



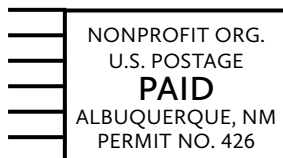
**Wesak Moon**

The rhythms in the blood run deep  
Giving voice to the ancient truths  
Sun and moon breathe light and love  
On a land now scarred and dry  
Though human tongues be mute  
Encased in bodies driven to a machine's beat  
The heart yet drums its message through the vein  
Listen  
Listen to the deep stirrings  
Life calls to Life  
We are here to dance upon the Earth  
We are here to sing beneath the sky

by K. Gay Witherington

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance  
P.O. Box 25464  
Albuquerque, NM 87125

**DO YOU NEED TO RENEW?** Check your membership  
expiration date located above your name and address.



# New Mexico **WILD!**

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

## A Monumental Year

PUSHING FOR ANOTHER NEW NATIONAL  
MONUMENT FOR NEW MEXICO

Breaking News: Secretary of the  
Interior Visits Organ Mountains–  
Desert Peaks

ON PAGES 4-5



New Mexico  
Wilderness Alliance  
[www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org)

# New Mexico **WILD!**

The Newsletter of the  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance  
**SPRING 2014**

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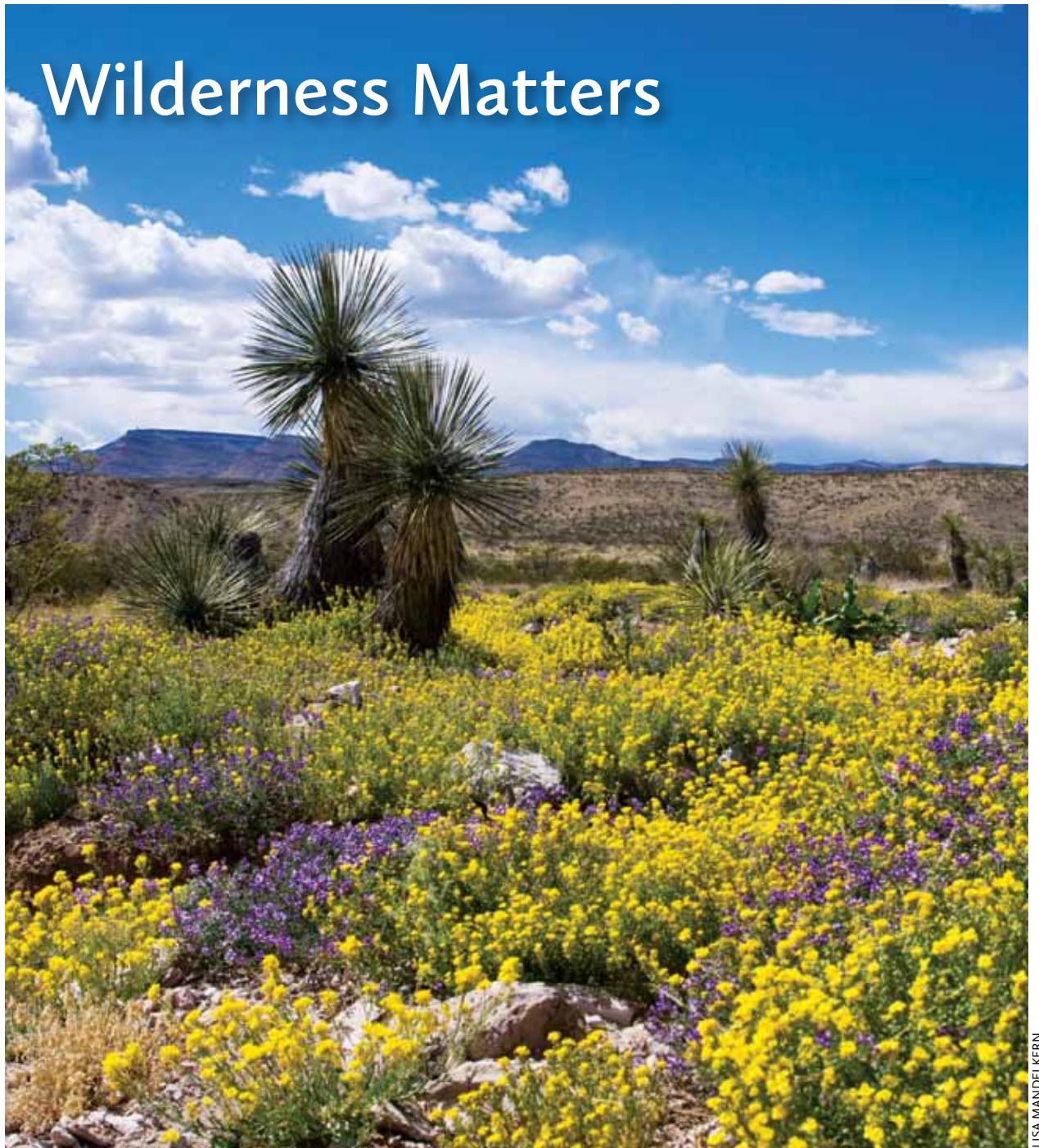
**COVER PHOTO:** Sierra de Las Uvas Mountains  
and Organ Mountains at sunset

**Lisa Mandelkern** is an artist from Las Cruces,  
New Mexico. She likes to photograph the diverse  
array of native plants that occur in the area. This  
often takes her into the uninhabited, sweeping  
landscapes of the Northern Chihuahuan Desert.

[www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org)

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Wilderness Matters



LISA MANDELKERN

**By Mark Allison, Executive Director**

**T**hank you for picking up this most recent edition of our newsletter. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NM Wild) publishes these bi-annually, distributing 45,000 copies to more than 300 locations across New Mexico. I'm glad you found us!

This edition highlights national monuments. Within these pages we will explain what national monuments are, how places become national monuments and why we here at NM Wild are pursuing this strategy for certain areas at this time. As illustrations, we also will celebrate the recent designation of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument near Taos and highlight our campaign to designate the Organ-Mountains-Desert Peaks in Doña Ana County.

Whether you are already well acquainted with New Mexico's special wild places, visiting from another state or country and planning to get outside while you are here, or are just curious about this free publication with the beautiful picture on the front, I think there is something in here for everyone to enjoy. Like our 5,000 members, the perspectives in this edition are diverse and include those from an international student, a biologist, a young hunter, our U.S. senators, volunteer archaeologists and the mayor of a small village in Northern New Mexico, among many others.

I hope that these articles, photographs and musings will bring you pleasure, that you might discover something you didn't already know and that they will motivate you to learn more about NM Wild and how you can be a part of protecting our state's best public lands. I hope, too, that this newsletter will provide you with the inspiration to get outside with your friends and family to discover the magnificent beauty of New Mexico's wilderness this year. We know that is the very best path for people to become lifelong advocates.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and the 90th anniversary of the world's first administratively-protected wilderness—our own Gila Wilderness. During this very special year, we want to remind ourselves why wilderness is essential, honor the vision and efforts of those who came before us and renew our commitment to preserve additional deserving lands now under threat.

Contrary to common perception, the vast ma-



majority of federal public land in New Mexico is not protected from logging, mining, road-building, off-road vehicles or oil and gas development. It is easy to think while hiking on U.S. Forest Service land under a beautiful New Mexico sky, for example, that the area is protected from these threats, while in fact it may not be. It is essential to set aside our increasingly rare, special, wild places fully and permanently before they are gone. Your voice is critical. While we don't have the money that the well-heeled corporate extractive industries have, we do have the moral authority of people like you speaking out on behalf of the places they cherish.

In addition to affording us exhilarating and life affirming recreational opportunities, wilderness honors New Mexico's history and cultural heritage, protects our watersheds and air quality, provides critical habitat for threatened species, supports biodiversity and promotes tourism and much-needed

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**This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act... During this very special year, we want to remind ourselves why wilderness is essential, honor the vision and efforts of those who came before us and renew our commitment to preserve additional deserving lands now under threat.**

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job creation. Research has even linked childhood development, emotional wellbeing and good citizenship to time spent outdoors.

As much as anything, wilderness is also important as an idea—to know that there are still places that exist that are essentially untouched and “untrammled” by us—I think that knowledge enriches all of humanity, whether we personally visit it or not. Perhaps you have your own thoughts about why wilderness matters.

Do your favorite outdoor places enjoy special protected status? If not, they could be under threat and lost forever.

NM Wild educates people of all ages about our wild public lands and wildlife and how these treasures are directly connected to our clean air, drinking water and overall quality of life. Our education and outreach activities include the publication of newsletters like this one and our annual award-winning Wild Guide, which lists dozens of opportunities for public participation. Each year we lead more than 30 guided hikes and volunteer service projects throughout New Mexico's most important landscapes deserving of permanent protection. We build collaborations with community stakeholders and local businesses and work with state and federal agencies to complete restoration projects on public lands. Through these activities, we hope community members build an enduring appreciation of the importance of our public lands and become new stewards to protect our land, water and

wildlife for future generations. We hope you can join us in 2014.

I have seen the pride and joy that came with the designation of Rio Grande del Norte as a national monument in March 2013. This was the culmination of an active NM Wild campaign of seven years, and a dream of many long before that. I have heard this successful effort described as a national model, one where local voices were prominent and where the coalition was as broad as the mesa and as deep as the gorge itself.

Down south in Doña Ana County, we've been leading a challenging multi-year effort to protect a broad expanse of Chihuahuan desert grasslands, sky island peaks, dramatic canyons and historic ruins known as Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. This campaign is also a model of collaboration including faith and business leaders, youth groups, veterans and sportsmen, and has been described as one of the top campaigns in the nation. The eyes of the country are upon us, and I can tell you that we've never been closer to victory. We are so proud and appreciative of Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich introducing legislation in December of 2013 to protect these nearly half a million acres. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell recently visited the proposed national monument (read more on pages 4-5) and we are calling upon President Obama to protect this area.

The last Congress was the first since World War II to fail to protect a single new acre of public land as a national park, monument or wilderness area. It is in large part because of this shameful record that we have been pursuing strategies to encourage the Obama administration to do what Congress has failed to do and to protect special places like Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks by using the president's executive authority under the Antiquities Act.

I am proud to be associated with such a smart, dedicated and persistent group of members, volunteers, staff and colleagues working to protect New Mexico's wild places. We're going to do our very best to make sure that NM Wild is the strongest, most effective, homegrown, statewide, grassroots, membership advocacy group that we can be. We have big plans for the upcoming year and our chances for success will very much depend on engaging, growing and broadening our members. Are you one?

There are lots of ways to get involved:

- Join or renew your membership.
- Ask your friends and family to join NM Wild.
- Give the *2014 Wild Guide* as a gift to your loved ones.
- Join us for one of our many outings.
- Act on our advocacy alerts.
- Volunteer in the field or the office.
- Host a membership gathering.
- Write a piece for our newsletter.
- Contribute financially what you can.
- Let us know what is on your mind!

Thanks again for picking up a copy of this newsletter. Enjoy, and keep it wild!

Go to our website at [www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org) to sign up for an adventure, get the latest news and find out how to join our collective voice for wilderness. 🐾

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### MISSION STATEMENT

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

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### What is Wilderness?

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System to preserve the last remaining wildlands 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 Monumental Day in Las Cruces



ALL EVENT PHOTOS BY RAYMOND WATT

By Nathan Small, Wilderness Protection Coordinator

*The majority of attendees were in favor of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument proposal.*

It's a special day when the Interior Department secretary, two United States senators and the Bureau of Land Management director visit natural public lands together. On Friday, Jan. 24, more than 1,000 local citizens joined Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Sen. Tom Udall, Sen. Martin Heinrich, BLM Principal Deputy Director Neil Kornze and New Mexico State Land Commissioner Ray Powell in Las Cruces to discuss conservation of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks region at a town hall meeting. After an overwhelming show of support, prospects for permanent protection of the iconic Organ Mountains and surrounding wild lands are now better than ever before.

Various news outlets reported that a tour by the secretary touched on some of the region's highlights, like seeing a gray fox, tarantula, javelina and raptors as well as many Native American petroglyphs. The wildlife and the region's unique cultural history are two of the most important reasons justifying permanent protection of the area. Native wildlife



*Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell speaks to a standing-room only crowd at the Ramada Inn Las Cruces February 24, 2014. The town hall style meeting was aimed at gauging support for the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument proposal.*

includes pronghorn antelope, desert mule deer, javelina, badgers and many different types of rodents. Three types of quail, many different raptors and an exciting array of different reptiles also

call the Chihuahuan desert home. First nations have been part of the landscape for more than 10,000 years and have left behind images and implements that give current people a window into past worlds.

