# THE PINE CONE

Official Newsletter of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation

Albuquerque WILDLIFE Federation
conservationists since 1914

May 2025

## Swinging the Pendulum Back Toward Conservation

It was just over a century ago that the U.S began setting aside large portions of land for public use, and ever since there has been a push and pull between those who seek to prioritize extractive resource development on those lands, and those who prioritize conservation.

That pendulum has swung back and forth as national politics have shifted over the decades. Right now, it is swinging decidedly in the direction of extractive development, and against conservation. Some developments from the past few weeks include:

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have proposed a rule to rescind the definition of "harm" in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) so that the law would no longer prohibit the destruction of habitat essential for a species' survival;
- The Secretary of Agriculture issued an "emergency memo" opening up 112 million acres of our national forests (about 58% of all national forest lands) to increased timber production by reducing environmental assessments prior to logging;
- The Bureau of Land Management announced it will no longer conduct environmental impact statements prior to issuing oil and gas leases on approximately 3.5 million acres of federal lands in seven states, including New Mexico;

- The Interior Department has proposed selling off 440,000 acres of land within 10 miles of cities or towns for housing developments (the Center for Biological Diversity mapped the lands at risk, which include protected areas around Nambe, Ojo Caliente, and the Organ Mountains); and
- The Senate voted down an amendment from New Mexico's senators and others to prevent public lands from being sold off as part of the budget reconciliation bill that Congress is currently considering.

While these are deeply disheartening developments for those of us who value wild lands and wild creatures, the destruction that has been proposed has not yet come to pass. Our nation's public lands still belong to all of us, and we have the opportunity and obligation to speak up for them. Public outcry has halted harmful policy proposals before; to do so again, we have to make our voices heard during a very loud and chaotic time.

So tell your family, friends, and neighbors about these threats, and encourage them to join you in contacting your elected officials. (Click here to submit comments on the ESA "harm" rule before the May 19 deadline, and click here to contact your elected officials about potential sales of public land.) Together, we can swing the pendulum back toward conservation and protect our natural heritage for the next generation.

Kristina G. Fisher
AWF Secretary

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## MAY 16-18, 2025 RESTORATION PROJECT: Ft. Union Ranch

LOCATION: Ft. Union Ranch near Watrous, NM

THE PROJECT: This month AWF will return to Ft. Union Ranch where we will be working to restore a different section of the Wolf Creek watershed in partnership with Hermits Peak Watershed Alliance. Similar to last month, the work will focus on building rock restoration structures.

SCHEDULE: Friday, May 16 – Sunday, May 18
Volunteers do not need to be present for the entire weekend to participate. You are welcome to join us just for the main work day Saturday, or camp for just one of the two nights.

GEAR: Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping and restoration work, including work gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. We recommend bringing a change of shoes, and boots you don't mind getting wet or muddy. Rain gear, layers, warm clothes for the evenings, and plenty of water are essential. **Note that we will NOT be based at the Marshall House at Ft. Union Ranch for this project, so please plan for no access to indoor facilities.** (Porta-potties will be available at the campsite.)

FOOD: AWF will provide breakfast burritos on Saturday morning and bison or veggie burgers on Saturday evening. Please bring a dish to share for the Saturday potluck dinner, along with your own lunches, Friday dinner, Sunday breakfast, and lots of water!

TO SIGN UP: **Email Kristina at abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com**
Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.

## 2025 SERVICE PROJECTS CALENDAR

March 15.....Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge
April 11-13.....Higgins Canyon, Ft. Union Ranch
April 26.....Galisteo Basin
May 16-18.....Turkey Mountains, Ft. Union Ranch
May 30-June 1.....Rito Peñas Negras
June 20-22.....Rio San Antonio, Jemez Mtns
July 11-13.....L Bar Ranch near Laguna
August 15-17.....Midnight Meadows near Questa
August 29-31.....Limestone Canyon, San Mateo Mtns
September 19-21.....Rio Embudo, Dixon
October 3-5.....Cebolla Canyon, El Malpais
October 25.....Cedro Creek, Tijeras

## AWF BOARD 2025

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*Treasurer – Laurie Marnell*
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*Michael "Scial" Scialdone*
*Hamish Thomson*
*Bob Tilley*
*Alexcia Trujillo*
*Bill Zeedyk - Director Emeritus*

# MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025 RESTORATION PROJECT: Rito Peñas Negras

**LOCATION:** Rito Peñas Negras in the Jemez Mountains

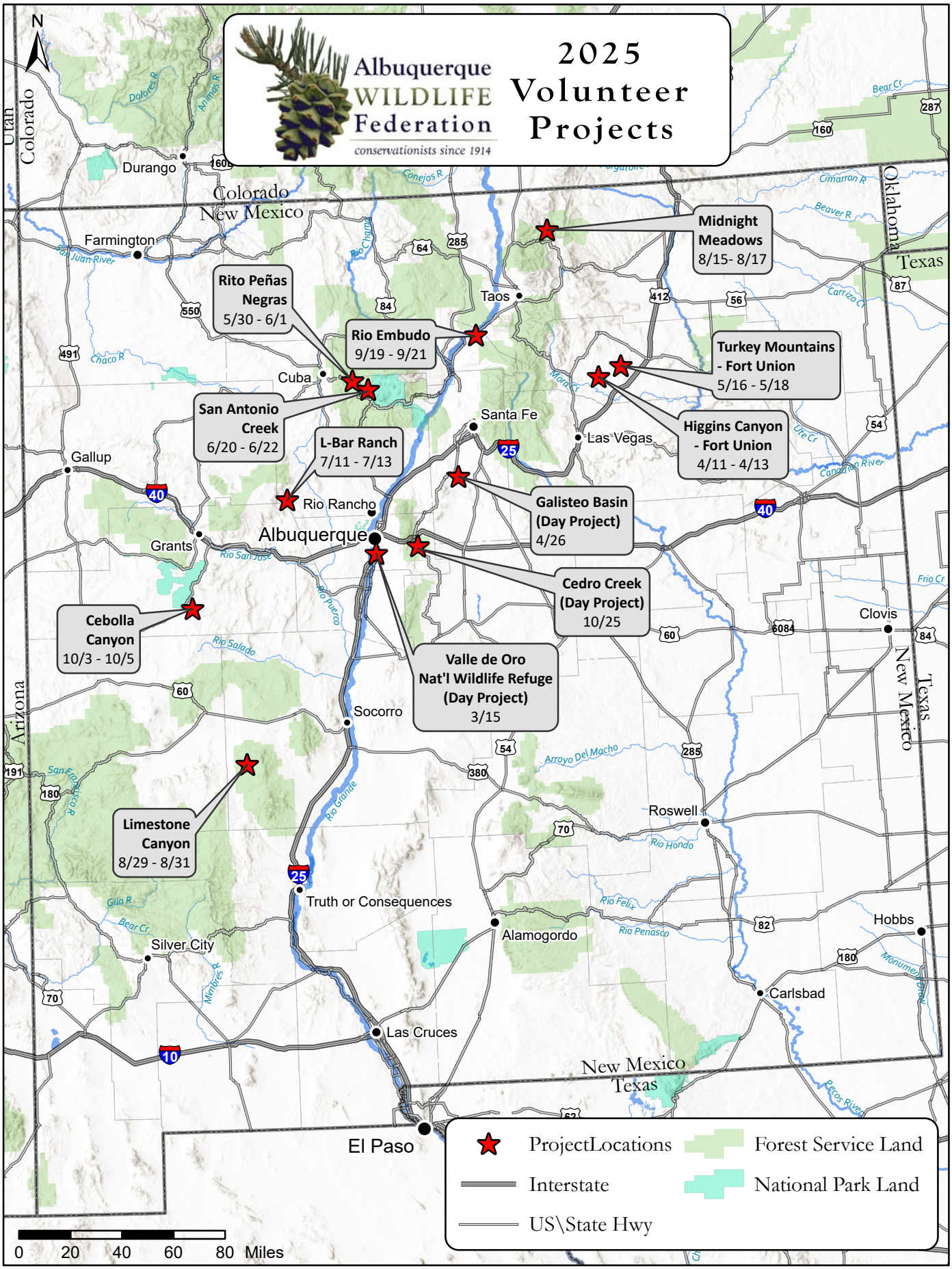
**THE PROJECT:** Join AWF for our second project along the Rito Peñas Negras on the west side of the Jemez Mountains. Similar to last year, we will again be partnering with Rio Grande Return to build Beaver Dam Analog structures that will slow down the water flowing through this system, holding it on the landscape longer so that it can sink in and sustain more vegetation.

**SCHEDULE:** Friday, May 30 – Sunday, June 1
Volunteers do not need to be present for the entire weekend to participate. You are welcome to join us just for the main work day Saturday, or camp for just one of the two nights.

**GEAR:** Bring everything you need for a weekend of camping and restoration work, including work gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. **We recommend bringing a change of shoes, and waterproof boots or boots you don't mind getting wet, as we will be working in and around the creek**. Rain gear, layers, warm clothes for the evenings and plenty of water are essential.

**FOOD:** AWF will provide breakfast burritos and coffee/tea on Saturday morning and bison or veggie burgers on Saturday evening. Please bring a dish to share for the Saturday potluck dinner, along with your own lunches, Friday dinner, Sunday breakfast, and lots of water!

**TO SIGN UP: Email Kristina at abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com**
Directions and further details will be sent to you once you sign up.


Albuquerque WILDLIFE Federation
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2025 Volunteer Projects
N
Midnight Meadows
8/15- 8/17
Rito Peñas Negras
5/30 - 6/1
Rio Embudo
9/19 - 9/21
Turkey Mountains - Fort Union
5/16 - 5/18
San Antonio Creek
6/20 - 6/22
L-Bar Ranch
7/11 - 7/13
Higgins Canyon - Fort Union
4/11 - 4/13
Galisteo Basin (Day Project)
4/26
Cedro Creek (Day Project)
10/25
Cebolla Canyon
10/3 - 10/5
Valle de Oro Nat'l Wildlife Refuge (Day Project)
3/15
Limestone Canyon
8/29 - 8/31
Durango
Farmington
Taos
Cuba
Santa Fe
Las Vegas
Gallup
Rio Rancho
Albuquerque
Grants
Socorro
Clovis
Roswell
Truth or Consequences
Alamogordo
Hobbs
Silver City
Carlsbad
Las Cruces
El Paso
Colorado
New Mexico
Utah
Arizona
Oklahoma
Texas
ProjectLocations
Interstate
US\State Hwy
Forest Service Land
National Park Land
0 20 40 60 80 Miles

# RECAP OF APRIL 11-13, 2025 PROJECT: FT. UNION RANCH

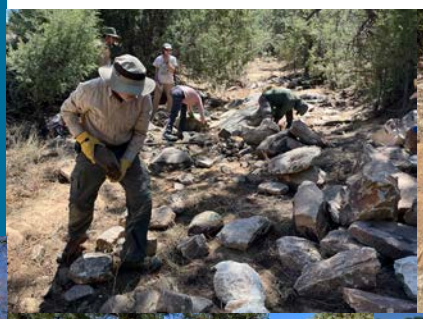
## *Thanks, Volunteers!*

Abe Aufdermauer
Lyle Aufdermauer
Betty Bastai
Peter Callen
Phil Carter
Tania Chavez
Steven del Favero
Kristina G. Fisher
Abe Franklin
Carlos Gomez
Donna Howell
Jess Karan
Jamie Knutson
Rayyah Mahan Knutson
Laurie Marnell
Brian Miller
Quintin Muhlenkamp
Bob Nordstrum
Shantini Ramakrishnan
Toby Rosenblatt
Barbara Rosensimon
Scial
Marilynn Szydlowski
Hamish Thomson
Alexcia Trujillo
Cameron Weber
Paulee Wheatley-Rutner
Leza Wimett
Daryl Woolems
Bill Zeedyk

For AWF's first weekend-long restoration project of the year, we returned to Fort Union Ranch to continue our ongoing restoration work in Higgins Canyon. This canyon was downcut by heavy wagon traffic between Ft. Union and Mora when the fort was active in the mid-1800s, and AWF has been partnering with the ranch over the past five years to build a series of restoration structures to hold more water on the landscape and encourage the growth of willows, cottonwoods, and riparian habitat.

On Saturday, volunteers build a series of sizeable rock structures high in the canyon – and when the work was done, many cooled off with a dip in the pond at the ranch house! On Sunday, we built a Zuni bowl and one-rock-dam while being filmed by a crew from the Wildfire Resiliency Training Center at Luna Community College. That footage will be edited into brief instructional videos to help teach others how to build these structures.

We remain grateful to Josh Miner and the rest of the family who manages Ft. Union Ranch with great care for the land and local wildlife, and we are excited to return to the ranch in a few weeks for another restoration project, this time along Wolf Creek and its tributaries.



# RECAP OF APRIL 26, 2025 PROJECT: GALISTEO BASIN

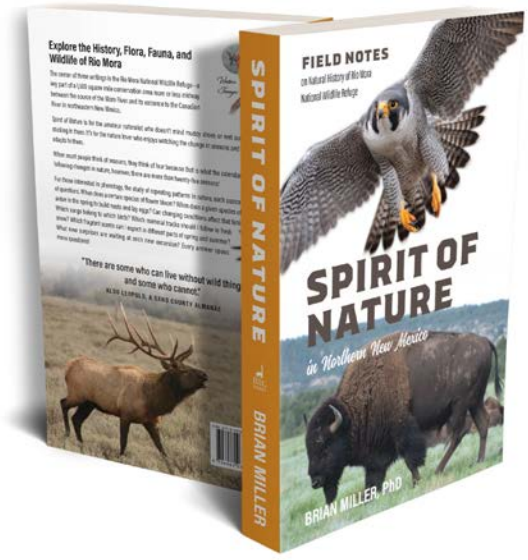
## *Thanks, Volunteers!*

Phil Carter
Candace Duran
Russ Duran
Kristina G. Fisher
Alison George
John Grabowska
Elliot Hendry
R. Henel
Jan Willem Jansens
Robert Long
Meagan Marsee
Rowan
Laura Murphy
Adrienne Rosenburg
Barbara Rosensimon
Adam Splitek
Hamish Thomson
Alexcia Trujillo

On April 26, a terrific team of experienced and first-time volunteers completed a day-long restoration project on private land in the Galisteo Basin, in partnership with Ecotone Landscape Planning. The Galisteo Basin is an important wildlife corridor linking the Sangre de Cristos with the Sandia and Manzano mountains.

Building on work from our first project at this site last fall, volunteers constructed a series of wicker weir terraces on a steep slope into an arroyo. This involved gathering up big piles of juniper branches, pounding juniper posts into the slope, and weaving the flexible juniper branched in between them. These wicker weirs will catch the soil that erodes from the slope when it freezes and thaws, creating a gentler grade and reducing the amount of sediment entering the arroyo. Volunteers also built a Zuni bowl to prevent erosion in a side channel, as well as a rolling dip and one-rock dam to carry water off an access road without causing gullying. At the end of the day, we seeded the whole project area with native seeds. Now all we need is a bit of rain to green up this patch of habitat!

# BOOK OF INTEREST: Spirit of Nature in Northern New Mexico, Brian Miller



## Explore the History, Flora, Fauna, and Wildlife of Rio Mora

The center of these writings is the Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge—a key part of a 1,500 square mile conservation area more or less midway between the source of the Mora River and its entrance to the Canadian River in northeastern New Mexico.

*Spirit of Nature* is for the amateur naturalist who doesn't mind muddy shoes or wet socks with seeds sticking in them. It's for the nature lover who enjoys watching the change in seasons and the way nature adapts to them.

When most people think of seasons, they think of four because that is what the calendar tells us. When following changes in nature, however, there are more than twenty-five seasons!

For those interested in phenology, the study of repeating patterns in nature, each season brings a bevy of questions. When does a certain species of flower bloom? When does a given species of migratory bird arrive in the spring to build nests and lay eggs? Can changing conditions affect that timing? Which songs belong to which birds? Which mammal tracks should I follow in fresh snow? Which fragrant scents can I expect in different parts of spring and summer? What new surprises are waiting at each new excursion? Every answer opens more questions!

**"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot."**

**ALDO LEOPOLD, A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC**

## BOOK INFORMATION

**SPIRIT OF NATURE IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO: Field Notes on Natural History of Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge**

AUTHOR:
Brian Miller, PhD

SIZE: 6 x 9 inches, 226 pages

Hardcover ISBN: 979-8-9890369-3-6
Retail Price USD $64.99

Paperback ISBN: 979-8-9890369-4-3
Retail Price USD $54.99

eBook ISBN: 979-8-9890369-5-0
Retail Price USD $19.99

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**BRIAN MILLER** has co-authored or edited five books and has published over one hundred scientific articles. He has served on the board of directors for five NGOs and as a scientific advisor for several more. He has received outstanding service awards from the Colorado Division of Fish and Wildlife for co-heading the Lynx Advisory team and from the USFWS for his work on black-footed ferret conservation. In 2009, he received the Conservationist of the Year Award from the Denver Zoological Foundation.

# UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

## Ramah Cornfield Restoration Project

**SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025**

**NEW MEXICO HEALTHY SOIL WORKING GROUP**

Help lay the foundation for spring planting at a traditional communal cornfield on the Navajo Nation! This cornfield is facing a major challenge of soil erosion during monsoon rains caused by concentrated runoff from a nearby culvert. During this field day, volunteers will create low-tech rainwater harvesting structures to transform the challenge into an asset, slowing and sinking much-needed water instead of allowing it to erode topsoil. Come lend a hand, enjoy a delicious lunch, and experience the beautiful landscape where this cornfield is located on the Navajo Nation near El Morro and El Malpais National Monuments. Bring gloves, hat, sun protection, layers, water, an extra shovel if you can, and a chair to sit in for lunch. Children and friendly dogs welcome. Please RSVP at: https://www.nmhealthysoil.org/portfolio/spring-field-day-preparing-for-summer-rains/

## Caja del Rio Clean-Up

**SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**

For years, the Caja del Rio has suffered from illegal dumping, vandalism, and improper use from off-highway vehicles that leave lasting scars on a land so many of us love and cherish. Join us for a day of enjoying and giving back to the Caja!

For more info and to RSVP: https://cajadelrio.org/headquarterswellcleanup/

## Riverscape Restoration Network Meeting

**THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025, 2:00-3:30 p.m. Zoom**

The Riverscape Restoration Network includes over 340 members from all over the US, Canada, and the UK sharing information on process-based restoration. This month's meeting will focus on identifying historic beaver habitat and enabling beavers to recolonize in appropriate locations to maintain floodplain/wetlands health - letting the landscape guide where you work. For more information and to sign up to attend: https://www.americanrivers.org/riverscape-restoration-network-connecting-restoration-practitioners-in-the-west/

## Love Your Watershed Day

**SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2025, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., DeVargas Park in Santa Fe**

**SANTA FE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION**

Enjoy live music by Lone Piñon and Repurposed Vibe, visit Queen Bee's instrument petting zoo, help clean the river, and participate in a variety of tabling activities that highlight the importance of the Santa Fe Watershed.

For more info: https://santafewatershed.org/lywd-2025/

## Red Canyon Spring Gathering

**MAY 9-11, 2025**

**QUIVIRA COALITION**

Join the Quivira Coalition at their Red Canyon Reserve for a weekend of camping, bird watching, and conservation work. Red Canyon Reserve is a living laboratory for community building and learning about rangeland health, Southwestern flora and fauna, and erosion prevention. On Saturday morning, volunteers will learn how to build Zeedyk rock restoration structures. Then that evening, join a full moon bird walk through the canyon with Mathew Hayes, ecologist, and Amy Erickson, avian biologist and conservation coordinator for the Rio Grande Land Trust. During a full moon, birds like the prairie falcons and Western screech-owls living in Red Canyon have increased energy. Bring your binoculars and telescopes! Sunday morning will feature a plant ID walk around the Reserve. Please RSVP at: https://quiviracoalition.org/events/red-canyon-2025/

# UPCOMING EVENTS continued

## Pika Monitoring Volunteer

**BANDELIER & VALLES CALDERA**

Volunteers will collect data to help researchers understand the impacts of climate change on these animals and develop strategies to mitigate these effects. For more info, please email:
Sarah_Milligan@nps.gov or Priscilla_Hare@nps.gov

# AWF is (still) seeking a reliable truck!

AWF is seeking a new (used) truck to haul our trailer, supplies, food, and various volunteers to remote project sites. Because its main duty will be hauling a heavy trailer over questionable roads, the truck will need to be tough and reliable, and should be 6 or 8 cylinders (AWF's current truck is a 2003 Ford F-150).

Because AWF is a lean, all-volunteer organization (our annual revenues and expenses are generally around $10,000), we are turning to our amazing member community to ask for any leads you may have on either a donated truck or one that can be sold to us at a major discount.

The good news is that, because we are a 501c3 nonprofit, donations to AWF are tax deductible: if someone sells a truck to AWF at less than its Blue Book value, we can provide a charitable donation letter for the difference between the price we paid and the truck's value. And of course, for a donated truck we would provide a record of donation of the full Blue Book value of the truck!

So if you or someone you know has a lead on a truck that would be a good fit for what we're seeking, please reach out to Phil at abqwildlifefederation@gmail.com. Thanks!

# Willow Planting Day

## San Antonio Creek, Valles Caldera National Preserve

Join **Rio Grande Return** in planting willows along San Antonio Creek to improve habitat for beavers and trout.

RIO GRANDE RETURN

### How You Can Participate

- **Volunteer**
  Come plant willow poles with us. No prior experience is needed, just your enthusiasm and willingness to make a difference.
- **Learn**
  Rio Grande Return is continuing our long-term beaver habiat project by planting willows, installing beaver dam analogs, post-assisted log structures and large woody debris, and building exclosure fencing. Learn about the role of beaver mimicry in improving water quality, storing water, expanding wetlands and creating wildlife habitat.
- **What to Bring**
  Nourishment (food/water), work gloves, warm clothing (layers), muck boots/hiking boots, hat/sunscreen

### Event Date

Wednesday
May 14, 2025
9am - 3pm

### Location

Meet at Valles Caldera Visitor Center; caravan to site

RSVP by email before the prior Monday to:

Karen Menetrey
karen@riograndereturn.org
505-603-1328

# JOIN US!

## Become a Member of the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation

The Albuquerque Wildlife Federation is an all-volunteer organization founded by Aldo Leopold in 1914 and dedicated to protecting and restoring New Mexico's wildlife and habitat.

Our work is only possible thanks to the generous support of our members.

If you like the work we do, we hope you will help keep this legacy going by becoming a member or renewing your membership.

## AWF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Albuquerque Wildlife Federation | P.O. Box 20225 | Albuquerque, NM 87154

❒ Yes, I'd like to join AWF! ❒ This is a gift membership from: _____

name(s): _____

address: _____

city, state, zip: _____

phone: _____ email: _____

❒ Student _____ $10
❒ Individual _____ $25
❒ Family _____ $35
❒ Sustaining _____ $50-99
❒ Patron _____ $100
❒ Lifetime _____ $500 (*one-time payment*)

Dues: $_____

Extra Contribution: $_____

**TOTAL ENCLOSED: $_____**