

THE MESQUITE GRILL

NEWS FROM THE SOUTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER • SPRING 2008

SWEC goes solar!

The Southwest Environmental Center inaugurated its new six kilowatt rooftop photovoltaic (PV) system on April 16th, becoming the first commercial PV system to come online in Las Cruces.

New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson was on hand to cut a paper chain symbolizing U.S. dependence on fossil fuels, along with NM Representative Antonio Lujan, NMSU Provost Waded Cruzado-Salas, Las Cruces



Governor Richardson speaks at dedication ceremony for SWEC's rooftop solar system against a backdrop of photos of the system. Photo Ken Stinnett.

and installed in partnership with staff and students at NMSU's Institute for Energy and the Environment. It consists of 33 solar panels, each with a capacity of 180 watts. The panels convert sunlight into electricity. An inverter converts the DC power into AC, and it is then fed into the El Paso Electric distribution network.

SWEC's system should produce about 950 kWh of electricity per month, while annually preventing about 17,000 pounds of CO₂ from being put into the atmosphere by traditional electricity generation.

Under a 20-year purchase power agreement with SWEC, El Paso Electric intends to buy the power produced by SWEC's system to help it

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Governor Richardson and Rep. Antonio Lujan cut a paper chain held by SWEC Executive Director Kevin Bixby (left) and NMSU Provost Waded Cruzado-Salas. Photo Ken Stinnett.

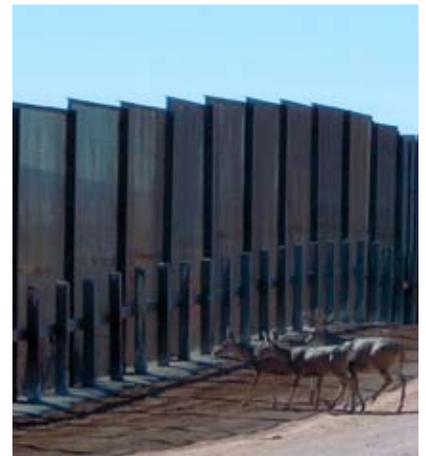
Border fence vs. wildlife

The Southwest Environmental Center has joined with a growing number of conservation, human rights and immigration groups, as well as many state and local elected officials to protest the fast-tracked construction of hundreds of miles of new fencing and high intensity lighting along the U.S. Mexico border. (See article by El Paso Mayor John Cook on page 4.)

"The proposed fence is a band-aid approach to complex issues, and it won't work," said SWEC director Kevin Bixby. "But it will waste taxpayers' money and have a lasting negative impact on wildlife."

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) wants to construct

700 miles of fencing along the border. The fence will be a potential disaster for wildlife, blocking their movement and preventing access to the resources they need for their survival. Many species will be affected, including pronghorn, ocelots, mountain lions, javelina, coatimundis, deer, bears, etc. in important wildlife areas such as the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, the San Pedro



Mule deer stopped by border fence in southern Arizona.

Riparian National Conservation Area, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Wildlife Refuge, and the Rio Grande near El Paso.

Of particular concern is the impact on endangered jaguars trying to make a come back in the Southwest. SWEC has supported efforts by conservationists and ranchers to establish a jaguar reserve in northern Sonora, just 120 miles from the U.S. border, from which animals could disperse northward. These animals may now find their passage blocked in some areas.

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Mark your calendars!

Raft the Rio -- June 14

see details on page 5

Back by Noon Outings

new schedule on page 7

"On the River, For the River" gala -- Oct. 11

at the new Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park!

See back page for more details.



Help SWEC stimulate the economy. See back page.

Wolf numbers continue to drop

For the third time in four years, the number of endangered Mexican wolves in NM and AZ has declined. If this continues, the most endangered mammal in North America will soon disappear entirely from the Southwest.

The latest population count by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) revealed 52 wolves remain in the wild, including only 3 breeding pairs. A year ago there were 59 wolves and 6 breeding pairs.