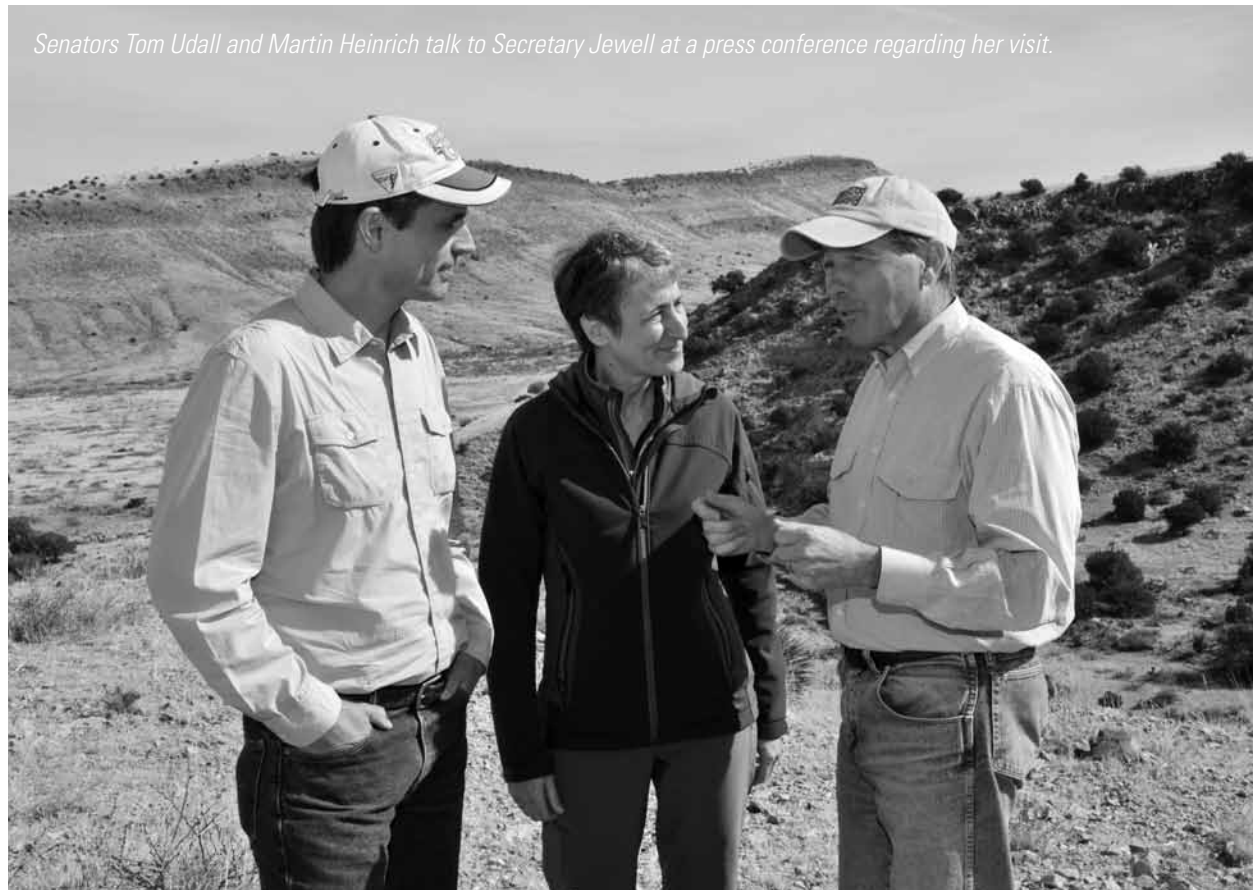
More recent history covers everything from the first European expeditions along the Camino Real to Apollo mission training that took place at Kilbourne Hole. The sweep of history, the scenic beauty, the cultural heritage and the biological significance that have so inspired Las Cruces and New Mexico now have a rare chance to be protected by either Congress or the president of the United States.

Even with so much progress, work remains. This issue of *New Mexico Wild!* features testimonials from local residents who are committed to the conservation of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. Send your own testimonial and

written note to elected officials and to Secretary Jewell to ensure the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument is designated as soon as possible! 🐾

## LATE BREAKING NEWS!

Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich talk to Secretary Jewell at a press conference regarding her visit.



"We are so pleased that **Secretary Jewell** took the time to personally visit this magnificent area to see for herself what a rare and important place it is and to have the opportunity to hear directly how overwhelming the community support is to preserve it. The secretary saw today how proud New Mexicans are of this national treasure," **Mark Allison**, executive director of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance said. "We call on the Secretary to take this experience back to **President Obama** and to urge him to designate an Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument so that this special landscape receives the national recognition it deserves and the additional protection it needs."



Above: NM Wild staff member and archaeologist Angel Peña talks about the historical significance of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks.

Left: NM Wild staff members celebrate after a successful town hall meeting.

## TESTIMONIAL

# Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks a Unique Laboratory

By **Angel Peña**, cultural resources specialist and Hispanic organizer for the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and team leader for the Groundworks Doña Ana Green Team

**EVERY DAY I AM PRIVILEGED TO HAVE A LABORATORY** as beautiful, bountiful and unique as the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks region. My support for protecting this region is strong because these lands are a precious educational resource that will benefit many future generations.

The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks contain outstanding examples of our extraordinary biological, ecological and archaeological resources. Despite its often harsh summer temperatures, windy spring days and cold winter nights, the Chihuahuan Desert is a beautiful place where plant and animal communities thrive. There are few places in the

*I want to protect these resources and the opportunities they offer for future academics as well as for a community that recognizes such beauty and storied culture as its own.*

United States that contain such concentrations of natural and cultural resources. Even fewer are located in such proximity to a level one research university (New Mexico State University) and its associated research partners like the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Jornada Experimental Range.

I want to protect these resources and the opportunities they offer for future academics as well as for a community that recognizes such beauty and storied culture as its own.

Natural lands like Broad Canyon and the Potrillo Mountains provide unique opportunities for research and education. This past summer I had the privilege of leading a team of 16 local young adults as part of an educational program

known as the Groundworks Doña Ana Green Team. The young people had the chance to learn about geology, biology and archaeology through working on a project that inventoried cultural sites within the boundaries of the proposed monument. This project is the tip of the iceberg for service learning and engagement of our youth that would take place in the monument. New Mexico is really the land of enchantment. Protecting the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks as a national monument and honoring our community and our senators' commitment to conservation would make our state motto—the Land of Enchantment—ring true for us Southern New Mexico residents.

# Rio Grande del Norte National Monument

## A Protected Landscape

By Esther Garcia

Mayor of the village of Questa and president of San Antonio Del Rio Colorado Land Grant

**AS A HISPANIC LEADER IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO, I AM WRITING TO THANK THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION** for the protection of the environmentally, culturally and historically rich landscapes of the San Luis Valley and Rio Grande Gorge.

On March 25, 2013, President Barack Obama designated the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument here in Taos County. Hispano culture and presence in New Mexico is and has always been closely connected to our state's rich public lands. These areas provide our families and communities with hunting, recreation, traditions and so much more. Throughout

time, they have also brought travelers and tourists and with them, economic development. As such, the protection of these natural treasures is an important priority to us and to our future.

The Rio Grande del Norte National Monument includes some of New Mexico's most spectacular landscapes, including the Rio Grande Gorge—which at some places is a half mile wide across, dropping to the Rio Grande 800 feet below—and is a vital migratory flyway for a number of bird species.

Today, I can enjoy the fact that this landscape will be protected for my children, grandchildren and

those who follow. I am an 11th-generation-resident of the Questa area and was fortunate to work with a group of individuals and organizations that felt as passionate as I do about the Rio Grande del Norte. Through this work, we made sure this area will never change. The Rio Grande del Norte will continue to be part of a memory that I have cherished since I was a young girl.

I can still remember my grandfather telling me that this land must remain protected, as it is the place where most of our waters come from here in Northern New Mexico. He said to me, "*Aqua es la vida*. (water is life). Without water we cannot exist." These words are still close to my heart and now I am proud to say this landscape is forever protected.

Fortunately, then-Secretary of the Interior Kent Salazar, Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich (co-sponsor) and Rep. Ben Ray Lujan had the vision to protect the Rio Grande del Norte and make sure that all future generations had the opportunity to visit and recreate in the area that we have all grown to love. This important measure protected 242,455 acres around the Rio Grande Gorge from development of all kinds, while preserving our traditional ways of life and boosting our economy by attracting visitors who leave their dollars behind.

The Rio Grande del Norte National Monument proclamation specifically protects our right to hunt, fish and collect piñon nuts and firewood within the monument—traditions we have depended on for many generations. Grazing will continue where it exists today. The measure will not affect water rights or private property and recognizes existing rights of way for vehicle access and utilities. Simply put, the Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument will protect the area around the gorge as it is while also

protecting existing uses of the land. That's why grazing permittees, land grant heirs and acequia members supported the proclamation.

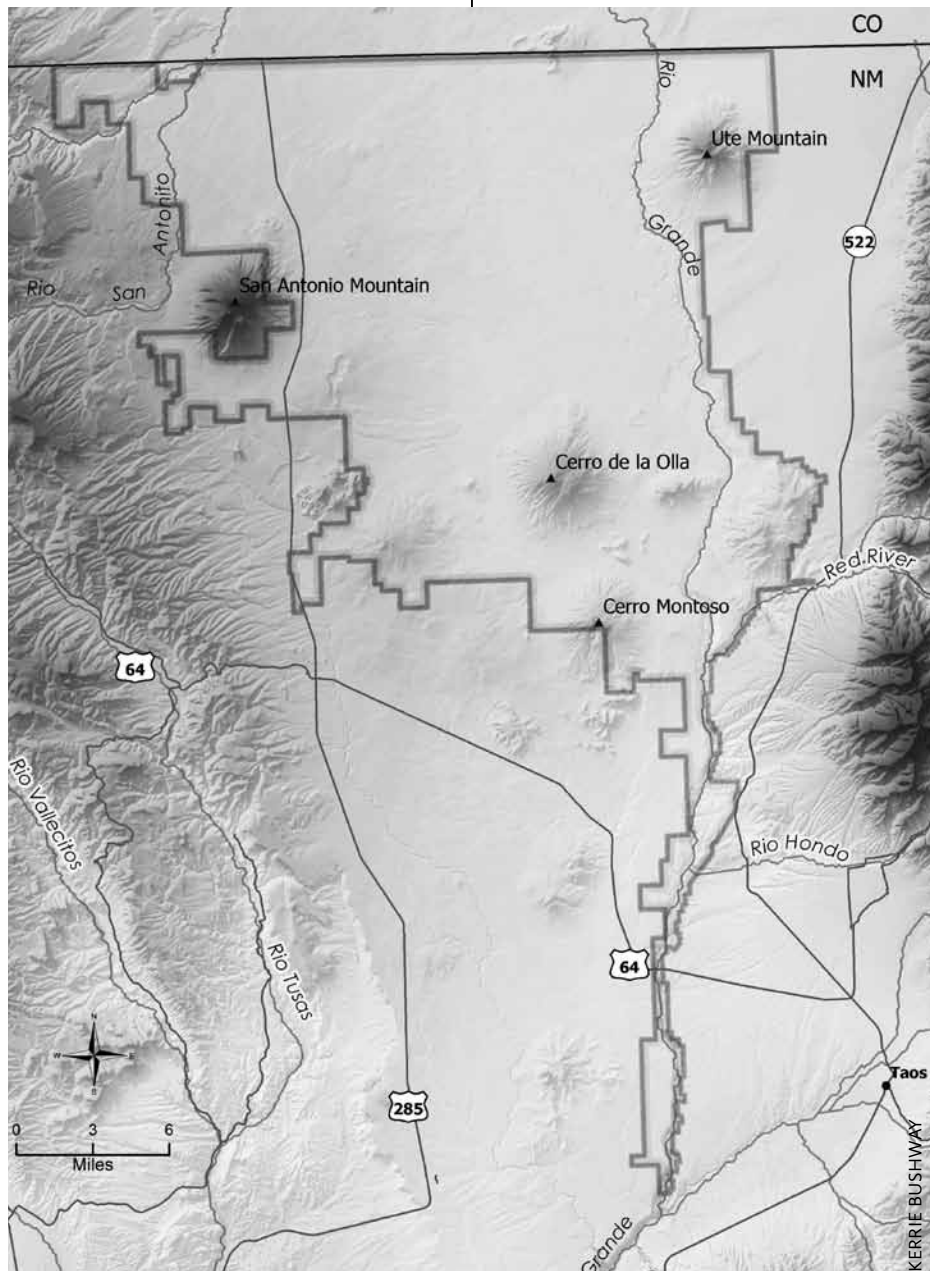
Lands like the Valle Vidal, Latir Wilderness and Wheeler Peak Wilderness in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains have played large roles in Hispano life and culture throughout Northern New Mexico's history. Hunting and traditional gathering activities continue to this day and bind generations of Hispano families together.

