

THE MESQUITE GRILL

NEWS FROM THE SOUTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER · FALL 2007

Show up and speak out for wolves

The Fish and Wildlife Service is holding a series of important public meetings as part of a process that will determine the future of Mexican gray wolves in Arizona and New Mexico. Your participation is vital.

A success story...almost

The Mexican wolf is a tremendous success story...almost.

By 1976, the Mexican wolf, or lobo, was completely wiped out in the United States. The handful of wild wolves that remained in Mexico were captured to start a captive population, which has been the source for wolves that have been reintroduced into Arizona and New Mexico since 1998.

The released wolves have done their part. They have learned how to hunt wild elk and deer, and are restoring balance to our wildlands. Unfortunately, politics have gotten in the way of their full recovery. Now we have a chance to change that and ensure that the lobo is home to stay.

Changes needed

While reintroduced wolves have thrived in the Northern Rockies - now numbering over 1,500 - the Mexican wolf population remains dangerously low, with only about 60 wolves in an area twice the size of Yellowstone. The difference is in the rules governing the reintroduction program. Because of these rules, 11 wolves have been shot by the government, 20 more died inadvertently because of capture, and at least 24 have been trapped and permanently removed from the wild since the reintroduction began.

(continued on next page)

Mexican wolf meetings in southern NM:

**Alamogordo--Monday, Dec. 3, 5 p.m.
Tays Special Events Center, NMSU**

**Las Cruces--Tuesday, Dec. 4, 5 p.m.
Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum**

**Glenwood--Wednesday, Dec. 5, 5 p.m.
Glenwood Community Center**

For a complete listing of meetings, see page 3.

It's that time of year again

Please consider a year-end gift to the Southwest Environmental Center. Help us protect native species like the wolf and jaguar, and important habitats like Otero Mesa and the Rio Grande. See donation form p. 7.

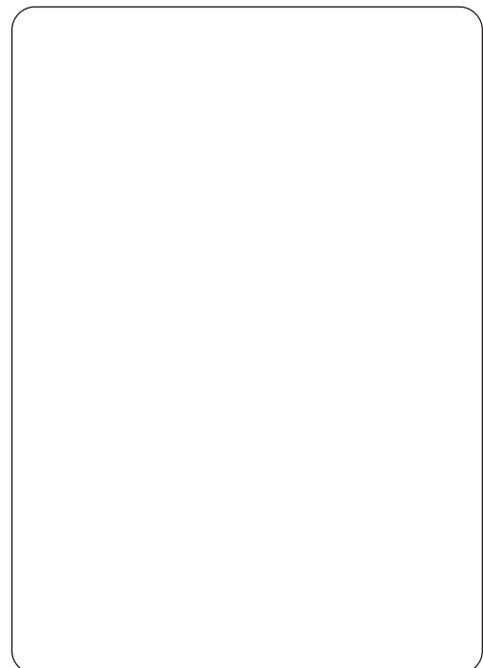


Some of the winners in SWEC's Mexican wolf essay and art contests for middle school students. From L-R: Bailey Bonfantini, Logan Richards, Kyle Thomas, Tennisa Julian, Rose Choneska, Eiden Rische-Bloom, and Sydney Salas. For a complete list of winners, See p. 6. Photo Ken Stinnett.

Please use this card!

If you shop at Albertsons Food Stores, here is an easy way to raise money for the Southwest Environmental Center. Just show this Community Partners card each time you make a purchase, and Albertsons will make a donation to SWEC. It doesn't cost you anything!

The more people who use their cards, the more SWEC will receive. If you don't want or need this card, please pass it on to someone else, or drop it in the mail back to us. Thanks.



Wolf meetings

(continued from front page)

Here are some of the changes that biologists and conservationists say need to happen.

Get rid of the artificial boundaries

Northern Rockies wolves are allowed to expand their territory. Mexican gray wolves are confined to the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, which includes the Gila National Forest in New Mexico and the Apache National Forest in Arizona (see map). But with good habitat outside of these areas, wolves often cross the political lines in search of new homes and prey. But when they cross the boundaries, they are captured and relocated back into the Blue Range, which thwarts expansion of the population, disrupts packs, and sometimes causes serious injuries to individual wolves. Wolves should be allowed to recoccupy suitable habitat where it exists. We need to eliminate the artificial boundaries.

Clean up dead livestock

Wolf recovery requires compromise and adjustments on the part of all public land users, but the current rules are stacked against the wolves. Nearly the entire Mexican wolf Recovery Area is leased for grazing by cattle (see map below). The portion in New Mexico is often grazed year-round, creating many opportunities for wolves to come into conflict with livestock.

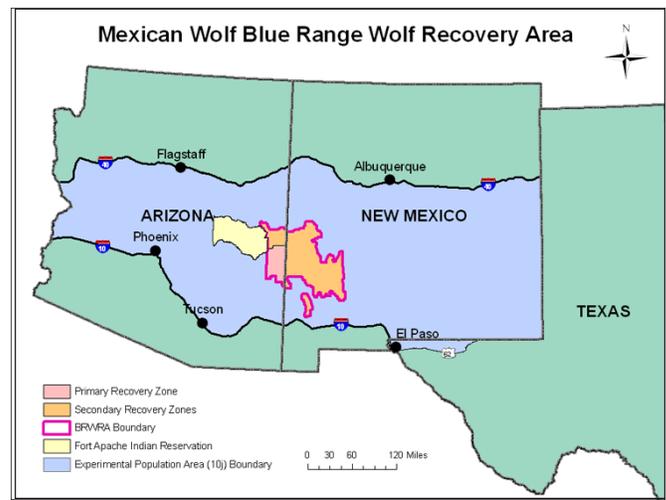
Ranchers using public lands are not required

to remove or render inedible (as by lime, for example) the carcasses of livestock that die for a number of non-wolf related reasons like disease, falls and lightning strikes. Wolves are attracted to and scavenge on these carcasses, and sometimes then begin to prey on live cattle or horses nearby. After three livestock kills in a year, the wolf is either killed or placed in captivity.

The gray wolf reintroduction rule for the northern Rocky Mountains in Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho required ranchers to remove such "attractants" and specified that wolves that prey on livestock near carcasses would not be killed or removed. But the Mexican wolf never received this protection. Since conflicts with livestock are a major reason why reintroduction goals have not been met for Mexican wolves, it is only fair to require that public land ranchers manage their dead livestock to prevent such conflicts.

Update the recovery plan

Federal wildlife managers are supposed to develop recovery plans for endangered and threatened species. The current Mexican wolf recovery plan hasn't been revised since 1982, when Ronald



The current policy of automatically recapturing wolves when they leave the Blue Range Recovery Area works against wolf recovery.

Reagan was president and E.T. was in theaters. It was developed before the discipline of conservation biology had emerged and contains no numerical goals for determining when Mexican wolves are no longer in danger of becoming extinct. We need a new recovery plan for the Mexican wolf, based on modern conservation science and with numerical goals.

Put wolves in the best habitat

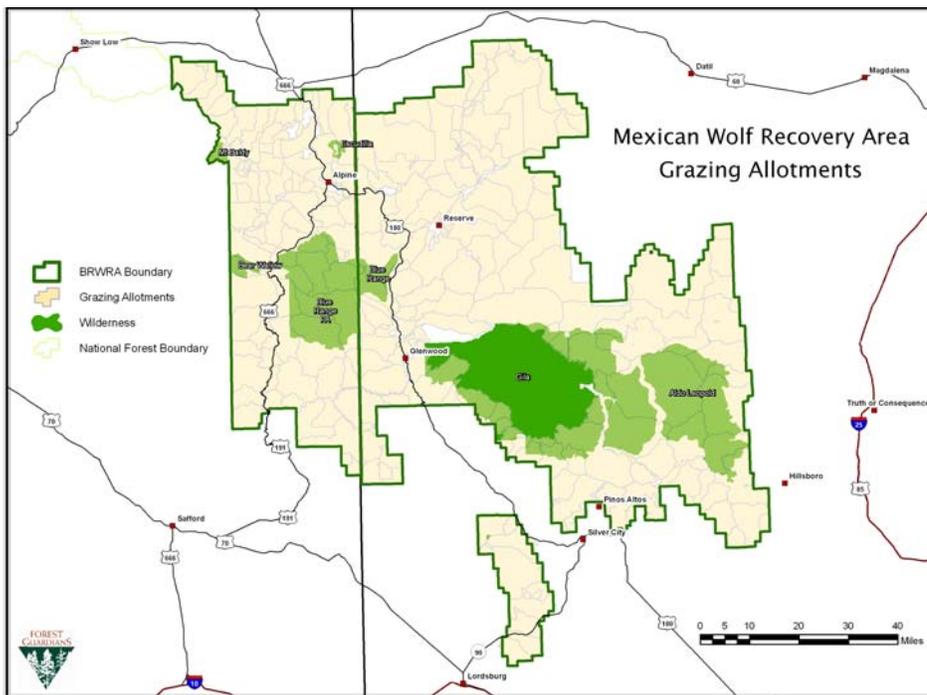
It is hard to imagine a better place for wolves than the huge, roadless, and mostly cattle-free Gila Wilderness, but current policy prevents captive wolves from being released there. The reason is pure politics.

When the reintroduction program first started, New Mexico was opposed to it, so federal wildlife officials cut a deal with the state: captive wolves would only be released directly into Arizona, not New Mexico. (Wolves are currently in New Mexico either because they moved there on their own, or they got in trouble in Arizona and were relocated into New Mexico.)

This makes no biological sense, especially considering that most of the best wolf habitat in Arizona is currently occupied, and the state of New Mexico now supports the reintroduction program. This is a no brainer: the rule should be changed to allow the direct release of wolves from the captive population into the Gila National Forest.

Phase out grazing in key areas

Wolves need a livestock-free core recovery area. As long as livestock are present, there will be conflicts with wolves. The long-term solution for wolf recovery is to buy ranchers out who want to retire or relocate to wolf-free areas, which means paying ranchers for both their private land to which grazing leases are attached, and com-



Grazing allotments in the Mexican wolf recovery area. Nearly the entire recovery area is leased for livestock grazing. Map courtesy Forest Guardians.



Elk in the Blue Range Recovery Area. For political reasons, current policy prevents the direct release of Mexican wolves into suitable habitat areas in New Mexico.

pensating them for their financial interest in their federal grazing permits.

There are conservation-minded groups and individuals who would do this in a heartbeat, if they could be assured that the grazing permits would be permanently retired. However, current Forest Service policy is to transfer those permits to someone else who will use it for livestock grazing. This needs to change, so that grazing permits in key Mexican wolf recovery areas are permanently retired.

Promote better understanding of wolves

Finally, federal and state agencies need to do a better job of promoting public understanding of Mexican wolves with fact-based educational programs, especially in communities within the wolf recovery area that have been gripped by unwarranted fears about the threat to humans and pets posed by wolves.

The wolves need you!

These are just some examples of problems with the current rule governing the reintroduction program. Your attendance at these meetings, and your written comments, are critical to the future of the Lobo in the southwest. Any changes to the Final Rule will have the force of law for many years, so it is extremely important that we send a clear message to the decision makers that the citizens of New Mexico and Arizona want the Lobo to stay and make a full recovery.

Please mark your calendar and spread the word to your friends and families. Call us if you want to carpool. Send written comments to:

*Brian Millsap, State Administrator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
NM Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113
Attn: Mexican Wolf NEPA Scoping*

To learn more about how you can get involved, call Adam Guss at (575) 522-5552.

Location, dates of wolf meetings

All weekday public meeting will be held from 5:00 till 9 p.m. Saturday meetings will be held from 11 a.m. till 3 p.m. Locations are as follows:

- Mon., Nov. 26: Flagstaff, AZ - Radisson Woodlands Hotel, 1175 W. Route 66
- Tues., Nov. 27: Hon-dah, AZ - Multipurpose Room, McNary School, 108 No. Pollack, McNary, AZ
- Wed., Nov. 28: Alpine, AZ - Alpine Community Center #12 CR 2052
- Thur., Nov. 29: Grants, NM - Best Western 1501 East Santa Fe Ave
- Fri., Nov. 30: Albuquerque, NM -Special Events Building, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center 2401 12th St. NW
- Sat., Dec. 1: Socorro, NM - Macey Conference Center Lobby/Foyer, New Mexico Tech. 801 Leory Pl.
- Mon., Dec. 3: Alamogordo, NM - Tays Special Events Center, New Mexico State University, 2400 Scenic Dr.
- Tues., Dec. 4: Las Cruces, NM - Tortugas Ballroom, Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, Dripping Springs, Rd
- Wed., Dec. 5: Glenwood, NM - Glenwood Community Center
- Thur., Dec. 6: Safford, AZ - Dining Room at the Activities Center, Eastern Arizona College, 1014 N. College Ave.
- Fri., Dec. 7: Tucson, AZ - Student Union Memorial Center (Tucson and Catalina Rooms), University of Arizona, 1303 E. University Blvd.
- Sat., Dec. 8: Phoenix, AZ - Garnet, Emerald and Sapphire Rooms, Glendale Civic Center, 5750 West Glenn Dr.

Wolf volunteers needed

We are looking for volunteers to help with our Mexican wolf campaign---before, during and after the upcoming public meeting--for the following tasks:

- Help out at the scoping meetings
- Phone calling
- Tabling
- Door-to-door outreach
- Write letters to the editor

Call Adam at (575) 522-5552 for more details.

Remembering a gentle giant

by Kevin Bixby

Tom Wootten was a giant in Southwestern conservation circles. He played an enormous role in helping to develop the conservation community that exists today in the region.



Tom Wootten
March 20, 1939-August 7, 2007

When I first arrived in Las Cruces in 1988, a young idealist fresh out of school, Tom was one of the first people I met. He helped put me in touch with other conservation-minded folks, and got me up to speed on local issues.

I told him about an idea I had for a resource center. The encouragement and advice he gave me was instrumental in getting the Southwest Environmental Center off the ground in 1991.

I was not alone. He helped many other individuals and groups, always with generosity, humor and patience.

Tom and his wife Eleanor were active in the Native Plant Society, Audubon Society, and other groups.

Through their foundation, T&E, Inc., they provided financial assistance to countless groups, activists and students, all motivated by a common desire to preserve the Southwest's natural heritage.

Tom died this past summer near his beloved Gila River. He will be missed, but not forgotten.

SWEC joins effort to save borderland jaguars

The chesty roar of a jaguar in the night causes men to edge toward the blaze and draw serapes tighter. It silences the yapping dogs and starts the tethered horses milling. In announcing its mere presence in the blackness of night, the jaguar puts the animate world on edge. For this very reason, it is the most interesting and exciting of all the wild animals of Mexico.

—A. Starker Leopold, 1959, *Wildlife of Mexico*

Deep in the heart of the rugged Sierra Madre foothills of Sonora, Mexico, remains one of the largest areas of unfragmented, yet mostly unprotected, wildlife habitat left in North America. The region has unprecedented significance for a diversity of threatened and endangered species, including military macaws, bald eagles, eared trogons, neotropical river otters, ocelots, desert tortoises, gila monsters, and jaguars.

Jaguars once roamed widely from Arizona to Argentina. While these animals ventured as far north as the Grand Canyon as recently as 100 years ago, habitat loss, hunting, federal anti-predator programs, and conflicts with live-stock precipitated rapid declines in jaguar populations. Today, it is believed that only 10,000 wild jaguars remain worldwide, making them endangered throughout their entire range.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the US-Mexico borderlands. Although photographers and automatic trip cameras have documented solitary male jaguars in New Mexico and Arizona since the mid-1990s, recent field investigations indicate that the closest breeding population is in northern Mexico approximately 125 miles south of the border. Hopes for jaguar recovery in the US depend on preserving this remaining Sonoran population.

Yet owners of ranches in this area have been hostile to jaguars, hunting and trapping carnivores indiscriminately. Within the last several years, at least 24 jaguars, including adult females and kittens, have been killed by poachers and local ranchers.

With a strong desire to protect these wild cats and their habitat, a small group of conservationists from the southwestern US and northern Mexico came together in 2003 to form the Northern Jaguar Project (NJP). In partnership with Naturalia, one of Mexico's most respected environmental organizations, NJP seeks to revitalize jaguar populations by maintaining a core reserve and working with local ranchers, schools, and the Mexican government to safeguard breeding jaguars and promote conservation. Our work will ultimately help to establish and maintain safe passage corridors for jaguars to return to their original breeding habitat along the US-Mexico border.

Soon after its inception, NJP helped Naturalia purchase the 10,000-acre Rancho Los Pavos in northeastern Sonora to establish a jaguar sanctuary. To expand the reserve and provide the jaguar population with adequate room to roam, NJP is currently raising funds to acquire Rancho Zetasora, an adjacent 35,000-acre ranch.

Crucial to protecting the jaguar, Zetasora is characterized by its remote, rugged, and inaccessible subtropical wilderness. Featuring beautiful oak and palm-dotted perennial streams, jagged cliffs, and frontage on northern Mexico's longest undammed river, Zetasora's landscape supports an exceptionally unique, rich, and diverse ecosystem. This initial expansion will more than triple the current size of the reserve, encompass 70 square miles, and will incorporate the area where the highest

numbers of jaguar sightings have occurred.

The approximate cost of this purchase would equal only \$49 per acre, and donations have raised more than half of the funding needed. NJP is diligently working to raise the remaining balance to complete the purchase by January 2008.

[Article courtesy of the NJP. SWEC supports this work, and recently hosted a slideshow and fundraiser in Las Cruces, raising \$1500 for this important effort. For more information about NJP or to make a donation, please visit www.northernjaguarproject.org.]



Jaguar self-portrait, taken with a camera trap. Photo courtesy Northern Jaguar Project.

Jaguar Facts

- Due to an administrative oversight, jaguars were not protected domestically until 1997, when the species was finally listed as endangered within the U.S.
- Jaguars are the largest cats in the Western Hemisphere, and the third largest in the world. Only lions and tigers are bigger.
- Often confused with leopards, jaguars also have stockier bodies, shorter limbs, and larger paws.
- The Maya believed the jaguar, God of the Underworld, helped the sun to travel under the Earth at night, ensuring it would rise each morning.
- Rosette patterns are unique for each individual jaguar.
- The word jaguar comes from the South American Tupi and Guarani languages. A likely origin is the word *yaguareté*, meaning "true, fierce beast."
- Jaguars evolved in North America, expanded into Central and South America, and then lost most of their original northern range.
- Jaguars live a total of 12 to 16 years.
- Though jaguars once roamed throughout the southern U.S., only four are known in New Mexico and Arizona since the mid-1990s (including one, identifiable through his unique spot pattern, who has resided in Arizona for at least 10 years).
- An excellent swimmer and a strong climber, the jaguar will often wait in trees for its prey, relying on proximity rather than sustained speed in hunting.

Farming on grasslands poses risk to Aplomado falcons in Mexico

by Alberto Macías-Duarte, Roberto Rodríguez-Salazar, Angel Montoya, Tom Cade, and Grainger Hunt

The last known desert-dwelling Aplomado Falcon population (*Falco femoralis septentrionalis*) in North America may be extirpated within the near future. We have studied and worked to conserve this relict population in Chihuahua for the last fifteen years, and we feel a responsibility to inform the international community of the recent and ongoing destruction of the falcon's breeding habitat through the plowing of native grasslands.

The Aplomado Falcon is a strikingly beautiful, endangered species that once occurred throughout the grasslands of the Chihuahuan Desert. In the 1800s, the population extended northward into the southwestern United States, but it disappeared there entirely by the 1950s



Farmers plowing native grasslands

and has since been reintroduced in Texas [and, more recently, New Mexico]. This is one of only two areas in Mexico where this endangered species is known to breed, one along the eastern coastal savannas from southern Tamaulipas southward and the other in the desert grasslands of Chihuahua. The distance between those populations is about one thousand kilometers.

When we began studying the Chihuahua population in 1992, there were thirty-five known pairs, but the long drought of the 1990s and early 2000s reduced the population to about twenty-five pairs. At that time, we identified grassland desertification as the major threat to the long-term survival of the species. We could not foresee, however, that in the next few years, the species would face the destruction of its breeding habitat by the sudden conversion of desert grassland into croplands.

Just as the remnant falcon population in Chihuahua began to respond to the recent increase in rainfall, Mennonite farmers began buying the grassland portions of the ranches inhabited by falcons within Tarabillas valley, north and east of Sierra El Gallego, in the municipality of Ahumada [about 150 miles north of Chihuahua City]. At a recent meeting with government authorities, we discussed the loss of seven Aplomado Falcon breeding territories to plowing. Officials informed us that farmers are buying "...every available hectare of native grassland in the area," including additional known Aplomado Falcon territories.

The farmers continue negotiations with landowners to buy all the grasslands within that valley including communal lands (ejidos), and if left unchecked they will eventually own and farm the entire Tarabillas valley. These purchases are facilitated by the fact that most grasslands are in poor condition following the drought and its consequences on livestock production, tempting many landowners to sell their land to farmers.

The Mexican Institute of Water Technology measured aquifer recharge rates at 37 million cubic meters per year from which CONAGUA (the agency responsible for monitoring/controlling water utilization) determined that ground water pumping could support 5,300 hectares [one hectare is about 2.5 acres] of crop production in the Tarabillas Valley on a sustainable basis. About 10,200 hectares are already under ground-water irrigated crop production, and 20,400 hectares have been plowed in preparation for crop production. In all, 59,900 hectares of grassland have been sold for conversion to crop production in just the last four years.

Ground water pumping at current and projected rates is clearly not sustainable. Meanwhile,



The Tarabillas Valley is located in the Suco area of Chihuahua. Map courtesy The Peregrine Fund.



Farms in the northern half of Tarabillas Valley have thus far destroyed seven Aplomado Falcon breeding territories.

a substantial portion of the last remnants of desert grasslands known to support Aplomado Falcons in Chihuahua are being destroyed for short-term profit from unsustainable agriculture.

Today we know of only 18 Aplomado Falcon pairs remaining in Chihuahua, a trend that suggests the possibility of extirpation within a few years unless immediate action is taken to stop the rapid conversion of native grassland to cropland. In the last year alone, the breeding territories of seven pairs have been lost to the plow. We have found no evidence of Aplomado Falcons in other regions of Chihuahua, and surveys in Durango and Coahuila have also been unsuccessful.

The Aplomado Falcon is not the only species risking extirpation from this portion of Mexico. The endangered Mexican pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana mexicana*) lives only in native Chihuahuan grasslands and will share the same fate as the Aplomado Falcon if farmland conversion continues in Tarabillas valley during the coming months. Both Aplomado Falcons and Mexican pronghorns are closely associated with open grassland. Pronghorns move along grassland corridors, and the farming of these grasslands will further fragment their already diminished populations.

Tarabillas valley is an internationally important wintering ground for migratory grassland birds from the northern United States and Canada; the density of grassland birds during the winter far exceeds that observed in other grasslands in Chihuahua.

For further information, contact Alberto Macías-Duarte (maciasduarte@yahoo.com.mx); see www.peregrinefund.org/aplomado_articles.asp for details about the Aplomado Falcon population in Chihuahua.

[Article and photos reprinted by permission of the Peregrine Fund.]

Winners Announced in Mexican Wolf Student Contests

"When I grow up, I want my children to hear the howls of wolves when I take them camping in the Gila Wilderness..."

So concludes Logan Richards' essay which tied for first place in the Southwest Environmental Center's Mexican wolf student essay contest. Logan is a sixth grader in Mrs. Rose's Science Class at Camino Real Middle School in Las Cruces.

The other first place essay winner was Kyle Thomas, an eighth grade student at Zia Middle School in Mesilla. They both walked away with new iPod 8 Gb nanos and a chance to spend a day in the field with biologists tracking wild Mexican wolves.

In the art contest, first place was also shared by two contestants, who also won iPods and a field trip. Tennisa Julian, a seventh grade student at Chaparral Middle School in Mrs. Alden's science class, wanted to show wolves' strong social structure as well as their individuality. "I want people to look at the wolves and see how they feel and their personalities," she wrote in her artist statement. "Each wolf reacts differently."



Rose Choneska earned a first place tie with this drawing of a wolf in a divided world

She shared first place with sixth grader Rose Marie Choneska at Zia Middle School, who drew a wolf living in a world divided between inconsiderate humans and the natural environment where wolves can thrive.



Tennisa Julian tied for first place with this drawing showing the social nature of wolves

More than 320 middle school students submitted essays or drawings from middle schools in Socorro, Alamogordo, Chaparral, Las Cruces, Silver City and Deming. Essay writers were asked to answer the question: *Mexican wolves are returning to New Mexico. Do you think their return is important? Why or why not?* Art contest entrants were asked to draw or paint a Mexican wolf in a way that emphasized what the artist thought were its most important qualities. In each contest, prizes were also awarded for Honorable Mentions, and to the teachers who encouraged the most students to enter. In addition,



Bailey Bonfantini earned an Honorable Mention for her drawing of a wolf at the water

Winners--Essay Contest

- 1st Place (tie): Kyle Thomas, 8th Grade, Zia Middle School, Mesilla,—Mrs. Baker, Lit/comp teacher
- 1st Place (tie): Logan Richards, 6th Grade, Camino Real Middle School, Las Cruces,—Mrs. Rose, Science Teacher
- Honorable Mention: Eiden Rische-Bloom, 7th Grade, Mercer School, Las Cruces—Michelle Granger
- Honorable Mention: Belkis Jacquez, 7th Grade, Sierra Middle School, Las Cruces—Mrs. Manning
- Honorable Mention: Sydney Salas, 6th Grade, Zia Middle School—Mrs. Crespin

Winners--Art Contest

- 1st Place (tie): Tennisa Julian, 7th Grade, Chaparral Middle School, Chaparral, Mrs. Alden, Science Teacher
- 1st Place (tie): Rose Marie Choneska, 6th Grade, Zia Middle School, Mesilla
- Honorable Mention: Daniel Tannen, 8th Grade, James Monroe Middle School, Albuquerque, Mrs. Reynolds
- Honorable Mention: Bailey Bonfantini, 7th Grade, Sierra Middle School, Las Cruces, Mr. Olin Calk, Art Teacher
- Honorable Mention: Natalie Kuhns, 6th Grade, La Plata Middle School, Silver City

Winners--Teachers

- Essay Contest: Soraya Smith, Technology Teacher, Lynn Middle School, Las Cruces
- Art Contest: Olin Calk, Art Teacher, Sierra Middle School, Las Cruces

the names of 12 students were drawn at random to go on the field trip to track wild wolves.