Management itself is the problem. In 2007 alone, the FWS killed or removed 22 wolves, causing the wild population to decline by nearly one-third. All but 3 of these wolves were targeted for preying on livestock.

Serious adjustments need to be made to the current wolf recovery program. Shooting and trapping wolves can no longer be the primary tools used by government officials to address conflicts with livestock. We need to solve these problems, not just react to them, and protect wolves to ensure their recovery.

What you can do:

If you haven't already, please take a moment to send an email to U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman (senator_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov). Urge him to use his authority to do two things:

1. Call for a moratorium on any further killing or removal of wolves until the population rebounds to at least 102 wolves and 18 breeding pairs, as recommended by the American Society of Mammalogists.

2. Direct U.S. FWS to restart the recovery planning process and develop an updated, scientifically-based recovery plan, as required by the Endangered Species Act. (The current recovery plan is more than 25 years old.)

Please also cc the following officials. It is critically important that they hear from large numbers of wolf supporters.

- Governor Bill Richardson (NM): <http://www.governor.state.nm.us/email.php?mm=6&type=opinion>
- Benjamin Tuggle, Regional FWS Director: RDTuggle@fws.gov
- Bruce Thompson, Director, NM Dept. of Game & Fish: bruce.thompson@state.nm.us
- Alfredo Montoya, Chair, NM Game Commission: alfredo@nmmc.edu

SWEC joins lawsuit to save Mexican wolves

With only 52 Mexican gray wolves left in the wild, the Southwest Environmental Center joined 10 other conservation organizations in asking an Arizona federal court to direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to take back its leadership responsibilities for the Mexican wolf reintroduction effort and make wolf conservation a priority.

In a suit filed May 1, the groups challenged FWS's decision to create an oversight committee to manage reintroduction efforts, under which FWS has relinquished its powers to other governmental agencies rather than maintaining final authority in FWS to recover Mexican wolves. In addition, the groups challenged FWS's approval of a rule requiring immediate, often lethal, removal of wolves known or likely to have committed three depredations on domestic livestock within a one-year period.

Specifically, the organizations are challenging FWS's creation of the Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC) and the approval of Standard Operating Procedure 13 (SOP 13). AMOC is composed of USDA Wildlife Services, which traps and shoots wolves, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, New Mexico Game and Fish Department, U.S. Forest Service, the White Mountain Apache Tribe and FWS. AMOC has taken over management of the reintroduction effort to ensure the recovery of the Mexican wolf, but since its creation in 2003, wolf removals have increased significantly, and the wild wolf population has declined in three out of the past

four years.

SOP 13 requires the removal of wolves that are known or suspected to have killed livestock on three separate occasions during a one-year span. This rule has resulted in a significant increase in the removal of wolves from the wild since its approval in 2005, and is in direct opposition to the recommendations made by scientists contracted by FWS to review the reintroduction program. Removal, both lethal and non-lethal, under SOP 13 is now the leading cause of wolf removals from the wild. Defenders and their co-plaintiffs cite SOP 13 as the most obvious and egregious example of how AMOC has fundamentally reshaped the framework under which FWS had been previously successfully recovering the wild Mexican wolf population.

The conservation organizations are hoping that this case will stop the indiscriminate removal of wolves under the current regulations and bring control of the program back to FWS, which, prior to the creation of AMOC, was successfully increasing the wild population.

Mexican wolves were first reintroduced to the Southwest in 1998. Eleven wolves were released in the Blue Range wolf Recovery Area in the Apache National Forest in Eastern Arizona. According to FWS's 2007 survey, there were only 52 individuals in the wild at the end of that year, which falls well below the agency's goal of 100 wolves by 2006.

Students track wolves

Fourteen very lucky middle school students from southern New Mexico spent a day in the field last March with biologists looking for Mexican wolves in the Gila National Forest. The students were winners in SWEC's Mexican Wolf art and essay contests held last fall.

