

THE MESQUITE GRILL

NEWS FROM THE SOUTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER • SPRING 2010 • WILDMESQUITE.ORG

Mexican wolf numbers continue to drop

Conservationists urge new recovery plan, stronger protections

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently released its annual count of Mexican wolves in the wild, and the results are not good.

Only 42 wild lobos remain--27 in Arizona and 15 in New Mexico. This is down 20 percent from the 52 at the end of last year, and the lowest number of wild lobos in seven years.

Overall there are 20 percent fewer wolves in the wild, with a 15 percent and nearly 50 percent loss in Arizona and New Mexico respectively. There are currently just two breeding pairs.

Why did the numbers decline?

There is no clear explanation as to why the numbers dropped so much. On the one hand, fewer than normal pups survived. Usually about half of all pups born in any year survive, but in 2009 only seven of 31 did, a fact that FWS calls "very disappointing and of great concern."

Poaching was a factor. Eight wolves were found dead--four adults and four pups. Two were confirmed shot. The other six deaths remain under investigation. At least one wolf is missing.

Although wildlife officials did not permanently remove any wolves from the wild in 2009, several prior years of excessive management removals probably contributed to the current decline by removing numerous successfully breeding packs from the population.

Dr. Rich Fredrickson, a University of Montana wildlife biologist, says the falling numbers threaten the genetic diversity needed for the wolf packs to become self-sustaining, because many pups seeking to mate are closely related.

What good are wolves?

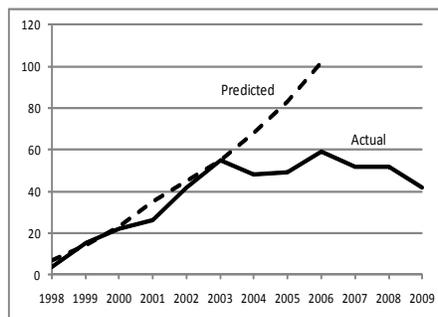
You'd be surprised. See page 3.

What is needed

Conservationists are calling for several actions. First and foremost there needs to be a new science-based recovery plan. The current one is 27 years old--written on a typewriter, when the movie ET was in theaters, and--most importantly--without today's understanding of the principles of conservation biology.

Next, the criminals killing wolves need to be brought to justice. People need to know that killing a priceless endangered species is simply not acceptable and that they will be met with the full weight of the law.

Finally, more wolves need to be released into the wild. More wolves doing their job in the wild will bring more positive change to local ecosystems and bolster the genetic fitness of the wild population of wolves. With numbers so low it is critical that more wolves get on the ground.



The number of wild Mexican wolves at the end of 2009 was 42--the lowest in 7 years, and far below what biologists predicted at the start of the reintroduction effort.

What you can do

1. Call Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar at (202) 208-3181. Tell him:
- A 20 percent decline in this population is unacceptable. We want wolves to survive and thrive in the southwest.
 - Release more wolves into the wild to bolster

(continued on next page)

Back by Noons are back!

Bighorn sheep, cacti, wildflowers, burrowing owls, bats, bugs...See back page.



Photo Ken Stinnett



Why is this man smiling?

Because he won a new car. You can too! See back page for info.

Coming to the Cottonwood:

An exhibition of Michael Berman's stunning b&w photos entitled "Grasslands: The Chihuahuan Desert" opens at SWEC's Cottonwood Gallery on Friday, April 2 and runs through May. He will give a talk about his work and sign copies of his books (done with author Charles Bowden) on Monday, April 19, 7 pm. Don't miss this show!



Help us find new members

We're growing, and we need your help. Who better than our supporters to tell others about SWEC? See insert for details.

Check out our cool website

Our new website is finally up. Find a typo on it and you could win dinner for two at Ardovino's Desert Crossing in Sunland Park. Details at www.wildmesquite.org.

Join our email list

If you would like to receive announcements about events and issues, send an email to list@wildmesquite.org. We promise not to overwhelm your inbox, and we never trade or sell our list.

Wolf numbers

(continued from front page)

the genetic fitness of the population

- Bring the criminals killing wolves to justice
- Write a new science-based Recovery Plan because the outdated 1982 plan is not working.

2. Write a letter to the Editor. These are read by elected officials and interpreted as representing broadly held viewpoints. You can find tips and addresses for some Arizona and New Mexico newspapers at <http://www.mexicanwolves.org/Act Now>.

3. Tell a friend why we need wolves. Take this opportunity to tell someone you know that wolves (and other predators) are critical to the balance of healthy ecosystems.

