

# THE MESQUITE GRILL

NEWS FROM THE SOUTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER · SPRING 2011 · WILDMESQUITE.ORG

## City of Las Cruces is newest partner in SWEC wetland project

The Southwest Environmental Center's La Mancha Wetland Project took a giant step towards completion with the addition of the City of Las Cruces as a partner. The City's Utility Board voted on March 10 to help the project by dedicating up to 15 acre-feet of groundwater rights to the project.

We are delighted to have the City on board, especially since the New Mexico State Engineer said we couldn't go forward with the project without acquiring groundwater rights

to offset evaporation from open water in the wetland. SWEC owns surface water rights for the project, but not groundwater rights. It would be prohibitively expensive for SWEC to buy groundwater rights on the open market, which currently sell for \$5000 per acre-foot. We approached the City, which fortunately saw the value of restoring wildlife habitat along the Rio Grande, as recommended in its Rio Grande Corridor Ecological Management

*(continued on next page)*

## Mountaintop removal on Otero Mesa?

*It could happen if new mining claims are developed*

For nearly a decade, the Southwest Environmental Center and other members of the Coalition for Otero Mesa have worked to safeguard the fragile grasslands, abundant wildlife, and freshwater resources of this extraordinary landscape from full-scale oil and gas drilling. Now, a new threat has emerged: hardrock mining, and with it the prospect of entire mountains being removed in the quest for minerals, a la Appalachian coal mining.

Since late 2010, Denver-based Geovic Mining Corp has staked nearly 200 mining claims on Otero Mesa for zirconium and other rare earth minerals. Contrary to their name, rare earths are abundant in the Earth's crust. They are used in a variety of technologies including magnets for wind turbines, missile guidance systems, hybrid car batteries, fluorescent lightbulbs and hard drives. Since the 1990s China

*(continued on page 4)*



Photo by Tom Connelly

### Start building your boats

The 14th Annual Raft the Rio is set for June 11th. See details on page 6.



### Prius drawing June 16th

Have you bought your ticket in SWEC's raffle of a 2011 Toyota Prius? Better hurry. The drawing on June 16 is rapidly approaching.

We're only selling 400 tickets, so your chances are pretty good. Think of it as a contribution to a good cause, with a, by-the-way, chance to win a new car. Somebody is going to win--it could be you!

See page 4 for details.

### Michelle Shocked rocks in concert for SWEC

See photos and story page 4.



### Stunning raptor prints make great gifts

Details on page 4.

### Pearce vs wildlife--where is the balance?

See page 5.



### The faces of SWEC

Meet some of our members and volunteers--back cover.



### Five minute activist

Here are the "what you can do" items in this issue:

- Sign our online petition to protect Otero Mesa--page 3.
- Join our Citizens Watchdog Team to monitor mining on Otero Mesa--p. 3.
- Build a raft for Raft the Rio--p. 6.
- Buy a Prius raffle ticket and help SWEC protect wildlife and their habitats--p. 4.
- Volunteer for SWEC--back cover.
- Become a member of SWEC--page 7 or online.

# Wetland project

(Continued from front page)

Plan of 2004.

An application has been filed with the Office of State Engineer to change the purpose and place of use of the City's water rights to make them available for the project.

This is the second partnership between SWEC and the City of Las Cruces on a wetland project. The two entities also collaborated in 2002 in the development of the Picacho Wetlands, which now form part of the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park.

You can read the text of the resolution and more about the La Mancha project at [www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org).

## Governor tries but fails to take SWEC's funding

In 2010, SWEC applied for and received a grant from the State of New Mexico of \$199,000 for construction of the La Mancha Wetland Project.

However, we almost lost that money before we could spend it when Governor Susanna Martinez tried to reallocate it for other purposes. Only a flood of emails and phone calls to Legislators prevented the money from being lost.

Thanks to everyone who responded to our calls to action. And thanks to the elected officials who went to bat for us: Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagashima, City Councilors Nathan Small, Sherry Thomas, Gill Sorg, Olga Pedroza, Dona Ana County Commissioners Scott Krahling and Billy Garrett, NM Senators Mary Kay Papen and Steve Fischmann, former NM Rep. Jeff Steinborn, and former Las Cruces Mayor Bill Mattiace.