They didn't find any of the elusive canids, but they did see plenty of other wildlife and learned what it's like to be a wildlife biologist.

SWEC would like to thank the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish for making this opportunity of a lifetime possible for the kids.



Winners in the SWEC-sponsored Mexican wolf art and essay contests try their hand at radiotelemetry tracking.

Tiguas call for permanent protection of Otero Mesa

On April 22nd (Earth Day), the tribal council of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (also known as the Tiguas), passed a resolution calling on Congress to permanently protect Otero Mesa from oil and gas development.

The resolution from the El Paso-area tribe refers to the “thousands of archaeological sites and several traditional gathering and ceremonial sites located on Otero Mesa and the surrounding area.

In particular, it calls attention to the abundance of petroglyphs on Alamo Mountain covering “many different cultures spanning thousands of years and is sacred.”

The resolution states that oil and gas drilling will cause “widespread and irreversible damage to archaeological sites and traditional gathering and ceremonial sites, and to cultural landscapes, including viewsheds, that have existed largely undisturbed since ancestors of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo first entered the area.”

It also states that proposed oil and gas drilling with its certain physical and visual impacts and irreversible landscape damage will be “inherently offensive to our people,” and will be a “deliberate display of disrespect and an affront to our dignity as a native people.”

Declaring that the pueblo “wishes to protect Otero Mesa’s landscapes, viewsheds, cultural



Alamo Mountain on Otero Mesa, considered sacred by the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo.

resources as well as grasslands, wildlife and water for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations of the Pueblo,” the resolution calls on Congress “to introduce legislation that will provide permanent protection for Otero Mesa’s unique and irreplaceable cultural landscape and associated archaeological, water, plant, and animal resources from oil and natural gas exploration.”

We hope the action by the Tiguas will encourage other groups and community leaders to follow suit. SWEC has had several recent discussions with El Paso City Councilors and County Commissioners, and similar resolutions may be forthcoming from those bodies. These would be added to the resolutions passed by Sierra and Dona Ana Counties calling for a moratorium on drilling and leasing until an ongoing water study can be completed.

Meanwhile, SWEC and other groups have succeeded so far in preventing further drilling. A Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposal to allow HEYCO to drill another natural gas well drew significant public opposition. Apparently HEYCO is the only oil company



Rock art on Alamo Mountain.

still interested in Otero Mesa. In response to comments by SWEC and others, the BLM is revising the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed well. There will be another opportunity for public comment when the revised EA comes out.

What you can do:

Now is the time to send a clear message to your elected officials that protecting Otero Mesa is a priority to you. If you live in New Mexico or El Paso, please take a moment to make a quick phone call.

El Paso Residents:

Please call your City Representative and Mayor John Cook and urge them to support a city resolution calling on Congress to permanently protect Otero Mesa’s land, wildlife and water from oil and natural gas development.



The petroglyphs on Alamo Mountain were made by different cultures over thousands of years.

- Mayor John Cook: (915) 541-4145
- Dist. 1 Ann Morgan Lilly: (915) 541-4151
- Dist. 2 Susie Byrd: (915) 541-4416
- Dist. 4 Melina Castro: (915) 541-4140
- Dist. 5 Rachel Quintana: (915) 541-4701
- Dist. 6 Eddie Holguin Jr.: (915) 541-4182
- Dist. 7 Steve Ortega: (915) 541-4108
- Dist. 8 Beto O’Rourke: (915) 541-4123

New Mexico Residents:

Please call U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman and urge him to introduce legislation that will permanently protect Otero Mesa’s land, wildlife and water from oil and natural gas development.

- Senator Jeff Bingaman: (202) 224-5521

Key Reasons To Take Action

- Otero Mesa provides outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hiking, hunting, bird watching and wildlife viewing.
- Oil and gas development on Otero Mesa could put the region’s future water supply at risk
- Otero Mesa is one of the largest remaining grasslands in the Chihuahuan Desert, providing habitat for many wildlife species.
- Otero Mesa is an important cultural landscape for the Tiguas and other native groups.
- The amount of natural gas beneath Otero Mesa is considered by most experts to be negligible.

Border

(continued from front page)

The fence could also block the migration route of one of the few remaining wild bison herds in North America that now roams between Chihuahua and New Mexico. Even birds could be harmed by the miles of proposed stadium lights along the Rio Grande—a major migratory flyway for many birds.

SWEC is especially concerned about the 57 miles of continuous wire fence proposed along the Rio Grande from El Paso to Fort Hancock, Texas, cutting off wildlife access to this critically important resource and undermining efforts by SWEC and others to restore habitats along the river.

SWEC raised these concerns in comments submitted jointly to DHS with Defenders of Wildlife and other groups. We also offered suggestions for alternative approaches, such as virtual security measures and wildlife gaps, that would meet security objectives with less impacts to wildlife. However, in April, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff invoked the authority given by him under the REAL ID Act to waive more than 30 federal, state and local laws in order to expedite construction, closing the door on public input. This was the fourth time in two years he took this action, each time claiming exemption from a larger number of laws.

SWEC is calling on border governors and Congress to halt construction of the border fence and seek real solutions to the challenges of immigration and border security.

What you can do:

If you live in a border state, please take a moment to call your governor and urge them to call on Congress to halt construction of the border fence until a thorough analysis of environmental impacts is completed. Here are the phone numbers:

- New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson--(505) 476-2200
- Texas Governor Rick Perry--(512) 463-1782
- Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano--(602) 542-1318
- California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger--(916) 445-2841

Border Fence Poses Detrimental Effect

By El Paso Mayor John Cook

Over the centuries, international trade has been the primary focus on the U.S.- Mexico border. In a post 9-11 world, that focus has changed both physically and politically. Immigration reform and national security have dwarfed trade issues. In 2006, Congress passed the Secure Fence Act and mixed the threat of terrorist with the need for immigration reform. The Texas border mayors understand the importance of national security, but question the wisdom of the Act.

The Act incorporates a sophisticated border surveillance system which implements technologies such as manned and unmanned aerial vehicles, ground based sensors, satellites, radar, and mobile and static monitoring tools. I have no opposition to these tools as long as "boots on the ground" accompanies them. Fences and walls along the border are a horse of a different color.

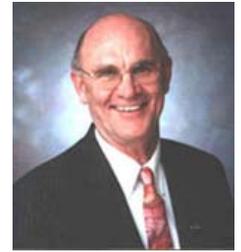
The Texas Border Mayors met with Secretary Chertoff and asked that the Department of Homeland Security consult with us before erecting fences. While we are not opposed to limited strategic placement of physical barriers to control illegal drug trade and human smuggling, the plan to construct a wall from San Diego to El Paso to Brownsville has obviously been concocted by folks who have limited knowledge of border communities, our sensitive ecologies, or the strategic value of the barriers.

What the Act ignores is that our current immigration policies are so ineffective that they encourage rather than discourage illegal immigration. Let's explore the issue of immigration reform for a moment. The reality is that the United States needs to import half a million workers into the country every year, yet we have quota systems that fall short of meeting the demand.

Given the choice of trusting one's life to a human smuggler, trekking through harsh and dangerous territory, hoping your status is not discovered, paying into social security benefits you will never receive or entering the country legally with a guest worker permit, what do you think most immigrants would choose? And when you remove that many people from the equation, the only people left entering illegally will be criminals.

Rather than investing a million dollars a mile in fencing, we should use strategic fence implementations in the major metropolitan areas to force international travelers to use

the ports of entry. We should invest in technologies, such as retina scanning and identification cards with digital embedded chips that make it easier to tell the good guys from the bad.



Mayor John Cook

For goods crossing the border we should use tools that assure manufacturing is done at secure origins and tracked into the United States.

Some criticism has been leveled at the Border mayors for our position. However, it is important that people understand that in a global economy, decisions that impact the border also impact the country as a whole. In El Paso alone, the annual trade with our sister city of Juarez, Mexico is \$54 billion a year. The goods manufactured in Juarez are distributed all across the United States and Canada. Wait times at the borders impact the transportation costs and these are passed along to the consumers.

Various problems and issues exist with the building of a border fence. From the possibility of serious negative effects on ecosystems and wildlife species housed along the border and the risk of illegal traffic moving to more dangerous areas of the desert creating a more complex hazard, to the potential for human trafficking becoming even more aggressive with the increased risk of heavily armed incursions - all have serious implications for the border region.

The leader of our neighbor to the south has been opposed to the fence. Recently in a meeting with U.S. Governors, Mexican President Felipe Calderón stated that Mexican immigration to the U.S. is an inevitable, natural phenomenon and he urged the U.S. Congress to approve reforms that would allow more Mexicans to work legally north of the border. We could very well look at exploring our quota system and link it to the market system. If the market, i.e. the United States, dictates that there should be an increase in the Mexican labor, then perhaps we should increase the quota in Mexican immigrants.

In the end, our country's border is not something that divides us but rather something that brings us together. A fence is not the solution.

We need to pursue better agreements with Mexico regarding immigration, look at alternate ways to combat the illegal trade of humans and drugs and keep our precious environment safe.

SWEC welcomes new board members

Five individuals recently joined the board of the Southwest Environmental Center, bringing fresh ideas, diverse experience and great new energy to the organization.

Sheila Black teaches creative writing (poetry) in the English Department at New Mexico State University. She is the author of a chapbook How to be a Maquiladora (Main Street Rag Publishers, 2007) and a full-length poetry collection House of Bone (CustomWords Press, 2007). For seven years she was the development director at the Colonias Development Council (CDC), a local nonprofit that did community organizing in border colonias.



Christopher Brown is an Associate Professor of Geography at New Mexico State University, where he specializes in US-Mexico border environmental research. He also runs an applied research laboratory that does geographic



information systems research into border transportation and environmental issues, and he serves on the boards of several regional, national, and international research organizations. He has recently begun a research program into the use of photovoltaic solar technologies to explore alternative electricity generation in the border region.

Kate Mott is a realtor and owner of Rethink Real Estate in Las Cruces. She was born and raised in New England, and has been a resident of New Mexico since 1981. Kate studied Fine Arts and Architecture at Art Students League of New York, and at the Rhode Island School of Design.



She was a Fine Arts instructor at Keene State College and at The Well School in New Hampshire. She was also the Director of the Concord, New Hampshire Council on the Arts. She is married to Russell Mott, and mother to Padma Mott-Valdevit and John Mott.

Melissa Guynn was born, raised, and attended college in South Carolina. She has MA and PhD degrees in psychology (not that kind of psychology) and has been a teacher

and researcher at NMSU since 2001. She lives with two spoiled Labrador Retrievers, Maddie and Bodhi. She enjoys hiking, bicycling, running, skiing, and windsurfing. She often worries about whether she's making good use of her time, and she hopes that someone or something will be better off because she was here.



Georgette Malooly is owner of Malooly's Flooring Company. She and her husband, Norman Todd, are both very active in the community. They have 2 boys, Chris and Bobby. She has lived in Las Cruces for 28 years, and loves it very much.



The five new members join President Gregg Henry, Vice-President Ray Padilla and Treasurer Steve Fischmann on the board.



Everyyeartheraftsgetmorecreative.PhotoKenStinnett.

Raft the Rio set for June 14

Start building your rafts! SWEC's 11th annual Raft the Rio raft race on the Rio Grande near Las Cruces is scheduled for Saturday, June 14.

The race is a fun event open to individuals and teams of all ages. It starts at the Picacho Bridge (La Llorona Park) and ends just above the Mesilla Bridge (Calle del Norte).

Prizes will be awarded to homemade boats in five categories: Best Use of Recycled Materials, Most Creative, First to Finish, Least Likely to Finish (must be floating at the starting line), and Spirit of the River.

The race starts at 10 a.m. Participants can register in advance (\$10 per raft) or on the day of the race (\$20). The registration fee covers the first two sailors 13 years old and over. Additional adult sailors are \$5 each.

All participants will be entered into a drawing to win a whitewater raft trip for two, donated by Far-Flung Adventures in Taos, NM.

New Mexico state law requires that each participant have a personal floatation device.

For more information and to register, call (575) 522-5552 or come into the Center. Volunteers and sponsors are still needed.



Whateverfloatsyourboat,ordoesn't. Photo Ken Stinnett.

What is solar energy?

by Mark Westbrook

Here in Las Cruces, we have greater potential to create usable energy from sunlight than does almost any other location in the country. Despite this potential, we lag behind other regions, even within our own state, when it comes to installed solar capacity.

There are three major categories of solar energy: photovoltaic, solar thermal used for heating, and solar thermal used to produce electricity. The latter, also known as concentrating solar power (CSP), has great potential as a power source, but is only practical when employed in large, utility-scale projects. In contrast, solar thermal heating and photovoltaic electricity are practical on smaller scales.

Solar thermal heating uses the heat energy of the sun to heat liquid which can then be used either for space heating or domestic water heating. Solar thermal heating typically uses flat plate collectors with thin pipes running inside of them to circulate the heating liquid (anti-freeze solution or water). For space heating, the heated liquid flows out of the collector and is circulated through a radiant floor tubing system, radiant baseboard, or radiator. When heating domestic water, the heated liquid from the panels flows through a heat exchanger, and a large storage tank keeps the hot water ready for use. Solar domestic hot water heating is a very efficient use of our solar resources and usually has a relatively short financial payback time.

Photovoltaic (PV) technology does not use the heat of the sun, but rather the photons of the sun to move electrons, producing electricity. PV panels actually operate more efficiently at colder temperatures. There are two main types of PV systems: stand-alone and grid-tied. The original PV systems were all stand-alone systems, storing the energy produced during the day in a bank of lead-acid batteries to be used when the sun is not shining. The battery bank requires regular maintenance and usually needs to be replaced about every 7-10 years. A grid-tied PV system uses the utility grid as energy storage, and so eliminates the cost and maintenance of a battery bank.

In a grid-tied PV system, the solar panels produce electricity during the day and this electricity first goes to power any needs within the building. In a process known as net-metering, any excess power is fed back into El Paso Electric's (EPE's) grid, spinning the building's utility meter backwards and crediting the build-

ing's account with EPE. The homeowner gets free energy storage from EPE, while helping to offset EPE's peak demand, thus reducing their need to build additional power plants. A grid-tied PV system can also help EPE to meet the requirements of the New Mexico Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS). In order for EPE to count the energy produced by grid-tied PV systems towards their RPS requirements, they must purchase the Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) credits from the owner of the PV system. EPE does not currently have a program set up to purchase RECs from homeowners, but they will be submitting a proposal for such a program to the state Public Regulatory Commission in July. PNM, the utility serving Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Alamogordo, and other areas of NM, does have a REC program which pays homeowners an additional \$0.13/kWh for all energy produced by the PV system, in addition to net-metering.

PNM's REC program is probably a major reason why northern New Mexico has so many more grid-tied PV systems than we have here in the Las Cruces area: through the end of 2007, PNM had 187 grid-tied PV systems in their territory, compared to only 14 systems in EPE's New Mexico territory. Hopefully the implementation of a REC program by EPE will help us to keep pace with the rest of the state when it comes to clean energy production.

