

THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation



Albuquerque
WILDLIFE
Federation

conservationists since 1914

March 2020

A River's Rights

Late last year, the New Mexico State Engineer's Office issued a water rights permit to Audubon New Mexico, allowing the organization to take water that had previously been used for irrigation and instead allow that water to remain in the river, along a stretch of the Rio Gallina that starts just upstream from its confluence with the Rio Chama and extends to Abiquiu Reservoir.

This permit was historic, as it marked the first time in New Mexico history that a private individual or organization had been allowed to register a water right for water that would remain in the river.

Since the mid-1800s, New Mexico's water rights have been based on the very utilitarian concept of prior appropriation: the first person to divert water from a river and put it to "beneficial use" (e.g., farming, mining, manufacturing) won the right to use that much water in perpetuity. The water right could be leased or sold to someone else who was also going to use it for some beneficial human activity.

There was no benefit seen in allowing water to simply remain in the river.

Ever so slowly, that understanding has begun to shift. Starting in the 1970s, other western states began to recognize that there could be value in water left instream – to sustain plants and animals, maintain water quality, and support recreation like boating and fishing.



New Mexico lagged behind the curve. In 1998, then-Attorney General Tom Udall issued an opinion from his office finding that an instream water right could be considered a beneficial use under state water law, but there were still concerns about how to measure such a water right and make sure that it stayed in the reach of the river where it belonged.

In 2005, I helped lead the effort to create a Strategic Water Reserve, a pool of publicly owned instream water rights dedicated to protecting endangered species and preventing litigation over interstate river compacts. The Strategic Water Reserve now includes over 4,500 acrefeet of instream flow water rights on the Pecos River and over 1,000 acrefeet in the middle Rio Grande.

Now Audubon New Mexico has built on this foundation by acquiring its own instream flow right, setting an example for other conservation organizations and landowners to follow. Already, Trout Unlimited is pursuing a similar application for water on the Rio Gallinas near Las Vegas. Considering that 80% of New Mexico's wildlife species depend on riparian areas, and that the water stresses of climate change are increasing year by year, this movement to give more of our rivers rights to their own water is a welcome development indeed.

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Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Secretary

MARCH 7, 2020 SERVICE PROJECT: Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge

LOCATION: Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in the South Valley of Albuquerque

THE PROJECT: Join AWF for our first volunteer project of the 2020 season! We will be partnering with Rio Grande Return, WildEarth Guardians, Friends of the Valle de Oro, and others on this project at the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge. Valle de Oro was once a working dairy farm, and it is now one of the nation’s first urban wildlife refuges. Lots of work is underway to improve habitat and visitor resources at the refuge.

During this year’s project, volunteers will be planting cottonwood and willow seedlings and assisting with various other needs around the refuge.

SCHEDULE: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Saturday, March 7, 2020

GEAR: For this project, you will need gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. Wear layers as the day may start off cool and warm up towards lunch.

FOOD: Please bring snacks and plenty 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.*



2020 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

March 7.....Day project at Valle de Oro
 April 17-19.....Wolf Creek, Ft. Union Ranch, NM
 May 15-17.....Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge
 June 5-7.....Jemez Mountains
 June 26-28.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
 July 17-19.....Valle Vidal
 August 21-23.....Midnight Meadows near Questa, NM
 September 4-6.....Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
 September 18-20.....Cebolla Canyon near Grants, NM
 October 24.....Day project at Cedro Creek

AWF BOARD 2020

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Wilderness First Aid Course for AWF Volunteers Saturday, March 28, 2020

Greetings AWF volunteers!

AWF is hosting an all-day Wilderness First Aid course on Saturday, March 28, 2020. Our goal is to improve the first aid skills of our board members and volunteers so that we are even better prepared to take care of one another in case any accident should occur on a restoration project.



The course is being taught by the UNM Mountain Medicine Center, an internationally recognized educational institution. (More information about the UNM Mountain Medicine Center is available at: <https://emed.unm.edu/immc/education/Wilderness%20First%20Aid/index.html>)

Location: The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131
Exact building & room number will follow upon sign-up.

This is a 16-hour Online and Practical Hybrid Course:

- 8 hours of online lectures completed from home (online lectures to be provided on March 9th)
- One day, 8-hour practical session to drill hands-on skills
- 2-year Wilderness First Aid certification

Cost: The total cost per person is \$240. However, AWF has generously donated \$1,500 towards the cost of this course! This means participants will only be paying \$53-\$178 based on the number of attendees (i.e., from the minimum of 8 people to a maximum of 24 people).

AWF asks that all attendees commit to attending at least two projects during the 2020 project season.

To sign up: If you are 95% sure that you are going to attend this course, or if you have any questions: email Braden at bradenbelliveau@gmail.com

Payment details will follow after the reservation deadline.

Reservations for this course are due by Monday, March 9th.



UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Public Meetings for New Mexico Wildlife Corridors Action Plan

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 6:30-8:00 pm - 1950 Siringo Road, SANTA FE

THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 6:30-8:00 pm - 41 County Road 5568, FARMINGTON

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 6:30-8:00 pm - 2715 Northside Drive, LAS CRUCES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 6:30-8:00 pm - 11990 Hwy 180 E., Santa Clara, SILVER CITY

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 6:30-8:00 pm - 1615 West College Boulevard, ROSWELL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 6:30-8:00 pm - 1508 Paseo Del Pueblo Sur, TAOS



The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and the New Mexico Department of Transportation are holding a series of public meetings to get public input on developing the Wildlife Corridors Action Plan in accordance with the Wildlife Corridors Act that was enacted last year. Under that Act, NMDOT and NMDGF are directed to identify wildlife-vehicle collision hotspots that pose a risk to the traveling public, identify wildlife corridors from ecological data, and provide a list of priority projects based on the results of the plan's analysis. Show up to provide your comments in person or submit them by email to Wildlife.Corridors@state.nm.us. For more information on the Wildlife Corridors Action Plan, contact Phil Carter at phil@wildlandsnetwork.org.

Banff Mountain Film Festival on Tour

MARCH 13-14, 2020, Kimo Theater in Albuquerque

MARCH 16-17, 2020, Lensic Theater in Santa Fe

New Mexico Wild (Albuquerque) and the Santa Fe Conservation Trust present the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour. The tour features a collection of inspiring action, environmental, and adventure films from the Banff Centre Mountain Film and Book Festival. For more information and to purchase tickets:

Albuquerque: <https://kimotickets.com/event/356344/banff-mtn-film-festival-world-tour-2-day-pass-march-13th-amp-14th-2020>

Santa Fe: <https://sfct.org/events/banff-mountain-film-festival/>

Gila Wilderness Rafting Adventure

MARCH 9-14, 2020

Join New Mexico Wild for a rare opportunity to experience rafting on the Gila River in Americas' first wilderness. Gila Backcountry Services' experienced guides Zack and Jamie Crockett will pilot you through the beautiful and rugged Gila River Canyon where scenic vistas await around every bend. The trip itinerary includes stops along the way to explore the riparian forests, side canyons and archeological sites. For more information: <https://www.nmwild.org/events-outings/183-gila-wilderness-5-day-rafting-adventure>

Sustainable Trails Workshop

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020, 11:00 am

Cerillos Hills State Park

The best made trails maintain themselves. The five miles of trails in the state park provide examples of good and poor trail design. Park seasonal ranger, Eli will get you up to speed with sustainable practices to help you learn the do's and don'ts of sensible trails maintenance. Come ready to work and learn. For more information: <https://www.cerrilloshills.org/events/sustainable-trails-workshop>

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: \$ _____