## SWEC briefs EBID board

Continuing SWEC's commitment to working collaboratively with other stakeholders, Executive Director Kevin Bixby gave an update on the La Mancha Project to the Elephant Butte Irrigation District's board of directors at its meeting last March. Bixby reaffirmed SWEC's commitment to restoring the river while working within the existing management framework as much as possible to achieve a balance between the needs of water users and the river ecosystem.

# SWEC proposes ambitious program to restore wetlands throughout region

SWEC has submitted a proposal to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to establish an "In-Lieu Fee" program in southern New Mexico and west Texas. If accepted, the program would provide SWEC with a long-term source of funding for wetland restoration projects while providing developers and agencies another option for complying with permit requirements under the federal Clean Water Act.

### How it works

Under section 404 of the Act, anyone who wants to do a project resulting in the discharge of dredged or fill materials into waters of the U.S. (including wetlands, streams, and arroyos) must first obtain a permit from the Corps. In practice, this includes most types of construction activities, since some discharge of materials is usually unavoidable. To compensate for harm caused to aquatic resources, the Corps requires the permittee to undertake some sort



Rio Grande leopard frogs are one of many species that depend upon wetlands and streamside habitats.

of mitigation to create, restore, enhance or preserve similar wetlands and streams.

In the past, wetlands created by permittees as mitigation didn't always work that well. New regulations were issued in 2008 emphasizing the need to use better science and more rigorous ecological performance standards for mitigation efforts, and to address watershed needs.

If permittees don't want to do the required mitigation themselves, they have the option of using third parties who presumably have greater interest and expertise in ecological restoration.

One option is to use an in-lieu fee program, wherein



Although they comprise less than one percent of the New Mexico and west Texas, wetlands and streamside habitats are extremely important for wildlife.

a government agency or nonprofit organization continually undertakes projects to benefit aquatic resources within a defined geographic service area. As each project is completed, it generates a certain number of mitigation credits, which if approved by the Corps can then be sold to permittees to meet their mitigation requirements.

SWEC is proposing to establish an in-lieu fee program that will generate mitigation credits by restoring wetlands throughout southern New Mexico and west Texas. The service area includes portions of the Gila, Mimbres, Rio Grande, Pecos, Rio Bavispe, and Colorado (TX) watersheds.

Money received from the sale of those credits will be put back into the program to fund the next project, and so on, thus providing a steady source of funding to address the backlog of aquatic restoration needs in the region. SWEC intends to work in partnership with other groups currently doing aquatic restoration work in the targeted watersheds.

It's a win-win for permittees, the public and the environment.



Cottonwood gallery forests (bosques) were once common along the Rio Grande, and still provide important habitat where they exist for wildlife such as these bald eagles. Jim Sesales.



The Mountain Pass Mine in California once produced 70 percent of the world's rare earth minerals. Mining like this can remove entire mountains, and would be a disaster for the wildlife and water resources of Otero Mesa.

## Otero Mesa

(continued from front page)

has been the world's leading supplier.

One of the problems with rare earth minerals is that they are often associated with radioactive elements, such as uranium and thorium. Their production requires huge amounts of electricity. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Mountain Pass mine in California produced 70 percent of the world's supply of rare earth minerals, but it also generated large quantities of radioactive and salty wastewater, more than 600,000 gallons of which were spilled between 1984 and 1998. Environmental violations as well as foreign competition eventually caused the mine to shut down in 2002, but it has since reopened.

This type of mining operation could destroy Otero Mesa's unique desert grassland ecosystem and contaminate the Salt Basin freshwater aquifer. Most of the mining claims are on or around Wind Mountain, one of the dramatic isolated peaks of the Cornudas Mountains. Conservationists are worried that mining could eventually remove Wind Mountain entirely.

On April 21st, Geovic Mining Corp filed for a "Minimal Impact Exploration Permit Application" with the State Mining and Minerals Division. The company is proposing to drill 10 test wells, with the majority of them on the slopes of Wind Mountain. All of the pending mining operations are either within proposed wilderness areas or the Coalition's proposed Otero Mesa Grassland Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

In some ways, this latest threat to Otero Mesa is more serious than oil and gas drilling. Hardrock mining basically trumps other uses of federal lands under the federal 1872 Hardrock Mining Law. Agencies cannot say no to mining entirely, and are limited in the operating conditions and mitigation requirements they can impose on mining companies.

The threat of hardrock mining underscores the need to enact permanent protection for this irreplaceable natural treasure. SWEC and other groups continue to press Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and other federal officials to designate Otero Mesa National Monument.



Iconic peaks such as Wind Mountain and nearby Alamo Mountain (shown) are threatened by new mining claims on Otero Mesa. Photo SkyTruth.

### What you can do:

- If you haven't already, please sign SWEC's online petition at [www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org).
- Join SWEC's newly resurrected Citizen Watchdog Team and become SWEC's eyes and ears on the ground. Volunteers commit to visiting the site of proposed mining on a regular basis (e.g. monthly) to document environmental impacts and mining activities. SWEC will provide the necessary training. All activities will be legal, peaceful and avoid direct confrontations with company personnel. Volunteers will work in pairs. Contact Jason at [Jason@wildmesquite.org](mailto:Jason@wildmesquite.org) or call him at (575) 522-5552.

## Border Patrol proposes "scorched earth" plan for Rio Grande

*Mowing Plan Would Eliminate Wildlife Habitat Along 91 Miles of the river*

The Southwest Environmental Center and WildEarth Guardians have called on the Border Patrol to scrap its plans to increase clearing of vegetation along 91 miles of the Rio Grande below El Paso, and find more wildlife-friendly ways to do its job.

The Border Patrol (BP) is proposing to mow vegetation along the river—up to four or more times each year—to keep plants from growing more than 24" in height. The floodway is currently mowed by the International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section (IBWC), but only as needed for flood protection—no more than twice annually, and in some places not at all. BP says it needs to keep plants short to catch illegal border crossers, despite the recent construction of an 18' steel mesh pedestrian border fence and installation of high intensity lighting along much of the same reach of the river.

The conservation groups say BP's plan would harm wildlife by destroying important habitat. The groups also say that BP's proposal would harm the southwestern willow flycatcher, an endangered bird species that occurs in dense stands of tall shrubs and trees along streams, and is occasionally found along the Rio Grande below El Paso. The groups say that BP's plan would worsen the impacts of IBWC's already destructive mowing practices, by increasing the frequency of mowing and allowing mowing during the bird-nesting season (March 1 through September 15), currently not permitted by IBWC.

"The Rio Grande is tremendously important for birds," said SWEC Executive Director Kevin Bixby. "More than 300 bird species—most of them migratory—use the river corridor for nesting, feeding and resting. Mowing during the nesting season will cause direct killing of groundnesting birds, such as burrowing owls—a species already on the decline throughout the U.S.—or cause so much disturbance that birds will abandon their nests," said Bixby.

The groups' full comments can be read at [www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org).

# Somebody is going to win



Jack Wright  
Winner, 2008



Martha Janssens  
Winner, 2010



Don Patterson  
Winner, 2009

## It could be you

But only if you buy a ticket



Winner, 2011

Tired of high gas prices? Want to reduce your carbon footprint?

Here's one thing you can do--buy a raffle ticket for a brand new 2011 Toyota Prius that gets an EPA-rated 51 miles per gallon in the city.

Only 400 tickets will be sold at \$100 each. Swing by the Center or buy your ticket online at [www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org).

You do not need to be present to win, but you are welcome to join us on June 16th

at 6-8 pm for refreshments at SWEC as we pull the winning ticket and celebrate somebody's (maybe yours!) great luck.

Our thanks to Las Cruces Toyota for once again helping us with this major fundraiser.

Are you good at selling? We're offering a \$500 cash prize to the person that sells the most raffle tickets, including tickets you buy for yourself.

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

## Limited edition raptor prints for sale

The Southwest Environmental Center is selling prints of 42 beautiful paintings by Richard Sloan of southwestern birds of prey.

Sloan is one of America's premier bird artists. He created these paintings for the Raptors of Arizona book published in 1998. Forty-two species of hawks, vultures, falcons, kites and owls are portrayed in their typical southwestern habitats.

The prints are generously provided to SWEC to use for fundraising by Patty Woodruff of Hillsboro. Each issue, signed and numbered by the artist, is the only artist-authorized printing of this collection. Each



Aplomado falcon--one of 42 prints available.

of the 4-color lithographic prints is 13.5 X 18 inches image size, on 17 X 21.75 inches white archival stock.

They make beautiful gifts, and sell for \$100 each; \$90 for 2-9 prints; and \$50 when purchasing ten or more. SWEC will receive 75 percent of the proceeds. Shipping (flat, not rolled) is available within the U.S. for \$15.

To see the prints online, go to <http://aldos-attic.com/Raptors/index.html>. To order prints, call 575-522-5552.

## Michelle Shocked rocks Las Cruces

Michelle Shocked put on an unforgettable solo show in a benefit concert for the Southwest Environmental Center at the Rio Grande Theatre on May 12th.

Talking almost as much as she sang, weaving new and old songs with intensely personal stories of her life, she charmed an audience of long time fans and new converts, and then mingled with them in the lobby afterwards while she signed CDs.

Here are some photos taken with permission by Ken Stinnett. To see more images, go to [www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org).



# Steve Pearce's attack on wildlife

By Kevin Bixby

From pronghorn on the eastern plains to javelina in the Bootheel, New Mexico is truly blessed with a diversity of wildlife. This fact is confirmed by biologists. Of all the states, we rank third in the number of species of mammals found within our borders, third in reptiles and amphibians, and second in birds.

So why is Congressman Steve Pearce (R-NM) so determined to get rid of our wildlife? In recent months he's been like a hunter on safari, taking aim at one species or habitat after another. Here are some of his targets:

## Mexican spotted owls

Pearce introduced a bill (HR1202) that would relegate endangered Mexican spotted owls to "sanctuaries" while opening up the rest of our national forests to commercial logging. He calls it "common sense;" biologists call it a recipe for extinction.



Pearce's bill would put Mexican spotted owls in "sanctuaries" and allow their remaining habitat in national forests to be logged.

The idea that spotted owls could survive in a few small preserves ignores biological reality. Spotted owls require healthy forests with big, old trees. Decades of logging have left big timber in short supply on New

Mexico's national forests, and put spotted owls on the endangered list. Pearce's bill would give timber companies the green light to cut the last of the big trees, and start owls back down a quick path to extinction.

## Mexican wolves

With only 50 or so Mexican wolves in the wild, the "lobo" may be the most endangered canid on the planet, but that hasn't stopped Pearce from trying to send it the way of the dodo. He tried to attach a rider to a stopgap budget bill meant to keep the government from shutting down that would have cut off funding for the Mexican wolf reintroduction program, now in its thirteenth year.

His amendment failed, but Pearce hasn't given up. He is cosponsor of another bill (HR509) that would eliminate protection for



Pearce calls the Forest Service's modest proposal to reduce damage caused by uncontrolled off-road vehicle use in the Gila National Forest "a war on our lifestyles, quality of life, our history and our culture."

all gray wolves under the Endangered Species Act, silencing the lobo's howl forever.

## Gila trout

Pearce rallied opposition to a modest Forest Service proposal to control off-road vehicle use in the Gila National Forest, where it's currently the Wild West on wheels. People can drive pretty much anywhere they want, on or off a road. Too often the result is soil erosion and pollution of streams inhabited by creatures such as the Gila trout. Pearce denounced the agency's proposal as "a war on our lifestyles, quality of life, our history and our culture."

What was this dire threat? The Forest Service would like vehicles to (mostly) stay on designated routes, and wants to reduce the number of roads from the outrageous (4600 miles currently) to the merely excessive (3300 miles, still enough to drive from California to Maine).

## Dunes sagebrush lizard

Lately Pearce has been whipping crowds into a frenzy over a federal proposal to list the dunes sagebrush lizard as endangered. The lizard has been on a downward slide for many years, as its habitat has been chewed up by oil and gas development, off-road vehicles, and conversion to cattle pasture. According to Pearce, listing the lizard would have a "devastating" economic impact, causing "most" jobs in the oil and gas industry in southeastern New Mexico to be lost.

While Pearce's scapegoating of a tiny reptile may play well with his campaign donors (since 1989, Pearce has taken nearly \$1.2 million in contributions from the oil and gas industry), the facts suggest otherwise. The Endangered

Species Act allows drilling and other activities to continue, providing safeguards are followed to protect the lizard and its habitat.

## Bighorn sheep

Large roadless areas are good for wildlife, especially species that need lots of room and tend to avoid people, such as bighorn sheep. Roads carve up habitat, and bring vehicles, noise, and poachers with guns.