While the initial investment required to install a PV system is not insignificant, the system pays for itself through energy savings and REC payments in less than half the warranty period of the solar panels. There are state and federal tax credits of up to 30% of the system cost for both PV and solar thermal systems; you can find out more about these and the RPS at www.dsireusa.org. In addition to the financial benefits, each kilowatt (kW) of installed PV prevents about 1,500 pounds of CO₂ from being emitted by fossil-fuel powered electricity generation. Additional environmental benefits include reduction of other pollutants and elimination of the need to exploit pristine natural areas in order to extract additional fossil fuel. The only fuel needed for solar power is our own abundant New Mexico sunshine.

[The author runs the Las Cruces office of Positive Energy, a renewable energy company based in Santa Fe that designs and installs PV systems. He can be reached at (575) 524-2030.]

SWEC goes solar

(continued from front page)

comply with New Mexico's renewable portfolio standard which requires that 20 percent of the power sold by utilities in New Mexico come from renewable sources, such as solar and wind, by 2020. The money will be used to support maintenance of the system, and for public educational programs about renewable energy, including an exhibit at SWEC.

This agreement is on hold until a separate interconnection agreement, currently under



SWEC's rooftop photovoltaic array consists of 33 panels in three rows. Photo Ken Stinnett.

negotiation, can be reached. SWEC is hoping that the utility will allow "net-metering" of our PV system, so that the power produced can be used onsite to offset our own electricity consumption.

Many other utilities around the country, including Public Service Company of New Mexico—the largest utility in New Mexico—allow both the sale of power from renewable sources and net-metering. Those utilities don't actually require that the renewably produced power be delivered to their distribution systems, but instead are content to purchase "renewable energy certificates" (RECs), which are basically vouchers that the power was produced in a renewable fashion.

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.

Are you expired?

We hope not! 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.

2008 Back by Noon Outings

We have a new volunteer outings coordinator (Dan Scurlock) and a new schedule. As always, the best way to hear about these outings is by getting on our email list.

Environmental History of the Mesilla Valley--May 31, 8:00 a.m.

Learn about how the Mesilla Valley looked in the mid-19th century and the changes in the river, fauna, and flora since then. Environmental historian NANCY STOTZ will take us to two locations in Las Cruces to point out where natural features were before being altered by human activity. Following these two stops, the ecotour will go to Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park where we will compare the wetlands community of today with those of 100-150 years ago. Rating: Easy. (Mostly driving; some easy walking.)

The Columbian Exchange in southern New Mexico--June 28, 7:00 a.m.

Learn about the exchange of peoples, plants, food, diseases, architecture and more with environmental historian DAN SCURLOCK. He will lead us to the Fabian Garcia Landscape Garden, the Rio Grande-La Mancha wetland, and landscape vegetation scars of the Camino Real near Engle. Rating: Easy (mostly driving, with some easy walking).

Ancient Rock Art--July 5, 7:00 a.m.

LEROY UNGLAUB will take us to see geometrics, prehistoric and historic images of masks, animals, etc. on rock faces at two sites west of Las Cruces. These petroglyphs were executed by Archaic, Jornada Mogollon and Apache peoples over thousands of years. Rating: Easy. (High clearance vehicles will be required to get to one of the sites, but both are within easy walking distance of the vehicles. SWEC will facilitate carpooling, so you don't need a high clearance vehicle to go.)

For all trips, advance reservations are required. Sign up early--space is limited. Be sure to bring sturdy footwear, water and a hat. All trips are open to the public and free for members of the Southwest Environmental Center. A \$5 donation is requested of non-members. Children 12 and under are free.

For more info, call (575) 522-5552 or email djagwolf@wildmesquite.org.

SWEC receives challenge grant

SWEC recently received a \$15,000 grant from the Stocker Foundation to hire a staff person to do outreach to schools and community groups related to our river restoration work. This will really help us respond to the many requests we get to give presentations and lead field trips. But there is a catch.

Half the amount was granted outright, but we'll only get the other \$7500 if we can raise a one-to-one match by December 31.

If you would like to make a special contribution towards this goal, please write "Stocker match" on your check, or make a secure credit card contribution on our website www.wildmesquite.org. Go to "Donate now" and designate that you want your contribution to go towards the Stocker challenge match.

Get a rub for SWEC

If you're wanting a massage in Las Cruces, consider Vincent Ortega. He is a Licensed Massage Therapist and he will donate \$10 to the Southwest Environmental Center every time a SWEC member receives a massage from him. All you have to do is mention SWEC or show your Albertsons Community Partners card. He hopes to generate at least \$1,000 in donations in the coming year. Check out his web-site www.VincentOrtega.com or contact him at (575) 642-3157.

Thanks, Vincent!

Consider a sustaining membership

The Southwest Environmental Center is constantly working to find ways to increase our effectiveness. The door-to-door canvass we started has been a great success and enabled us to grow to well over 2000 members.

With the organization steadily growing we're currently seeking ways to maximize the support of all our members. A great program that many non-profits rely on is sustainable gift giving. By giving small monthly or quarterly donations from your credit or debit account, it gives us a continuous stream of support for our efforts.

This is the most cost-effective and reliable way to give. It works well for our members because it allows you to give large contributions in small, workable increments. It also ensures that you never have to worry about renewing your membership. It works best for us because it ensures continuous support. By knowing ahead of time what donations are coming and when, it allows us to plan much more effective manner.

Our canvass team is beginning to focus on these types of contributions. If a passionate canvasser comes knocking at your door, tell him or her you want to sign up as a sustaining giver! And please, feel free to sign up through the mail or on our website (www.wildmesquite.org) or call us at the office (575-522-5552).

We have big things in store for the future, and with your help we can continue to be an effective voice for the environment in the southwest.

yes!

i want to help the southwest environmental center Protect our natural heritage

\$500

\$250

\$100

\$50

\$30 (BASIC MEMBERSHIP)

OTHER _____

SUSTAINING

(\$ _____ PER MONTH)

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

SWEC

275 N. DOWNTOWN MALL

LAS CRUCES, NM 88001

thank you!

DONATIONS ARE FULLY

TAX DEDUCTIBLE

52008

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER? _____

CREDIT CARD INFO (CIRCLE): VISA MASTERCARD AMEX

CARD NUMBER _____

CVS NUMBER _____ EXP. _____



University Professor wins Prius

John Wright, a geography professor at New Mexico State University, was the lucky winner in SWEC's Prius raffle held on February 14. He drove home in a brand new 2008 Toyota Prius Hybrid. He is pictured above (middle) with Las Cruces Toyota manager George Vescovo (left) and SWEC board president Gregg Henry. SWEC sold all 350 tickets and raised \$15,000.

SWEC would like to thank Las Cruces Toyota for making this fundraiser possible. Please go see them next time you're buying a car.

If you didn't win this time, don't despair. We hope to raffle off another car soon.

SWEC gala to be held at new state park

For the past 11 years, SWEC's annual gala fundraiser has been called On the River, For the River but we've never actually held it on the river because there was no suitable venue...until now. This year's event will be held on Saturday, October 11, at the beautiful new visitors center of the new Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. This is appropriate since SWEC was instrumental in establishing the park. Enjoy gourmet food, great music and dancing under the stars down by the river. Mark your calendars--you won't want to miss it!

We are looking for sponsors for the event as well as donations (worth \$50 or more) of items and services for the silent auction.

The park is expected to open this summer, and hold its grand opening event sometime in the Fall.

Do we have your email address?

Email is the most effective way for us to communicate with our members. If you would like to receive electronic 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.



Your check's in the mail

*\$600 per taxpayer
\$1200 per couple
\$300 per child

Let the Southwest Environmental Center stimulate the economy for you!

Please consider sharing your tax rebate with SWEC. Your contribution will help support our work on behalf of Otero Mesa, the Rio Grande, wolves, etc., and will quickly circulate within the local economy. Make a secure contribution on our website (www.wildmesquite.org) or use the coupon on page 7. Either way, we appreciate it!


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