What good are wolves?

I get asked this surprisingly often, by people that ought to know better.

Wolves help maintain healthy ecosystems--i.e., ecosystems that are productive, support diverse species and are resilient to change.

Healthy ecosystems make life on earth possible. They provide all sorts of free services upon which humans depend: clean air, clean water, fertile soil, nutrient recycling, waste disposal, carbon sequestration. They also provide any number of useful products, like timber and medicines.

The effects of wolves are not always obvious. For example, wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 after they were wiped out 70 years earlier. Scientists observed that trees began growing again along streams where they hadn't grown in decades. The reason? Wolves prevented elk from eating all the tender young saplings. Trees help stabilize banks, prevent erosion and cool stream temperatures, all of which creates better fish habitat. Wolves, it turns out, are good for trout. Who knew?

Mexican wolves could undoubtedly have a similar salubrious effect on the streams in the Gila, once their numbers reach an ecologically effective level. That's (one) reason why wolves matter.

--Kevin Bixby

Students compete in wolf contests

More than 400 middle school students from across southwestern New Mexico submitted entries in the Southwest Environmental Center's 2009 Mexican wolf art and essay contests. New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson was the featured guest at an awards

ceremony held at the Rio Grande Theater in Las Cruces on November 21 to congratulate all the participating students and their teachers.

With so many high quality entries, selecting the winners was difficult. In the art contest,



A. J. Phillips of Camino Real Middle School in Las Cruces is congratulated by Governor Richardson for his winning essay.

Eluid Martinez of Chaparral Middle School took first place and received an iPod Touch and a trip into "wolf country," as did A. J. Phillips of Camino Real Middle School, first place winner in the essay contest. Isabeau Egan of Sierra MS took second place



Eluid Morales of Chaparral Middle School took first place in the SWEC Mexican wolf art contest with this drawing.

in the art contest and received a signed Robert Bateman print of a Mexican wolf. Melody Reeves of Lynn MS took second in the essay contest, and received a signed copy of *Of Wolves and Men* by Barry Lopez.

The awards ceremony also featured an im-

promptu howling contest and special recognition for some of the teachers who went above and beyond the contest's requirements: Cari Aguilera and Susan Colquitt of Lynn Middle School, Olin Calk of Sierra Middle School, and Dabareh Vowell of Animas Public Schools. With only 42 Mexican wolves remaining in the wild, these teachers were commended for their extraordinary effort in encouraging their students to learn more about this important conservation issue.

Our thanks to Steel Horse Adventure Tours (Silver City, NM), Patagonia, The North Face, Wal-Mart, Staples, Robert Bateman, Barry Lopez, the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History and the Wilburforce Foundation for their generous support and donations.

Feds scrap "3 strikes" policy, retake helm of Mexican wolf management

The Mexican gray wolf recovery effort took a pivotal turn in the right direction in November as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reclaimed its decision-making authority over management of this highly endangered animal that roams Arizona and New Mexico's backcountry.

Settling a lawsuit brought by SWEC and other conservation organizations, the FWS reasserted its authority over a multiagency management team and scrapped a controversial rule that required permanently removing a wolf from the wild, either lethally or through capture, after killing three livestock in a year. Conservationists had criticized the rigid policy, known as Standard Operating Procedure 13 or SOP 13, for forcing wolves to be killed or sent to captivity regardless of

an individual wolf's genetic importance, dependent pups or the critically low numbers of wolves in the wild.

For several years, the Mexican Wolf Adaptive Management Oversight Committee, also known as AMOC, had called the shots on whether or not a wolf would stay in the wild. AMOC was organized to bring other agencies to the table, but FWS - in an unusual move - had ceded control of the Mexican gray wolf's reintroduction to the committee.

Under AMOC's direction, the Mexican gray wolf recovery effort became less about helping this endangered wolf return to its home range and more about wolf control and appeasing anti-wolf interests in the recovery area.

A good day

by Kevin Bixby

It was a good day in Las Cruces recently. There were two inspiring speakers in town, and I was lucky enough to hear them both.

One was writer and activist Bill McKibben. McKibben was the first person to write a book (*The End of Nature*) for a popular audience back in 1989 about the looming threat of climate change. Now, two decades later, people are starting to pay attention.

Alarmed at the slow pace of action, McKibben and a few friends launched a grassroots campaign to ratchet CO2 levels back to 350 parts per million—the upper limit of safety according to NASA climatologist James Hansen. The name for this initiative is 350.org.

From its modest beginnings in Vermont in 2007, 350.org has expanded rapidly, culminating in more than 5000 “actions” in 181 countries on the designated day of action last October. Afterwards, McKibben took his fellow 350ers to the Copenhagen Climate Conference where they succeeded in getting endorsements from more than 100 nations.

Unfortunately, “they were the wrong 100,” says McKibben. The U.S. and other developed nations that account for most global warming emissions are “still not ready” to embrace the 350 target, as McKibben politely put it. They may not be on board, but the 350 train clearly has momentum. McKibben is a great example of how much one person can do, armed with persistence and a good idea.

The other speaker was Blake Mycoskie, the 33 year old founder of Tom’s Shoes. Mycoskie pioneered the “one for one” business model: for every pair of Tom’s shoes sold, a pair is donated to a child in need somewhere in the world.

I took my 16 year old daughter out of school to go hear him speak, since she was the one who told me about the company. She wore her pair of Tom’s shoes.

Mycoskie got the idea for Tom’s while on a trip to Argentina in 2006. He returned to Los Angeles with the modest goal of selling/giving away 250 pair of shoes. A few lucky breaks later (including an article in *Vogue*), and sales of Tom’s shoes took off. To date Tom’s has given away more than 400,000 shoes.

Mycoskie is another case of one individual making a huge difference, armed with a good idea and persistence. I was moved. It was a good day.

Sign-on ad for Otero Mesa

We plan to run the following letter to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar as a full page newspaper ad in the Las Cruces area. We are looking for as many people to sign the ad as possible. If you would like to sign on or make a donation to help pay for the ad, please contact Jason Burke at (575) 522-5552 or wldtrkey@hotmail.com.

Dear Secretary Salazar,

We would like to express our full support for the permanent protection of Otero Mesa, a landscape of 1.2 million acres of great ecological and cultural significance in southern New Mexico that is threatened by oil and gas development.

Otero Mesa is a national treasure, containing one of the largest remaining grasslands in the Chihuahuan Desert. This unique landscape provides vital habitat for many plant and animal species, including pronghorn, mule deer, mountain lions, prairie dogs, the endangered Aplomado Falcon, and more than 200 other bird species.

Otero Mesa also sits atop one of New Mexico’s largest untapped sources of fresh water—the Salt Basin aquifer—which may contain as much as 4 trillion gallons of potable water, according to a U.S. Geological Survey report. This aquifer will be at serious risk of contamination if oil and gas development is allowed to move forward.

Otero Mesa has long been an important place for Native Americans, used for traditional hunting and gathering as well as sacred sites. More recently, it was the location for a Butterfield Stage Station. The tracks of the Butterfield Trail are still visible on the ground.

Finally, Otero Mesa’s public lands provide outstanding opportunities for the people of this region to enjoy hiking, bird-watching, hunting and other types of outdoor recreation.

The extraordinary values of Otero Mesa have been recognized by many elected officials and community leaders who have called for its permanent protection, including New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, numerous state legislators, city councils, county commissions, religious and tribal leaders, scientists, sportsmen, business owners and conservationists.

We applaud the recent decision by the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals rejecting the Bureau of Land Management’s plan to open up 90 percent of Otero Mesa to oil and gas leasing, directing the agency instead to consider alternatives to industrial development, including a no-drill alternative “to protect environmental values.”

We the undersigned wish to send a clear message to you: it is time for action. We want to see Otero Mesa protected, now and for the future. We invite you to visit Otero Mesa and to experience the wild beauty of this landscape and to work with us on a plan for its permanent protection.



Richardson recognized as Otero Mesa “champion”

The Southwest Environmental Center joined other conservation groups at a boxing gym in Albuquerque last January in honoring NM Governor Bill Richardson as a “champion” in the fight to protect Otero Mesa. Albuquerque champion boxer Holly Holm presented the governor with a pair of golden gloves. Richardson reaffirmed his commitment to seeking permanent protection for this special landscape.

More recently, Richardson announced his support for consideration of Otero Mesa as a National Monument, in response to a leaked Interior Department list of potential national monuments in the West.

SWEC canvassers come knocking

The Southwest Environmental Center is starting up its door-to-door canvass again in Las Cruces and possibly El Paso. The focus will be on building public support and raising funds for our Otero Mesa campaign.

We will be looking for people willing to attend and speak in favor of protecting Otero Mesa at public meetings to be held later this year by the Bureau of Land Management as part of its 'Tri-County' Resource Management Plan revision. We will also be asking people to add their names to a full page newspaper ad we hope to run in April (see p. 3 for details).

Our new Canvass Director is Jason Burke. Jason attended the University of Missouri, studying Philosophy and History. After completing his undergraduate studies, he began his



Canvassers (L-R) Nick Giusti, Elizabeth Dunning, Stephanie Moore, Cassandra Rosa and Jason Burke. Not shown: Giselle Apodoca.

non-profit environmental canvassing work after years of political canvassing. He was raised in Missouri and moved to Las Cruces in September 2009.

Under Jason's direction, a crew of four dedicated canvassers has been hired and trained. They may soon be knocking on your door. Be nice!

New staff at SWEC

SWEC has a new Field Organizer/Outreach Coordinator.

Originally from Chicago, Paul Heiberger has always been passionate about the natural world. Growing up with annual fishing trips and road trips to the Smokeys, Glacier, and other National Parks, Paul has a long history of enjoying the outdoors.



Paul Heiberger

This enjoyment translated to a passion for ecology and ecological restoration that has permeated Paul's professional and educational development.

While studying Ecology at the University of Illinois, Paul led a native lands restoration group for two years. There he helped to restore and maintain nearly 65 acres of floodplain forest and prairie.

After the experience of on-the-ground restoration Paul sought to increase his skillset in motivating others to be supportive of restoration projects and environmental actions. This led Paul to the University of Wisconsin's M.S. program in Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development.

For his graduate work he developed and began the implementation of a community-based social marketing campaign to promote ecologically friendly stormwater management.

With the completion of his degree this past summer, Paul is excited to have the opportunity to work as part of SWEC on the unique conservation challenges facing the Southwest.

Paul says there are some great parts about living back "east," but is looking forward to being surrounded by mountains, open spaces, and the vibrant Las Cruces community.

Let him know about your favorite day hikes and spots for green chile - he'll appreciate the tips and the chance to meet you.

In memorium

From Halina, in memory of Sassy -- descended from wolves, her brave and joyful heart.

Engaging the community in river restoration

by Paul Heiberger

As a new resident of Las Cruces I am amazed over and over by the limited interactions people have with the Rio Grande.

We live in one of most diverse desert ecosystems in the world, we're fortunate enough to have a river right in our backyard, and yet many people don't even seem to realize that it is there. Some of my work with SWEC is focused on making sure that local residents understand how important a healthy river ecosystem is for all of us. Since there are so many people that don't have positive experiences with the river who do we start with? The kids!

Through partnerships with local schools and thanks to grant money that SWEC received I have organized more than a half-dozen field trips down to the Rio, with another half-dozen already in the pipeline.

More than 300 K-12 students have participated in field trips to the new La Mancha wetland site and the Mesilla Valley Bosque Park. By visiting both the more established Bosque Park and the up-and-coming La Mancha site, students see firsthand the amount of work that goes into a wetland restoration project. Not only do students receive the benefits of learning outside the classroom,



Students from Sierra Middle School in Las Cruces helped remove invasive salt cedar plants along the Rio Grande on a recent SWEC sponsored field trip.

but they also have a opportunity to learn about river ecology, local history, as well as the unique challenges of water management in the southwest.

I am always looking for opportunities to bring people down to the river and I'm happy to customize the trip to fit group's needs. Have your student's teacher get in touch with me, or simply pass along any contact information of people (including your own) interested in learning more about one of the defining rivers of the West. Contact me at paul@wildmesquite.org.

Spotlight on our members

Mary Ellen and Jon Hunner are proud to call themselves members of the Southwest Environmental Center. They have been in the Mesilla Valley for fifteen years after moving here from northern New Mexico.

Mary Ellen is a nurse practitioner for the UNM Cancer Center at Memorial Medical Center in Las Cruces and Jon directs the Public History Program and teaches at NMSU.

Mary Ellen and Jon like to spend time along the Rio Grande, as well as hike in the Organ Mountains, Gila Wilderness and Sacramentos. Mary



Jon and Mary Ellen Hunner

Ellen enjoys gardening and provided produce for family and friends throughout the summer. Jon looks forward to collaborating with SWEC to provide historic environment education here in the Mesilla Valley for local schools.

"As a health professional and an historian, we know the importance of a balanced and prospering environment to ensure the well being of both an individual and of our society. We join SWEC in preserving our land and our landscape."



Elisa Cundiff

Elisa Cundiff says she is always thrilled to volunteer at SWEC events and activities, not only because she supports SWEC's extraordinary conservation efforts, but because she enjoys the camaraderie of the spirited individuals that SWEC attracts.

Elisa spent her childhood running amok in the wild beauty surrounding Las Cruces. In 2008, she helped to launch Thrive (www.justthrive.com) a free, online personal financial advisory service. She continues to work for Thrive remotely, along with Energy Concepts, a local residential solar and wind company.

Currently, she is working with Matyas Danter, developing a commerce website to link local farms and businesses in Las Cruces. She is also, in her words, the "least talented musician" in a very good band called Fire in the Flower.

SWEC welcomes new board members

SWEC's board continues to expand. Lori Kae Schwab is a recent transplant to



Lori Kae Schwab

Las Cruces from Urbana, Illinois where she did graduate research and began her career in restoration ecology of tallgrass prairies and riparian corridors.

She is currently pursuing her doctorate studies at NMSU, her focus being on restoration of Otero Mesa's fragile grasslands after human-caused disturbance. She continues to be fascinated by the biological diversity of such an arid landscape. In her free time, Lori Kae enjoys gardening, cycling, artisan bread baking, weekly hikes and frequent camping trips with her fiancée, Mark, and their two dogs. She is looking forward to working with SWEC in its outreach and education activities across southern New Mexico.

Born and raised in the Mesilla Valley, Stefan Schaefer is a physician practicing Family Medicine. He joined the SWEC

board in December, 2009 because it allows him an opportunity to put his love of the outdoors, his concerns for the impact of our expanding population on the environment and personal ethics of conservation into practice.



Stefan Schaefer

Jeremy Klass is also a PhD student at NMSU, in the Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences. His research involves plant and soil ecology in arid systems. Originally from Colorado, Jeremy obtained his undergraduate degree in Envi-



Jeremy Klass

ronmental Science and his Master's in Biology. He lives in Las Cruces with his wife and two children. He is committed to educating the

public on environmental issues and creating a more verdant future.

Antix is a strong business supporter

The Southwest Environmental Center has many business supporters. We are proud that Antix, Inc. is one.

Antix has been in Las Cruces for over 33 years and is one of the longest surviving companies in the area. It has built a reputation over the years for quality woodworking in the commercial arena. In fact, if you walk into a bank or school in Las Cruces, chances are the teller line, customer service areas or classroom casework was fabricated by Antix. Many commercial contractors rely on Antix as the "go-to" local company that can build unique items for most any business.

In the last 15 years, Antix has expanded into a kitchen and bath design center. Its intimate showroom, expert designer assistance and personal attention to customers has allowed the business to thrive even through hard times.

Owner/Managers Tony Harris and Vicky Rader have been long-time supporters of SWEC. In the last several years, the business has been particularly involved in supporting and sponsoring the On the River event.

Antix maintains a strong belief in finding

ways to protect our beautiful Mesilla Valley environment through recycling manufacturing byproducts, reducing our carbon footprint through energy conservation, and by offering products whose manufacturing processes are environmentally friendly and sustainable. Antix has been supporting the Green Building concept long before it became a buzz word. It is one of a few companies that offers cabinets and countertops that qualify for points toward US Green Building's LEED certification program.

Need help with a kitchen or bath remodeling project? Call Antix at 575-526-2398.



Antix has built a reputation over many years for quality woodworking. It is a proud supporter of SWEC.

Start building your rafts!

Raft the Rio set for June 12

The Southwest Environmental Center's thirteenth annual Raft the Rio will be held on Saturday, June 12, 2010 on the Rio Grande, near Las Cruces.

As always, creativity and the use of discarded materials in building rafts is highly encouraged.

The three-mile rafting adventure will begin at La Llorona Park beneath the Picacho Street bridge, and end just upstream from the Calle del Norte Bridge ("Mesilla Bridge"). There will be refreshments, food vendors and live music at the finish line.

We've changed the awards categories slightly this year:

- Best use of recycled materials
- Least likely to finish (must be floating at start of race)
- First to finish
- Champion of the River (best promotes



- appreciation for the Rio Grande)
- Most spirited (most enthusiastic crew)
- Best theme (most thorough application of a theme to crew and vessel)

Prizes will be awarded in two divisions. The Kids Division race begins at 10 a.m. sharp., followed by the Open Division at 10:15. To be eligible for the Kids' Division, at least half the sailors on a boat must be under 13 years of age.