One of the best things we can do to save wildlife over the long run is protect roadless areas wherever they still exist, so it is puzzling that Pearce has cosponsored a bill (HR1581) that would remove protection for more than 400,000 acres of roadless areas in New Mexico, and millions of similar acres in the West.

Pearce claims to support wildlife conservation, but his actions too often would have the opposite effect. Aldo Leopold wrote that there are two kinds of people in the world: those that can't live without wild places and wildlife, and those that can. Unfortunately for New Mexico's extraordinary natural heritage, it seems like Steve Pearce is one of those who can.

## KRWG series takes hard look at Pearce initiatives

Be sure to check out the excellent series by Las Cruces reporter Jared Anderson (KRWG-FM/TV) taking a critical look at Pearce and his recent actions. You can view the reports at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIL7PpR1VA8>.

## Do you shop at Albertsons?

If you do, you can raise money for SWEC simply by showing your Community Partners card each time you shop. With your help, we can earn up to \$24,000 each year. Call us at (575) 522-5552 to get your card.

## Don't miss out

Do we have your email address? The best way to stay informed about SWEC events and issues is to sign up for our weekly eNewsletter. You can do it at [wildmesquite.org](http://wildmesquite.org) or call us at (575) 522-5552.

# Start building your rafts!

14th annual Raft the Rio set for June 11

The Southwest Environmental Center's fourteenth annual Raft the Rio will be held on Saturday, June 11, 2011, on the Rio Grande, near Las Cruces.

The family-friendly event is open to individuals and teams of all ages willing to get wet and have fun. Creativity and the use of discarded materials in building rafts are highly encouraged.

The three-mile rafting adventure will begin at La Llorona Park beneath the Picacho Street bridge, and end just upstream from the Calle del Norte Bridge ("Messilla Bridge"). Prizes will be awarded to homemade boats in the following categories:

- First to finish
- Least likely to finish (must be floating at start of race)
- Best use of recycled materials
- Most spirited (most enthusiastic crew)
- Best theme (most thorough application of a theme to vessel and crew)
- Champion of the River (best promotes appreciation for the Rio Grande)

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

Participants can register in advance at the Southwest Environmental Center located at 275 N. Downtown Mall. Registration will be available M-F from 9 am until 6 pm at SWEC.

Teams may also register on race day beginning at 8:00 a.m., but are encouraged to come early to avoid crowds and delays.

The entry fee is \$10 per raft in advance (or \$20 on race day), plus \$5 for each crew member 13 years and older (after the first two). Motorized craft are not allowed. New Mexico law requires that all participants wear personal

flotation devices.

There will be refreshments, food vendors and live music at the finish line. A pancake breakfast provided by the Kiwanis Club can be purchased at the starting line.

In keeping with the environmental spirit of the event, participants are encouraged to minimize their purchase of new materials for making rafts. Although water is scarce this year, there should be sufficient water in the river due to irrigation releases.

Sponsors for this year's event include: Positive Energy, Inc., Aggie Recreational Equipment, GeoInsight, Good Samaritan Society, Hacienda Carpet and Tile,

and Roseanne Camunee, attorney at law. A very special thanks to all of our sponsors for their tremendous support.



The use of discarded materials is encouraged. Photo Ken Stinnett.



Photo Ken Stinnett

Need some ideas for rafts? Check out these websites by photographers Ken Stinnett and Tom Conelly to see Raft the Rio photos from years past:

- [http://kenstinnettphoto.smugmug.com/SWEC/Raft-the-Rio/2009-Raft-the-Rio/8596347\\_zMqbY](http://kenstinnettphoto.smugmug.com/SWEC/Raft-the-Rio/2009-Raft-the-Rio/8596347_zMqbY)
- <http://www.pbase.com/tconelly/raftrio2010>

For more information, go to [www.wildmesquite.org](http://www.wildmesquite.org) or call the Southwest Environmental Center at (575) 522-5552.

## Meet our business supporters:



## From the Ground Up

From The Ground Up is a homegrown resource for all things herbal. The owner, Deborah Brandt, is an RN and a longtime clinically oriented herbalist. She also is a former Southwest Environmental Center board member.

The shop has a wide variety of organically and sustainably harvested botanical preparations available for purchase. Deborah specializes in individual, one-on-one evaluations, formulating for the specific needs of the client. The shop is open for walk-in consultations as well.