Ute Mountain, the scenic backdrop of our community, is part of another piece of legislation that would give it the strongest form of protection as part of the 13,500-acre Cerro del Yuta wilderness. Another, smaller area—the 8,000 acre San Antonio area—is also up for wilderness designation. By establishing this "gold standard" of protection, we can be sure that future generations of New Mexicans will be able to experience and enjoy all this wild land has to offer.

The national monument proclamation made good sense, both socially and economically. But more than that, protecting the land is a trust we inherited from grandparents and ancestors that came before us. We all need to be good stewards of the land to ensure that this shared natural treasure will be part of our grandchildren's heritage. They will appreciate that this wild land remains as it has always been—an anchor in their lives, a place for a hike or a hunt, a living reminder of the generations that preceded them and a precious gift they can hand down to their own grandchildren. 🐾



Pamela and John Olivas, and Esther Garcia



RIO GRANDE DEL NORTE NATIONAL MONUMENT BOUNDARY



COURTESY OF BLM/NEW MEXICO

## Thank You, John

Since 2008, **John Olivas** has worked to build community support for the permanent protection of Rio Grande del Norte. As a land grant heir, John quickly gained pivotal support from the San Antonio Del Rio Colorado land grant. John worked hard to establish an effective coalition that represented the local community of Northern New Mexico. He made countless presentations, led hikes and spent hours negotiating a conservation path that would protect the traditional land uses of the community, including hunting, fishing, wood gathering and grazing. As an outfitter, John understands the economic benefits of protected public lands firsthand. He worked with the town of Questa and Taos County to hold economic development workshops and trainings for the permitting process for local outfitters.

John was responsible for much of the grassroots

support for Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, including resolutions of support from the Taos County Commission, Taos Village Council, Taos Pueblo, Taos Chamber of Commerce, Taos Green Chamber, Taos Ski Valley, village of Red River and town of Mora. He also gained letters of support from more than 100 local businesses, hunters, fishermen, land grants, acequias, grazing permittees and tribal citizens.

As part of his work, John also established the Wilderness Outdoor Connection Leadership Program (WOCLP) to work with youth in Mora and Questa in May 2008. The program helped foster the next generation of conservation advocates in Northern New Mexico. Students developed grassroots organizing skills by working with the federal delegation and their staff to help create federal law, and they visited the campaign area, specifically Ute Mountain, Wild Rivers Recreation Area and the Rio Grande Gorge.

The Rio Grande del Norte Coalition has been called a national model. Much of that can be attributed to John's style. With roots in the area going back hundreds of years, John patiently listened to the local concerns and brought much of the community into the campaign to truly solidify a local conservation effort. He works hard, collaborates well and is just one of the nicest guys you will ever meet. Rio Grande del Norte National Monument was established by President Obama on March 25, 2013. We would like to thank John for his outstanding contributions and years of dedication to successfully protect the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, an amazing landscape now protected for all of us!—*Tisha Broska*

*John Olivas was awarded a New Mexico Outdoors Coalition Engaged Citizen Award in 2013 to recognize his leadership.*

# ORGAN MOUNTAINS-DESERT PEAKS Preserve Sacred Sites in Perpetuity

By Alex Mares

Diné Advocate for Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument  
(Reprinted from 2013 *Wild Guide*)

**W**hether mountain biking an approved trail from the Texas-New Mexico state line north towards the Organ Mountains or hiking or horseback riding in the Robledo, Uvas or Doña Ana mountains you are constantly surrounded by evidence of past peoples.

Prehistoric campsites, villages, pictographs and petroglyphs—many of which still hold meaning to current native peoples of the area—are scattered throughout this very large and varied landscape. From Providence Cone to Aguirre Springs and from Aden's Crater to Magdalena Peak, the past is still with us.

Archaeologists have named and temporally distinguished many cultural traditions in this geographic area known as the Jornada branch of the Mogollon cultural region. Evidence supports dates of habitation ranging from Paleolithic (12,000-10,000 BP) to the more recent Mimbres traditions (1200-860 BP) and the most recent Proto/Historic Apache peoples (120-600 BP).

The modern Tigua from Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo (Texas), Mescalero Apache (New Mexico), Chiricahua Apache (Oklahoma/New Mexico) and others hold these first peoples and the lands they roamed and depended on for survival sacred and consider them an extension of themselves.

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Many of the Diné origin stories, songs and ceremonies speak of natural features and primordial beings that still occur and are found depicted in this area. It is truly a cultural landscape.

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Even among the Diné, we have family stories of groups and individuals traversing these areas and encountering these Inaasazi (old enemies) and raiding or trading with them and continuing on further into Mehiigo Biyeeho (old Mexico) during the 15th through 19th centuries.

The hidden fresh water springs, seeps and the Rio Grande (known to various Apache bands as To chinne—Red Water), along with native plants that provided food, medicine, clothing and building materials, as well as abundant game—fish, antelope, bighorn sheep, mule deer, rabbits,

squirrels and many others—allowed the people to survive.

Many of these plants and animals are still gathered by and important to these same native peoples today. Some of these animals and other beings are depicted in both the pictographs and petroglyphs throughout the area.

Many of the Diné origin stories, songs and ceremonies speak of natural features and primordial beings that still occur and are found depicted in this area. It is truly a cultural landscape.

These lands are no longer populated by small bands of roaming hunter-gatherers or sedentary farmer-hunters but, rather, sit adjacent to large population centers such as Las Cruces with hundreds of thousands of people and El Paso County with a population nearing one million.

It is for all of these reasons that I encourage each of you to go out and walk, hike, camp, bike, raft, horseback ride, drive and **responsibly** enjoy the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks lands. Also, feel free to join us on one of our organized outings through the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NM Wild). These are now your public lands and you have the freedom to enjoy them. With great freedom comes great responsibility, so I would also encourage you to get involved and support the effort to increase the current level of protection given to these lands while continuing to allow for responsible and wise use by a wide range of visitors. You can do so by joining the Friends of the Organ Mountains or NM Wild or simply educating yourself about the area and writing your congressional representatives.

Many different native peoples have passed through, depended on and lived by these sacred lands. Each has left their mark of passage while not destroying the very things that drew them here. What impact and legacy will you leave for your children and their descendants? 🏹

*Alex Mares is vice chairman of the Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition based in El Paso and also serves as a native guide for outings throughout the Southwest for Southwest Expeditions out of Mesilla.*

## TESTIMONIAL

### Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Culturally and Historically Significant

By Jennifer Romero

**LIVING IN THE SAME COMMUNITY** for your entire life, it is easy to take it for granted. Part of your daily activities does not usually involve thinking about the uniqueness of the desert environment. As a native New Mexican, I fell into this mindset quite often until I became a member of the Green Team, an environmental education program for youth that is managed by Groundwork Doña Ana County.

The desert can be a harsh environment, and the need to protect it is often not evident. When I visit areas of the proposed national monument and discovered artifacts from ancient communities, I realize the cultural significance of this area. I realize how amazingly resourceful these ancient people were. The desert also contains remnants of more recent history such as

*When I look out at such a scene, I realize how large the world is and know that while I am only one person, I have the capacity to experience it to the extent I choose.*

bombing targets from World War II, which provide a wider range of historical significance to the area. By protecting these areas for future generations, humans will have a link to the past that they can personally experience and accept as their own no matter what their ethnicity is.

The proposed Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument allows you to escape from the stresses of everyday life. I have climbed to the top of some of the peaks in the area, and the views are amazing. When I look out at such a scene, I realize how large the world is and know that while I am only one person, I have the capacity to experience it to the extent I choose. It is easy to get stuck in our own little box of

thinking, but these unique locations allow us to see the beauty of our surroundings and to establish a wider view of life as a whole.

Before my involvement with Groundwork, I did not know about the historical significance the land around me had. Growing up, I was somewhat embarrassed to come from New Mexico when all the "important" states like California and New York barely knew it existed. Now, I am proud to be a New Mexican because of the beautiful landscape and heritage the state has.

*For more information about Groundwork, go to Page 24.*

The following is an excerpt from “Cultural Resources, Archaeology And History of the Proposed Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, Doña Ana County, New Mexico: An Exploration of Significance and Risks for a National Treasure,” by Rebecca Proctor, Ph.D., Jean Fulton and Polly Shaafsma.

### The Human Tapestry

Humans have lived in this part of southern New Mexico for at least 10,000 years, and there are sites from all time periods present in the proposed Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. The research potential exists to study known sites and discover many new ones that contain:

- Exquisitely flaked Paleo-Indian spear points from the earliest times of human habitation;
- Carved petroglyphs and painted pictographs on exposed rock faces, with geometric, animal and mythological images;
- Caves and rock shelters containing stone tools and remnants of perishable objects such as woven sandals and baskets from the Archaic period, before people began farming;
- Occupation sites from the Mogollon period, when people began farming, living in pithouse villages, and making fired pottery;
- Remnants of Apache camps and hiding places from the tumultuous period of the Indian Wars;
- Remains of Spanish and Anglo farming and ranching efforts in now-dry watersheds.

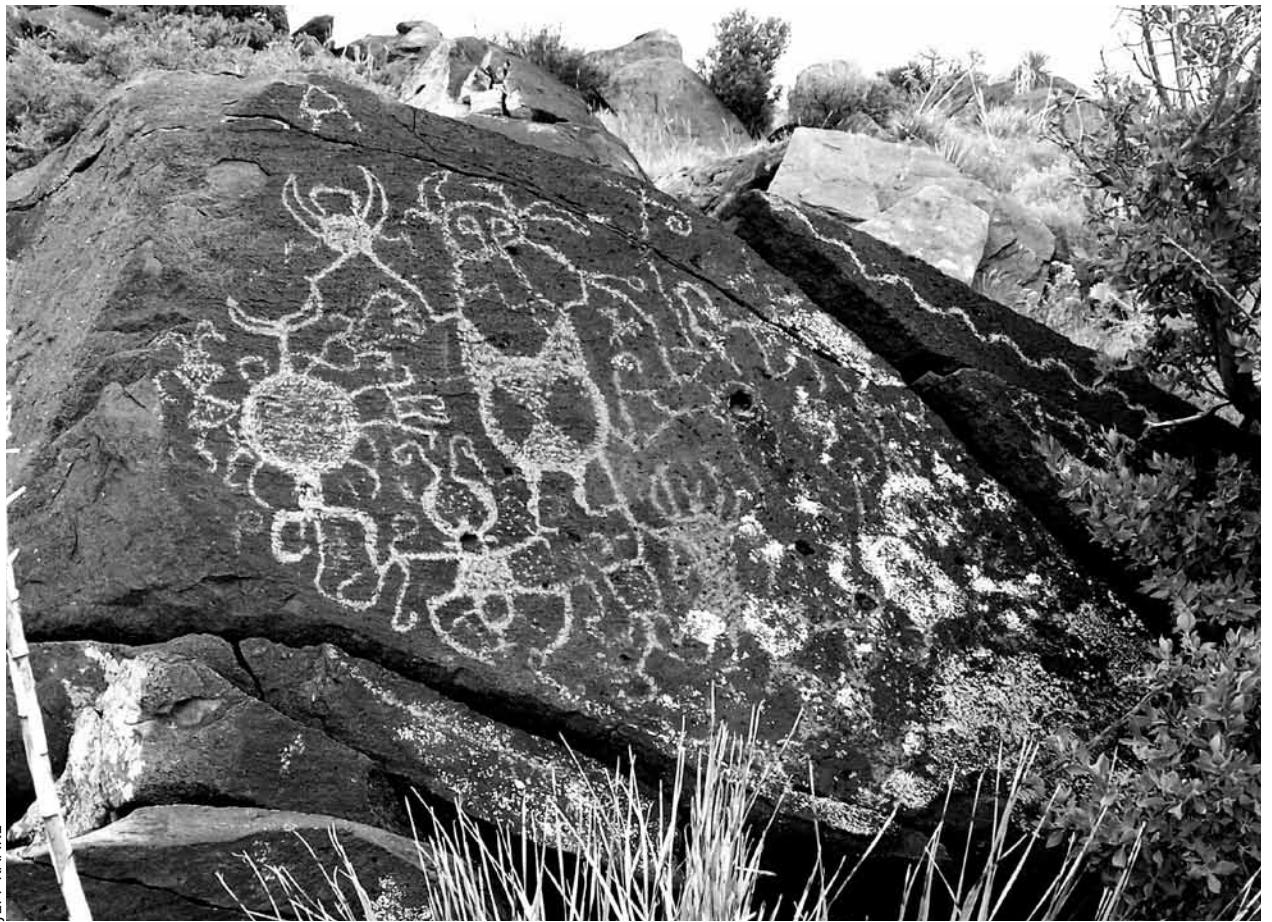
### The Superior Quality Of The Archaeological Record

Ancient peoples in the south-central region of what is now New Mexico interacted with the better-known cultures, but were different in many ways from any of them. Current knowledge indicates that the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks region was a fertile ground for cross-cultural exchange. There is reason to believe ancient inhabitants were in contact with:

- Northern Mexico
- the Mimbres Culture to the west
- the Zuni and Chaco Canyon areas to the north and
- the Jornada Mogollon (Mug-ee-yóne) culture to the east.

