AWF Newsletter
APRIL 2012

MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, April 12, 2012 | 7:00 pm | Manzano Mesa Center

Human and Climate Moderated Genetic Structure of Black Bears in New Mexico

Guest Speaker: Rick Winslow, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish

Join us for an interesting discussion of New Mexico's black bears. Rick Winslow, Large Carnivore and Furbearer Biologist with NMDG&F, will describe results of his research on black bear genetic relatedness across New Mexico and how the research got to where it is today.

Rick is originally from the Bay Area in California. He earned a B.S. in Wildlife Biology from Humboldt State University in California in 1989. From 1989-1990, he served in the Peace Corps in Guatemala, then engaged in spotted owl surveys and research from 1992-1994. In 1992 Rick moved to NM and was Forest Biologist and later Fisheries Biologist for the Navajo Nation. He joined the NMDGF as Game Warden in 2000 and became Large Carnivore Biologist in 2003.

Jim Hubert's Notable Quote of the Month

"Agriculture and urban development, as well as dam building, have destroyed more than half the nation's original wetlands. More than 113 million acres of wetlands have been lost in the lower 48 states, and in some states wetland losses have been as high as 90%."

– Matt Jenkins, The Nature Conservancy, 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We kicked off the 2012 Volunteer Service Projects season with Cedro Creek on March 17. After taking the winter off from projects, it was great to get back out on the land working to restore it. Cedro Creek is one of AWF's Legacy Projects – areas that we go to regularly, often on an annual basis. There is always a bit of a tug to keep moving to new places. There is so much to see and so much that needs to be done, but after many discussions among volunteers, agency personnel, and restoration professionals, there is broad agreement that repeated efforts to an area have a greater net positive effect than hitting an area once or twice and moving on.

Many volunteers develop an attachment to areas that they have worked on. This will hopefully mean that restoration efforts will continue well into the future. For new volunteers, being able to see what has been done and the way it has worked provides insight as to why we keep doing what we do.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued*

Our April project in Cebolla Canyon is another AWF Legacy Project. Past AWF President Gene Tatum was working for the BLM when they acquired much of the private land in Cebolla Canyon back in the 1990's. Though degraded from years of overgrazing, Gene recognized its potential to heal if the grazing was removed and its spring was protected. Gene led the effort to start restoring this magnificent canyon. Many years and many projects later, the spring's wetland is expanding down the canyon and the incised creek bed is holding water and growing in with riparian vegetation.

As interest in Cebolla Canyon's restoration potential grew, it was decided to pursue even larger projects through restoration grants. Both a federal and a state grant were given a couple years ago. I was fortunate to do freelance work on some of the surveys done to aid in work plan development. Over the past year, contractors have been out doing this work, but there is still much to be accomplished. In many places where restoration structures or planting is needed, machinery is either not feasible or inappropriate. Hand work, like that from AWF Volunteers, is the only way to get the job done.

Another reason that AWF involvement is critical for these grants is that they require a match for the money being given. This match can be in the form of money, equipment, land, or labor. For labor like the hard work done by AWF Volunteers on these projects, a per-hour rate is calculated and goes toward this match.

From March to October, AWF has one project per month on the third Saturday (which makes it easy to mark your calendar now). March and October are local one-day projects. The remaining are weekend camp-outs. There are many Legacy Projects to be part of or even a brand new spot in the Sandias that we'll be going to. We hope you'll join us.

Scial

PROJECT #2

Cebolla Canyon I
April 20-22
Weekend Campout

Join AWF for the first campout Volunteer Service Project of the 2012 season in an area where we have a long history.

WHERE: Cebolla Canyon, El Malpais National Conservation Area, SE of Grants, NM

THE PROJECT: We will be doing vegetation planting and structural work with rock.

GEAR: Everything you need for a weekend of camping. Bring the usual gear for the work – gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. Don't forget warm clothes for the evenings and plenty of water.

FOOD: AWF will provide breakfast burritos on Saturday morning and bison or veggie burgers to go with a potluck on Saturday evening. Please bring your own lunches, Friday dinner, and Sunday breakfast.

TO SIGN UP: Contact Michael Scialdone, "Scial", at rioscial@gmail.com or 505-480-2906. Directions and further details will be sent to you.

2012 PROJECT SCHEDULE

March 17	**Cedro Creek – East Mountains**
April 20-22	**Cebolla Canyon**
May 18-20	**Cebolla Canyon**
June 15-17	**Rio de las Vacas**
July 20-22	**Valles Caldera**
August 17-19	**Valles Caldera**
Sept 14-16	**Limestone Canyon**
Oct 20	**Sandia Ranger District**

RECAP PROJECT #1

Cedro Creek in March

Our first Volunteer Service Project of 2012 was a great success. We built 33 structures downstream from where we worked last fall. With a little faith that it will one day rain again, these structures will increase meander, widen steeply cut areas, and act as grade control to hold back sediment and moisture. The positive benefits from one day of work will be felt by the ecosystem for years to come.

Our thanks to the great volunteers who came out to help create all of these functional structures. Our group photo (top of page) came at the END of the day, so some of their smiling faces are missing there, but we've captured many of them hard at work in the stream channel, at right.

Thanks also to Beverly deGruyter and her USFS colleagues for their assistance. And, as always, Bill Zeedyk was the "man with the plan" to bring it all together on the land.












Public Weighs in on Forest Rehab
Project aims to prevent future megafires

By Wren Abbott, *Santa Fe Reporter*

At a meeting held [March 29] in Santa Fe, the US Forest Service introduced the public to its ongoing efforts to rehabilitate the Jemez Mountains area in the wake of last summer's Las Conchas fire, and restore habitat in the interest of preventing similar disasters in the future.

The project, part of a nationwide effort, actually originated before Las Conchas. The federal Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act of 2009, supported by US Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-NM, is designed to reduce megafires and create more ecologically-sound forest management practices in the nation's wildlands. The New Mexico project area was chosen in 2010 in the first round of funding. Aside from reducing the risk of massive wildfires, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project is also intended to improve wildlife habitat in the selected areas and to create jobs in environmental management.

The Jemez Mountains area could receive $40 million between now and 2020; so far it has received $2.8 million. For comparison, suppression of the Las Conchas fire cost approximately $41 million, according to Jon Williams, Ecosystems Staff Officer with the Santa Fe National Forest.

The project area encompasses 210,000 acres, including 110,000 acres of Santa Fe National Forest, plus the Valles Caldera National Preserve and some of Jemez Pueblo. About 35,000 acres of the project area burned in the Las Conchas fire.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, such projects must go through an initial public participation process. Meetings scheduled in April *(see below)* will present a draft of the specific proposed actions on the project area. An approved plan allowing the project to go forward isn't expected until August 2013. But the project partners have already accomplished many milestones that had gone through the NEPA process when the funding was awarded. So far 5,242 acres of the project area have been treated to improve the watershed.

This year, the partners are moving forward with other actions that have also been NEPA improved, including thinning and prescribed burning of 14,532 acres in the Paliza area of the Jemez, rehabilitation of campsites along the east fork of the Jemez River, removal of invasive species in 30 acres of the project area, and monitoring of wildlife, stream quality and vegetation.

While much of the area has been treated by thinning and prescribed fire in the past, it was done in small "postage-stamp" segments, Williams noted. That method is not as effective as this larger-scale project, both because fires don't respect political boundaries and because the NEPA process is lengthy.

Future meetings on proposed project activities:
April 12, 1-5 pm, SF National Forest Headquarters (11 Forest Lane, Santa Fe)
April 14, 9 am- 1 pm, Valles Caldera Education Center

News From
New Mexico Wildlife Federation

The U.S. Senate took an unprecedented step in March in protecting public lands and assuring public access when it reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The bipartisan vote doubles the current funding level to $700 million a year for two years. It also dedicates 1.5 percent of the funds to securing public access to existing public lands through the use of voluntary conservation easements across private land. The "making public lands public" effort had support from more than 40 conservation and sportsmen's organizations. The amendment was part of a transportation bill that later passed the full Senate. It now heads to the House where support for LWCF is not as strong as in the Senate.

NMWF Project Gets Financial Boost

New Mexico Wildlife Federation's project to improve wildlife habitat on the Rio Grande near Santa Fe and to get local students involved in the long-term health of the river got a boost in March from two grants. The funding, from the Eugene V. and Clare Thaw Charitable Trust and a U.S. Forest Service program called More Kids in the Woods, will expose Santa Fe and Espanola students to the bosque ecosystem at Buckman, a historic railway town on lands managed by the Forest Service and BLM and the site of a water diversion project for Santa Fe.

The funding will allow some 250 students to participate in habitat restoration and public access improvements, as well as water quality monitoring. "We want the Rio Grande to be used in ways that help kids understand more about wildlife, habitat and where our water comes from," said Alan Hamilton, who is spearheading the project for NMWF. The Buckman restoration effort will include cleaning up the site, removing invasive species and planting cottonwoods.

--Joel Gay, NMWF

AWF member Rich Leonard shares a favorite quote:

"Unless one can enjoy himself fishing with the fly, even when his efforts are unrewarded, he loses much real pleasure. More than half the intense enjoyment of fly-fishing is derived from the beautiful surroundings, the satisfaction felt from being in the open air, the new lease of life secured thereby, and the many, many pleasant recollections of all one has seen, heard and done."
--Charles Orvis, 1883

ALBUQUERQUE WILDLIFE FEDERATION
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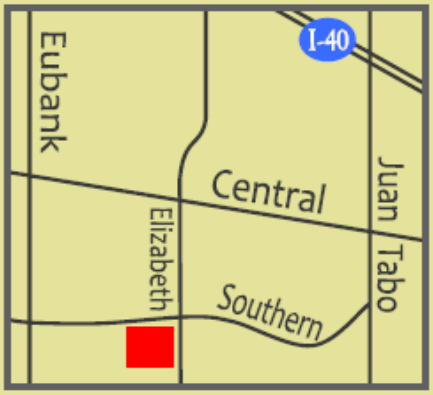
RENEWED MEMBERS

John Dickel
Jim Hines
Dean and Mary Kuehl

Thank You

AWF MEETING LOCATION

Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center
501 Elizabeth SE at Southern



AWF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Albuquerque Wildlife Federation | PO Box 20225 | Albuquerque, NM 87154
An affiliate of New Mexico Wildlife Federation

☐ **I'd like to belong to AWF ONLY or** ☐ **I'd like to belong to AWF + NMWF:** ***Designate NMWF member(s)*** _____

name(s) _____

address _____

city, state, zip _____

phone _____ email _____

☐ Gift membership from: _____

☐ Student [under 18 ------- $10 *(AWF membership only)*
☐ Individual ---------- $25
☐ Family---------- $35
☐ Sustaining ---------- $50-$99
☐ Patron ---------- $100
☐ Lifetime ---------- $500 *(One-time payment)*

Dues $ _____
Contribution $ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED $ _____