

# THE MESQUITE GRILL

NEWS FROM THE SOUTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER • SUMMER 2007

## Mexican wolf recovery program at critical point

by Jean Ossorio, with contributions from Kevin Bixby

July 5, 2007: A Wildlife Services predator control agent took aim at the female wolf, and fired his rifle. The animal crumpled to the ground, and another Mexican wolf was dead, killed by government officials who lately seem more determined to eliminate this endangered carnivore than ensure its successful return to the Southwest.

This scene has been repeated three times in 2007, and 11 times since the reintroduction program began in 1998. This latest victim was the alpha female of the Durango Pack, killed because she had been involved with three livestock killings in the past year.

In addition to the wolves killed by project officials for conflicts with livestock, thirteen wolves died as a direct result of recapture, five pups conceived in the wild died after their pregnant mother was recaptured and gave birth in captivity, and approximately 24 wolves remain in captivity after being removed from the wild.

A total of about 50 Mexican wolves have been lost to the wild population because the animals were involved in conflicts with livestock or established territories outside the artificial, politically inspired boundaries of the recovery area.

### *Progress towards recovery stalled by politics*

Nine years after the first Mexican wolf howls broke a fifty year silence in the Southwest, lobo recovery still falters. The 49 to 59 wolves documented in the end-of-year survey fall far short of the 102 wolves projected for 2006 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The number of breeding pairs lags even further behind the projected 18 pairs. Only six pairs meeting the definition in the Final Rule were found. One of those, the San Mateo Pack, has already been destroyed.

The fundamental problem is that wolves sometimes prey on livestock, but under current management these conflicts are resolved entirely in favor of livestock operators, not wolves. There is no balance in the program. Wolves are permanently removed from the wild if they violate the "three strikes" rule, but ranchers who lease these vast public lands to graze their livestock are under no obligation to implement responsible husbandry prac-

*(continued on page 3)*

**Richardson stands up for wolves--see page 2**



More than 60 mostly homemade boats entered SWEC's 10th Annual Raft the Rio on the Rio Grande, held June 16. The entry Cirque du Rio, shown here at the starting line, featured a dog trimmed to look like a lion, and took the "Most Creative" award in the ensemble division. For more photos, see page 7.

## Save the Date! SWEC gala set for 9/29

Mark your calendars for the best party of the year. SWEC's annual *On the River, For the River* gala will be held on Saturday, September 29, 6-11 p.m. The theme for this year's event is A Taste of Las Cruces, with samplings from some of the area's finest restaurants and caterers.

The event will take place on the newly renovated Main Street, outside the SWEC building on the Las Cruces Downtown Mall. It will feature wine, High Desert brews, live music by the New River Blues Band and others, folkloric dancing by students at Hermosa Heights Elementary School, silent and live auctions, and...a drawing for a brand new Toyota Prius hybrid (see back page). Tickets go on sale in August at \$45 in advance, \$50 at the door.

If you have a treasure or service to donate for the silent auction (retail value of \$50 or more), please let us know. Call Kevin at (505) 522-5552.

# Richardson stands up for wolves

New Mexico governor Bill Richardson called for a change in the way wolf-livestock conflicts are resolved in the wake of the most recent killing of an endangered Mexican wolf by government agents.

Richardson called for an immediate suspension of the current "three strikes" policy that requires federal wildlife officials to trap or shoot any wolf that kills three head of livestock in one year. Calling the most recent killing of a female wolf that leaves motherless pups in the wild a "setback" to the Mexican wolf recovery program, he said it was time to reexamine the protocols under which wolves are removed from the wild.

"I strongly support the effective recovery of endangered Mexican wolves in the Southwest, done in a responsible and sensitive way," said Richardson in a press release. "Changes must be made to the protocol for the wolf re-

introduction program."

Richardson instructed the Director of the Department of Game and Fish and members of the State Game Commission to work with the state's partners in the Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Program to review and revise standard operating procedures related to the control of nuisance (non-depredating) and problem (depredating) Mexican wolves. The Governor has also called for the immediate suspension of the use of Standard Operating Procedure 13 (SOP 13) procedures in New Mexico pending these revisions.

A dozen regional and national conservation groups, including the Southwest Environmental Center, praised the action in a letter to Richardson, saying it was "an important step in stopping the unmitigated slaughter of wolves in New Mexico."

# Wolf Program at critical juncture

*(continued from front page)*

tices that would reduce wolf-livestock conflicts, such as disposing of livestock carcasses that attract wolves, seasonal grazing, and confined calving areas.

The response of the interagency team charged with oversight of the recovery effort--the Mexican Wolf Adaptive Management Oversight Committee (AMOC)--to a stagnant wolf population is disappointing. The recommendations component of the Five Year Review continues the practice of basing policy on politics, rather than science. Instead of removing artificial boundaries of the re-

covery area, as recommended by scientists as long ago as 2001, the AMOC proposes expanding them, while applying the current, failed management regime to a much larger area. Other recommendations would allow states, tribes, and individuals to kill even more lobos, and establish a de facto 125 animal "cap" on the wolf population. The document utterly fails to address the role abandoned livestock carcasses play in habituating wolves to cattle. In fact, the AMOC specifically promises **not** to require livestock operators on public land to remove carcasses or treat them to make them unpalatable to wolves.

Not satisfied with wolf management that caters to the livestock industry, wolf opponents and their allies in the anti-government Paragon Foundation, whose agenda includes asserting control over management of our public lands, are making a concerted effort to destroy the

Mexican wolf reintroduction program. Opponents came out in force to the March 28 meeting of the New Mexico Game Commission. Wolf supporters also came from across the Southwest, including guest ranch owner Caren Wiltbank, who traveled from her ranch in eastern Arizona to speak about the benefits of wolf related tourism to local businesses. Although conservationists attended in significant numbers, the format of the meeting made it difficult to refute the misstate-

# What the lobo needs

Here are a few modest suggestions for turning the Mexican wolf recovery program around:

- Put an immediate end to removing wolves from the wild (trapping or shooting) until population goals are reached.
- Update the Mexican wolf recovery plan with new science and numerical targets for delisting. (The current plan hasn't been revised since 1982, before the discipline of conservation biology emerged, and contains no numerical goals for recovery.)
- Allow direct release of wolves from the captive population into the Gila National Forest (currently only allowed after wolves have initially been released into Arizona).
- Allow wolves to roam beyond the boundaries of recovery area. (Currently they are recaptured and returned if they cross the boundaries, even if they aren't causing any problems.)
- Require livestock operators who lease public lands in the wolf recovery area to practice responsible husbandry practices, such as disposal of carcasses, seasonal (versus year-round) grazing, using penned calving areas, etc.
- Resolve livestock-wolf conflicts over the long term through a voluntary grazing retirement program that allows ranchers to relocate their livestock operations to wolf-free areas.
- Counter the hysteria put forth by wolf opponents with fact-based education programs, especially in communities within the wolf recovery area.



ments of the opposition. Press accounts described the meeting as more or less a wash, with the take home message being the impossibility of reconciling the positions of lobo supporters and opponents.

The question still hanging over the Mexican wolf reintroduction is whether the population will grow quickly enough to prevent genetic deterioration and inbreeding depression. The answer will depend on how much pressure wolf advocates bring to bear on the agencies, the Congress, and Governor Richardson. The lobos will do their part hunting elk, digging dens, raising pups, and dodging bullets. The rest is in our hands.

## Mexican Wolves: Fact vs. Fiction

Recently, a great deal of myths and hysteria about wolves has been propagated by folks who want the lobo out of New Mexico.

In early July, Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM) told Congress that a wolf loves nothing more than the "cry of a baby" during his attempt to eliminate funding for the Mexican wolf program. The Paragon foundation is claiming that communities are being psychologically traumatized by having to live with wolves. They have also been telling hunters that the elk population is being decimated by the 26-or-so wolves living within the 3.3 million acre Gila National Forest. And, of course, claims that the lobo is putting ranchers out of business continue to linger.

We'd like to take this opportunity to set the record straight. Here are some facts:

- You stand a better chance of getting hit by a meteorite than killed by a wolf. There is no documented case of a healthy, wild wolf killing a human in the United States.
- By comparison, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate between 10 to 20 people are killed and 4.7 million attacked each year by man's best friend, the domestic dog.
- There is not a single documented case of a Mexican wolf attacking a human.
- The New Mexico Game and Fish Department's numbers show elk numbers have been rising in the Gila since the late 1990s (when the lobo was reintroduced).
- The National Agricultural Statistics Service reports that wolves are responsible for less than 1% of total cattle loss in New Mexico and in Arizona.
- Defenders of Wildlife offers compensation to ranchers in the Southwest for livestock lost to wolves, paying full market value for confirmed wolf kills.
- There are currently approximately 50-55 Mexican gray wolves living in the wild today. This is about half of the 102 projected population that the original EIS estimated.
- There are approximately 5 breeding pairs in the wild today when there should be 18.

## Not all ranchers hate wolves

*This is the statement made by Caren Wiltbank at the NM Game Commission Meeting last March in Las Cruces. Caren and her husband run a guest ranch outside of Alpine, Arizona, less than a mile away from Mexican wolves were first released in 1998.*

My name is Caren Wiltbank. I am a rancher, a business owner, and a mother. I live in the heart of wolf country and I am here to speak in favor of the Mexican wolf recovery program.

My husband and I have owned a guest ranch for 15 years 14 miles south of Alpine, AZ, and 7 miles from the New Mexico border - right in the middle of the wolf reintroduction area. My husband's family has been cattle ranching on that mountain for over 60 years. At Beaver Creek we are responsible for 100 head of cattle from July to November. Since the wolves were released we have lost one newborn calf to wolf kills.

Our chickens are always enclosed. We keep our dogs in at night. We keep a close eye on our cattle and horse herds. None of these efforts were done originally because of the wolf. They were done for the coyote, bear, and mountain lion. I have lived with predators all these years and the wolf has posed no threats that the other predators don't. Even though it is more work, and depredations do occur, we feel the wolf is very beneficial to our business and our environment.

At the ranch, we present the wolves in a positive manner. Many of our guests are pro-wolf. A highlight of their stay is to see a wolf print, or hear a howl, or best of all, to see a wolf. One of our guests' favorite activities is to lay in the meadow at night and stargaze while listening for wolf howls. Our guests feel safe in our surroundings and view any encounters with the wolf as a gift.

One longtime guest/hunter and his daughters were at the ranch last fall on an elk hunt. His daughters had the tags. They were fortunate to see wolves chase two elk through our meadow and proceed to kill one down by the creek. He and his girls crept down to where he could film this happening. The three of them were enthralled at the process of the wolves killing and eating the elk.

His comment to us was, "I am so glad my girls got to see that. Very few people will ever have this experience." He felt this changed his negative outlook on the wolf because the wolves did their killing and eating with no interest in them and proceeded to leave the area when they were through. His fear level for his girls dropped considerably after that and they now look forward to seeing more wolves.

In 1998 when the wolves were released, less than one mile away, my son was 11. He already at that age spent hours in the woods by himself coming home with tales of his encounters - tales of seeing the "biggest bear so far," or a "huge mountain lion." So when the wolves were released, I really didn't have any worries about my son - especially when he started coming home with his excited accounts of seeing wolves.

It's been 10 years now and he's seen the wolves progress in their natural habitat. He is now a guide/outfitter and feels lucky to be able to work in wolf country and to share his positive experiences with others. He does not carry a gun, but is an avid bow hunter. To this day he has never felt a moment of fear of wolves. He is very happy with the wolves. He feels he is already seeing an upgrade in the quality of our herds. His spring elk sheds are huge and numerous as ever.

As a business owner, I know the wolf has helped our guest ranch. Our guests have never had a negative experience and are not afraid of wolves because we help them to understand. With knowledge and respect of the wilderness, there is nothing to be afraid of.

I think the wolf needs to be better advertised, possibly internationally, and that it would have a huge beneficial tourist impact for all of us.



Caren Wiltbank talks to a reporter after the NM Game Commission meeting in Las Cruces last March.

# Otero Mesa: wildlife, water still at risk

by Cathilia Flores, SWEC Regional Organizer

Not only is the largest remaining tract of black grama grassland in the Chihuahuan Desert at risk of irreversible destruction, but the largest untapped aquifer in New Mexico is at risk of contamination.

The Salt Basin aquifer lies beneath Otero Mesa and extends south into Texas. It holds an estimated 57 million acre-feet of water in the New Mexico side alone, of which 15 million is considered potable.

A 2006 report filed by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) gave these estimates along with several other key findings. One is that surface recharge areas are generally vulnerable to the introduction of contaminants. In several locations, Otero Mesa's surface water runoff recharges the Salt Basin aquifer. Another finding is that the Basin contains areas of rapid groundwater movement which can make the entire system susceptible to the rapid spread of contaminants.

Both USGS and SNL have recommended a multi-year study to understand the critical features of the aquifer including recharge and discharge rates, volume of recoverable groundwater, and areas within the Basin susceptible to rapid movement of subsurface contaminants. The 2007 NM Legislature appropriated \$1 million for the proposed study and Senators Bingaman and Domenici have jointly sponsored federal legislation to support the study. Unfortunately, contamination from oil and gas drilling could moot the study before it is even completed.

This threat has caused southern New Mexi-

cans to call for a temporary moratorium on oil and gas drilling until the study is complete. Local and federal elected officials have been responsive to this public outcry.

In June, the Doña Ana county commission passed a resolution supporting a moratorium and the Sierra county commission will be considering a similar resolution in July. These resolutions follow leadership by the majority of our Congressional delegation. Senators Bingaman and Domenici and Representative Udall have contacted the Secretary of Interior, requesting a temporary moratorium on oil and gas leasing on the Mesa until the study is complete.

The administration responded by indicating the BLM has no plans to lease and that a moratorium was therefore unnecessary.

It has been estimated that just a 16-day national supply of natural gas can be recovered from beneath Otero Mesa. There are only two active wells. A temporary moratorium on leasing and drilling on Otero Mesa would have little impact on oil and gas resources in New Mexico, or the nation for that matter. The

NM state BLM director has even stated Otero Mesa is "small potatoes" when it comes to oil and gas. However, the real potential of the Salt Basin aquifer to supply southern New Mexicans for decades is definitely no small potatoes and nothing to take for granted or put at risk.

This is why it is imperative that our representatives in Congress enact a legislative moratorium. The BLM's plan for Otero Mesa leaves 95% of the land open to oil and gas leasing and does not have specific provisions to protect the groundwater. While they emphasize it is the most restrictive plan to date, it clearly does not have the teeth to prevent developers from destroying habitat or



Pronghorn on Otero Mesa. Photo by Joe Adair.

## A new face at SWEC

SWEC is pleased to announce it has hired a new regional organizer.

Cathilia Flores is a native New Mexican who grew up in Hobbs before moving to Las Cruces in 1990 to begin college at New Mexico State University. There, she earned a BA in cognitive psychology and a master's degree in public health. She focused her graduate studies on policy and community organizing.

During her tenure as a political and community organizer, Cathilia has worked on a range of issues including the Health Security Act (to ensure all New Mexicans have health care coverage), increasing the state minimum wage, organizing the NMSU staff union, and campaign ethics reform. She also recently co-managed the successful reelection campaign of the Southwest Environmental Center's friend, NM state Rep. Antonio Luján.

Cathilia spends as much time as possible camping and fishing for trout in the Gila River and hiking the various trails in the Organs Mountains. She joins the Southwestern Environmental Center team to protect New Mexico's beautiful lands and ecosystems with great enthusiasm.

Cathilia will be responsible for mobilizing public support for SWEC's campaigns. You can contact her at [cathilia@gmail.com](mailto:cathilia@gmail.com) or (505) 522-5552.

contaminating the aquifer.

Right now, Representative Wilson is sponsoring a companion Salt Basin aquifer study bill which she could amend to include a moratorium until the study is complete. Otero Mesa and the aquifer need absolute protection, not just good intentions.

If you haven't already, please call Sens. Bingaman (202-224-5521) and Domenici (202-224-6621) and Rep. Udall (202-225-6190) to thank them for taking action.

Also, call Rep. Wilson (202-225-6316) and ask her to amend her bill to include a temporary moratorium for Otero Mesa.

For more information, call Cathilia at (505) 522-5552.

# The Rio Grande in chains

By Kevin Bixby

If water is the lifeblood of nature, what have we done to the Rio Grande? It is as if the river has been abducted by aliens who keep it chained in captivity so they can drain its blood for their own purposes.

The Rio Grande—any river system—is alive. It is more than water and sand. It is a complex interplay of the river's flows; the nutrients and sediments it carries, the floodplain over which it flows, and all the plants and animals that depend upon it for their existence.

Left to their own devices, river systems are chaotic and dynamic. Each year snow melts in the mountains, sending a rush of water downstream. Trees are uprooted, banks are torn away. In this violence the river sows the seeds for its own renewal. Floodwaters create the conditions needed for young trees to grow. High flows send a signal to fish that it is time to spawn. By spreading out over its floodplain, the river creates and maintains a mosaic of habitats, which in turn sustains an abundance of diverse life forms.

Humans develop fictions to govern their interaction with the natural world. The main legal fiction related to the Rio Grande is the idea that someone can "own" the river's water. Based on this notion, every drop in the river has been appropriated by humans over time. **The river owns none of its own water.**

Worse, our legal system expects that humans will put the water they own to "beneficial" use, which is interpreted to mean they will take it out of the river. The assumption is that leaving water in a river does nobody any good.

The result has been predictable. Every October since Elephant Butte Dam was built in 1916, the river is turned off. Water is stored behind upstream dams until irrigators want it delivered the following spring. As a result, the river slows to a trickle, and in some years, dries up entirely. Fish die in huge numbers. It is a regular occurrence, like the spring winds, but few people seem to notice.

Other changes have occurred. The river has been straightened and channelized. Its banks are regularly mowed, and its channel periodically dredged. The net result of all these changes is to cause water to move faster downstream, a desired effect for water users who prize "efficiency" above all else. But the water is moving faster because less of it is being used by the river ecosystem, for things like oxbow lakes, wetlands, and the bosque that once provided shade and enjoyment for so many people.

The Rio Grande can be restored to ecological health, but only if humans recognize that the river itself needs water too.

*[This article originally appeared in the April, 2007 edition of Agua Viva, the newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces. It was accompanied by the statement at right from the Office of Catholic Social Ministry.]*

*In pursuit of our mission to preserve the planet's biological diversity, SWEC is actively engaged in seeking out partners in the faith-based community and elsewhere. Reprinted with permission.]*

## NM Senate urges stakeholders to work together to find water for Rio restoration

The New Mexico Senate unanimously passed a memorial earlier this year calling on all stakeholders to work together to obtain through voluntary mechanisms the water needed to support restoration efforts intended to benefit the Rio Grande ecosystem in southern New Mexico.

The memorial, sponsored by Senator Mary Jane Garcia, acknowledged that the Rio Grande ecosystem in southern New Mexico has been compromised by the construction and operation of two federal water projects since 1916, and that

the river has no legal rights to its own water to use for restoration projects, such as instream flows and wetlands, and that mechanisms currently exist which could be used to achieve voluntary transfers of water to support restoration efforts, including purchase, lease and donation of water and/or water rights.

Although not binding, the memorial sends an important message that the Rio Grande is in trouble and needs everyone's help.

## Caring for God's Creation: more than one day commitment

Office of Catholic Social Ministry

Caring for creation is a sign of respect for the Creator. An authentic environmental ethic is an expression of stewardship for the creation God has given us.

Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

To learn more about this faith teaching, please visit the environmental justice program at from the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops web site at <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/>

## SWEC keeps pushing for river reforms

Remember the Canalization Project Environmental Impact Statement? Many of you attended meetings or submitted comments in favor of river-friendly changes to federal management of the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico and west Texas during preparation of this document.

The EIS was finalized by the International Boundary and Water Commission--U.S. Section in 2004, but it never went into effect because the Record of Decision was never signed due to widespread public dissatisfaction with the agency's decision.

Instead, a collaborative process was initiated in the hopes that farmers, conservationists and other stakeholders could reach consensus on such issues as mowing, dredging, and how to obtain water for restoration projects.

SWEC is participating in that process. We will continue to advocate for an end to such destructive practices as annual mowing of the banks, grazing in riparian zones, and dredging of the river channel. A record of decision is expected in 2008.

SWEC also led a delegation of conservation groups that met with the IBWC Commissioner and staff last March to discuss unresolved issues from the Canalization Project EIS. We will continue to advocate for river-friendly management at every opportunity.

# Governor Richardson gives New Mexico's last wild river a second chance

by Allyson Siwik

The Gila River is the state's last free-flowing river and one of the few remaining un-dammed rivers in the Southwest. However, the 2004 Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA) threatens the future of this river system by authorizing the potential construction of a major water project that could remove up to 140,000 acre-feet of water every decade from both the Gila River and its tributary, the San Francisco.

## **Arizona Water Settlements Act 101**

Signed into law in December 2004, the Arizona Water Settlements Act settles long-standing Native American water rights claims in Arizona. The Gila Settlement, outlined in an amendment to the AWSA and accompanying agreements, delineates New Mexico's right to use 14,000 acre-feet/year of Gila River water originally promised to the state under the 1968 Central Arizona Project authorizing legislation. The Act also provides up to \$128 million in federal subsidy for construction of a water project.

In spite of the fact that local communities in southwestern New Mexico have not identified a need for this water project, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission has been moving ahead with efforts to study water withdrawals from the Gila without examining the range of water supply alternatives available to the region. The groundwater supply of the Silver City area, the intended beneficiary of this project, is estimated to last centuries, even taking into account projected growth. According to a report by ECONorthwest, the costs of extracting water from the Gila River are 16 times higher than the costs of purchasing unused water rights and developing new wells. Even if partially subsidized by federal coffers, it makes no economic sense

for local governments to buy into infrastructure development that would provide water they don't need and at such high cost to water users and taxpayers.



The Gila River is the last free-flowing major river in New Mexico. Photo courtesy of the author.

## **Governor Richardson Veto of Gila Appropriation and Redirection of Planning Process**

During this year's legislative session, Governor Richardson vetoed a \$945,000 appropriation for "Gila Basin Water Development" in response to hundreds of calls from throughout the conservation community. The Governor's Office stated, "The appropriation language was problematic and didn't include the proper balance." The conservation community believes that the Gila-San Francisco Coordinating Committee, the entity overseeing the current planning process, has been biased toward study of potential impacts of water withdrawals from the Gila River. The Governor's veto underscored the need for a new process that examines the full range of water supply alternatives that meet the water needs of the communities in southwestern New Mexico and is not focused solely on Gila River diversion and consumption.

In late June, the conservation community's efforts to reform the planning process bore fruit.

Governor Richardson issued a policy statement expressing his desire to protect the Gila and San Francisco Rivers for future generations and to make conservation of these rivers a top priority in the state's response to the Act. In addition, the

Governor's statement redirected the Gila-San Francisco Coordinating Committee process to study the range of alternatives to meet water supply needs, "with the 'no diversion' option as an essential part of the analysis."

The Gila Conservation Coalition and its partners will continue to promote an open and transparent process and a common-sense approach that can satisfy the future water needs of the region while also maintaining the free flow of the Gila. The AWSA allows for \$66 million of the \$128 million federal subsidy to

be expended for any "water utilization projects that meet a water supply demand." This funding could go to improving municipal conservation, increasing irrigation efficiency, buying water rights, digging new wells, or to a host of other practical measures that would meet the future needs of the entire region in a cost-effective manner and conserve the Gila and San Francisco rivers.

With river systems around the globe increasingly under threat from water development, the Arizona Water Settlements Act provides New Mexico with a rare opportunity to find a balance between human and environmental needs. The \$66 million federal subsidy from the AWSA should be used to meet the region's future water demand at least cost and keep the Gila a wild, free-flowing river.

*The author is Executive Director of the Gila Conservation Coalition. For more information on this issue, visit [www.gilaconservation.org](http://www.gilaconservation.org)*

# Raft the Rio--June 16, 2007



Master of ceremonies NM Rep. Jeff Steinborn hands out awards at the 10th annual Raft the Rio. More than 200 people on 60+ boats participated--a new record for this event designed to get people on the river and having fun.



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

\$120 (\$10/MONTH)  
 \$60  
 \$36  
 \$25  
 OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:  
**SWEC**  
 275 N. DOWNTOWN MALL  
 LAS CRUCES, NM 88001

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU!**  
 DONATIONS ARE FULLY  
 TAX DEDUCTIBLE  
 SR2007

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER? \_\_\_\_\_

WANT TO USE A CREDIT CARD?  
 JOIN ONLINE AT [WWW.WILDMESQUITE.ORG](http://WWW.WILDMESQUITE.ORG)

# Win a brand new 2008 Toyota Prius



Tired of high gas prices? Want to trade in your car for something more fuel-efficient?

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--much better odds than the lottery!

The drawing will be held at SWEC's annual *On the River, For the River* gala on September 29, if all the tickets have been sold. Otherwise, the drawing will be held on Earth Day, 2008

(April 19). 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.

Unfortunately, the IRS says that raffle tickets are not tax-deductible. But hey, it's for a good cause, and if you win, it's one heck of a good deal.



## Solar project update

After some unforeseen delays, SWEC is moving forward with its rooftop photovoltaic project. The equipment has been purchased and installation is expected to begin later this month. We hope to "throw the switch" in August. The accompanying educational exhibit is also under design.

## Help Wanted

Door-to-door outreach for the Southwest Environmental Center. Get paid to help the environment. Call (505) 382-5361.

 S O U T H W E S T  
E N V I R O N M E N T A L  
C E N T E R  
275 North Downtown Mall • Las Cruces, NM 88001

## 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](mailto:list@wildmesquite.org). We promise not to overwhelm your inbox.

## Changes in the Albertsons Community Partner Program

Many of you have signed up to make SWEC the recipient of donations through Albertsons Community Partners Program. This is a great way to support SWEC painlessly. However, Albertsons has recently done away with their Preferred Shopper cards, which means that if you want to continue supporting SWEC through this program, you'll have to get a new Community Partners card to show the cashier when you check out. Don't worry--we have ordered enough cards for all of our members. We'll be mailing those out in August. Or if you prefer, you can pick them up here at the office once they arrive.

## Wolf lecture series at SWEC

Starting in September, SWEC will present a series of talks looking at the Mexican wolf issue from various perspectives, including wolf biology, voluntary grazing retirement, politics, and ecotourism. Stay tuned for details.

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 1008  
LAS CRUCES, NM  
88001

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED