carter & Kristina G. Fisher - *Sustaining*  
Marjorie Gerber  
Jim & Margie Hubert  
Dean & Mary Kuehl  
Dakota Kuehl - *Student*  
Richard Leonard - *Patron*  
Cliff & Joyce Mendel - *Patron*  
Larry & Mariane Miller  
Dennis & Glenda Muirhead  
Toby Rosenblatt  
(plus memberships for Governor & Lt Governor)  
Luke Shelby - *Sustaining*  
Marilynn Szydlowski - *Sustaining*  
Bill Zeedyk & Mary Maulsby - *Sustaining*

*Thank  
You!*

## TENTATIVE 2011 PROJECT SCHEDULE

The AWF Projects Committee met in early December to discuss plans for the new year. Gene Tatum has handed over chairmanship to Michael Scialdone, and Scial is ready to apply his organizational skills to this important position.

We plan to return to some familiar locations but will vary the project specifics, and maybe add some new venues, too. In **March**, we will host a local one-day project, most likely on the Bosque. **April** and **September** will take us to Cebolla Canyon. In **May** we'll be back on the Magdalena Ranger District with Dave Heft, and in **June** we'll be at Rio de las Vacas.

**July** is as yet undecided. Valles Caldera is up in **August**—the plan there is to work on the Rio San Antonio. And finally, in **October** we'll spend some time on Upper Cedro Creek in the East Mountains, and then enjoy our end-of-season celebration. **Plan to join us!**





## GAME COMMISSION PAY-TO-PLAY REPORT ONLINE

*Excerpted from reports by NMWF*

Due to the intrusion of pay-to-play and special interest appointments to the five public seats on the State Game Commission, the commission has lost the trust of many rank-and-file sportsmen in New Mexico. The commission was originally created by statute decades ago to get the politics out of wildlife management, but recent pay-to-play and special-interest appointments to the five regional seats intended to represent the average hunter and angler have actually made wildlife management more political.

Governor Susana Martinez could create a lasting legacy among the sportsmen of New Mexico by reversing this trend. New Mexico Wildlife Federation has written a **special report** that outlines the problems stemming from past governors' Game Commission appointments. The report also provides a blueprint her administration can use to help restore the trust of everyday hunters and anglers in New Mexico. Read the full report at <http://tracking.etapestry.com/t/14519172/360342248/54257766/ol>.

### SPECIAL REPORT SUMMARY

Politics and campaign contributions continue to steer the New Mexico Game Commission. Too often, commission appointments have been used as political favors, with the chairmanship apparently the reward for the biggest campaign contributors.

Gov. Bill Richardson, despite a strong conservation record, was not immune to using commission appointments to reward do-

nors. Those chosen commission chairman made major campaign contributions. Among them are Leo V. Sims II (\$79,000); Guy Riordan (\$44,560); Jim McClintic (\$12,700); and Tom Arvas (\$8,200 plus \$25,000 from a political action committee he was associated with.)

### The report's key recommendations for the Governor are:

- Make sure the five regional seats are filled by true sportsman representatives instead of political donors or individuals with monetary interest in Commission decisions. **Sitting commissioners should not** receive transferable license authorizations, wildlife transplants, or other items of value from the Department of Game and Fish, or make campaign contributions to the governor.
- Create a stable, bipartisan commission. Its underlying statute is designed to create a stable, professional commission, with appointees serving four-year terms that continue into a new governor's administration. However, some governors have required blanket resignations upon taking office, and some have asked appointees to change parties, or have removed appointees over certain votes.
- Ask the Game Commission to conduct an open hiring process for the next Game Department director. Finalists for the job should be made public, and it should be clear that the selection was based on qualifications and not the backing of a certain group or donor.

### HERE'S HOW PAY-TO-PLAY WORKS

A prime example of how pay-to-play has affected Game Commission decisions is spelled out in another NMWF report. Former Game Commission member Leo Sims helped steer the relocation of more than 60 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep to land his family owns, then worked with the State Land Office to prohibit public access for hunting and fishing to his leased state land for the next 50 years. Go to [http://www.nmwildlife.org/images/uploads/Sims\\_report\\_2.pdf](http://www.nmwildlife.org/images/uploads/Sims_report_2.pdf) to read more.

### COMMISSION DECISIONS HURT PUBLIC HUNTERS

By law, New Mexico sets aside 22 percent of all hunting licenses allocated through the Big Game Draw for nonresidents, a higher percentage than any other western state. And more than half of that nonresident guarantee is reserved for outfitters.

But by far the worst of the policies for state sportsmen is the State Game Commission's expansion of resalable hunting license programs for certain big game species. Every year, tens of thousands of licenses – amounting to 70 percent of all antelope hunting licenses and 40 percent of elk – are removed from the public license lottery and awarded directly to certain landowners as “transferable authorizations.” These authorizations can be sold to outfitters or hunters to buy their way around the public Big Game Draw. The authorizations have become more expensive over time, increasingly going to nonresident hunters who can afford to pay more than New Mexico residents.

The Game Commission narrowly approved an extension of the controversial allocation of antelope licenses to private landowners (A-PLUS) at its Dec. 9 meeting in Clovis. Commission Chairman Jim McClintic broke a 3-3 tie by voting in favor of a proposal that did almost nothing to expand New Mexico resident antelope hunting opportunity, but continues to give about 70 percent of all licenses to a small group of landowners. To read NMWF's full Game Commission report, go to [http://www.nmwildlife.org/images/uploads/Game\\_Commission\\_Report\\_,\\_December\\_2010.pdf](http://www.nmwildlife.org/images/uploads/Game_Commission_Report_,_December_2010.pdf)

NEWS

FROM

NMWF

## Green Fire TO PREMIERE IN ALBUQUERQUE

We're very excited to invite your participation in the world premiere of **Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and the Land Ethic in the 21st Century**, a one hour, high definition documentary film about famed conservationist Aldo Leopold, best known as the author of the classic book *A Sand County Almanac*.

A joint production of the Aldo Leopold Foundation, the US Forest Service, and the Center for Humans and Nature, **Green Fire** explores the life and legacy of Aldo Leopold, and the many ways his land ethic idea is living on in the work of people and organizations all over the country today. The film's world premiere will take place at 7:00 pm on Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, NM.



The film will frame Leopold's life in the historical context of the American environmental movement. It will not only introduce him to viewers, it will also encourage audiences to think about how we can apply Leopold's ideas to the environmental problems our society faces today. Leopold's call for a respectful relationship between people and the natural world lives on in community conservation work happening all across the nation and around the world, and certainly all over New Mexico. The film includes a passionate call to action for viewers to become a part of the "fierce green fire" of people and organizations currently working to connect people and land in their own communities. The reception after the film screening will be a place to spark conversations with New Mexico conservation organizations on how to get involved and make a difference.

**World Premiere!** February 5 at 7:00 pm in Albuquerque at the National Hispanic Cultural Center

Additional premiere events are planned for cities around the country including Washington DC, Chicago, San Francisco, Denver, Boston, New York, Atlanta, and more!  
*Tickets for these events will be available for purchase in early January.*

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 \$** \_\_\_\_\_