

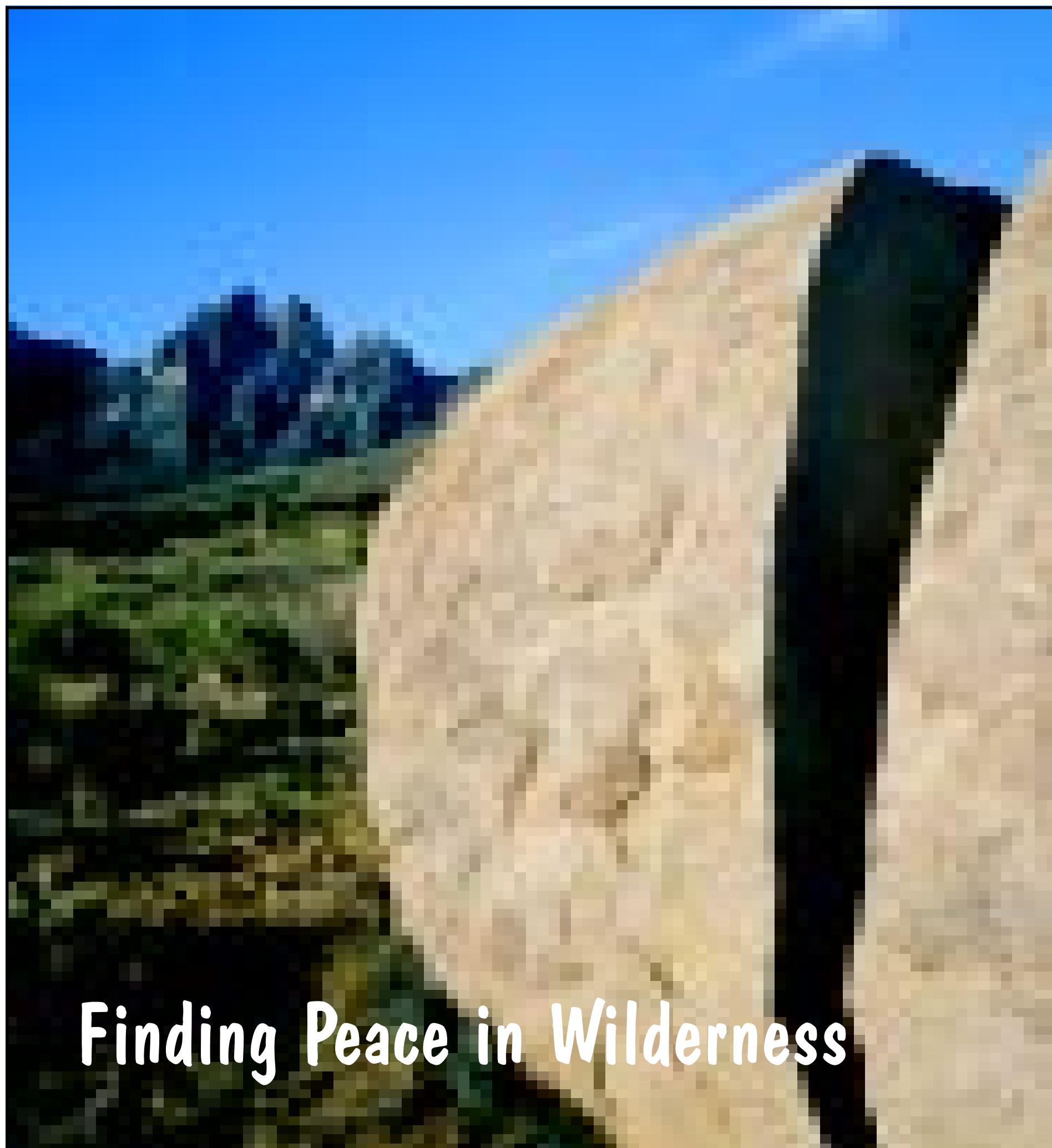


Call of the Wild

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Vol. V No. 3

Winter 2001



Finding Peace in Wilderness

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

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Mission Statement

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and continued enjoyment of New Mexico's wild lands and Wilderness areas.

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The Artists: Cover of Organ Mountains by W. Stone; p. 2 Black-footed ferret, p. 3 Cabezón, and p. 7 & 15 landscapes by E. Cantor; p. 3 Jeep by V. Cohen; p. 4 Caballo Mtn. and Potríllo Mtn. photo by M. Berman; p. 6 photo by G. Magee; p. 8 waterfall photo by W. Stone; p. 9 Owl by N. Moore-Craig; p. 10 photo by S. Capra; p. 11 photo from J. Atchley, WWF; p. 12 & 13 photos by M. Clark; p. 13 & back cover watercolors by A. Peden.

The next issue of *Call of the Wild* will be published in March 2002.

Wilderness

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System to preserve the last remaining wild lands in America. The Wilderness Act, as federal policy, secures "an enduring resource of wilderness" for the people. Wilderness is defined as an area that has primarily been affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of humans substantially unnoticeable. It is an area that offers outstanding opportunity for solitude or a primitive or unconfined type of recreation, and an area that contains ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

A Note from the Board Now Is a Time For Patriotism, Not Partisanship

This newsletter's theme is "Peace in Wilderness". Having spent a week in the Gila following September's tragedy, it is a theme I can well understand. For those nights under the stars and those days when I trekked across mesas thick with native grass and old growth pines, all seemed right in the world. We know, however, that all has not been right in the world since September 11.

Our nation is under attack and this country is doing all it can to stand united in defiance of those who would threaten innocent lives and our democratic system of government. As the son of a German immigrant who fled the Nazi regime, I have many strong opinions about freedom, government and patriotism. One thing I learned at an early age from my immigrant father was that the greatest patriots are often not the loudest or those who wave their flag the highest. Rather, our greatest patriots are often those citizens who realize what our flag symbolizes and work tirelessly to defend that ideal. I know that many of our Wilderness Alliance members who work hard, take care of their families, and sacrifice to see the world become a better place, fall into that category.

Unfortunately, there are some folks in Congress who are so wrapped up in partisan politics that they are asking you and I to set aside our morals and goals as conservationists while they use the current crisis to advance an agenda that will have grave consequences for those of us who believe that Wilderness is an essential part of our American fabric, history and landscape. This is evidenced by the repeated attempts in recent weeks to turn the Arctic Refuge into an oil field. A handful of U.S. Senators have attached to every popular piece of timely legislation they can find amendments that would sacrifice this greatest American Wilderness.

We need to have an open and honest debate about the future of this last unspoiled piece of the Arctic coastal plain. We do not need to make hasty decisions without input from the American public, which will have consequences that our children and our children's children will bear.

These times are difficult in many ways. There will be attempts to use patriotism to do things that are fundamentally not in this great nation's best interest and call into question the motives of anyone who would stand in the way. We must stand tall in the face of these challenges, secure in our beliefs. I believe there is no more patriotic act than working to protect this beautiful country of ours, its Wilderness and wildlife included. We need not wrap this work of ours in patriotic garb; it speaks for itself with the kind of quiet, real patriotism my father taught me to seek. If we continue to work in this way, future generations of Americans will still find Peace in Wilderness.

—by Martin Heinrich
Board Chair

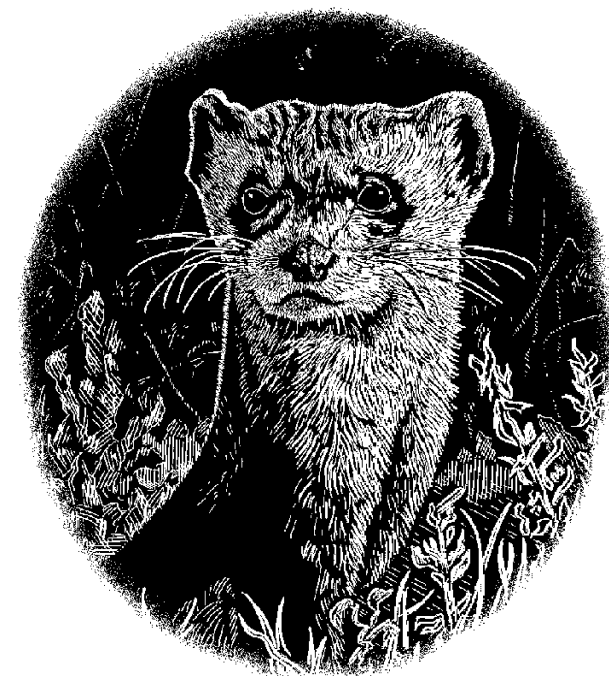


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NM Residents Are Speaking Up for Cabezón Wilderness

Through the Fall of 2001, we have continued our campaign to protect the Cabezón Country as Wilderness. While we have had some setbacks in the form of local opposition, we are continuing to build relationships in the area and to garner community support.

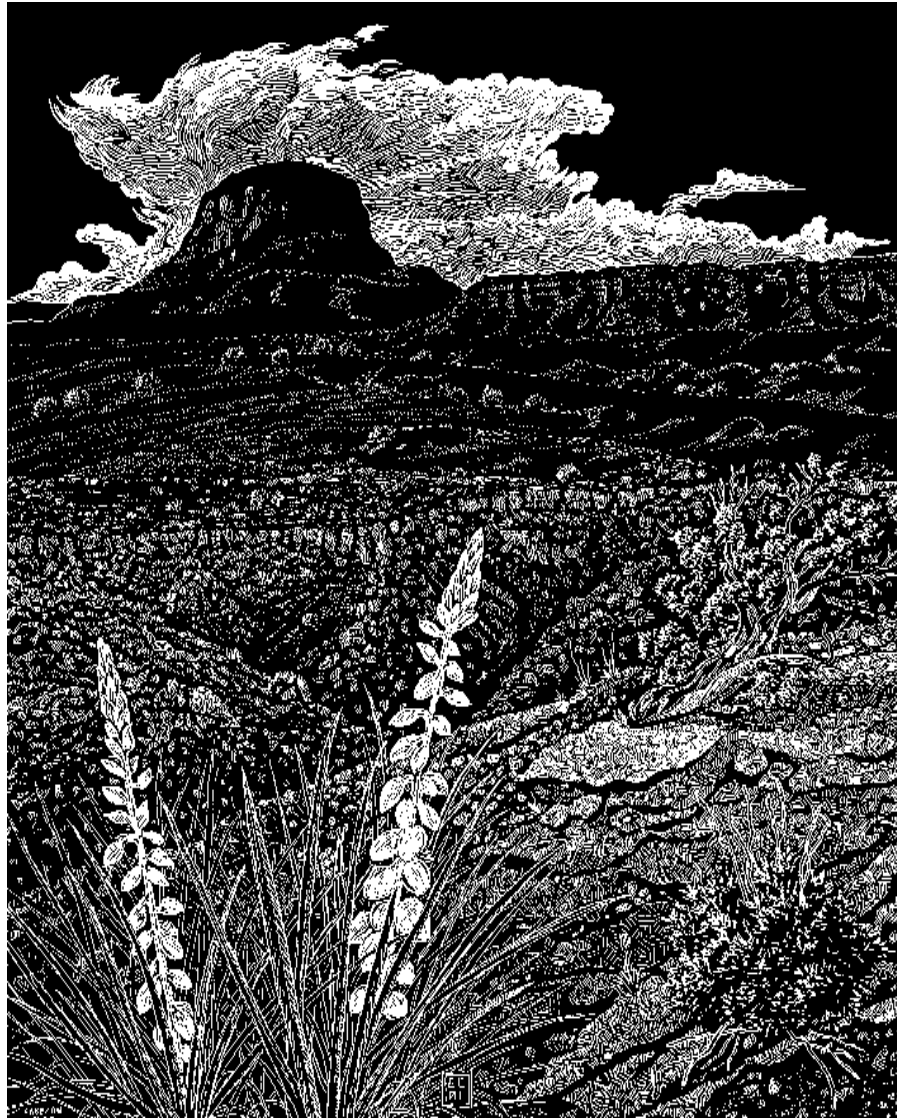
In Sandoval County, Grassroots Outreach Coordinator Garrick Delzell has been meeting with residents of Cuba, La Jara, and Regina. His meetings have had him talking to ranchers in the San Pedro Parks and the Ignacio Chavez Wilderness Study Area, as well as local business owners in Cuba and Bernalillo. Whether it's roofing a house, bucking hay, or just old-fashioned pounding the pavement, Garrick has been talking to anybody who will listen and some who won't.

Support for the proposal in the rest of the State has been impressive as well. Throughout the summer and early fall, our volunteers were out at as many community events as we could find educating folks about the proposal, collecting signatures of support and encouraging people to write letters. If it were not for our tremendous volunteers, we would have 200 petition signatures and letters instead of our more than 2,000 signatures and letters of support for the Cabezón Proposal.

Sean Saville, our Urban Outreach guru, has not slowed down one bit since being hired in July 2001. One cannot step foot into the majority of restaurants and businesses in town without seeing or hearing about Sean's handiwork. Be they Coalition members working to support the Cabezón proposal, or just willing to allow our brochures and newsletters in their storefronts, Sean has

left nary a stone unturned in his mission to spread the good word. As if this were not enough, Sean has managed to

coordinate approximately 30 volunteer activities for approximately 150 volunteers in the Albuquerque area.



Calendar

7 December—NMWA Annual Holiday Party. For more information, call 505/843-8696.

10 December—Southern Membership meeting in Las Cruces. Open to the general public. Branigan Public Library, 6:30pm. For more information, contact Jim Scanlon (505/527-9962).

February 15-18—Volunteer weekend at Guadalupe Escarpment in the Lincoln National Forest.

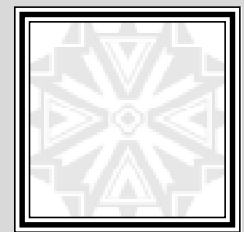
April 26-28—Cabezón Country Volunteer weekend.

May 24-27—Volunteer weekend at the Blue Range in the Gila National Forest.

June 21-23—Volunteer weekend at the Sacramento Mountains in the Lincoln National Forest.

August 30-September 2—Sabinoso Volunteer weekend backpack.

October 25-27—Peloncillos Mountains Volunteer weekend.



BLM Proceeding Despite Support for a Wild Otero Mesa

Otero Mesa is currently the most threatened wild place in New Mexico. Spurred on by industry, and despite overwhelming public comment opposing the proposal, the BLM has plans for oil and gas development in one of the most biologically important areas of the State (see Otero Mesa in *Call of the Wild*, Autumn 2001). The Bush Administration went so far as to send BLM representatives from Washington, DC to try to "streamline" the leasing process in Las Cruces. According to our sources, the development of more than 260,000 acres of Otero Mesa is a "top priority" for Interior Secretary Gale Norton. Such a move would effectively create a second "Farmington".

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is organizing opposition to this proposal. We have begun with an intensive inventory of this remnant Chihuahuan Desert Grassland. In early November 2001, we transferred our findings to GIS mapping and were thrilled to discover 450,000 acres of

Wilderness-quality lands in the Otero area! On 13 November 2001, we organized a meeting of local and regional environmental, hunting and community interests to discuss our options.

The BLM is reviewing all comments garnered during the last comment period, as it prepares its final environmental impact statement (EIS), due in February 2002. With so little time left

in the process, we are currently investigating every angle to halt the drilling.

Please be on the lookout for online or mailer updates of how you can help protect Otero Mesa in the coming months.

4-Wheelers Reintroduce R.S. 2477 Claim

On 28 August 2001, United States District Court Judge Leroy Hansen dismissed a federal lawsuit in which the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance intervened on behalf of the BLM. The case Southwest Four Wheel Drive Association vs. BLM came about when the BLM closed ORV trails entering the Robledos Wilderness Study Area. The BLM enacted these emergency closures to protect the WSA from impairment and undue degradation caused by ORVs.

Local Las Cruces four-wheel drive groups immediately filed suit against the BLM claiming a right to destroy the WSA based on R.S. 2477, an antiquated mining law. The four-wheelers brought this suit despite the agency having established an extensive ORV use area immediately outside the WSA. Judge Hansen dismissed the case because the four-wheel drive associations did not make their claim under the proper federal statute.

Unfortunately, victory that came with the dismissal was short-lived.

Judge Hansen's order allowed the four-wheel drive associations to amend their complaint to correct their original mistake. The four-wheel drive associations filed their amended complaint on 27 September 2001, bringing the case back into the active status. As of mid-November 2001, we are waiting for the Court to establish a schedule for filing additional legal briefs and a trial date. Until then, four-wheelers do not have access to ORV routes within the WSA.

Wilderness Spotlight

The Chihuahuan Desert—Close, But a Well Kept Secret

The Chihuahuan Desert is one of New Mexico's major ecosystems and is well represented in the wildlands of the South Central Desert Region centered around Las Cruces—New Mexico's third largest city and among the nation's fastest growing. No Wilderness has been formally designated here, but several BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) exist within an hour's drive of the city. In addition to these, several areas of *de facto* Wilderness exist here, although as with the acreage held by White Sands Missile Range, public entry is often forbidden.

The most conspicuous of these WSAs is within the BLM's Organ Mountains, whose dramatic spires, reminiscent of an organ's huge pipes (hence the name), are a dramatic backdrop for the city immediately to the west. The mountains, however, are generally too small, rugged and hot to provide the recreational escape that the Sandia Mountains do for Albuquerque. Moreover, large sections are within the missile range or otherwise off-limits.

Still, easy access and high visibility mean the Organs receive intense recreational use, especially by rock climbers—the climbing here is among the State's best, and a small but well developed hiking trail network exists here.

The mountains are wonderfully scenic, and I can think of no better place to discover the varied and interesting plants of the Chihuahuan Desert—alligator juniper, sotol, mountain mahogany, prickly pear cactus, Apache plume, squawbush, mesquite, and many more.

Water is scarce here, although a few springs and intermittent streams exist. The Organ Mountains' small size and brief trails argue against backpacking, unless, of course, one simply wishes to hike a short distance and spend a magnificent night beneath the stars. (Why do we always associate backpacking with long hikes?)

In contrast to the Organ Mountains, the region's other wildlands are little known and seldom visited. Southwest of Las Cruces and northwest of El Paso are several large BLM Wilderness Study Areas that, except for geologists, naturalists, and a few local outdoor recreationists, are little known to hikers. These wildlands include:

- the West Potrillo Mountains,
- Mount Riley, and
- the Aden Lava Flow—all volcanic in origin.

Access is often difficult, although not impossible; the main reason these areas receive so little attention is that they simply don't appear at first glance to be inviting. After all, who would want to hike on a lava flow in southern New Mexico when the Organ Mountains are closer at hand? Still, among the lessons Wilderness has for us is that, beyond surface appearances, things exist that are far more interesting and important than we'd ever imagined.

This is especially true in the Robledo Mountains and the Las Uvas Mountains BLM Wilderness Study Areas, northwest of Las Cruces. These are true desert mountains, where yucca stalks sometimes rival the height of trees (which are scarce). In the Robledos, the WSA is primarily on the mountains' western side. Seemingly featureless hills

are carpeted with creosote bush and mesquite, and dotted with huge barrel cacti. Mule deer abound, and some hikers report seeing oryx, an exotic species that has colonized here from White Sands Missile Range to the east. The Robledos are a good destination for day hikers.

The Las Uvas Mountains to the northwest have more difficult access and terrain. Here high sandstone bluffs overlook much the same vegetation as in the Robledos. Engraved on canyon walls in some drainages (usually dry) are petroglyphs made by the prehistoric Jornada-Mogollon Culture.

These are do-it-yourself Wildernesses. Again, there are no designated trails, but simply following an arroyo or a ridge is sure to lead to something interesting. Water is scarce. But for these reasons alone these mountains are wild. No park ranger will ask for your back country permit; you won't be assigned a campsite; no one will care how long you stay or where you go—and no one

will intrude upon your solitude. If you're among those who seek in Wilderness the excitement of discovery, you'll find much here to reward you.

Still further north are the Caballo Mountains, east of the Rio Grande and south of Truth or Consequences. Like the Robledos, these mountains are long sinuous, pale sedimentary layers. The Caballo Mountains are laced with numerous roads and mining claims, causing the BLM to drop the Caballos from Wilderness consideration, but the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance knows they deserve another look.

Unfortunately, the Chihuahuan Desert plant and wildlife populations have been in steady decline for decades. The WSAs that are apart of this special ecosystem must be protected as Wilderness.

—by Bob Julian
from New Mexico Wilderness Areas:
The Complete Guide,
Westcliffe Publishing (1998). 319 p.



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*No park ranger will ask
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and no one will intrude upon your solitude.*

Off the Path, On the Way

Wandering through the mountains and canyons of New Mexico has long been a source of deep pleasure, as well as a time when I am least troubled and most accepting of my life. On one of these hikes it occurred to me that walking off trail in the Wilderness is a good metaphor for Zen practice and might be a way that I, as a Zen teacher, could help Zen students deepen their practice and increase their appreciation of the Buddha Way. To implement this notion, I came up with a one-day Wilderness teaching that I call "Off the Path, On the Way."

Paths go to places or through places. If you want to become intimate with a place, you must leave the trail. You can walk absent-mindedly on a trail; off trail you must pay attention. How do I cross this rock face, get past this fallen tree, ford this stream? Where do I put my foot, my hand; how do I move in harmony with and counterpoint to the terrain?

Off trail are wonders seldom seen near the trail—a currant bush loaded with berries, a delicate woodland orchid, a deer bedded for the day, a porcupine curled up in a tree, a log collapsed in decay, supporting a marvelous garden of new life. After some time of traversing this territory

with the mindfulness essential to my safety, I reach a state where everything presents to my perceptions without labels. In Buddhism, we sometimes refer to this as the experience of Suchness.

In preparation for this hike, I give my students a quote, usually from Zen Buddhist literature. One such quote, from the 13th Century Japanese Zen Master and poet, Dogen Zenji, says, "To carry yourself forward to experience myriad things is delusion. That myriad things come forth and experience themselves is awakening." I hope my companions will have some awareness of this during our walk—the self vanishing in full attention to the experience of place.