Winners were selected by a panel of judges with expertise in writing, art, or biology, and announced at an awards ceremony held November 14 at the Rio Grande Theater in Las Cruces.

The winning essays and all the art entries are currently on display at SWEC. The winning entries will also be posted to our website in the near future.

On the River, For the River 2007



Trio Los Guapos kept the crowd on its feet.



Ballet Folkloric dancers from Hermosa Heights Elementary School.

All photos by Ken Stinnett



More than 200 people attended SWEC's 11th annual *On the River, For the River* gala fundraiser, held on September 29th on Las Cruces newly renovated Main Street, in front of SWEC's office building. Attendees enjoyed an evening under the stars with live music, colorful Ballet Folklorico dancers, and delicious food provided by five local restaurants and caterers. The event raised a record \$13,000.

We would like to thank the sponsors of the event: Las Cruces Toyota, Malooly's Carpet and Flooring, and El Paso Electric, as well as the many businesses and individuals who donated items for the silent auction.

The event planning committee is already gearing up for next year. If you would like to help out, please contact us at (575) 522-5552.



Master of Ceremonies Rep. Jeff Steinborn



Perusing items in the silent auction.



YES, I WANT TO HELP THE SOUTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER PROTECT OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

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Here's a great holiday gift idea



Looking for a unique holiday gift? How about a chance to win a new car.

Thanks to the generosity of Toyota of Las Cruces, the Southwest Environmental Center is giving away a brand new 2008 Toyota Prius hybrid. Only 350 tickets will be sold at \$100 each. We have less than 90 tickets remaining.

Raffle tickets make a great gift for the people on your list who don't want any more "stuff." If they win the car, they will help the environment by driving a fuel-efficient car. If they don't,

they will have the satisfaction of knowing that a generous contribution was made on their behalf to a good cause.

At the latest, the drawing will be held on Earth Day, 2008 (April 19). However, if we sell all the tickets before then, we'll hold the drawing sooner. You don't need to be present to win. Tickets are available at SWEC. The winner is responsible for license, title and all applicable taxes.

Call 505-522-5552 for more information.

Solar project update

SWEC is still waiting on final approval from the City of Las Cruces for our rooftop photovoltaic (PV) system. Apparently the novelty of the system has raised many questions about how to deal with it. However, it looks like the final hurdle has been surmounted, and we hope to throw the switch in December or January. Stay tuned.

Get paid to do good

Are you tired of meaningless, low-paying jobs? Do you like to talk to people? If so, you should consider door-to-door outreach as a canvasser for SWEC. Call Adam at (575) 522-5552 for more information..

Do we have your email address?

Email is the most effective and cheapest way for us to communicate with our members. If you would like to receive occasional electronic announcements about SWEC events, programs and issues, please let us know. Send us an email to list@wildmesquite.org. We promise not to overwhelm your inbox.

Volunteer Opportunities at SWEC

We are currently looking for volunteers for the following positions:

- Back by Noon outings coordinator
- Cottonwood Art Gallery Director
- Office help (on a regular basis--answering phones, greeting visitors, etc.)
- Office help (for mailings, special events, etc.)
- Tabling at various locations
- Phone banking
- Otero Mesa--adopt a lease team
- River restoration and clean-up
- Distribute SWEC hiking guide

Call (575) 522-5552 for more information.

See also page 3 for special volunteer openings related to Mexican wolves.

Are you expired?

Please check the date on your address label. If your membership has expired, please renew today. Your continued support will help us protect Mexican wolves, jaguars, the Rio Grande, Otero Mesa, and other wildlife and special places.

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