The scientific knowledge waiting to be uncovered is immense and cannot be found anywhere else in New Mexico. The fact that the region has not yet been studied to the level that allows us to understand fully how south-central New Mexico fits into the larger picture of prehistoric and historic land use within the Greater Southwest makes it especially important and especially vulnerable to poor planning or destructive forces. A review of the data available for this region shows how important cultural resources are in this desert wilderness. More than 20 discrete areas of significant rock art have been identified on the exposed volcanic and sedimentary rocks in the proposed monument. These include:

- At least 15 areas within the Sierra de las Uvas Mountains;
- Multiple locations in the Providence Cone area, which is as yet poorly explored;
- At least one area in the southern Organ Mountains, with much more territory unexplored;



JEFF KAAKE

- Four or more rock art sites in the Doña Ana Mountains, with much land still undocumented;
- At least nine rock art locations in other parts of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks region.

The archaeological record also includes:

- Open-air and rock shelter sites indicating that Archaic (pre-pottery and pre-bow-and-arrow) gatherers and hunters used these low mountain areas as an important source of food and tool-making materials;
- Sites from the later farming peoples, known as the Mogollon (Mug-ee-yóne), who ventured into the mountains for hunting, quarrying stone, and gathering important materials for medicines or tool-making;
- Late historic sites that may be associated with the Apache Wars; it is known that famous chief Geronimo and his fighters took refuge in the Robledo Mountains, likely using some of the same rock shelters that their forebears had occupied millennia earlier;
- Remnants of the Camino Real, the “Royal Road” from Spanish Colonial Mexico northward to Santa Fe and beyond;
- Traces of the famous Butterfield Stagecoach Route that helped connect the young U.S. with its Pacific Coast.

To understand the vastness of the archaeological material waiting to be studied and protected, the following points are important:

- Only a handful of formal archaeological surveys have been conducted in the project area;
- The existing surveys account for less than 5 percent of the total land base;
- Even with this tiny amount of archaeological survey, there are approximately 243 known archaeological sites;
- Based on the statistics above, professional archaeologists could conclude that the true density of sites in the proposed Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument could be as much as one site for every 123.5 acres, or almost 5,000 sites. 🗨️

Doña Ana  
County:

# Rich in Cultural History

# New Additions: New Mexico's Newest National Monuments

Managed by BLM

The Bureau of Land Management's National Conservation Lands include 19 national monuments in nine Western states. These national monuments encompass landscapes of tremendous beauty and diversity, ranging from rugged California coastline to vividly hued desert canyons. BLM-managed national monuments in New Mexico include:

## **Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument**

Located in north-central New Mexico, the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument is an outdoor laboratory that offers an opportunity to observe geologic processes as well as cultural and biological objects of interest. Cone-shaped rock formations are the products of explosive volcanic eruptions that occurred between 6 million and 7 million years ago. The monument, encompassing approximately 4,000 acres, was established in 2001 by presidential proclamation.

## **Prehistoric Trackways National Monument**

Prehistoric Trackways National Monument, located in southern New Mexico's Robledo

Mountains, was designated by Congress in 2009. The 5,280-acre monument includes a major deposit of Paleozoic Era fossilized footprint megatracks. The monument also provides opportunities for recreational activities such as hiking and horseback riding.

## **Rio Grande del Norte National Monument**

Located northwest of Taos, the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument includes a landscape of wide open plains, volcanic cones and steep canyons with rivers tucked away in their depths. The area provides important wildlife habitat and is home to extraordinary archaeological and cultural resources dating from the Archaic Period to the more recent passage of Hispanic settlers. The monument, which encompasses approximately 240,000 acres of BLM land, was designated by presidential proclamation in 2013. National monument designation has had a positive effect on visitation rates with in Rio Grande del Norte—post-monument designation data compiled by the Bureau of Land Management for Rio Grande del Norte shows a year-over-year visitation increase from fiscal 2012 to 2013 of 40 percent. 🦋



*Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument*

COURTESY OF BLM/NEW MEXICO



## **List of National Monuments in New Mexico**

### **Aztec Ruins**

National Park Service  
January 24, 1923

### **Bandelier**

National Park Service  
February 11, 1916

### **Capulin Volcano**

National Park Service  
August 9, 1916

### **El Malpais**

National Park Service  
December 31, 1987

### **El Morro**

National Park Service  
December 8, 1906

### **Fort Union**

National Park Service  
June 28, 1954

### **Gila Cliff Dwellings**

National Park Service  
November 16, 1907

### **Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks**

Bureau of Land Management  
January 2001

### **Petroglyph**

National Park Service  
June 27, 1990

### **Prehistoric Trackways**

Bureau of Land Management  
March 30, 2009

### **Rio Grande del Norte**

Bureau of Land Management  
March 25, 2013

### **Salinas Pueblo Missions**

National Park Service  
November 1, 1909

### **White Sands**

National Park Service  
January 18, 1933

# Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks Proposed National Monument

## Why Protect Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks as a National Monument?

### Cultural, Historical and Natural Values

Doña Ana County is celebrated for its incredible wild lands and history. It is loved for its natural wonders, such as the peaks of the Organ Needles and the Chihuahuan Desert. It is a cultural haven for its petroglyph-lined canyons of the Sierra de las Uvas Mountains and for its well-known Western historical figures and events, including Billy the Kid, Geronimo, the Butterfield Stagecoach route and even training for the Apollo Space Program and World War II bomber pilots and crews. Doña Ana County is where the Camino Real meets the American West.

### Good for Our Economy

Protecting the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks as a national monument will keep attracting visitors, tourists, new residents and businesses. Recent research found that national monuments add millions of dollars to the economies of communities close to them as well as adding hundreds of new jobs and increasing per capita income. Due to its natural beauty and historical and cultural icons, Las Cruces has already been recognized in:

- AARP's 2010 "Best Places to Retire"
- *Kaboom.org's* most "Playful City USA"
- 50 Motorcoach Destinations in the United States
- Facilities and Destinations three times as top destination
- US News & World Report's "10 Cities for Real Estate Steals"

## What Is In The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument?

### Historical and Cultural Features

- More than 22 miles of the Butterfield Stagecoach route
- Kilbourne Hole National Historic Landmark
- Billy the Kid's Outlaw Rock
- Geronimo's Cave
- 243 known archaeological sites
- An estimated 5,000-plus unknown archaeological sites
- Apollo astronaut training sites
- Original U.S./Mexico border from the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (Changed by Gadsden Purchase)
- Historic World War II aerial targets
- Shelter and Conklin's Caves, rich in pre-history

### Special Lands

- Organ Mountains
- Potrillo Volcanic Field
- Kilbourne Hole and Aden Lava Flow
- Robledo Mountains
- Sierra de Las Uvas Mountains
- Fragile Chihuahuan Desert grasslands

### Local Conservation Supporters

- Cities of Las Cruces, Mesilla and El Paso
- Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce
- High Tech Consortium of Southern New Mexico
- Las Cruces League of Women Voters
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
- Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen
- Local and state historians, archaeologists and cultural preservation experts

## NATIONAL MONUMENT FAQs

### How can the Antiquities Act be used to create a national monument?

The Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the president authority to designate national monuments in order to protect "objects of historic or scientific interest." While most national monuments are established by the president, Congress has also occasionally established national monuments protecting natural or historic features. Since 1906, the president and Congress have created more than 100 national monuments. National monuments are currently managed by agencies including the National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management.

### Why would the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance support a national monument instead of wilderness?

The National Wilderness Preservation System of the United States protects federally managed wilderness areas designated for preservation in their natural condition. A national monument, of course, is not wilderness, but it provides a layer of protection that prevents future development while preserving important ecological, cultural and recreational values. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is working to protect important ecosystems and wild public lands threatened by development. Sometimes the designation of a new national monument is an important first step toward wilderness protection within that area.

### What was the first national monument to be designated?

Devils Tower, Wyo., was designated in 1906 by President Theodore Roosevelt.

### What federal agency manages the most national monuments?

The National Park Service manages 79 national monuments—the most of any federal agency. The Bureau of Land Management comes in second with 19.

### What was the first national monument to be designated in New Mexico?

El Morro National Monument was the first national monument designation in the Land of Enchantment. El Morro features inscriptions in sandstone dating to the 1600s along its main trail. Early Spanish travelers called the cuesta El Morro, which is Spanish for the headland or the bluff. Subsequent American travelers referred to El Morro as Inscription Rock, but when it came to naming the national monument in 1906, the earlier Spanish name persevered. Habitation in the area can be dated back to the 1200s.

### What is New Mexico's newest national monument?

Rio Grande del Norte, located northwest of Taos, is the state's newest national monument. The Rio Grande del Norte National Monument encompasses a landscape of wide open plains, volcanic cones and steep canyons with rivers tucked away in their depths. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance started working on the Rio Grande del Norte Campaign in 2007, and President Obama designated the area as a national monument on March 25, 2013.

**PROTECTING OUR PUBLIC LANDS IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS**  
**ORGAN MOUNTAINS-DESERT PEAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT**

The jagged **ORGAN MOUNTAINS** were a landmark for travelers on the Camino Real.

DESIGNATION of the **NATIONAL MONUMENT** will be good for **THE ECONOMY**

**\$7.4 Million** annually in new economic activity

**88** new jobs created

**\$562,000** in additional state & local tax revenue

Source: <http://bit.ly/1afWFme>

Extensive mountain biking, climbing, horseback riding and other recreational uses make the **ORGAN MOUNTAIN-DESERT PEAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT** particularly important to fast-growing Las Cruces and Doña Ana County.

**PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE Favor the National Monument**

**83% of Doña Ana County residents support designation**

Voters across New Mexico come together on this position regardless of location or political affiliations.

Source: Sept 2012 poll of 500 residents of Doña Ana County

The **DOÑA ANA MOUNTAINS** are an archeological, cultural, and recreational gem mere miles from Las Cruces.

**PROTECTING public land creates local JOBS**

**297%** increase in jobs for western non-metro counties with at least 20% protected lands

Western non-metro counties with no protected lands saw only 83% increase in jobs for the same period.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1j21jle>

The **GREATER POTRILLO MOUNTAINS** have unparalleled significance to the large local and regional sportsmen community due to the outstanding populations of quail, mule deer, and javelina.

Learn more at [www.organmountains.org](http://www.organmountains.org)

**PUBLIC LANDS = TOURISM**

**40%** Increase in visitors in less than one year since the designation of the Río Grande del Norte National Monument in northern New Mexico.

Source: BLM Taos Field Office

**NEW MEXICO GREEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE POWER UP YOUR BUSINESS**

## National Monuments Protect Landscapes and Boost Local Economies



The designation of Río Grande del Norte as a national monument is expected to increase visitors to the area by more than 50 percent and nearly double the economic impact in the region, according to estimates by a Colorado consulting firm.

A public land designation such as a national monument may lead potential visitors to expect a higher-quality visit, and that, in turn, can draw more people to the area. Changes in visitation and tourism spending are especially important in rural areas where people may be particularly reliant on income from tourism.

In an August 2012 report, BBC Research and Consulting modeled the potential benefits to the regional economy of national monument designation by projecting increases in expected visitation and associated visitor spending. The results predicted that the national monument designation would nearly double the economic impact. The number of jobs supported by the national monument is also expected to increase by 279. Those estimates take into account activities, gasoline, groceries, restaurants, lodging, retail and other expenses incurred by visitors.

BBC reviewed data from other recently designated national monuments to gain an understanding of the potential visitor response.

Prior to national monument designation, BBC estimated about 325,100 visits a year to the Río Grande del Norte, with 19 percent of that total estimated to be non-local day users, 10 percent visitors who stay in hotels and 7 percent who camp. The report estimates visitation will increase to about 488,000 visits a year. It also breaks down estimated spending by activity—including biking, boating, camping, climbing, fishing, hunting and others—and estimates an additional \$1.8 million in state and local tax revenue will be collected under the new designation. 🐾

## Connect with the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Campaign

[www.organmountains.org](http://www.organmountains.org)  
[www.facebook.com/organmountains](http://www.facebook.com/organmountains)  
<http://twitter.com/OrganMountains>

**In Las Cruces**  
 275 North Downtown Mall  
 Las Cruces, NM 88001  
 575-527-9962  
[angel@nmwild.org](mailto:angel@nmwild.org)



JEFF STEINBORN

*Sierras de las Uvas grasslands*



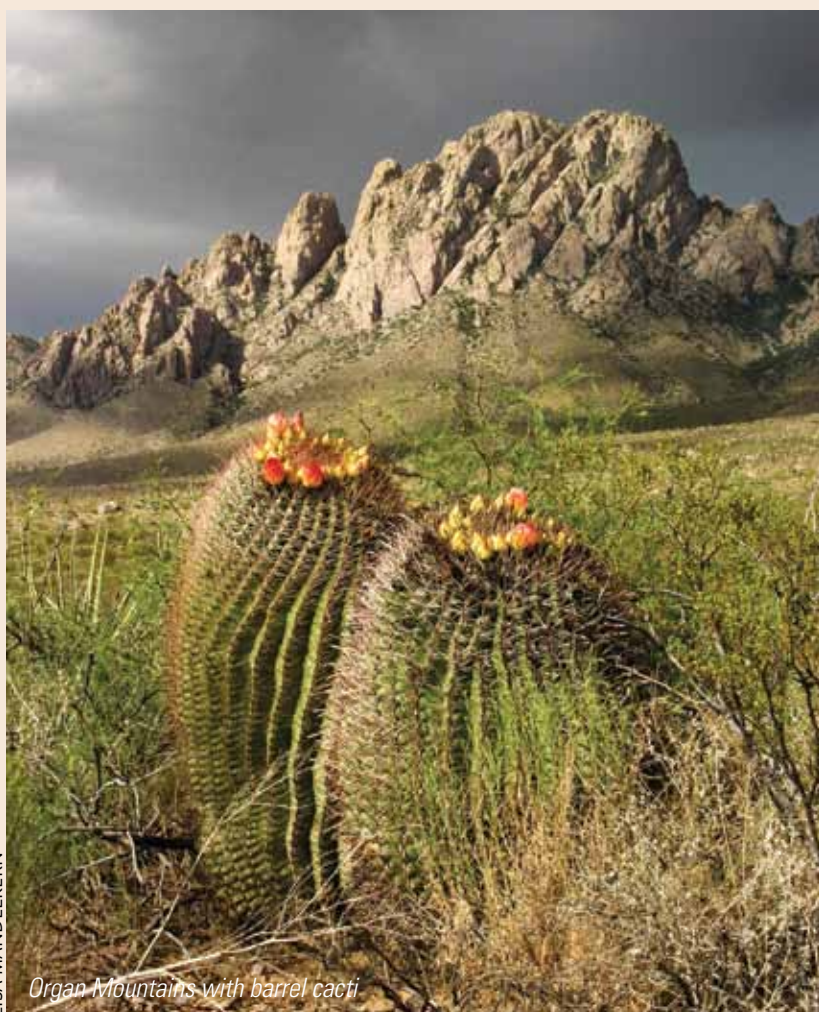
COURTESY OF BLM/NEW MEXICO

*Organ Mountains*



*Regional spiritual and religious leaders convened in October 2013 to discuss the importance of designating Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument*

LC SUN-NEWS ROBIN ZIELINSKI



LISA MANDELKERN

*Organ Mountains with barrel cacti*

Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks:  
*desert*  
*treasure*



*Organ Mountains, Aguirre Spring*

COURTESY OF BLM/NEW MEXICO



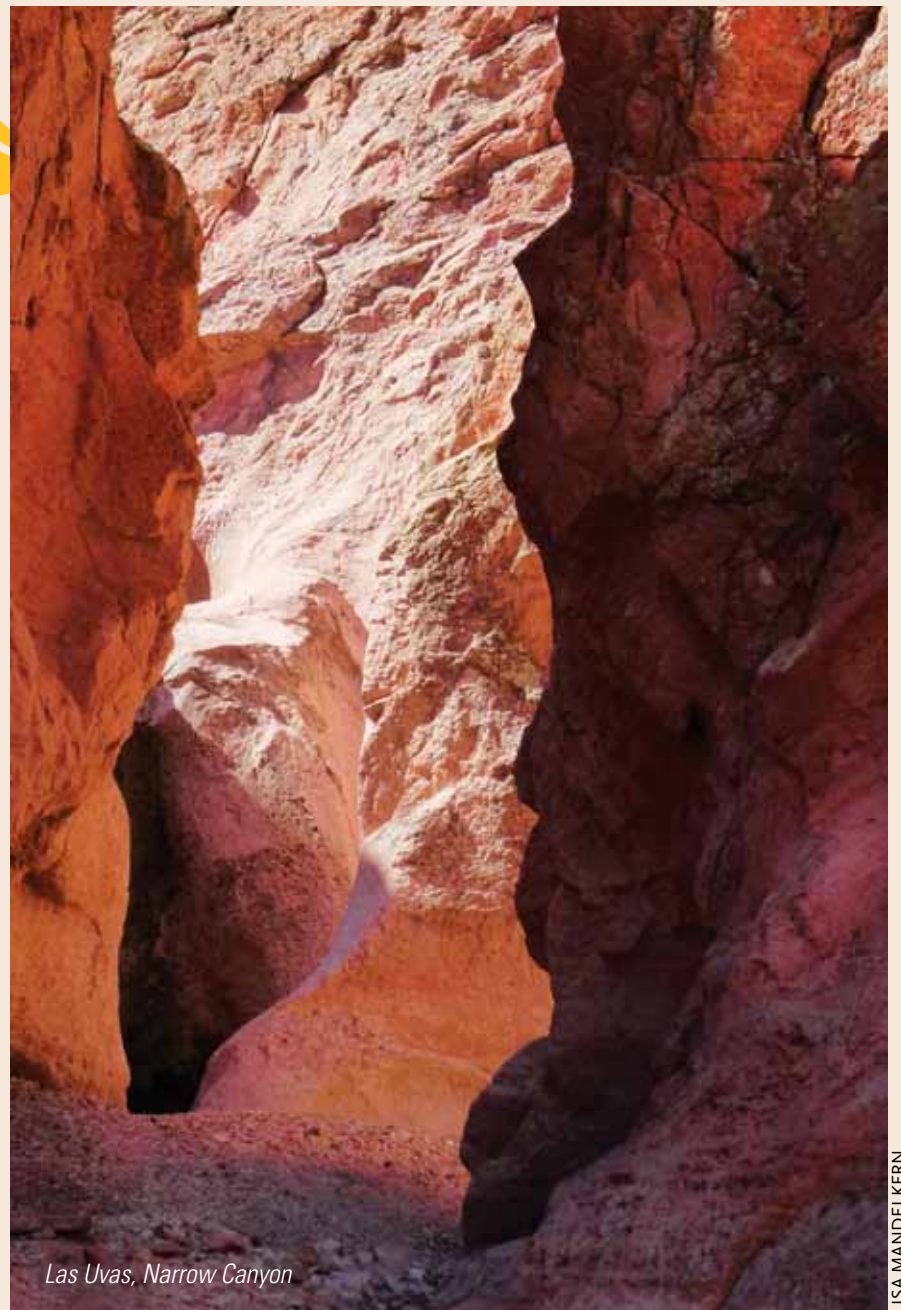
*Dayflower*

LISA MANDELKERN



*Horned Toad*

COURTESY OF BLM/NEW MEXICO



*Las Uvas, Narrow Canyon*

LISA MANDELKERN



Vesper Sparrow



Loggerhead Shrike

BARBARA K. RODRIGUEZ

## Organ Mountains- Desert Peaks Rich in *biological diversity*

BARBARA K. RODRIGUEZ

**O**n Dec. 12, 2013, Sens. Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall introduced legislation to establish the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. This legislation offers an opportunity to protect a wide array of Doña Ana County's most treasured resources: iconic scenery, cultural and historic sites, remote wilderness and valuable habitat for wildlife and native plants. From a biological perspective, the landscape-level protections the legislation offers are of particular importance.

Entering Doña Ana County from almost any direction, it's the mountains that grab your attention: the soaring, rocky peaks of the Organs, the blunt face of the Robledos overlooking the Rio Grande and the alluring forms of the Sierra de las Uvas and the West Potrillos on the horizon. Given how they dominate our vistas, it seems fitting that the proposed monument is anchored by these mountain ranges.

The tallest mountains in our region, the Organs, are also the most diverse. Among the rocky cliffs and canyons, chaparral-covered hillsides, spring-fed drainages and montane forests live 10 endemic plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. The variety of habitats also hosts a remarkable diversity of birds—more than 210 bird species have been observed in the Organs. This tally represents more than half the total number of bird species seen in Doña Ana County, even though the Organs encompass only 2.4 percent of the county's total land area.

Sixty of the bird species documented in the Organs are considered species of conservation concern in the Partners in Flight New Mexico Bird Conservation Plan. These include the colorful Grace's warbler, which nests in pine forests high in the Organs, and the black-chinned sparrow, whose song, reminiscent of a rapidly bouncing

ball, fills the shrubby canyons and rocky slopes of the Organ's mid-elevations during the breeding season.

Though the other mountains of the proposed monument lack the highest elevation habitats found in the Organ Mountains, they too host bird species of conservation concern. White-throated swifts, aerial acrobats whose high-speed turns and dives never fail to amaze, nest in the cliff-faces of the Doña Ana Mountains, while

*continued on page 16*

**By Nancy Stotz**  
Mesilla Valley Audubon Society  
Conservation Committee



Organ Mountains, view of "Bishop's Cap"

COURTESY OF BLM/NEW MEXICO



Organ Mountains

COURTESY OF BLM NEW MEXICO

Among the rocky cliffs and canyons, chaparral-covered hillsides, spring-fed drainages and montane forests live 10 endemic plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. The variety of habitats also hosts a remarkable diversity of birds.

*continued from page 15*

golden eagles, stately raptors with a six-and-a-half-foot wingspan, use canyons in the Robledos Mountains for their nest sites.

When we look toward the landscapes proposed for protection in the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, our eyes are drawn to the distant mountains, but from a bird conservation perspective, we can't overlook the value of the desert grasslands in the foreground. On the gently sloping bajadas at the base of the Organ Mountains and in the valleys and wide drainages between the mountains on the West Mesa, these grasslands host their own suite of birds, many of which are also species of conservation concern. According to the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative's 2011 *State of the Birds Report*, we have lost more than 97 percent of the native grasslands in the United States, and the native grasslands that remain on Bureau of Land Management lands are particularly important to grassland species in the Western U.S. In New Mexico, grasslands are home to more bird species of conservation concern than any other habitat.

Grassland species found in the proposed monument include birds of prey, such as prairie falcons and Swainson's hawks, which make an annual migration to winter in the grasslands of Argentina. Less dramatic, but no less important, are numerous LBJs—"little brown jobs" in birder-speak. Though the various sparrows, longspurs and other seed-eaters can be secretive and challenging to identify, species of concern such as grasshopper and Vesper sparrows winter in the proposed monument's grasslands.

The proposed monument is a good fit for grassland birds in part because of its large size. Our desert grasslands are dominated by warm-season grasses, which grow and produce seed in response to monsoon rains. These summer thunderstorms are often small and localized, so only limited areas may receive enough rain to support the seed production that is vital to migrating and wintering grassland birds. For instance, this year on the West Mesa, the first rains that we had in late July and early August were much heavier west of the Sleeping Lady and Rough and Ready Hills, causing those grasslands to green up and begin seed production earlier than the grasslands in the Corralitos Valley to the east of the hills.

The Corralitos Valley greened up only after a rainy spell during the second week of September. Having large areas of grasslands protected increases the likelihood that during dry periods some pockets of productive grassland will be available.

Having large areas of grassland protected is also important because of the diverse habitat requirements of grassland birds. For instance, Sprague's pipit and Baird's sparrow both depend on large patches (three to six acres) of virtually continuous grass cover, with minimal shrub encroachment. However, other species, such as Loggerhead shrikes and scaled quail, inhabit grasslands with a much more significant shrub component. Some species prefer shorter grasses such as tobosa and black grama; others, the tall, dense cover offered by giant sacaton. The large expanses of grassland and mixed shrublands in the proposed monument offer this wide diversity of grassland habitats.

Additional habitat diversity is offered by seasonal wetlands found in some of the cinder cones on the West Mesa and in playas. Playas, often associated with tobosa grasslands, form in low-lying areas where surface water collects. Some have been modified to function also as cattle tanks, and they are an important component of arid grassland landscapes. In all years, they increase the diversity of grasses and herbaceous plants available to wildlife, and in wet years they provide open water for species dependent on such aquatic habitats. Important to migrating shorebirds and waterfowl, and all manner of thirsty wildlife, these ephemeral ponds are also critical to the reproduction of numerous invertebrate and amphibian species whose entire life cycle revolves around the arrival of the summer rains.

Next time you see a towering thunderhead snagged on one of our iconic mountain tops, think of the playas and grasslands it sustains, not just the shrubby chaparral, rocky canyons and montane forests that get first access to the rain that falls on the mountain slopes. The wide-open landscapes of Doña Ana County host a remarkable diversity of native plants and animals, and the proposed monument will help protect them for generations to come.

To learn more about the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society, visit [www.mvaudubon.org](http://www.mvaudubon.org)



Western Flycatcher

LISA MANDELKERN

# Senators Commit to Preserving the Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks

## Udall, Heinrich Introduce Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Conservation Bill

**O**n Nov. 12, 2013, Sens. Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall introduced the Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks Conservation Act in the United States Senate. The legislation would protect 500,000 acres of culturally and ecologically rich Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in Doña Ana County as a national monument.

“The Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks region offers outstanding cultural resources, tourism and recreational opportunities like hunting, hiking and camping, and links us strongly to our past,” Heinrich said. “For years, diverse coalitions in New Mexico have worked tirelessly for its permanent protection. By designating this natural treasure a national monument, a critical piece of our shared outdoor heritage will be protected for us now and for future generations of Americans to enjoy. I look forward to working with Sen. Tom Udall and communities across New Mexico to get this done.”

Udall added that designating a national monument would put Doña Ana County on the map nationally.

“Designating a national monument would put

the Organ Mountains and other spectacular areas of Doña Ana County on recreation maps around the world, attracting tourists to Southern New Mexico, creating jobs and bringing in millions of dollars in tourism revenue,” Udall said. “The Organ Mountains and surrounding area form a beautiful and iconic backdrop for Las Cruces and are beloved by New Mexicans. Our bill would help ensure local families and visitors will continue to be able to hike, hunt and learn from the thousands of significant historic sites throughout the hills for generations to come.”

The bill conserves land in an area stretching across the Organ, Doña Ana, Potrillo, Robledo and Uvas mountains. The proposed monument is home to game animals, such as pronghorn, sheep and deer, as well as rare animals and plants, some found nowhere else in the world, including the Organ Mountains pincushion cactus. It encompasses Broad Canyon, Sleeping Lady Hills, Rough and Ready Hills, Picacho Peak, Mount Riley, Peña Blanca and Bishop’s Cap. And the area contains more than 5,000 archaeologically and culturally significant sites, including Geronimo’s Cave, Billy the Kid’s Outlaw Rock, Spanish settlement sites and numerous petroglyphs and pictographs.

Importantly, the bill preserves existing grazing rights and vehicular access to 100 percent of roads leading to currently used water wells, troughs and corrals, and it enhances hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities. The bill also strengthens border security in the region by releasing wilderness study areas within five miles of the international border, creating a buffer area for Border Patrol activities and adding an additional road for border security purposes.

NM Wild applauded the move by Sens. Heinrich and Udall.

“New Mexico is fortunate to have two senators with such vision and commitment to permanently protecting these very special places,” Executive Director Mark Allison said. “The breadth of community support for this legislation is truly inspiring, and NM Wild is proud to stand with hunters, faith-based groups, youth organizations, area businesses and our conservation partners to make sure this land receives the protection it deserves. NM Wild and our 5,000 members thank Sens. Udall and Heinrich and stand ready to assist them in any way we can.”

### TESTIMONIAL

## Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks Good for Business, Community

By Carrie Hamblen, *Executive Director, Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce*

**I’VE SPENT THE MAJORITY OF MY LIFE IN THE DESERT SOUTHWEST.** Much of my childhood was spent in El Paso, watching the sun set over the Franklins from my backyard. In my early 20s, I moved to Las Cruces and instantly fell in love with the Organ Mountains and the surrounding vistas. I would hike up to Dripping Springs to see the historical structures of days past and hear from my friends about trips to Aden Crater that I **MUST** make. Little did I know then that I would later be publicly advocating for the preservation of those areas.

Now, as the discussion becomes more active about the need to designate the Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks a national monument, I find myself looking at the bigger picture and asking this question: “How will Las Cruces benefit from this designation?” We know that the designation will bring a

significant amount of money into our local economy. That is seen in communities like Taos, which now has the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. The community saw an almost immediate increase in tourism after RGDN was designated. As I look around at our local businesses, many whom have been around for decades, I realize that **THEY** are one of the main groups who will benefit from this designation. They will benefit in terms of increased traffic through their doors. This will, in turn, increase their profits. Then, they will be able to send their kids to college, create more jobs, set aside money for retirement and maybe even expand. OMDP is a good thing for Las Cruces. It’s good for business and it’s good for our community.

### The Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks Conservation Act

- **Boosts the economy and creates jobs.** A recent study found that new visitors would generate \$7.4 million in new economic activity and create new jobs.
- **Conserves wildlife habitat and enhances hunting opportunities for generations to come.**
- **Protects some of Southern New Mexico’s most iconic vistas and preserves important landmarks and archaeological and cultural resources.**
- **Increases flexibility for Border Patrol to conduct operations.**
- **Directs the completion of a watershed restoration assessment that will support flood prevention.**
- **Maintains existing grazing allotments under the current rangeland management guidelines.**

# Mesa Breathing

By Josefine Just  
United World College  
student

*Josefine Just is 18 years old and from Austria. She is a student at United World College-USA in Montezuma, NM. UWC-USA is a two-year school with students from nearly 70 different countries. The UWC mission focuses on making education a force for peace and sustainability. Its founder Kurt Hahn also created Outward Bound. UWC's Wilderness Program has been a key component of the school since its founding 30 years ago and includes a student-led backpacking trip for all incoming students and a week-long backpacking trip in the Grand Canyon among many other trips. (NM Wild's Executive Director Mark Allison*



*considers himself privileged to have been a guide for a Grand Canyon backpack trip.) UWC's program focuses on leadership and active followership, self-awareness, communication skills, and developing tolerance for adversity. UWC also wants its students to develop a love for wilderness and a passion to protect it.*

Around me, short trees carrying thin but strong green leaves, that are moved by the fresh air of this place, gently. Underneath me, red sand that overflows the borders of my shoes, and makes its way up to the skin of my feet, where it rests and forms a thin layer of dust on the surface of my body. In front of my eyes, the stretched landmark of a river flowing its way through this land, giving it shape, and life. Within me, joy.

I stand on top of this mesa together with my teammates and as I look around to see their faces, I recognize their eyes gazing into the far, following the line drawn by the traveling river that marks the story of our journey. I can see them breathing and opening their arms to the sky, as if to take it all in. The freshness of the air around us, that caresses our tired bodies; the sun on our faces, that warms our hearts and minds, and the view that puts

things back into perspective, moving us back into the macrocosm, that as we now realize is home to the world that has been home to our walking.

Just like me, they are here with all they are, and as I take in the cool, moving air that resides around me, my body fills with life, joy and ease.

The thoughts stop jumping around from side to side in my head and settle down, softly; the wondering of what to do and where to go stops, and my mind starts to be. I am. A person standing on top of this mesa in the middle of the Gila Wilderness. Breathing. And in this very moment, that person is entirely content. 🏹

I am 10 years old and live in Las Cruces. My favorite wilderness area is the Latir Wilderness in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of Northern New Mexico in the Carson National Forest. I have been there two times. I love the Latirs because this year I drew an ewe bighorn sheep youth tag. This means I was one of two lucky kids who got to hunt North America's most prized game animal.

My family and friends took me to the Latirs first in June this year, and we were so shocked by how green and beautiful it was. The creeks were full, and I had never seen so many wildflowers in bloom. The 4 1/2-mile hike up Bull Creek was the hardest hike of my life. I thought I would die. But we stopped a lot and we even saw grouse chicks with their momma. When we got to the campsite, at treeline, it was raining but we could

hear the pikas. I was so excited because someone once gave me a book about pikas and now I could hear them. I couldn't wait to see them. On our second day in the Latirs, we saw more than 50 bighorn sheep grazing in the meadows. I was amazed by the sight. We also saw a large herd of elk. These are things I have never seen where I live, in the desert.

I went back to the Latirs in September for my hunt. After the first trip, my family and I did a lot more hiking so we could get into better shape. Things were different this time, like the creeks were low, and the wildflowers had wilted, but the hike wasn't nearly so hard. We were lucky to have friends who came with us to help, too. We camped in a grove of spruce and fir trees next to an elk wallow. I could even smell the elk because they had just been there. We hunted

## I Think Wilderness is Great

By Woody Montoya

the meadows for six hours, and I successfully filled my tag. My hunt was part of the management of this herd, which has grown large and could overpopulate its habitat. It was exciting, challenging and beautiful. I will never forget the experience. 🏹



### GETTING OUTDOORS WITH NM WILD'S LET'S GET WILD PROGRAM

The cornerstone of our Wilderness education efforts has long been our **Let's Get Wild** program, designed to actively educate people about the importance of protected public lands and engage the community in wilderness stewardship and restoration. The program includes our annual *Wild Guide* as well as volunteer service projects and hikes. The annual *Wild Guide*, which provides the dates and descriptions of hikes, projects and educational events offered by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, is published each year as

part of the Let's Get Wild program.

Our Let's Get Wild program works to inform people of all ages about New Mexico's wild public lands and diverse wildlife, and how these treasures are directly connected to our clean air, drinking water, and recreational opportunities. The Let's Get Wild program helps people experience the natural beauty of New Mexico and gives people the chance to give something back through hands-on projects to restore a trail; identify and remove invasive weeds; inventory a backcountry campsite;

or work on a riparian restoration or fence removal project that improves habitat for native fish and wildlife.

NM Wild would like to give a special thank you to the following organizations for grants to help fund our Let's Get Wild program:

**REI**  
**National Forest Foundation**  
**ESRI**  
**Wells Fargo**



# More Progress ON NM WILD'S KEY CAMPAIGNS

## Chaco Culture National Historical Park

Chaco Culture National Historic Park, a major center of ceremony and trade for the prehistoric Four Corners area, is one of the most spectacular places in New Mexico. This is where the ancient Puebloan culture took root and flourished for more than 300 years. Chaco was at one time the ceremonial, administrative and economic center of the San Juan Basin.

Today, however, oil and gas drilling on state lands within view of the park's visitor center is a significant threat. In addition, development threatens Chacoan ruins to the north on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. These lands are part of a connective corridor to the Bisti / De-Na-Zin Wilderness through the Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Wilderness Study Area. It is also clear that oil field dust, air pollutants and noise will reduce visibility while also threatening the health of people and wildlife living downwind from the development.

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NM Wild) is continuing to participate in the BLM's land use planning decisions for the area around Chaco. In August 2013, the Farmington Field Office of the BLM announced it would allow approximately 30 parcels in the immediate vicinity of the park to be leased for oil and gas development. Fortunately, after a round of comments

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## NM WILD CAMPAIGNS:

Chaco Culture NHP

Columbine Hondo Wilderness

Otero Mesa

Gila Wilderness

Mexican Gray Wolves

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and outcry from the environmental and Native American communities, the BLM decided to take those parcels off the leasing table for the foreseeable future. We intend to be involved at every step as the Farmington Office develops an amendment to its Resource Management Plan to complete an inventory of lands with wilderness characteristics and to analyze possible plans for the BLM lands in the Chaco "buffer" zone.

## Columbine Hondo Wilderness

Fresh off the victory of Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, NM Wild continues to work within a broad alliance in Taos County to protect more than 45,000 acres in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The Columbine Hondo proposed wilderness includes the wild and roadless mountains bounded by the Red River highway on the north side and the Taos Ski Valley on the south end and lies west of the Upper Red River Valley and east of the communities of Lama, San Cristobal and Gallina Canyon. Flag Mountain, Lobo Peak and Gold Hill are included.

The Columbine Hondo area is the last remaining portion of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains yet to be designated as wilderness. This designation would ensure that this watershed is protected as one of the last mountain chains in the southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains that include the Pecos Wilderness, Wheeler Peak Wilderness, Latir Wilderness, Valle Vidal and the latest protected landscape, Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

In April 2013, Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich introduced legislation to designate the 45,000-acre Columbine-Hondo area in Taos County as wilderness. A companion bill was

*continued on page 20*

## CAMPAIGN UPDATES

continued from page 19

introduced in the House by Rep. Ben Ray Luján. The bill was heard during a Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources hearing on Nov. 20, 2013.

### Otero Mesa

Otero Mesa is the largest remaining unfragmented Chihuahuan Desert grassland in the United States. It has tens of thousands of ancient petroglyphs and archaeological sites and has a genetically pure, native herd of pronghorn. It also sits on one of the largest untapped aquifers in the state.

The Bureau of Land Management's Draft Resource Management Plan, governing Otero, Sierra and Doña Ana counties was issued in April. The plan proposed a fairly large Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for Otero Mesa, totaling almost 200,000 acres. We've been working very hard on the plan, urging the BLM to propose an even larger ACEC for the grasslands and to ensure through stronger management that the amazing values in the area are truly well protected.

Another major issue facing Otero Mesa is the BLM's recent drive to lease parcels in Otero County for oil and gas development for the first time in more than 15 years. Until now, the Las Cruces BLM has not leased in this area because it lacked a valid (and required) oil and gas leasing plan. Any leasing inside the county without a legitimate oil and gas leasing plan is a serious threat to Otero Mesa and is not supported by current law and agency guidance.

We are working hard to ensure there is no leasing in any part of Otero County until the BLM completes a solid environmental analysis of potential impacts from development and excludes

sensitive areas like the grasslands from leasing entirely.

### Gila Wilderness

In the last year, NM Wild began preparing for the upcoming Gila National Forest land-use plan revision process. The U.S. Forest Service is slated to begin the process of updating its current land-use plan in the fall. As a part of this effort, we have already begun conducting extensive fieldwork throughout the Gila, documenting wilderness characteristics and collecting significant scientific data. With close to 2 million acres of public land that need to be inventoried, NM Wild is looking for volunteers in the region to help gather information on the ground.

We also have held several meetings with the Forest Service to discuss ways that we can work together on community projects that benefit the three wilderness areas in the Gila National Forest, as well as the numerous other roadless areas that exist. We already have four projects scheduled that include closing illegal roads that intrude on the existing wilderness areas, citizen monitoring and removal of invasive species.

### Mexican Gray Wolves

In 2013, we celebrated the 15th anniversary of the reintroduction of the Mexican gray wolf to the Southwest with a variety of events across the state, including a "Happy Birthday Lobos" event in Silver City. In October, we joined several other organizations to gather more than 500 people at a wolf rally and hearing in Albuquerque.

With WildEarth Guardians as our partner, we filed a lawsuit against the Department of Justice for its failure to prosecute poachers of wolves in

conformance with the Endangered Species Act. Despite 50 Mexican wolves being illegally shot since their reintroduction to the Southwest in 1998, the department has only prosecuted two individuals. This is due to the McKittrick Policy, which states the department will only prosecute if it can prove an individual knew exactly what species he or she was killing. Since the implementation of this policy, poachers have learned to claim they thought they were shooting a coyote when confronted by law enforcement. We will know more about the progress of our lawsuit in the coming months.

### Rio Grande del Norte National Monument

On March 25, 2013, President Barack Obama signed the proclamation to designate and protect 243,555 acres of land mostly owned and managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management office based out of Taos.

NM Wild is now working on putting a friends group together for the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. Coalition members, local organizations and Taos citizens are partnering to work on items within the newly designated monument. Partnerships with the Taos BLM will focus on smaller projects and hikes in the area. Meetings are ongoing, so if you're interested in participating in this program, please contact John Olivas at [john@nmwild.org](mailto:john@nmwild.org) or 505-379-5551.

NM Wild is also setting its sights on two new wilderness designations within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. We will keep members updated on our progress in the coming months. 🐾

## WILDERNESS50

### National Wilderness Conference

October 15-19, 2014

Albuquerque, NM



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. To commemorate this important landmark, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance will co-host the National Wilderness Conference, which will occur October 15-19 in Albuquerque.

The National Wilderness Conference will be a historic four-day event of diverse programs, including presentations, panels, exhibits, field trips, skill-development workshops and opportunities to share information about recent advances and emerging issues in wilderness stewardship. Field trips to nearby wilderness areas will be a key component of this year's conference. The companion Wilderness Celebration Exhibition will showcase organizational booths surrounding the Wilderness Interpretive Trail for students and will be open to the public for one day. The conference will close with a Wilderness Diversity Festival at Civic Plaza that is open to the public.

For more information about the conference, visit: [www.wilderness50th.org/conference.php](http://www.wilderness50th.org/conference.php)

## TESTIMONIAL

### History Must Be Guarded

By Sarah Nolan, *Director, Comunidades en Accion y de Fe (CAFe)*

AS A SECOND-GENERATION MEXICAN-AMERICAN who was born and raised in Doña Ana County, I find it incredibly significant that the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument proposal recognizes the importance of honoring the land and the people, past and present, who inhabit our region. Many of our families are struggling to feel as if they matter to a country that is experiencing economic crisis, crisis that New Mexico has known too well for too long. And yet to see a national monument that stretches to the tips and veins of our county, to find the poor kid in Vado (like I was) and show her that there is beauty and peace surrounding her is a remarkable thing to be a part of as an adult now raising my own family here. As a person of faith, I find this proposed designation a public expression of my personal belief in guarding God's creation. Our history must be guarded, no one will do it for us, we must be the ones to guard and celebrate.



DEMIS FOSTER

Steve West inspects the flora at Big Bend National Park

# Steve West: A Man of Many Hats



## Thanks, Steve.

Thanks for your longtime and varied work with the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NM Wild), as a board member, staff member (staff scientist), consultant, advisor and so on.

At the moment, and for the first time in many years, you are not wearing any of these NM Wild hats, although who knows what opportunities the future may bring for us to work together again.

We're not worried about you having no hats to wear, in fact you still need several big antlers to hold all the hats you have. One that comes to mind has to do with your being a member and secretary of the Carlsbad School Board, another is your involvement with the Carlsbad Museum Advisory Board, and still another relates to being on the board of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science.

One of your old hats comes from your days as mayor of Loving, where you grew up when your dad had a grocery store there. Another old hat ... probably several hats ... have the logos of the high schools in Texas and New Mexico where you have taught science. You did this so well that this year the New Mexico branch of the National Education Association (NEA) named you to its Hall of Fame.

You've done writing and research. Your book *Northern Chihuahuan Desert Wildflowers* is a

classic, and really is just the tip of the iceberg of your knowledge of the flora and fauna of the deserts of the Southwest. Your research and banding of the cave swallows at Carlsbad Caverns National Park for more than 25 years has produced essential and basic knowledge about this species (which may lead to decisions to separate as a species the cave swallow we know in this region from other subspecies around Florida and the Caribbean).

I mention birds, no surprise given our mutual fascination with this segment of the natural world. Early on you lived in Bolivia and Panama and became familiar with the bird species of those areas (and no doubt also got to know the butterflies, dragonflies and no-see-ums of your neighborhoods). This led you to lead bird tours for our mutual friend and bird tour pioneer Joel A. and to get to know some of the key figures in avian tourism. I also recall with great pleasure the trip we did for NM Wild on the Chama River, noting the birds we saw on the way. In reality, while I spotted some and made a note or two, you were getting many more identification details and writing not notes but copious records of the sightings.

You've led trips for us in Big Bend National Park, among other places. People tell me that a walk with you might cover a mile in the course of a morning: no plant goes unnoticed and unmentioned upon to the people with you. You've told me about some of your ramblings around Otero Mesa, and no doubt you've understated your

findings in that significant Chihuahuan Desert habitat. Your stories also reveal how you've become friends with some of the ranchers in that area, sharing knowledge and insights with serious people who may not have the same outlook about the use and conservation of that landscape. You've also talked about getting your vehicles stuck in that area, driving around in circles trying to find the road you came in on, and all the snacks you've consumed when you've pitched camp so as to be sure to see the dawn.

Of the various conversations we've had, one thing really stands out. That is the delight I see on your face when you talk about the joy that youngsters show when they come across something new in the outdoors. The great work you do in the classroom, properly rewarded by NEA, is a prelude to the impact you have had as you take teens and preteens on walks in some of your favorite places. No doubt this effort on your part has had a lasting impact on the kids.

So again, thanks for all that you have done for NM Wild over the years. I hope we can get you back to do more for us ... although working us into your schedule may be a challenge.

Good teaching, good birding, good guy. 🐦

—Ken Cole, Chairperson, NM Wild

*Note: NM Wild earlier this year made the decision to close our office in Carlsbad, and a consequence was that Steve West's time on our payroll had to come to an end.*

# Meet Our Staff



**Tisha Broska,  
Associate Director**

Broska has a degree in Environmental Science from the State University of New York at Fredonia. She has been with NM Wild since 1999, and has managed NM Wild's membership program and newsletter. She currently is responsible for non-membership fundraising and reporting. Broska has served as associate director, development director and membership coordinator in her 13 years with NM Wild



**Tina Deines,  
Communications  
Coordinator**

Deines grew up in the Midwest and has degrees in journalism and Spanish from Kansas State University. She also has a graduate degree in mass communications research, and focused her coursework in environmental and international communications. Drawn to the West, she moved to Idaho in 2008, and soon found her way to New Mexico to work for NM Wild. Deines manages member communications including eNews, website and social media, action alerts, and publications including the *Wild Guide* and newsletter. She also manages membership and fundraising communications.

fly-fisherman, Newcomer also enjoys spending his spare time painting.



**John Olivas, Traditional  
Community Organizer**

Olivas is currently the chairman of the Mora County Commission and is serving his first term in office. He has worked in the federal sector with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a fisheries biologist with the Mora Fish Hatchery and Technology Center, and also has worked in the private sector as an engineer with Intel Corporation in Rio Rancho. He is a past board member for the Santa Getrudis de lo de Mora Land Grant and is very active in the state-wide land grant efforts here in New Mexico.



**Mark Allison,  
Executive Director**

Allison comes to NM Wild with 20 years of professional experience working with non-profit agencies in leadership positions, including 13 years as the executive director of the Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico. During his tenure there he led the organization to become an award winning, nationally recognized agency that in his last year was named New Mexico's "Housing Developer of the Year." Mark was named one of New Mexico's "40 under 40 Top Young Professionals" in 2008 by the NM Business Weekly. Mark has demonstrated success in strategic planning, management, fundraising and media relations and is adept at partnerships and coalition building. He has experience working with elected officials at the local and national level. Childhood trips to Ghost Ranch near Abiquiú fostered a deep and abiding love and respect of wild places, the high desert, and New Mexico for Allison, which has led to hundreds of canoeing, camping and backpacking trips, including many solo ones. After obtaining a bachelor's and master's degree in political science from Illinois State University, Allison moved to New Mexico in 1993. He believes passionately that we have a responsibility to permanently protect and preserve land, not only for us and our children to experience and enjoy, but for its own sake.



**Judy Calman,  
Staff Attorney**

Calman moved to New Mexico toward the end of 2001, inspired by a life-long fascination with the West. After completing degrees in Biology and Philosophy and working on several political campaigns, she realized her true passion to be environmental policy. She completed her law degree at the University of New Mexico, as well as a Masters in Environmental Law and Policy at the Vermont Law School. She has worked at the City of Albuquerque as an Energy and Wildlife Consultant, at WildEarth Guardians on endangered species litigation, and at an environmental law firm in Atlanta opposing new coal plants.



**Nathan Newcomer, Gila  
Grassroots Organizer**

Newcomer is a fifth generation New Mexican with more than a decade of experience working on wilderness campaigns in New Mexico. He has previously been a grassroots organizer, media director, and associate director at NM Wild, having first joined the organization in 2002. After spending a year conducting wilderness inventories in the Cibola National Forest, he is now back as NM Wild's Grassroots Organizer for the Gila. An avid backpacker and



**Roxanne Pacheco,  
Finance Manager**

Pacheco joined NM Wild in 2001 and is responsible for our accounting, reporting, and office administration. She has years of experience as an environmental activist and owns her own accounting and tax preparation business.



**Nathan Small, Wilderness Protection Organizer**

Small was born and raised in New Mexico. His passion for the outdoors began early, fueled by hunting, woodcutting, horseback riding, and fishing trips with his grandfather in the Cibola National Forest near Grants. He attended the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio, where he earned dual degrees in Philosophy and English. Small loves taking friends and family into the wilderness, and he and his younger brother Douglas have spent their share of time in some of New Mexico's most spectacular wild lands.



**Emma Tomingas-Hatch, Administrative Assistant**

Tomingas-Hatch earned her Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of New Mexico and her Masters degree in Folklore from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Though she fell in love with the culture in Louisiana, she was eager to return to the landscape of New Mexico. She has experience in environmental activism and preservation, and loves hiking and camping in many of New Mexico's wilderness areas..



**Jeff Steinborn, Southern NM Director**

Steinborn comes to the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance with a wealth of experience in and out of government. He previously served as an advisor to both U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman and then Congressman Bill Richardson. As Senator Bingaman's former advisor to the Otero Mesa, Steinborn was a strong proponent of protecting this key resource, and played a vital role in helping to guide strategy. He was born and raised in Las Cruces, and attended New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell for high school, graduating on the Dean's academic list.



**Lynne Uhring, GIS Specialist**

Uhring has lived in New Mexico since 1966. Her first career was in healthcare. She completed her Geographic Information Systems (GIS) degree from Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) in fall 2011. After spending the summer as a GIS intern for NM Wild, she now gets to support its mission, to preserve and protect the wilderness areas of the state, as a GIS contractor. She makes lots of maps, and she works with dedicated NM Wild volunteers to hike around surveying wilderness areas. She loves being outside in the best place on earth—New Mexico.

**Angel Peña, Cultural Resources Specialist and Hispanic Organizer**

Peña has lived in the Land of Enchantment since 2006. He has a degree in anthropology and is currently finalizing a graduate degree in archaeology from New Mexico State University. With a commitment to preserving the history, culture and spirit of the south west, Angel works to connect local youth, as well as the Hispanic community, to environmental and cultural heritage studies and recreation opportunities of the area.



**Check Us Out Online—visit us at nmwild.org**

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*Groundwork Doña Ana County released a video highlighting the region's cultural resource richness and the importance of protecting the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks as a National Monument. To view the video go to <http://bit.ly/1huxLCg>.*

# Youth Crew's New Finds of Artifacts and Petroglyphs

## Groundwork Doña Ana County Leads Tour of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks

**LAS CRUCES, N.M.**—Groundwork Doña Ana County, a non-profit youth conservation and education group based in Las Cruces, has produced a three-minute video highlighting its youth crew's archaeological survey finds within Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks.

Groundwork released the video and led a tour of the Providence Cone area in October 2013 to showcase some of the widespread artifacts located at Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and to stress the importance of protecting those cultural and historical resources by designating the area a national monument.

Over the summer and fall of 2013, a Groundwork crew of 15 local young people known as the "Green Team" worked beside archaeologists and anthropologists to survey and map hundreds of significant artifacts at dozens of loca-



tions within the proposed monument, according to a news release.

"Those who visit Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks are usually surprised to find just how many historical artifacts there are in the region, ranging from lithic tools to pictographs," Groundwork Doña Ana County Executive Director Tim Fulton said in a statement. "These artifacts tell us a lot about the people who used to live here, and it is our responsibility to protect these cultural gems so future generations can continue to enjoy them and learn from them."

The Green Team documented and left in place

diverse artifacts including projectile points, petroglyphs and pictographs and ground stone tools, as well as other evidence that is highly suggestive of habitation practices. Some of these unique artifacts date between CE 400 to the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, the time of Spanish occupation, while others date back thousands of years to the Archaic Period.

The experience provided Green Team members with valuable work skills, a broadened understanding of career paths in cultural and natural resource stewardship, and a greater appreciation of the rich, cultural history waiting to be discovered on public lands within the proposed monument.

According to Angel Peña, an archaeologist from the region, there are thousands of archaeological sites filled with similar artifacts that have yet to be studied.

"Less than 5 percent of these wildlands have been surveyed professionally by archaeologists, and even with less than 5 percent surveyed, the number is still approximately 250 known sites," Peña said in a statement.

Groundwork's mission is to create opportunities for local people, especially youth, to learn new practical skills and take action on important community projects such as surveying the cultural sites of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks.

Adrian Avila, one of the young people participating as a Groundwork Doña Ana County Team Leader, said he believes the cultural artifacts found in the region are the primary reason why Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks should be permanently protected.

"These lands and the artifacts found here tell our story," Avila said in a statement. "We have to protect them so that future generations can understand their roots and their connections to the very land we stand on."

Added Fulton: "So much is not known about the cultures that lived here before and every year we learn more and more about the people who had inhabited this area hundreds and thousands of years ago."

Groundwork also released the video to educate the public about its work. The video ex-



plores some of the artifacts the Green Team discovered and documented, the valuable work skills and greater appreciation of their public lands acquired by Green Team members, and the reasons national monument protection is important from a cultural and historic resource perspective.

The Groundwork Doña Ana Green Team hopes that Interior Secretary Sally Jewell watches and enjoys the video and enjoyed her visit to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. Hopefully, a national monument designation will soon follow. 🐦





**THE NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE IS A PROUD RECIPIENT OF A WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP CHALLENGE AWARD FROM THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION.**

The National Forest Foundation, chartered by Congress, engages America in community-based and national programs that promote the health and public enjoyment of the 193-million acre National Forest System, and accepts and administers private gifts of funds and land for the benefit of the National Forests.

In partnership with the National Forest Foundation, NM Wild has been assisting the Sandia Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest in battling invasive plants as part of the Wilderness Stewardship Challenge. Since June 2012, we have

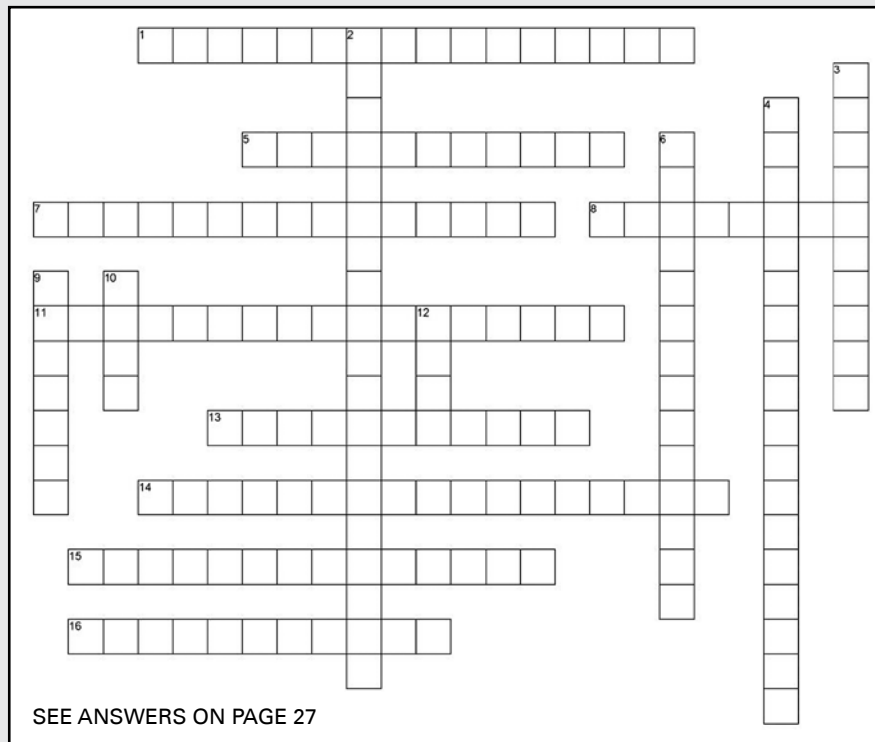


*Cheatgrass (bromus tectorum)*

been training volunteers and organizing volunteer service projects to monitor and remove non-native invasive plants. The main culprit is cheatgrass.

More than 100 volunteers recorded more than 1,000 hours training, monitoring and removing cheatgrass in the wilderness. Don Heinze, a retired botanist and invasive plant specialist, donated professional volunteer hours conducting workshops, preparing plant identification sheets and educating volunteers. We'd like to give special thanks to stalwart volunteers Irene Walkiw and Jackie Ericksen and to Kristian Mueller, an NM Wild GIS intern from the University of New Mexico, who contributed greatly to the cheatgrass project during 2013.

## Wilderness Crossword



SEE ANSWERS ON PAGE 27

### ACROSS:

- 1 Designation we want for the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks
- 5 Take a step into the ancient Puebloan cultures at this site in northern New Mexico.
- 7 2005 NM Wild victory

- 8 Residents of the "Big W"

- 11 Newest victory!
- 13 Father of wildlife conservation and the wilderness preservation system
- 14 An enchanting nickname for New Mexico
- 15 Mountains overlooking LC
- 16 Our current leader

### DOWN:

- 2 This New Mexico wilderness is named after a famous Native American.
- 3 The "Big W"
- 4 Obama created this wilderness in 2009 by signing the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act.
- 6 America's first wilderness
- 9 We need to \_\_\_ wilderness for future generations
- 10 What does the lobo say?
- 12 Spanish for wolf

## NM Wild would like to thank our 2013 Online Auction Sponsors!

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# Ways to Give to NM Wild

## Do you donate to the United Way through your employer?

Ask that your gift be directed to the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance to help support our work.

## Does your employer have a donation-matching program?

Your donation to New Mexico Wilderness Alliance could be eligible for matching donations from your work.

## Legacy Gifts

Are you passionate about the wild landscapes and wildlife of New Mexico? Do you want to be sure that nature is preserved for generations to come? Your legacy gift to the New Mexico

Wilderness Alliance (NM Wild) will ensure that the wilderness, wildlife and water of the Land of Enchantment are protected forever. Become an NM Wild Steward today. If you are planning to create a new will or update an existing one, we hope you will consider a future gift to protect and safeguard New Mexico's wilderness, water and wildlife. NM Wild Stewards are individuals who have included a future gift to NM Wild through their will or estate plans. Becoming an NM Wild Steward can be as simple as including a bequest to our organization in your will or designating our organization as one of the beneficiaries of a retirement plan or life insurance policy. If you would like to include

NM Wild in your will or retirement plan, please contact **Tisha Broska** at 505-843-8696, ext.106, or [tisha@nmwild.org](mailto:tisha@nmwild.org). On the Web: [www.nmwild.org/support-us/legacy](http://www.nmwild.org/support-us/legacy)

## Stock Gifts

Stock gifts can be transferred directly to our broker. Please contact us if you'd like to make a donation of stock and we will provide you with our account information. Upon completion of the transfer, a receipt and acknowledgment will be sent. For questions concerning the transfer of stock, please contact **Roxanne** at 505-843-8696, ext.103.



## Yes! I would like to support New Mexico wilderness!

Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Go to [www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org) to make your donation online today!

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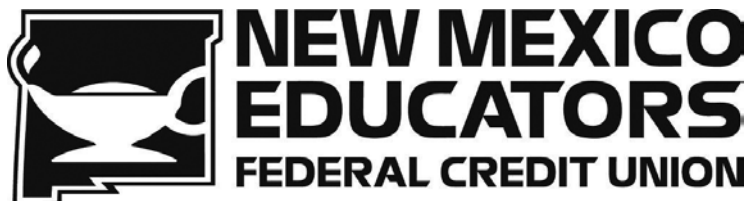
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## In 2013, The Conservation Alliance contributed a record \$1.5 million to conservation groups, and added 24 new members.

Their grantees protected more than 12 million acres of land and six river miles, removed one dam, and bought a popular Nordic ski area. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is proud to be a grantee of The Conservation Alliance for our work to protect the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

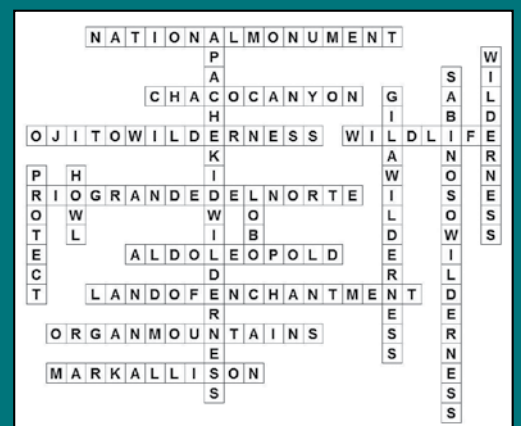
The Conservation Alliance is a group of outdoor industry companies that disburses its collective annual membership dues to grassroots environmental organizations. They direct funding to community-based campaigns to protect threatened wild habitat, preferably where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. The Alliance was founded in 1989 by industry leaders REI, Patagonia, The North Face, and Kelty, who shared the goal of increasing outdoor industry support for conservation efforts that benefit outdoor recreation.



PAUL BARDWELL

LEFT: This photograph, taken near the Apache Flats petroglyph sites, offers a view of the Sierra de las Uvas Range—another face of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks proposed national monument.

### Wilderness Crossword answers



## Mexican Wolf Conservation Stamp



2013 Wolf Stamp art by Susan Miller

The stamp pictured here is not a true postage stamp—it is part of a series of framing-quality art prints offered to collectors. Order wolf stamps online at [www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org). Click on “Shop.”

THE MEXICAN GRAY WOLF is the most endangered wolf in the world, with a total population of less than 75 in the wild. The Mexican Wolf Conservation Stamp is a conservation project created by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. The concept is similar to the Duck Stamp sold by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, except no hunting will be related to the sale of the stamp. Instead, proceeds will be used for the Mexican Wolf Conservation Stamp Fund, administered by NM Wild and utilized for Mexican gray wolf recovery.

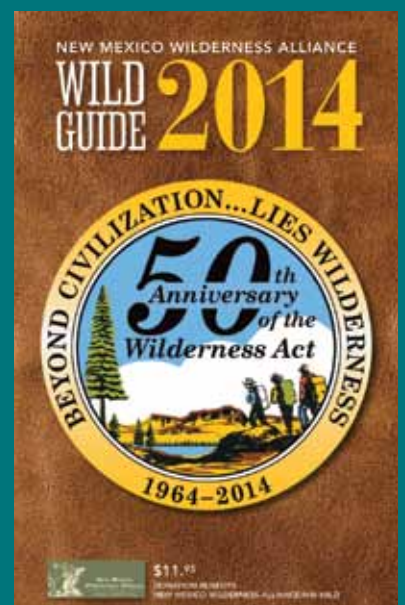
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### CALL FOR PHOTOS

Send us photos of yourself reading *New Mexico Wild* newsletter in a cool or exotic place, or New Mexico wilderness landscapes. We'll consider using your photo, with credit, in an upcoming NM Wild publication.

Send lo-res (72 dpi) files with your name and contact information to [tina@nmwild.org](mailto:tina@nmwild.org) and we will contact you for hi-res (3000 x 2400 pixels) versions of your photos. Thank you for contributing!

NATHAN NEWCOMER