We begin the walk on trail, walking in silence. At some point, I lead us off trail and our pace necessarily becomes slower, more mindful. After walking for three hours or so, I position the participants so that everyone can have an hour's experience of solitude. At the end of this hour, I reassemble everyone in some place that seems especially evocative of the territory we have traversed for council. Council is simply a means of sharing that includes talking and listening and excludes discussion. In the safe emotional space created by Council, people are able to share their

experience of the day without fear of criticism or judgment.

I tell my students that there is a Zen Path and that I can guide them along that path, but the Path is not the Way. Lao Tzu said, "The Tao that can be named is not the Tao." Each person's realization of the Way is unique and personal, and one who has some realization will recognize another's realization with appreciation and gratitude. Going off the path, into the Wilderness of one's own mind, is a crucial aspect of Zen practice.

Hiking off trail has taught me some useful truths about life:

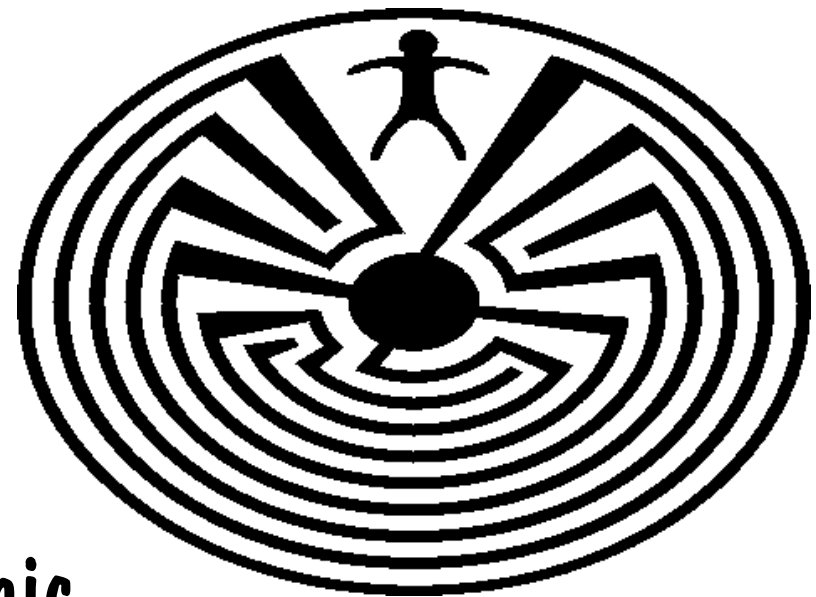
- It will never work out according to plan.

- There is always a way.
- Obstacles are also opportunities.
- I will be humbled.

One of my greatest pleasures is walking alone off trail in Wilderness. Being able to share this pleasure is immensely satisfying. I look forward to many more excursions, alone and with others, through Wilderness terrain that I do not know and that I discover to be no other than myself.

T.S. Elliot speaks eloquently to this experience when he writes, "We shall not cease from exploration/And the end of all our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time."

—by Sydney Walter
NMWA member



Teaching Kids a Wilderness Ethic

Our high school, Jemez Valley, has a Spanish exchange program. For two weeks each fall, we host twelve students from Spain. We take them on field trips all over central New Mexico, admit them as new students in our classrooms, and take them to basketball games and movies. In April, twelve of our students visit Spain to do the same.

Recently, in one of the biology classes I teach, we found ourselves discussing American's lack of compassion for Afghani civilians.

"We don't know them," my students said, "so we don't care." I asked how they would feel if a bomb destroyed Madrid.

"We'd be really worried. We've been there, and we know those people," they replied.

When I question the role schools ought to play in fostering a land ethic and a sense of respect for Wilderness, this discussion haunts me. I know Wilderness is solace, is respite, and needs to be defended. But the majority of my students do not know the Wilderness, and therefore, they don't care. In a traditional school, is fostering a connection to Wilderness my job? Do solace, respite and compassion for the wild have a place in traditional schools? What should we, and I, be teaching our children?

In defense of teaching a Wilderness ethic is the Wilderness Charter School, a small program within a large high school in Ashland, Oregon. Last year, I taught science and English at the Charter School. Both subjects are easily integrated into a curriculum that focuses on Wilderness, self, community, and sustainability. We tried to get kids into the Wilderness and on the land as much as possible. We opened and closed our year with a 14-day backpacking trip into remote Wilderness areas like the Marble Mountains and the Yolla Bollys, both in northern California. We studied permaculture by creating and working a small school garden. We did forest restoration projects, water-quality monitoring, attended conferences, and hiked, and hiked. At the same time, we also wrote papers, read books, and kept up with Oregon State educational standards and benchmarks. We asked different questions than those in traditional schools: Who are we? Where are we? What can we learn from this place? What we did seems incongruent with the goals of traditional education, but what we learned could not have been more harmonious.

In the Wilderness, we learned to find clarity, to discern the essential questions, to illuminate inquiry, and to find solutions. We learned about ourselves, especially with respect to our surround-

ings. We learned how to work together and how to make positive change. We learned the political process and the power of our words—persuasive essays became newspaper editorials, research papers became public comments for Forest Service Environmental Impact Statements.

Aren't these the things schools should be teaching—essential questions, communication, citizenship, empowerment, awareness, cooperation, and the ability to act? Of course, not all our students will become green activists. But the next time they hear about a timber sale or learn of a new species being federally listed, their experiences will foster empathy. The next time they get a chance to vote on an environmental issue, their personal knowledge of the Wilderness will guide their decisions. They carry with them diverse experiences, lessons, and perspectives of Wilderness and their world.

I write this beneath piles of biology textbooks, tests, homework assignments, papers, and New Mexico science content standards. I am almost half-way through my first year teaching in a traditional high school in rural New Mexico and am still just barely a day ahead of my students. I am still trying to gain the confidence of administrators and colleagues. I feel pressure to continue the tradition of textbook learning

for its secure sense of control and consistency. How do I make a place for Wilderness experiences, values, and ethics in this traditional classroom? How do I create the safe space for my students to discover their world—and themselves—through the amazing landscapes of their backyards?

I want my students to engage the unknown, to be familiar with the world around them so they care about what happens to it. I feel that desire every time I read the paper, listen to the radio, or walk in the woods. I feel that this is important, especially at our school, where delicate tarantulas skirt the edges of outbuildings, where eight-inch tiger salamanders take minor wrong turns and end up on the floor of my classroom, where stunning red rock canyons cradle our small school. Especially at our school, whose students have run those red dirt trails for miles, as cross country state champs and ambassadors of their age-old cultures. In today's volatile world, we are lucky in the Jemez Valley to be surrounded by such solace. More than ever, it is time to facilitate an exchange program with the Wilderness, to bridge the gap, to gain some clarity.

—by Anna Gahl
Jemez Valley High School
Biology Teacher

Inventory Update

Great Old Broads for Wilderness Come to New Mexico

The Great Old Broads for Wilderness (GOBW) is a non-profit group whose focus is the protection of Wilderness lands all across America. They have more than 1,500 members in all 50 states and other countries. Their members are all ages and of both genders—and they are quick to point out that “Broadness is a state of mind.”

Every year in the early fall they have an annual Broadwalk—a week of getting out to wild places to hike, explore and learn about the issues threatening that area’s wildness. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance was fortunate that this year the Broads chose the Land of Enchantment for their Broadwalk. M.B. McAfee, Executive Director for GOBW, contacted NMWA early this summer to ask what issues are affecting wildlands in New Mexico. We directed her to Otero Mesa, explaining that this was one of the most undeveloped areas in the Lower 48 and it was gravely threatened by potential oil and gas development.

Oliver Lee State Park, south of Alamogordo, was base camp for this year’s Broadwalk, which took place from 30 September-4 October. More than 30 Broads from all over America and one from Germany came to the event. Many had never been to New Mexico before and some had never spent much time in the desert, but all came with the right mix of attitude and wisdom that made them appreciative of the subtle beauty of the Chihuahuan Desert and eager to learn about it.

The first outing was out onto Otero Mesa itself. In the morning, the Broads met up with Rafael Corral, Ecologist for McGregor Range, and Dave Raines, Range Rider on McGregor Range, who

gave a guided tour of the grasslands of Otero Mesa in an area that is co-managed by the military and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Though grazed by cattle, these are some of the healthiest grasslands remaining in the Chihuahuan Desert, due in part to the stricter management of the military. Many of the Broads were amazed to be looking at a plant ecosystem that was still intact with its original flora. Not one invasive/non-native species was spotted on the tour.

*Their members are all ages and of both genders—
and they are quick to point out that
“Broadness is a state of mind.”*

After the tour, the Broads met with Tom Phillips from the Las Cruces District BLM to learn about the oil and gas development that threatens this prized piece of the Chihuahuan Desert. On a hilltop overlooking the area proposed for development, Tom showed maps of lease requests by the oil and gas industry and talked about what BLM is doing to facilitate industry requests while trying to preserve the natural state of the area. The Broads, skeptical of such a task, pointed out the Wilderness qualities of the area and affirmed that BLM should work to preserve those qualities.

The second day was spent hiking into canyons of the Sacramento Escarpment, learning about the flora and fauna. On the following day, a second trip to the Otero Mesa area was thwarted when the road to the area was closed by the military, likely because of stepped-up

training related to the tragedy of September 11th. Being that they are Great Old Broads, not one complaint was heard about having to drive back to camp. Folks simply adjusted and looked forward to another day of hiking around the Sacramento Escarpment.

Evenings during the Broadwalk were spent enjoying the wonderful sunset views from Oliver Lee State Park while having dinner, followed by campfire talks. The first one was delivered by Greta Balderrama, NMWA volunteer



extraordinaire, who told of her horseback rides in the desert outside of El Paso that probably gave her the passion she has for saving Otero Mesa. Charlie Lee, grandson of Oliver Lee and now a rancher in the Otero Mesa area, visited the next night to give his views on the current state of ranching, environmentalism, and the impact oil and gas will have on his operations. On the last evening, Melyssa Watson of the Wilderness Support Center summarized legislative wilderness activities going on all across the country.

As all good things must, this wonderful week spent with wonderful people came to an end. The last day arrived, and folks packed up and headed back to wherever they had come from. M.B. McAfee sent a follow-up letter out to everyone after the event was over. This excerpt captures the spirit of the week:

“We really have to sit still and quiet ourselves and then the memories of our wonderful gathering with you all in New Mexico crystallize and we can again feel the warm caress of the desert wind on our faces, see the full moon rising above the stark escarpment of the Sacramento Mountains, feel the scratches from wandering among those thorny plants of the Chihuahuan desert, and remember the time spent with all of you at this year’s Broadwalk.”

To learn more about Great Old Broads for Wilderness, visit their web site (www.greatoldbroads.org), call (970/385-9577; fax 970/259-8303), or write (mb@greatoldbroads.org; Great Old Broads for Wilderness, P.O. Box 2824, 863 1/2 Main Avenue, Durango CO 81302).

—by Michael Scialdone
NMWA staff

Mark Your Calendars!!

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance had another great year of volunteer weekend outings. Over the 26-28 October 2001 weekend, we wrapped up the year’s outings in the Sacramento Mountains. A car-camping group stayed in the mountains and hiked the canyons. A second group headed out to a ridge overlooking Otero Mesa and backpacked in. Perfect weather and classic New Mexico sunsets awarded those who came out.

Our volunteer weekends involve trekking out to New Mexico’s wilds, setting up a central base camp, and spending the days:

- documenting impacts to define the boundaries of potential Wilderness area, or
- capturing the characteristics that make the area suitable for Wilderness designation.

The outings are a fun way to see new places and meet new faces.

We are setting next year’s schedule

well in advance, so mark your calendars! In addition to these outings, we will host our annual conference in the spring and day hikes throughout the year. If you would like to lead a day hike outing, please call us.

For more information, call our Inventory Coordinator Michael Scialdone (505/843-8696), or add your name to our email alert-list by sending an email to nmwa@nmwild.org. Two or three weeks before an outing, we send complete information including directions to our campsite.



NMWA Outings for 2002

15-18 February—Otero Mesa. Spend Presidents’ Day weekend with us southeast of Alamogordo. This seldom-visited gem of the Chihuahuan Desert is gravely threatened by oil and gas development (see page 3 and *Call of the Wild* Autumn 2001). 5 hours from Albuquerque, 3.5 hours from Las Cruces.

26-28 April—Cabezon Country. Spend a weekend in this wild and varied landscape (see page 3 and *Call of the Wild* Autumn 2001 to learn more about our efforts to permanently protect this area). 1.5 hours from Albuquerque, 5 hours from Las Cruces.

24-27 May—Blue Range. Spend Memorial Day weekend on the Arizona border near Glenwood. Hopefully wolves will keep us company. 4-4.5 hours from Albuquerque and Las Cruces.

21-23 June—Sacrament Mountains. Spend Summer Solstice in the pines of the mountains east of Alamogordo. 3.5 hours from Albuquerque, 2 hours from Las Cruces.

30 August-2 September—Sabinoso. Backpack in to this little visited WSA in the northeast part of New Mexico along the Canadian River. 3.5 hours from Albuquerque, 7 hours from Las Cruces.

October 25-27—Peloncillos Mountains. Four major ecozones converge here, in the SW corner of the Bootheel. A jaguar was photographed here in 1997. Come explore and learn about NMWA and Sky Island Alliance efforts to protect this gem. 7 hours from Albuquerque, 3.5 from Las Cruces.

Ecosystem Diversity In New Mexico

Ecologists tend to view biological diversity at three levels—genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity. Genetic diversity resides within species, and species depend upon ecosystems. Our laws and policies, however, emphasize conservation of species. What is the status of ecosystem diversity in New Mexico?

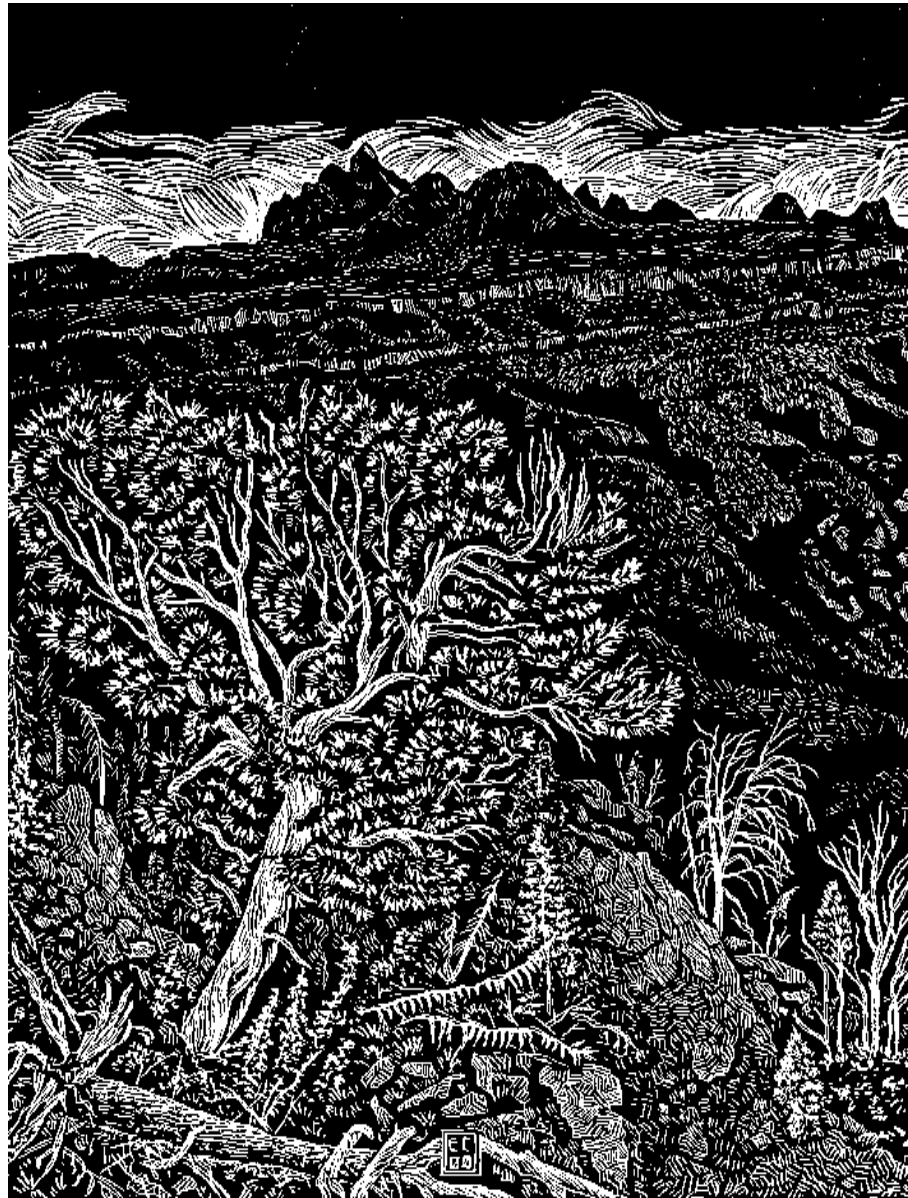
An ecosystem is a community of plants and animals and its associated physical environment. Ecosystems come in all sizes. For evaluating the status of biodiversity, we usually consider large ecosystems—namely vegetation communities such as grasslands or old growth conifer forests.

With its size and altitudinal range, New Mexico is one of the most biologically diverse states in the Union. Vegetation communities range from alpine tundra to Chihuahuan desert grasslands. One study claims more than 300 vegetation associations in New Mexico—more than can be addressed in this overview.

Biologists at New Mexico State University have evaluated the status of ecosystem diversity in our State in a program called “Gap Analysis”. Unfortunately, this study has attracted little attention, especially among the general public. The study recognized more than 40 major ecosystems, including 33 vegetation communities, and rivers and playas. The largest of these is short-grass prairie, comprising almost 20% of the State. In contrast, some ecosystems are rare in New Mexico. We have only a few square miles of Madrean pine forest and oak/manzanita chaparral, and only a little more of Rocky Mountain forest/shrub wetland, alpine grass-tundra, and sedge/rush wetland.

Each major ecosystem supports a unique combination of plants, animals and microorganisms. Also, each has both young and mature stages of development, such as regenerating and old growth forests, with differing combinations of plants and animals. To maintain its biodiversity, an area must be large enough to include these variations. As areas of mature vegetation are disturbed and regenerated, other areas replace them by growing to maturity.

Within and among ecosystems, species interact with each other and their physical environments. These interactions include foraging, predation, disease, scavenging, pollination, seed dispersal, fire, flooding and floodplain dynamics, hydrologic and nutrient cycles, succession and soil development. Species are thus tied to each other and to their environment in an immensely complex web of relationships that have evolved over great time. Native species have evolved to persist within the natural variation of such processes. “Natural” is defined as existing without, or with minimal impact from, modern humans. Naturalness is not merely an emotional idea promoted by environmentalists. The evolution of every species occurred mostly before



*With its size and altitudinal range,
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states in the Union.*

modern humans were a factor. Consequently, species are adapted to, and somewhat dependent upon, ecosystems that are natural.

Extirpation of native species, introduction of exotic species, or human-caused changes in the physical environment may alter, interrupt or diminish natural ecosystem processes. Numerous departures from naturalness cause the complex internal mechanisms of an ecosystem to unravel. The resulting degraded, simpler ecosystem will be less resilient to changes in its physical environment. Biodiversity is diminished when ecosystems are lost or degraded. They may be abruptly replaced by human developments. More often, natural ecosystems are gradually degraded until they no longer support many of their associated species.

Areas such as National Parks and Wilderness have been set aside to maintain natural biodiversity. The Gap study estimated that about 7% of New Mexico is

reserved for this purpose. Some native ecosystems are absent or scarce in these reserves. These are Madrean pine forest, sedge/rush wetlands, tall-grass prairie, and shinoak sand-scrub. Other ecosystems—mid-grass prairie, Great Basin swale/lowland, short-grass prairie and oak/manzanita chaparral—also have less than 5% of their areas in reserves. These ecosystems, and free-flowing rivers, are among the most endangered ecosystems in New Mexico.

It might be argued that short, tall, and mid-grass prairie ecosystems are so large in our State that any preservation in reserves is unnecessary. The Gap study, however, did not measure the quality or degradation of ecosystems. We know that several species of grassland birds have declined, indicating that our grasslands have been modified substantially from natural conditions. Prudence suggests that we need to reserve samples of even the largest ecosystems if we are to preserve the

biodiversity of New Mexico for future generations to use and enjoy.

A stated purpose of the federal Endangered Species Act is to conserve the ecosystems upon which threatened and endangered species depend. Species must be federally listed as threatened or endangered before the Act can be most effective in achieving this goal. Usually, ecosystem degradation has already occurred before species are listed. In New Mexico, ecosystem conservation under the Act has been limited to federal lands, or where federal funds are involved in land management. While application of the Act on federal lands has been controversial, its potential application on private lands has been downright acrimonious. Opposition to federal listings has caused some species to remain as “candidates” for more than 10 years. Efforts of the Fish and Wildlife Service to work with private landowners to conserve candidate species have been hampered by mistrust of the federal government and by lack of funding.

In the New Mexico endangered species law, the Wildlife Conservation Act, the term “ecosystem” is defined, but never used. State law does not mandate conservation of ecosystems. It authorizes the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to acquire habitat for state-listed threatened and endangered species; but this activity has rarely been funded by the state legislature and it applies only to species that have already been listed. The state law is ineffective for conserving ecosystem diversity.

Ecosystem preservation is basic to the conservation of biodiversity. We cannot conserve genetic or species diversity without providing for the ecosystems upon which species depend. Moreover, natural ecosystems provide special aesthetic, historical, recreational and economic values. They are the stage upon which the drama of life has been played. Our lives are being diminished by the loss of ecosystem diversity in New Mexico. When our grandchildren ask, “Where are the prairies that greeted the first New Mexicans?” We will have to answer, “They are gone.”