Teams may register at the starting line beginning at 8:00 a.m., or in advance by contacting the Southwest Environmental Center.

The entry fee is \$10 per raft in advance

(or \$20 on race day), plus \$5 for each crew member 13 years and older (after the first two). Participants who are SWEC members will



be entered into a drawing to win a whitewater raft trip for two on the Rio Grande near Taos, courtesy of Far Flung Adventures.

Every year this event gets bigger. Last year more than 400 sailors on 170 vessels enjoyed a day of fun on the water. You can see photos from last year's event at <http://kenstinnettphoto.smugmug.com/SWEC> (photographer Ken Stinnett) and at <http://picasaweb.google.com/RaftRio2008> (photographer Shawn Salley).

For more information, call (575) 522-5552.



On the River, For the River

Attendees at SWEC's gala fundraiser on September 26, 2009 enjoyed great food, music, comraderie and beautiful weather at the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. This year's gala will be held on October 16. Save the date! If you would like to help plan this event, please call us at (575) 522-5552.

Many thanks to our 2009 sponsors:

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Please reward our supporters with your business. And be sure to let them know you appreciate their support for the Southwest Environmental Center! If your business would like to be added to this list, please call (575) 522-5552.

Our mission

Established in 1991, the Southwest Environmental Center works to protect and restore native wildlife and their habitats in the Southwestern borderlands. We do this through grassroots advocacy, education and on-the-ground restoration projects.

Scientists tell us there is a global extinction crisis underway. Plants and animals are disappearing 1000 times faster than they would if humans were not around, through habitat loss, overhunting, pollution, invasive species and climate change. We are determined to make sure this doesn't happen in the Southwest.

Your contribution stays right here in the Southwest to protect special places like Otero Mesa and the Rio Grande, and native wildlife such as jaguars, pronghorn and wolves.

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It could be!

The Southwest Environmental Center is once again raffling off a new 2010 Toyota Prius hybrid.

We are only selling 400 tickets at \$100 each, so your odds of winning are pretty good! The drawing will be held on Earth Day (April 22, 2010) at SWEC. You don't need to be present to win.



Last year's Prius winner Don Patterson, shown here receiving the car keys. Don has been very happy with his new car.

Notwithstanding all the bad news about Toyota recently, this is an excellent car, fully warrantied, that gets an EPA rated 52 miles per gallon. If you don't want it, you can always sell it.

This is one of SWEC's two big annual fundraisers, and very important to our budget in this lean year, so please consider buying a ticket. They make great gifts!



Can't afford a raffle ticket?

We've got you covered. Bring in four new members of SWEC at the regular rate of \$30/year or more, and we'll give you a Prius raffle ticket, worth \$100.

How easy is that? Everyone knows four people who would join SWEC if someone asked them. But hurry--this offer expires on April 22.

Call (575) 522-5552 for more info.

Do you shop at Albertsons?

If you do, you can raise money for SWEC simply by showing your Community Partners card each time you shop. Call us at (575) 522-5552 to get your card.

Are you expired?

We hope not! Please check the date on your refrigerator magnet, if you still have it, or call us to find out at (575) 522-5552. If your membership has expired, please renew today. Your continued support will help us protect Mexican wolves, Otero Mesa, and other wildlife and special places.

Back by Noon Outings Spring 2010

The Southwest Environmental Center is excited to announce its Spring 2010 schedule of "Back by Noon" Saturday morning guided natural history outings. Informative, family friendly, and not too strenuous, most of the trips will have you back to your car before noon.

Featuring a mix of the new and familiar, the Spring 2010 lineup includes the following trips:

- Tonuco Mountain (Rincon)—March 6
- Rio Bosque and the Border Wall (El Paso)—March 13
- Wildlife of NMSU's College Ranch (north of Las Cruces)—March 27
- San Andres National Wildlife Refuge (north of Las Cruces)—April 17
- Birds of Swan Pond (Selden Canyon)—April 24
- Cacti of Tortugas Mountain (Las Cruces)—May 1
- Wildflowers of the Organ Mountains (Las Cruces)—May 8
- Chihuahuan Desert Arthropods (Las Cruces)—June 5
- Urban burrowing owls (Las Cruces)—June 19
- Bats of the Franklin Mountains (El Paso)—June 26 (Back by Midnight!)

Advanced reservations are required. Sign up early—space is limited for some trips. Be sure to bring sturdy shoes, water, sunscreen and a hat. Detailed descriptions of the outings can be found at wildmesquite.org. Call (575) 522-5552 to sign up.

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