From the Ground Up is dedicated to the wise integration of herbal therapies into the overall framework of health. Andy, Mireya, and Chauncy are happy to assist customers when Deborah is unavailable.

From The Ground Up recognizes SWEC as a long time champion for the preservation of our environment and supports them wholeheartedly. The continuation of our New Mexican herbal traditions depends on healthy wetlands, deserts, and mountains. SWEC shares our great respect for the earth, and we support its efforts to preserve our unique heritage for generations to come.

# Thanks to our business supporters!

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 Duncan Noble Rejuvenating Spa  
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 El Comedor  
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Enchanted Gardens  
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 Primitime Fitness  
 Prudential Silver City Properties  
 Raven Rouge, Inc.  
 Renee Frank, EcoBroker-Steinborn & Associates Real Estate  
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 Warren Construction, Inc.  
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 Wild Birds Unlimited  
 Williams Design Group  
 Zia Engineering

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

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 DONATION AT OUR WEBSITE: [WILDMESQUITE.ORG](http://WILDMESQUITE.ORG)

## Who we are

Established in 1991, the Southwest Environmental Center works to protect and restore native wildlife and their habitats in the Southwestern borderlands.

We speak for wildlife and wild places. We work to protect and restore vital habitats, like Otero Mesa, and endangered species, like the Mexican Grey Wolf. We're the group whose work on the Rio Grande resulted in the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park.

There is an extinction crisis and we are working hard to prevent plants and animals from disappearing here in the Southwest.

We've had 19 years of success and we cannot do it without our members.

Not a member? Please join us today!

# Faces of the Southwest Environmental Center

*Our members and volunteers are vital to our work protecting wildlife and wild places. Here are some of the people responsible for our success.*

## Leslie Fritz, Member

Leslie Fritz values SWEC for its excellent advocacy on behalf of wildlife and wild places. She was first attracted to SWEC because of our work to restore and protect the Rio Grande. "Rivers are our lifeblood. When you support the river, you support the community," says Leslie.



Working as an organizer for the National Education Association of New Mexico, Leslie has a special appreciation for the work SWEC does. "It isn't enough to say we support the

good cause. We all have to pony up for those doing the real work for our environment," she adds. Leslie moved to Las Cruces in 2003 after working with the NEA in Washington, D.C. and teaching middle school English in Winnemucca, Nevada.

"Protecting the Rio Grande, advocating for the wolves, and bringing Michelle Shocked to town, well what's not to love about SWEC?" concludes Fritz.

## Non-printed newsletter option

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter online only, please let us know by sending an email to [lauren@wildmesquite.org](mailto:lauren@wildmesquite.org).

## Nancy Simmons, Volunteer

Nancy was born in Wisconsin, attended college in Missouri, moved to New York City where she stayed and loved every minute of it. In 1999, Nancy moved to Arizona with her husband Mike and stayed until 2009. "Summers are really hot, and there's only so much camping one can do," she says. She moved to Las Cruces in December 2009. She met Paul Mitchell (former SWEC board member) and became interested in the organization. She attended a Raft the Rio meeting and promptly began volunteering to help with the annual event, which she loves, and other SWEC activities.



Nancy is an advocate for the environment which is why she dedicates much of her time to SWEC and encourages others to do so as well. She brings enthusiasm, warmth and a sense of "fun" to the committees on which she works. She is truly a joy to work with.

## Volunteer Opportunities at the Center

We are currently looking for volunteers for the following positions:

- Bulk mailings (fun!)
- Data entry (more fun!)
- Tabling at various locations
- Phone banking
- River restoration
- Otero Mesa Citizens Watchdog Team
- Distribute SWEC hiking guide
- Cottonwood Art Gallery Director
- Rio Grande Aquarium manager (maintain, obtain specimens, etc.)
- Hold a house party
- Planning committee for On the River, For the River annual fundraiser.
- Internships

In addition to ongoing opportunities, there is usually a SWEC volunteer event on the second Saturday of each month. Call (575) 522-5552 for more information. See additional volunteer opportunities on our website at [wildmesquite.org](http://wildmesquite.org).

## Our Mission

Established in 1991, the Southwest Environmental Center works to protect and restore native wildlife and their habitats in the Southwestern borderlands.

Not a member? Please join us today!

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