—by Jim Bailey

At the Solstice

Winter grips the land.
Now it is here,

the darkest time
of the changing year

farthest from spring
and yet most near.

—R.W. French

Feature

Lesson at the Falls—Letting the Place Find Me

I was in the Jemez Mountains, writing about and photographing New Mexico waterfalls, when I decided to stop and become acquainted with Jemez Falls. From the parking lot, I followed a short trail to an overlook. As efficiently as possible, I set up my tripod and camera, adjusted the settings, then took several shots. Yep, that should do it. I paused a moment to look at the fall, then packed my gear and left. If I hurried, I could bag another fall that day.

Only later did I realize that, if someone had asked me for details about Jemez Falls, I'd have been as ignorant as if I'd never been there at all. Did the water descend into a pool, or onto rocks? What geology created the fall? What plants grew around its moist bottom? What sounds did it make? To all such questions, all that I can plead is, "Beats me."

Finding peace in Wilderness is a lot like getting acquainted with a waterfall—if we aren't willing to slow down, even stop, we're apt to miss it completely.

Wilderness is replete with the elements evocative of peace—natural rhythms, beautiful scenery, quiet. When was the last time anyone was in a noisy Wilderness? But these elements are as nothing if we aren't open to them.

And too often we aren't. Instead, we bring to Wilderness the familiar patterns that keep us distracted at home—scheduling, planning, comparing, talking, photographing—and above all, keeping always in motion, whether hiking or puttering around camp. Things to do, places to go. Busy.

Just as I was at Jemez Falls.

After that incident, I vowed I'd never again visit a new waterfall without spending at least half an hour, not including photography, just being with the waterfall.

So some months later, working on the same project, I found myself sitting near Lower Frijoles Falls, keeping that vow. I noted the details about the waterfall—color, sound, geology, etc.—but that took only a few moments, leaving me with ample time just to sit there.

That's what I was doing when suddenly I realized I was seeing not just one fall but two—one of water, the other of rocks. Rock fragments from cliffs above me were plunging downward just like water in the stream, but at a different time scale. Had I been able to measure time in centuries rather than seconds, I would have beheld a cascade of rocks at least as impressive as the waterfall.

It was a revelation, a breakthrough in perspective. It brought a deep satisfaction, a sense of finally seeing what I needed to see. And all it had required was simply being there.

That's how it is with finding peace in the Wilderness; it's always there, if we're willing to stop and let it find us.

—by Bob Julian
NMWA member



"The only Zen you find on the tops of mountains is the Zen you bring up there."

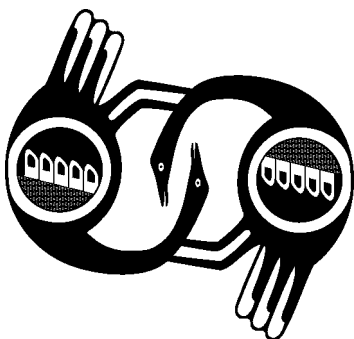
—Robert M. Pirnie

September 11,
2001

Early and sudden
the land turned gray,
the color of steel.

And then at night
it glowed like bones
under a blood-red moon.

—R.W. French



Finding Peace in Wilderness— Escaping the Battlefield of Modern Life

The concept of needing a quiet place or some personal peace has taken on new meaning in recent months. The attack on the twin towers left many people shaken and confused. Yet for some, an important first step in their personal recovery was getting back to nature. Gale Norton told a meeting of outdoor writers that, in the two weeks following the attacks, visitation to our National Parks and Forests more than doubled. In nature, many have been able to find the grounding and peace of mind that was shattered by the bombing and further violence that has occurred since September 11th.

Be it forest, desert, wild river or mountain top, the connection to earth, plant, water, animal and sky have a profound effect on our psyche. In times of stress or loss, a hike or time away from the modern world can help to rejuvenate the spirit or clear the mind.

In these times of war and uncertainty, it's not only important, but also reassuring, to go into Wilderness and wild country to smell, see and feel the energy that nature gives our soul.

As the bombings continue and even getting your mail becomes an experience, the words of Thoreau have perhaps never been more profound. "In wildness is the preservation of the

"In wildness is the preservation of the World."

—Henry David Thoreau

Emotionally, whether we realize it or not, the constant barrage of coverage, the graphic images on television, the constant threats and bravado affect our consciousness. Taking a hike, listening to silence, studying tracks in the mud, smelling the creosote after a sudden storm, or seeing the fall colors change on the aspen can be a bandaid to these emotionally draining events. In our modern world, it is the therapy for life.

World." In the uncharted waters following September 11th, these words, like the Wilderness they speak for, are an anchor to hold on to. They give hope and remind us that we are not one nation, but a collected part of a larger planet. Perhaps another way to say it is: In Wildness is the renewal of spirit, and from this comes our best chance for sanity.

—by Stephen Capra, NMWA staff

Spirit Guides

The day started like most field days working for the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance—my mind focused on documenting as many human impacts and miles of road as possible. I spend most of my days on the fringes of the wild Chihuahuan Desert landscape—seeking the remnants of nature in a landscape that is generally under-appreciated and often thought of as barren and worthless. Despite the numerous stock tanks and windmills, isolated attempts at mining, and miles of destructive, eroded ORV trails with no real purpose, I find peace and solace in this incredibly diverse desert. Somehow, nature is persevering in a place that most people think of as uninviting or look upon only as a resource to be exploited.

On this particular day, I had been feeling a little depressed—precious few seemed to recognize the unique qualities of this desert. Was I the only one dedicated to preserving the wildness and special character of this landscape? I know in my heart that I am not the only one. Doing field work is how I best contribute to protecting what is left. But this day was not to be like most days in the field....

I stand near the Arizona-New Mexico border, just north of the Gila River. The landscape consists of a series of 5-6,000' creosote-covered mesas dissected by deep cutting arroyos, gradually transporting the upland landscape down to the Gila River. In the distance, a spectacular granitic formation rises dramatically 1,000' above the mesas, forming a visual focal point for my day. I think to myself, "this landscape has real potential to remain Wilderness."

The first indication that this day might be unique occurs when I decide to take a closer look at my map. As I pull to the side of the road and stop, I look off to the west just in time to spot a coyote a short distance away—simply staring at me. I am near enough so that I see her eyes focused directly upon me, but she neither moves nor seems concerned by my presence. Finishing my map reading, I set off down the road again, glancing back briefly to see the coyote still there calmly regarding me. I continue on and decide to drive out to the farthest point of the maintained road to document a route shown on the map as having access to an old mining site.

As I reach my destination at the far end of the road, I am relieved to see that the road I came to document is completely abandoned. I leave my truck behind and walk along the remnants of the route shown on the map. Following the old, revegetating path is difficult, but I am compelled to find the historic mining site revealed on the map. The abandoned route follows the drainage up a narrow canyon, and I am surprised to see flowing water in sections of this sandy wash in desert country.

Soon I come upon a mine-shaft, a tunnel running into the hillside



perpendicular to the canyon drainage. As I near the shaft, a rock falls in the tunnel and I step back, somewhat startled by the abrupt break in the silence. But, logic overrules imagination—it must have sounded larger than it was. Reassuring myself, I step out directly in front of the shaft and document the opening with my camera. A few steps away, I poise to take another photo to show that there are no tailings or other major impacts from the old mining effort.

As I raise my camera, a large Black Bear rushes out of the tunnel and turns toward me, obviously annoyed at my presence. Motionless, in awe, merely a dozen or so feet away from this magnificent animal, I stand. She snorts at me twice, seeming to say, "why did you disturb my nap in the heat of the day?" I have no answer, I am the trespasser. She trots off down the canyon in disgust. I take a reviving breath and finally have the presence of mind to click off a photo of her back end as she departs.

Hiking back down the canyon, adrenaline racing through my veins, I feel more alive than ever. What an experience! The depression I felt earlier fades somewhat as I realize the opportunity to experience nature I've just encountered. I walk gratefully back to my vehicle and slowly drive back down the maintained road—amazed and astonished by what just happened.

It is only early afternoon, so I locate the last inventory mission on my map. It is another route that intrudes the area, apparently accessing a stock pond near the steep cliff formation that defines the area. This route drops off the mesa steeply to a grove of cottonwoods in the canyon below.

There, as I cross the dry stream bed, a large horned owl swoops down out of a cottonwood tree directly in front of me, gracefully gliding over to perch on a rock outcropping of the rough canyon wall. I pause to admire the great bird as he studies me and think to myself how unusual it is to cross paths with so many splendid animals in the same day.

Taking leave of my avian acquaintance, I continue down the canyon following the route as it becomes less

traveled. I discover a developed spring that appeared on the map. As I emerge from the truck to take photos, I catch the sound of hawks calling out directly above me, but maintain my course toward what looks like an old windmill with the mill missing from the top of the tower. Instead of the mill, it appears that a large nest resides there—complete with Red-tailed Hawk chick waiting patiently for her parents to bring her next meal. Out of respect for the hawks, I take my photos as quickly as possible and move along the route to the ridge above.

I follow the map line along the ridge for a short distance before dropping down to yet another canyon and stock pond. Completing my mission, I pause along the grassy ridge to watch the sun set over this amazing place. Though this inventory area is rather small, it does meet the criteria for Wilderness, and a feeling of satisfaction comes over me. Discovering a special wild place not yet recognized by the BLM coupled with today's events has created a sense of peace within me that was absent when the day began. As the cliffs behind me begin turning various shades of desert pink, a glance down into a side canyon reveals a family of five or six javalinas tumbling down the open slope and heading for dense cover in the canyon bottom. Clearly, this was meant to be my day to commune with wildlife.

I would like to say the story ends there, on a natural note—but there is more. After thoroughly enjoying the sunset, I proceeded to meet a fellow field worker at our designated camping spot for the night. But, I never made it. On the way, I lost control of my truck on a well graded gravel road and rolled completely over. I don't remember exactly what happened once I began sliding off the road, but the next thing I knew, I had flipped all the way over and was upright again. The cab of the truck was totally smashed in and the windows broken out, but I was miraculously okay.

I crawled out of a broken window and double-checked myself—but appeared to have only a minor scrape on my wrist.

Feature

Since that day, I've often thought about what the events of the day might mean. Perhaps it could all be chocked up to coincidence, but I tend to think there is much more to it than that. My wondering came full circle recently when two friends shed some light on the whole incredible experience for me.

On this day in the Wilderness, I met five fellow spirits, and each one had a message for me.

"We are your five Spirit Guides.

Coyote—"I am a great teacher and this is the wisdom I pass on to you.

It is important to work diligently, but you must learn to relax and enjoy your playful side. Like me you are a survivor, and so you must remain mindful of the importance of deep level enjoyment. Learn from me how to be truly playful, and you will, in turn, be led along paths of happiness and peace.

Black Bear—"I am here to remind you to be reflective. Look deep within and release your strengths your quietness, your courage, your peaceful nature. All of these will serve you well as you brave new challenges along your spiritual path. Inner strength, that is the key.

Owl—"Trust your intuition and instincts. Confront your shadow self and whatever you fear, so you can be free. Confusion and conflict within will give way to clarity and peace. I give you eyes to see more—and the ability to discover unspoken words.

Hawk—"I am the bearer of awareness and attention. I instruct my young how to see the small things within the totality, to be intuitive, observant, and patient. You too can teach these qualities to others. Continue to share yourself with others, and you will be filled with increased energy and passion for life. Call on me, brother, for strength and endurance.

Javalina—"You are going to enter a period of Growth and prosperity, in which your courage and faithfulness will be increased. You will find new inspiration and value in the connectedness of life... the details most people do not even notice. And thus you will fully benefit from your life situations and experiences.

"So say your five Spirit Guides: We dwell within, beside and nearby—radiating clarity, peace, connectedness, playfulness, composure, and courage. May the awareness of our gifts be ever present in you."

—by Greg Magee, NMWA staff with invaluable insight from NMWA members Jane Robertson & T.J. Reilly

A Wildlands Vision Becomes a Conservation Reality

Safeguarding native biodiversity through protecting and connecting vast wildlands areas has long been one of the visionary principles of conservation biology. Now, for the first time, on-the-ground efforts to implement such a "wildlands network" are turning this vision into reality in the biologically unique Sky Islands region of southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico and northern Mexico.

The Sky Islands Wildlands Network Conservation Plan, the product of seven years of research and writing by the Wildlands Project and its partners—Sky Island Alliance, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, and Naturalia—now stands as the prototype for future wildlands network conservation plans around the continent. As the first large-scale conservation plan to be based on the science of rewilding—a strategy to protect and connect core wildlands ecosystems in order to sustain large carnivores and other important keystone species—the Sky Islands plan has not only made conservation history, it also has become the first practical laboratory

for implementing wildlands projects in the field.

Since release of the Sky Islands proposal in September 2000, a network of organizations and individuals interested in carrying out its implementation is already demonstrating the power of the plan's slogan, "Networks of People Protecting Networks of Land." Of the plan's 75 suggested steps necessary for implementation, involving changes to management of lands held by a broad cross-section of private individuals, state and federal governments, and other agencies and organizations, many are already being accomplished:

- Sky Island Alliance has been cooperating with the Coronado National Forest to close non-designated forest roads;
- New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is completing a southern New Mexico public lands inventory in preparation for protection campaigns;
- the Wildlands Project is conducting an outreach program to encourage participation by private land own-

ers and is enlisting the support of land trusts to assist those owners in making private land protection decisions.

- Pima County (AZ) is looking at Sky Islands Wildlands Network maps as a key resource for its Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan;
- the Sonoran Institute is leading the effort to protect a critical "missing link" between the Las Cienegas NCA and the Rincon Mountain Wilderness (AZ);
- Turner Endangered Species Fund is reintroducing California condors at its Ladder Ranch in south-central New Mexico; and
- the Southeast Arizona Bird Observatory is identifying bird flyways and involving private landowners in ecotourism in the San Pedro River watershed in northern Sonora, Mexico.

And the list of Sky Islands implementation successes continues to grow.

"After a year of implementation work, it's clear that it will take generations to fully restore and protect the millions of

acres in the Sky Islands Wildlands Network," reminds Kim Vacariu, Southwest Representative for the Wildlands Project. But he points out that, no matter how long it may take to complete the project, eventual protection of ecosystem services like clean air and clean water, and preserving the opportunity for our children to see magnificent wildlife in undisturbed native habitats in the future will be worth it.

"As the process moves forward, progress will come one puzzle piece at a time," notes Vacariu. "But with each piece, the picture of a healthy, rewilded landscape will become more recognizable." Hopefully, the pioneering spirit of wildlands network implementation now underway in the Sky Islands region will help to heal a wounded landscape—and serve as a proving ground for implementation of other wildlands networks yet to come.

For more information about the Sky Islands Wildlands Network, contact the Wildlands Project's SW office in Tucson, Arizona (520/884-0875).

Conservationist's Prayer

Oh Great Spirit you entrust Nature to our care.
Now we ask you to help us care for her.

As Mother Earth provides food for us
Help us provide food for Mother Nature.
Help us to nourish her and keep her safe.

As the trees provide shelter and beauty
Help us shelter the trees from harm.
Help us protect the wilderness they call home.

As the plants provide medicine and fibers
Help us to nurture the plants.
Help us clothe them in protection so they may flourish.

As the creatures of the Earth provide us with freedom of spirit
Help us provide them with safe habitats.
Help us give back to them the freedom they give to our souls.

As the oceans, rivers and streams provide water
Help us quench their thirst for purity.
Help us protect all that call them home.

As the air gives us breath
Help us breathe freshness into the air.
Help us renew her as she renews us with her gentle breezes.

As Mother Nature makes us aware of her presence with the thunder and lightning of a summer storm
Help us make people aware of our debt to her.
Help us to be heard until the thunder of voices demanding her protection becomes too loud to be ignored.

As Mother Nature provides us with the gifts of beauty and peace
Help us provide her with the gift of respect.
Help us realize our connection to her.

And lastly, Great Spirit,
As Mother Nature accepts our ravagings yet still embraces us
Help us accept our responsibility to her.
Help us embrace her, respect her, and humbly take our place as her protectors, her caretakers, her voice.

—Mary E. Kenny

Coalition of Groups Defends Southwestern Forests

On 5 September 2001, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, Republicans for Environmental Protection, the Sierra Club and NMPIRG held a news conference to address the fate of millions of acres of National Forests in the Southwest and the fate of 58.5 million acres of Roadless National Forest lands throughout the nation.

In January 2001, after years of review, President Clinton signed the Roadless Policy into law. Approximately 1.6 million people (18,000 in New Mexico) had written to support the policy, and 600 public hearings yielded 95% sup-

port for the strongest possible protection. President Bush, however, rescinded the law as one of his first acts on Inauguration Day, claiming that there was not enough public input into the plan. The Forest Service reopened public comment for 60 more days, which ended in early September 2001 (see "Riding for Roadless", *Call of the Wild* Autumn 2001). Approximately 650,000 additional public comments were received in support of the Roadless Policy. Now it is up to President Bush to protect our forests.

For more information, contact Steve Capra 505/843-8696.



The Aplomado Falcon—Sentinel of a Vanishing Grassland

The northern aplomado falcon (*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*) is a medium-sized falcon distinguished by vibrant colors and dramatic striping. It has a striking lead gray crown, a black line behind the eye, and a thin black mustache. The white eyebrows join behind the head, and the cheeks and throat are creamy to whitish in color.

This falcon once inhabited much of South and Central America, Mexico, and the southernmost portion of the southwestern United States. It was considered fairly common in grassland communities of southern and western Texas, southern New Mexico, and southeastern Arizona—inhabiting desert and coastal grasslands, savannahs, and riparian woodlands in the midst of desert grasslands.

hual, Mexico. This population has been under scientific investigation since 1996 in an effort to provide valuable information for the return of this species to the southwestern United States. The study in Chihuahua, coupled with data from the United States, may help us to understand whether the populations in Mexico are stable enough to recolonize portions of their former range.

Causes for the falcons' decline in the southwestern United States may have included the loss and degradation of desert grassland habitat, poaching and egg collecting. While the latter two causes have been virtually eliminated, the degradation and loss of habitat continue today. Although there is considerable controversy, the prime factors commonly believed to have contributed

The [Peregrine] Fund plans to proceed soon with further reintroductions in western Texas and southern New Mexico.

As most of us hurry down the highways and byways of the southwest borderland, we often forget about the complex web of life functioning in these desert grasslands. The grasses themselves provide seeds to support several species of grassland birds as well as provide food and shelter to insects. The insects, in turn, provide food for other grassland birds. Top predators like the aplomado falcon are supported by these grassland bird populations.

The falcon populations, however, declined rapidly in the early 1900s; the magnificent bird was largely absent from the United States by 1940. The last known wild aplomado falcon nest in the United States was located near Deming, New Mexico in 1952. In 1986, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the aplomado falcon as an endangered species. Today, as a result of the Peregrine Fund reintroduction effort, aplomado falcons are being seen again in southern Texas.

While the aplomado falcon may not have bred in the United States for many years, sightings have been documented at the following locations:

- White Sands Missile Range in 1991 (a single bird);
- San Antonio, New Mexico and Marfa, Texas in 1992;
- Las Cruces, New Mexico in 1996 and again in 1999;
- Deming, New Mexico in 1997; and
- Otero Mesa, New Mexico in September 1999 (a banded juvenile).

In the Fall of 2000, a pair of aplomado falcons was found in southern New Mexico. This same pair nested in 2001, but the nest failed.

In 1992, a population of aplomado falcons was located less than 100 miles south of the border in northern Chihua-

to the degradation of the grasslands are:

- overgrazing by domestic livestock,
- fire suppression,
- change of climate,
- exotic plant competition, and
- overpopulation of rodents.

The first two factors are usually considered to have been the most damaging. While some land-management strategies have recently changed, the degradation continues; the challenge for land managers today is to maintain and restore historic desert grasslands.

Since the early 1990s, the Peregrine Fund has conducted an intensive aplomado falcon reintroduction program in southern Texas, north of Brownsville. In 1995, this program resulted in the first documented successful nest in the United States in more than four decades. In the 2001 nesting season, observers documented 33 pairs producing 22 nests. The Fund plans to proceed soon with further reintroductions in western Texas and southern New Mexico.

Perhaps with better land management, our southwestern desert grasslands can be enhanced to provide greater habitat for the aplomado falcon. This, along with the potential of recolonization and reintroduction, may allow the aplomado falcon to once again be a top predator and help restore balance to this important biological system. Then perhaps the aplomado falcon can return home to the border region of the southwestern United States and be the sentinel of a healthy grassland once again.

—by Robert Tafaelli
NMWA member



Latest Note from the Field

(20 October—1 November 2001)

(M—male, F—female, A—alpha pair, lower case letters—yearlings or pups)

Wildcat Pack (M578, M580)—After visiting the Lordsburg area, M578 has returned to the Silver City area. He has been located back in the Burro Mountains, but most recently, he moved north and was located northwest of Silver City. M580 has remained in Point of Pines on the San Carlos Reservation. We are attempting to remove him from the Reservation at the tribe's request. Campbell Blue Pack (AM166, AF592)—Both wolves were captured on 10 June 2001 due to livestock depredations. They remain in captivity at the Seville wolf facility. Mule Pack (AF189)—AF189 has not been located since 2 February 2001. Pipestem Pack (AM190, AF628, M627)—AM190 and AF628 remain together and continue to use the Elk Mountain and Snow Lake areas. Male 627 has not been located since 2 July 2000.

On 24 October 2001, M184 and M520 were transferred from the Ladder Ranch and Seville wolf facilities to the Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, Kansas. These two males are no longer potential release candidates, because of behavioral (would not pair bond) and physical (inability to breed) reasons.

The Mexican Wolf Reintroduction is a multi-agency cooperative effort involving the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Arizona Game & Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, USDA-Wildlife Services, U.S. Forest Service, and the Turner Endangered Species Fund. For more information, contact the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (505/248-6652, 520/367-4281; <http://mexicanwolf.fws.gov>). Call 888/459-9653 to report suspected livestock depredation, or incidents of take or harassment of wolves.

Get Involved

Española Road Closure Alert

The Española Ranger District in the Santa Fe National Forest has announced plans to temporarily close four roads in the Cerro Grande fire area for 2-5 years. The agency has three objectives:

- to ensure public safety—freezing and thawing associated with the winter may increase the hazard of soil and rock movement;
- to gather information to develop long-term strategies for proper transportation management in the area; and
- to allow for rehabilitation efforts (e.g., seeding, raking, erosion barriers) that will lead to reforestation of the Cerro Grande fire area.

Although District Ranger John Miera is receiving letters from locals in favor of keeping the roads open to the public, the Forest Service is currently proceeding with installation of gates to close the roads.

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is asking concerned Wilderness activists to show your support for the agency's decision to close these roads. Send letters to:

John Miera, District Ranger
Española Ranger District
USDA Forest Service
P.O. Box 3307
Española, NM 87532

NMWA Northern
Field Coordinator
Michael Scialdone
and
NMWA members
John Klingel
and Rich Besser
enjoying
a Wilderness
Characteristics
and Values
snowshoe in
Columbine Hondo
WSA.



Letters To the Editor

As part of our ongoing media efforts to excite, educate, influence and change public perception of conservation issues, we have often asked you to write to our elected officials (see box below). Writing a letter/week is a great habit. This remains the most important way any of us can really effect change. There is, however, another important avenue where average citizens' voices can carry additional weight—it is the "LTE"—your Letter to the Editor.

In New Mexico, elected officials closely monitor such letters, and they can affect the editorial content of any given paper. LTEs are short and to the point—150 words or less—sound bites in print. LTEs are crucial to the success of our campaigns, including Cabezón Country Wilderness, Otero Mesa protection, and our long-standing effort to protect the Arctic Refuge.

Pick up the *Journal*, *Current-Argus*, *Daily Record*, *Sun-News*, *Tribune* or the *Daily Times*—your LTE in any state or national paper can blunt criticism, spur action, or correct the inaccuracies of industry's constant propaganda machine. Once your letter is published, send that clipping to us and to your elected officials (Senator and Congressman/woman) to make sure they get the message! Always sign and include your phone number, as the papers will often call to confirm that it was actually you who wrote and submitted the letter.

Remember no more than 150 words. Make your case in a strong but not-over-the-top manner. Keep it factual, but a little emotion never hurts. For more information, contact Stephen Capra (505/843-8696).

Albuquerque Journal
Letters to the Editor
P.O. Drawer J
Albuquerque, NM 87103
opinion@abqjournal.com

Albuquerque Tribune
Letters to the Editor
P.O. Drawer T
Albuquerque, NM 87103
jehn@abqtrib.com

Farmington Daily Times
Letters to the Editor
201 N. Allen
Farmington, NM 87401
turner@daily-times.com

Santa Fe New Mexican
Letters to the Editor
202 E. Marcy Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501
editor@sfnewmexican.com

Taos News
Letters to the Editor
P.O. Box U
Taos, NM 87571
editor@taosnews.com

Las Cruces Sun-News
Letters to the Editor
P.O. Box 1749
Las Cruces, NM 88004
editorlcsn@zianet.com

Volunteer for Wilderness

1. Write a Letter in Support of Wildlands Protection—Send letters to the editor, to representatives, or to agencies. Contact Stephen Capra (steve@nmwild.org).
2. Table to Educate and Involve the Greater Community—Spread the "Wilderness word" and meet new people. Contact Garrick Delzell (garrick@nmwild.org).
3. Mapping Projects—Work on topo maps or GIS projects of proposed Wilderness. Contact Matt Clark (matt@nmwild.org).
4. Assist with Membership Development—Attend Weekly Volunteer Nights, Thursdays from 6-9 PM. Contact Tisha Broska (tisha@nmwild.org).
5. Contribute to our Newsletter—Submit photographs, art, poetry, articles, etc. Contact Tisha Broska (tisha@nmwild.org).
6. Artwork Projects—Work on creative projects that illustrate wildlands and wildlife. Contact Matt Clark (matt@nmwild.org).
7. Grassroots Organizing Projects—Help to build a statewide constituency for Wilderness protection. Contact Garrick Delzell (garrick@nmwild.org).
8. Field Outings—Get out and explore New Mexico's wildlands on one of our monthly field outings. Contact Michael Scialdone (scial@nmwild.org).
9. Adopt a Wilderness—Do fieldwork, advocate for Wilderness protection, and work with the management agency on issues that affect your adopted area. Contact Garrick Delzell (garrick@nmwild.org).
10. Do Something Unique!—Everyone has special talents and ideas. Work with us to start your own project that will support the efforts of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. Contact NMWA (nmwa@nmwild.org).

Writing Letters Is the Key to Wilderness Preservation

Please write a letter to the President, Secretary of Interior or your Representative or Senator to confirm that you support Wilderness preservation.

President George Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500
president@whitehouse.gov
202/456-1414

Secretary of Interior Gale Norton
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
exsec@ios.doi.gov
202/208-7351

Senator Pete Domenici
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
domenici@domenici.senate.gov
In Albuquerque—505/346-6791
In Roswell—505/623-6170
In Santa Fe—505/988-6511
In Washington, DC—202/224-6621

Senator Jeff Bingaman
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov
In Santa Fe—505/988-6647
In Washington, DC—202/224-5521

Congresswoman Heather Wilson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
heather@mail.house.gov
In Albuquerque—505/346-6781
In Washington, DC—202/225-6316

Congressman Joe Skeen
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
joe.skeen@mail.house.gov
In Las Cruces—505/527-1771
In Washington, DC—202/225-2365

Congressman Tom Udall
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
tom.udall@mail.house.gov
In Santa Fe—505/984-8950
In Washington, DC—202/225-6190

Peace In the Gila—And In My Mind and Soul

The Gila River pours out of the Wilderness as it converges with Turkey Creek. Cold, clear water flows by towering cottonwoods, whose broad branches arch out under a wide-open blue sky. The air is calm and quiet. The chill of fall has not yet snuck down this far south. The sun burns silently above, heating the earth. The canyon walls reflect the sun's bright intensity, while green leaves absorb its free energy. So will we, unfortunately. I forgot the sunscreen.

We cross the knee-deep river three times before the persistent road turns into a two track, and then finally yields to a trail. The rugged terrain and Wilderness designation now prevent motors from venturing any further. Hats off to Aldo Leopold! Back on they go in order to block the hot sun.

Our packs fully loaded, we hike up Turkey Creek at a steady pace. Time slowly unwinds as the tick-tock of my mental clock is hushed by the voices of nature. Even conversation begins to ease up, as we walk in the shade granted by a grove of mature alligator junipers. Later on, while taking a break creekside, I find myself staring at the sunlight that is reflecting off of the creek, dancing on the swaying leaves of alder. Mesmerized by this dance, my mind is cleared of the worries, wants and demands of life in the big city.

The trail suddenly becomes harder to follow. Up and over boulders, along cliff shelves, crisscrossing the poison ivy-laden creek and even through a cave, we meet each challenge with our

minds, muscles and teamwork. It feels good to exert, sweat, stretch, jump and breathe in deep the clean, dry air.

Our hard work is rewarded, as the trail finally leads us to a steaming hot tub of spring water to soak in. Scalding hot water bleeds from cracks in a boulder and mixes with the creek to feed a waterfall, which cascades into a deep pool of lukewarm water—a perfect temperature for swimming, and lounging on our inflated Thermarests. Stress and tension flow out of me and float downstream as the sun slips behind the ridge. Peace envelops my entire being, as I float upon the healing waters of the Gila.

The moonless night sky glitters with every visible star, and the expansive universe reminds us of how small our affairs truly are, even in the wake of September 11. Waves of hot water pulse on the surface of the spring, extracting toxins from my skin and soothing our muscles and nerves—we sleep like logs.

In the morning I feel renewed, invigorated and fully present in the moment. Sadly, we conclude we must begin our journey home. Responsibilities and the concept of time entrain our minds. Our bodies follow suit, as we reluctantly march down the canyon and back to our vehicle, back to the rat race.

Next morning. Off to work. Twenty-five minute commute. Brown cloud hangs over the Rio Grande Valley. Radio waves report of an Anthrax scare, and Albuquerque tunes into the latest on

"America's New War". Moving westward, the highway is packed. The rush hour rushes quickly by, until Carsile that is, where it slows to 10 miles per hour—I should have gotten off. Enter the Big I construction project. Four directions and two major highways converge in a grand display of civilization—concrete ramps curve skyward, looping this and that way. Cars, trucks, vans, and semis creep along slowly, like a steel serpent. The tension of traffic causes cut-offs, honks and frustration to the hustle and bustle of the mid-morning commute. American flags fly from every possible perch: vehicles, buildings, billboards, ramps, poles and windows. The technological juggernaut moves full steam ahead. A steady

rhythm of progress and purpose fills the Big Interchange. A crane sweeps its arm overhead, carrying a massive slab of concrete, while buzzing bulldozers move mounds of earth with ease, sending up plumes of black smoke into the air as they go. A long pile of gleaming black asphalt lines the north-bound highway, ready to be machined into a new road. Confounded by the dichotomy of this world, I head south slowly through Babylon, with the peace of the Gila inside my mind and soul. Thank God I'm going to work for Wilderness.

—by Matt Clark
NMWA staff



Stressed? Take a Hike

Researchers at Texas A&M University have conducted a detailed study of challenging outdoor activities and how they can often reduce stress, improve self confidence, and create a positive mental outlook.

Camille Bunting and Homer Tolson, researchers in health and kinesiology, along with colleagues at Duke University, tested groups of volunteers performing various outdoor tasks.

Some of the participants were in good physical shape, while others were classified as low fit.

Their results, published in the *Journal of Leisure Research*: "Those who were in good condition could not only handle the rigorous physical demands placed on them, but were also better equipped to tackle the mental and emotional stress associated with such activities.

"The bottom line is this: If you are in good physical condition, you can probably overcome challenging activities because you will have less anxiety and stress than someone who is not in good shape," said Bunting.

The researchers tested volunteers, ages 20-49, before they engaged in such activities as rope courses, backpacking with 40-50-pound packs, off trail hiking, white water canoeing and rock climbing. They again tested them once various activities had been completed.

Urine tests confirm that epinephrine, norepinephrine and cortisol—hormones associated with human stress—were much higher in persons who were not in good physical condition.

Those who were classified as low fit had the greatest difficulty in overcoming the stress associated with the most

challenging activities—whitewater canoeing and rock climbing.

Those individuals who were not in good shape responded with much higher levels of epinephrine, a hormone related to psychological stress, and norepinephrine, a hormone associated with physical stress.

"Stress confronts us on two levels—an emotional level and a physical level," Bunting explained. "The study shows that people who are in good physical condition can handle unexpected challenges better than those who are low fit."

Cortisol, a hormone found when a threat exists with physical or emotional tasks, was also found to be higher in low fit persons.

"The lesson appears to be that the better shape you are in, the better your body is able to handle stress," Bunting said. "But a lesson might also be that fitness training through a variety of activities is not only better for the muscular system, but also for our stress response system."

—College Station, Texas
17 October 2001 (ENS)



Book Reviews

Nature's Justice—Writings of William O. Douglas

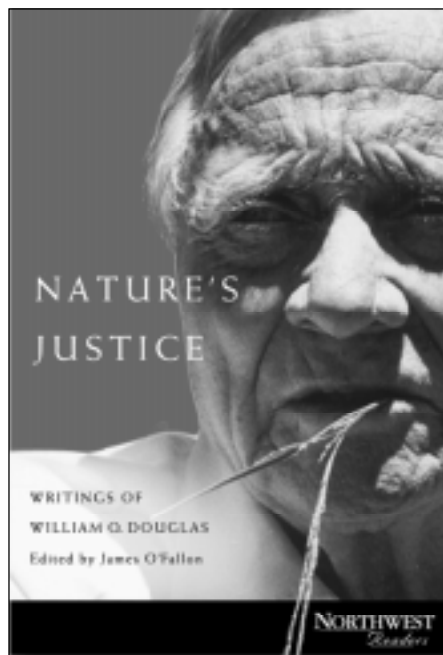
For many, William O'Douglas is best remembered as one of our country's most liberal and long-lasting Supreme Court justices. From 1939-1975, O'Douglas was part of a court that helped shape modern America. He was strong-willed and known for his dissenting voice on many issues, but perhaps his strongest dissent was focused on the Vietnam War. So much so that then Congressman Gerald Ford (R-MI) and soon to be President called for his impeachment from the court.

At heart, however, O'Douglas never forgot his humble roots. His background instilled in him a compassion for average people and a strong inner strength. His love of the mountains of Washington and Oregon and a lifetime of exploring, returning, and in a sense remaining humbled by nature were in many ways the foundation of his greatness.

O'Douglas has been dead for 21 years, but his writings live on, especially those devoted to nature. This collection of his writings includes selections from *Of Men and Mountains—My Wilderness*, and essays that speak to his strong belief in civil liberties, equality, his strong international beliefs, and his passion for environmental issues.

O'Douglas' writings were always visual, creating scenes and emotions that jump from the pages. The following excerpt from *Nature's Justice* comes from a chance meeting in a Chicago stockyard between O'Douglas, as he headed east to law school, and a hobo:

"He had come, to begin with, from Northern California. He had worked the harvests, and as he worked he could look up and see the mountains. Before him was Mount Shasta. He could put his



bedroll on the ground and fall asleep under the pines. There was dust in the fields of Northern California, but it was good clean dirt. People were not packed together like sardines. They had elbowroom. A man need not sit on a Sunday looking out on a bleak alley. I listened for about an hour as he praised the glories of the mountains of the West and related his experiences in them. Dawn was coming, and as it came I could see the smoke and some of the squalor of which my friend spoke. I asked what brought him to the freight yards at this hour of the morning. He said he came to catch a west-bound freight-back to God's own land, back to the mountains. Lonesomeness swept over me. I never had loved the Cascades as much as I did that early morning in the stockyards of Chicago."

O'Douglas indeed loved the Cascades; they are the center of his nature writings. From the Goat Rocks to the Wallowa Mountains, on foot or horseback, under a full moon or fishing for trout, O'Douglas never left these mountains in spirit.

Yet, in spite of his affection for nature, some of these writings do betray the environmental consciousness of the era:

"Roy has great respect for animals that inhabit the forests. Coyote is the exception. Coyote plans his campaign of killing with some of man's thoroughness."

Nature's Justice is a time capsule; it takes us to another era and allows the reader to enjoy the simple outdoor experiences of a complex man. It also examines some of the broader issues the court faced during O'Douglas' tenure. Historical and human, it is important reading.

—reviewed by Stephen Capra



Welcome, New Members of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

(1 August-15 November 2001)

R.T. Abrich • Amy Adshead & Gregory Lansdon • K. Ahlgren & J. Kristoffca • Lynn Aldrich • Wynn Anderson • Jean Apgar • Cary Arden • Travis Askew • Jean Babb • Anna Baca • Jean Bahr • Mr. & Mrs. Sam Ballen • H.M. Barber • Joann Barrett • William Beckstead • Dave & Betty Begeal • Fermin Beltran • Shirley Belz • Tom Bender • Sarah & Jeff Berg • Dana Berkeland • Robert Bernstein • Mrs. H. Bezansky • Gus & Helen Bigelow • Steve Blake • Jed Blaney • David Blecha • Mr. & Mrs. S. Bloom • Elspeth Bobbs • Pat & Mike Boring • Sigrun Bouius • Chris Boyd • Mary Alice Bradt • Deborah Brandt • Lauren & Donald Breese • Carole & Gerald Broska • Kate Brown • Kathryn Browne • A.W. Bryce • Hugh Bryce • Budd & Cindy Buddington • John Bunn • Mayer & Kate Burgan • Nellie Burns • Roberta Buss • David & Ellen Calvert • Tom Campbell • Marianne Campbell • Juanito Campiglio • P. 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Staff/Volunteer Profiles

Jack Davis, Native of NM, No Stranger To Wilderness

El Paso native Jack Davis has been involved with NMWA since the Continental Divide inventory weekend in July 2000. Jack's parents migrated to the southern New Mexico desert from the plains of southeastern Wyoming in 1956 when Jack's father, the late John Davis, took a job at White Sands Missile Range. Although John was a bonafide High Plains cowboy, both he and his wife Marguerite soon grew to love the desert, especially the area's prehistory. The family traveled and camped extensively all over west Texas, New Mexico and northern Mexico.

In 1993, after living, working and studying in places such as Colorado, Nebraska, Alaska, Central America, Canada and Lapland, Jack settled down, first in High Rolls, later east of Cloudcroft, and then finally in Mesilla.

A former outdoor educator for the School for Field Studies, Jack backpacked at least once into each of New Mexico's already designated Wilderness areas during those first two years. When he heard about the lagging BLM Wilderness study and NMWA, Jack decided that volunteering for NMWA would be a great way to not only see stunning new New Mexico landscapes, but perhaps to have a hand in preserving them for future generations.

Jack currently teaches biology at El Paso Community College on a half-time basis. His wife Silvia, from Madrid, Spain, also participates as a NMWA field volunteer. Jack is currently the vice-president of the Southern NM Natural History Foundation, which advises the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History, while Silvia is the group's membership chair.

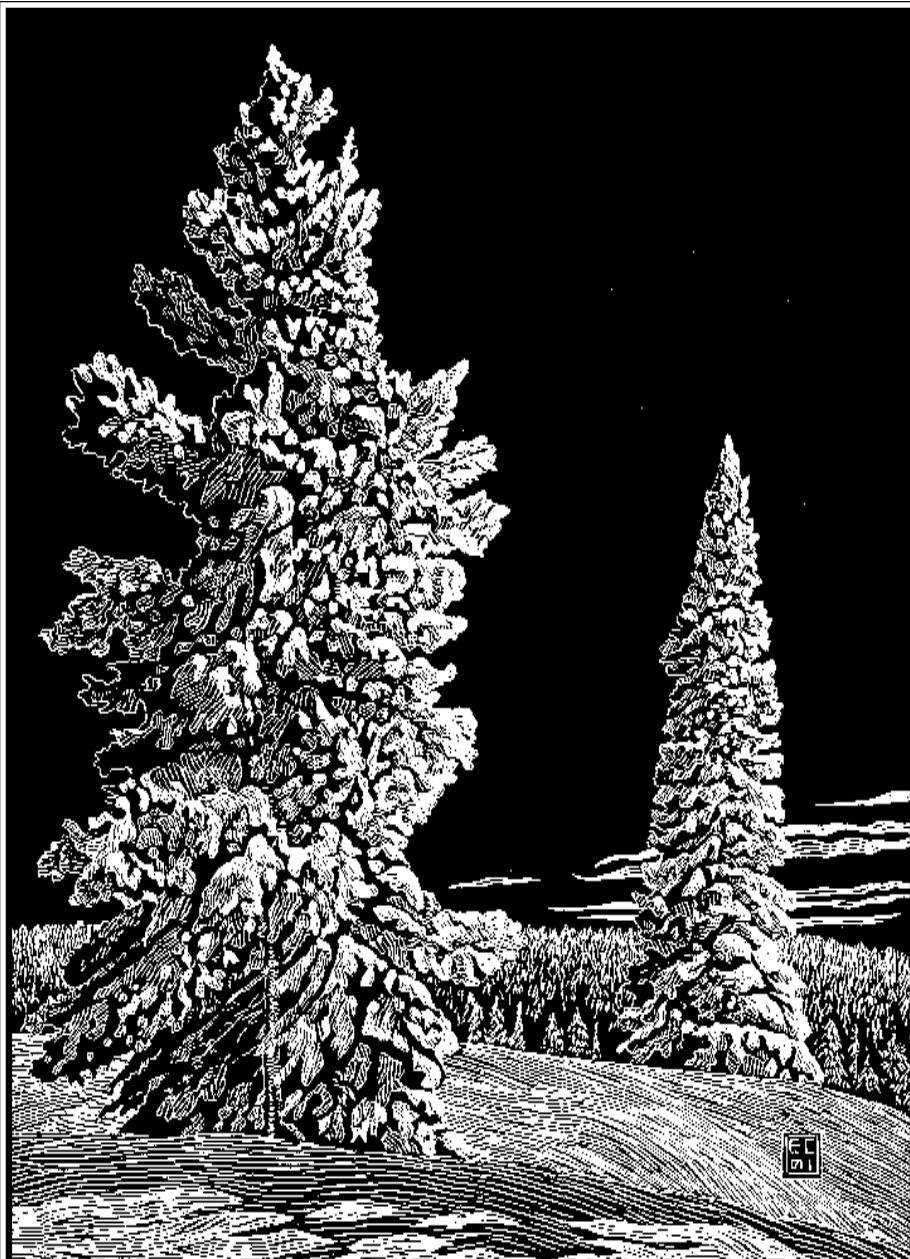
Donate Stock

Avoid hefty capital gains taxes by donating part of your stocks in the name of Wilderness protection. You can deduct the value of the stock at the time of your donation as a charitable contribution. For more information, call Bob Langsenkamp (505/ 473-3136).

You can also make a Legacy gift to New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

Wish List

- Wilderness Poetry (for *Call of the Wild* and a book of Wilderness poetry)
- Artwork for *Call of the Wild*
- Cameras
- GPS Units
- TV/VCR
- Frequent Flyer Miles/Vouchers
- Airfare to Washington, DC



Happy Holidays!!

from the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

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or

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Contributions to NMWA are tax deductible.

☐ NMWA occasionally exchanges its mailing list with other organizations involved in issues we feel you may also find of interest. If you would like to guarantee that your name will not be exchanged, please check here.

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
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