It was a short 30-day session and legislators had to work on the state budget. Wild Friends knew that their memorial might have a difficult time, but the black-tailed prairie dog issue offered lots of opportunities to bring people together on a controversial issue. Every step of the way presented a different challenge. With lots of help from House Joint Memorial 13 sponsor Rep. Mimi Stewart, legislative allies and other supporters, Wild Friends students were able to negotiate the maze of issues and offices to shepherd the memorial in and out of committees, to the House for a 48-10 vote, and to its final destination on the Senate floor where, in a race against the clock, despite the efforts of Senate sponsor Linda Lopez, the clock won. In the final four hours, the Senate still had more than 120

HJM 13: Prairie Dog Memorial
Out of Time at the Last Minute

The Sandia hairstreak butterfly may be on its way to becoming the official New Mexico state butterfly. For the first time the Wild Friends Dancers had their own memorial. They helped write it and then danced it through the legislature. Rep. Gail Beam introduced it in the House, and senators Cisco McSorley and Bernadette Sanchez sponsored it on the Senate side. Ages ranging from 5 to 15, dancers playing caterpillars and butterflies performed “The New Mexico Gossamer Wing” in the rotunda.

The Sandia hairstreak butterfly was discovered in Albuquerque in

Jonathan Murphy of Jefferson MS Wild Friends pins Sen. Cisco McSorley with the official black-tailed prairie dog pin. The pin (above left), created by teacher Kris Olson and her Carlos Rey ES students, was a big hit among legislators.

Butterfly dancers meet reporter Willie J. Allen Jr. (front center) of The New Mexican, who shot a picture and wrote a story for the next day's paper. The photogenic and colorful Wild Friends Dancers are a natural for media coverage at the legislature every year.

Butterfly pins were attached to invitations to the New Mexico Gossamer Wing dance in the Rotunda.
bills scheduled for floor votes, including House Joint Memorial 13.

**Things to know about HJM 13**

HJM 13 was a joint memorial to commend the New Mexico Black-tailed Prairie Dog Working Group for using a common ground approach to develop a management and conservation plan for the species. In addition, the memorial requested that a legislative committee come up with ideas for conservation measures and landowner incentive programs, and for paying a working group coordinator.

The first hurdle was the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on HJM 13. Some people disagreed with parts of the memorial. The committee passed the memorial 9-0 on the condition that the different parties meet and resolve their differences. One reason it passed was the solid preparation and passionate testimony by Wild Friends from Albuquerque, Silver City, and Jemez Springs. Committee member Rep. Miguel Garcia later spoke highly of these Wild Friends. “This was the best presentation by students ever in that committee, and we hear a lot of testimony from students,” he said. “They were well prepared and sharp.” Several people had to stand outside the door because the room was packed with people who wanted to speak for and against the proposed legislation.

**Common ground**

The work of the Wild Friends to study and understand the black-tailed prairie dog issue led to an opportunity to be heard at a roundtable of state and national opinion makers with varying views. It was a formidable group in the eyes of onlookers, but the Wild Friends delegates took it in stride. The first meeting drew a large audience that included the media, both local and national. While KOB-4 aired its story of kids providing common ground for people who rarely share common ground, CNN aired a story of kids getting together with grown-ups to agree on language changes to the memorial.

At first, everybody differed, but after two meetings in two days, the memorial changes were acceptable to all. Rep. Mimi Stewart kept checking in to see how the students were doing and to offer advice and direction to all. The working-group parties included such diverse groups as the NM Game and Fish Department, the State Land Office, the Farm and Livestock Bureau, the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, the NM/AZ Coalition of Counties, and the Sierra Club. Larry Bell, director of NM Game and Fish represented the lead agency of the Black-Tailed Prairie Dog Working Group, which is working on a plan on how to keep the black-tailed prairie dog off the federal endangered species list.

**Pizza Rules**

Pizza often figures highly in Wild Friends field trips to the legislature, and this year was no exception. Rep. Joe Thompson (R-Albuquerque) and Rep. Dan Silva (D-Albuquerque) treated Wild Friends to pizza over a business lunch one day, and on another occasion Sen. Ben Altamirano (D-Silver City) treated the Guadalupe Montessori delegates to pizza at the Upper Crust, a popular nearby hangout whenever the legislature is in session.

**Wild Friends Who’s Who on the Memorials**

More Wild Friends went to Santa Fe this year than ever before. Elementary schools sending Wild Friends delegations to the 2002 legislative session were Alameda, Carlos Rey, Dolores Gonzales, Guadalupe Montessori (Silver City), Longfellow, and Mountain View. Middle schools were Harrison, Jefferson, Jemez Springs home school group, Los Lunas, and Polk. High schools were Santa Fe and Socorro. Wild Friends Dancers represented various Albuquerque schools. Other groups that worked on and contributed to the success of this year’s legislative projects were Cobre (Bayard), Rio Grande (Alb), and Foothills (YDCC Alb) High Schools, and Garfield Middle School.

Congratulations Wild Friends for the gazillion things you did to help move your legislation through the swarm of 1,410 bills and memorials (including the massive budget bill!) presented at the legislature this year!
Ray Powell has been through many a memorial with the Wild Friends, and met with hundreds of students over the years. He went from Jefferson Middle School all the way to Tufts University where he became a veterinarian with a specialty in wildlife rehabilitation. His rapport with wildlife combined with his wonderful, gentle way with young people has made him a favorite of Wild Friends everywhere. He’s been New Mexico State Land Commissioner for the last eight years, and he’s worked very hard to find common ground between wildlife and state land issues. Proceeds from management of state lands support New Mexico public schools. In his role as State Land Commissioner, Ray has been in the news lately. Here are some highlights.

**La Semilla: City people and wildlife living together**

The Commissioner’s dream come true is La Semilla, a natural refuge for city dwellers and a world-class center for study of the earth. La Semilla (the “seed”) a 2,880-acre nature preserve and environmental education campus in a future planned community south of Albuquerque. The project will generate revenue for New Mexico schools. Scientists at La Semilla will study the impact of urbanization on plants, animals and geology. La Semilla will have a campus, an urban ecological field station, a native plant garden, an arboretum and horticultural research center, a wildlife rehabilitation center, and a renewable energy research and demonstration area.

**No killing the snakes, no removing the snakes, no trespassing**

Every year in Alamogordo in southern New Mexico, an event called the Rattlesnake Roundup is held. Thousands of snakes are captured during the weekend event, many of them found on state land. Ray Powell, the State Land Commissioner, has nixed the custom on state trust lands and taken the bold step of prohibiting the killing or removing snakes from these lands. “We need to demonstrate respect for all living creatures,” he says. “This is an unregulated exploitation of wildlife, which could disrupt the delicate balance of this desert ecosystem. A healthy population of natural predators is critical to keeping the rodent population in check.”

**Powell receives Wildlife Society Award**

Ray Powell received the 2001 Conservation Award from the New Mexico Chapter of The Wildlife Society. He received the award for his “significant contributions to the conservation of wildlife and habitat on state trust land in New Mexico.” As Land Commissioner on state trust lands, he (1) initiated the first-ever inventory of plants and animal, (2) received grants to fund river restoration projects, (3) launched efforts to install wildlife drinkers, (4) initiated a noxious weed management program, and (5) received appropriations to improve watershed health. Way to go, Commissioner Powell!

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We welcome new groups of Wild Friends from all over the state. Call 505/277-5089, or email cbyers@unm.edu if you are interested. Take a look at the Wild Friends home page at http://wildfriends.unm.edu. Newsletter Staff: Carolyn Byers, Judy Flynn-O’Brien, Ruth Musgrave, Kathy Grassel
Dolores Gonzales ES Wild Friends present flowers of appreciation to House Joint Memorial 13 sponsor Rep. Mimi Stewart (D-Alb). Rep. Stewart has been a Wild Friends champion for many years. Her legislative expertise, wisdom, kindness and hard work are invaluable to Wild Friends shepherding memorials and bills through the legislative process.

In 1994, when Tom Rutherford (2nd row) was the Senate Majority Leader, he sponsored the first bill to get legislative funding for the Wild Friends program. Now a Bernalillo County Commissioner, he keeps an eye on Wild Friends in Santa Fe, especially students from his alma mater, Jefferson Middle School in Albuquerque (pictured). Mr. Rutherford always stresses the importance of staying in school, and learning a thing or two while you’re there.
Sen. Linda Lopez with some Los Lunas MS Wild Friends. She carried HJM 13 in the Senate. Sen. Lopez always tells the students not to pay attention to those people who tell you that you can't do something. People tried to discourage her - and now she's a state senator.

Rep. Rick Miera, House Education Committee chair, comes off the floor to talk with Longfellow ES students and their teacher Naomi Julian (left). Longfellow's school mascot is the prairie dog.

Sen. Ben Altamirano takes a break with Alameda ES students. He was named "grandfather" of the Wild Friends during this session because he always has a big hug for the kids.

Rep. Joe Thompson (R-Alb), a favorite of Wild Friends, is known for quizzing Wild Friends on how much they know. It's the Alameda ES students' turn to get put on the spot.

It's been hard to miss the Wild Friends Dancers over the years. This year they had their own memorial to name a state butterfly.
backpacking in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness in the Gila. At Jefferson MS (teacher Rolene Barnett), Wild Friends (1) sponsored a visit from the wolf, named “Raven,” from Candy Kitchen Rescue Ranch for Jefferson MS Pride Night, (2) visited Wildlife West Nature Park at Edgewood, and (3) will be visiting the American International Rattlesnake Museum in Albuquerque. At Carlos Rey ES (teacher Kris Olson), the Wild Friends are (1) making a field trip to Rep. Rhonda King’s ranch in Stanley to see prairie dogs, (2) visiting Wildlife West Nature Park, and (3) sending a delegation to the May meeting of the New Mexico Black-Tailed Prairie Dog Working Group in Albuquerque. The Wild Friends Dancers (1) did six performances of selections from Stravinsky’s Firebird Suite with the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra at Popejoy Hall at UNM, (2) went butterfly spotting led by State Parks Department butterfly expert Steve Carey at Elena Gallegos Open Space Park, (3) were invited to perform their butterfly dance at the grand opening of the Albuquerque BioPark’s Butterfly Pavilion, and (4) will perform both dances at Carlos Rey ES. At Longfellow ES (teacher Naomi Julian), 5th graders including the Wild Friends participated in a 5-day exchange program with 5th grade students in Chihuahua, Mexico. At Garfield Charter School in Menlo Park, CA (teacher Cheryl Haynes), the Wild Friends (1) held a fundraiser to raise money for rainforest conservation, (2) are studying the bald eagle and California condor, (3) are planning a trip to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and (4) went on a whale sighting expedition.

Greetings from California Wild Friends! Having a wonderful time at the beach. Wish you were here! Love, Cheryl [Cheryl Haynes, in sunglasses, was one of the first Wild Friends teachers at Polk MS.]
Generating the Power of Environmental Stewardship

A lasting impression in the minds of legislators year after year is the sea of turquoise when Wild Friends students come to the legislature to meet them in their offices and hallways, testify in committees, or observe in the galleries. That sea of bright turquoise is thanks to the T-shirts each and every student wears on outings. Those T-shirts don’t grow on trees. Long-time Friend of Wild Friends, Public Service Company of New Mexico, once again came through with the resources for the hundreds of Wild Friends T-shirts necessary to make sure every Wild Friend at the legislature (and on field trips throughout the year) can be recognized. Thank you again, PNM!

PNM hasn’t restricted its participation in wildlife issues to T-shirts. In March, together with Hawks Aloft and B&D Industries, they installed Kestrel falcon nesting boxes at four schools—Mountain View ES, a Wild Friends site, is one of the four—the idea being to draw mating pairs to the school grounds. The American kestrel has been the focus of area schools since 1999, with three Wild Friends school sites participating. PNM’s website contains more information. Look it up at www.pnm.com!

PNM has also provided habitat space at one of its generating stations for underground burrows for burrowing owls. Several small owls are already long-term residents of this facility. Hawks Aloft created the burrows there, and the power plant employees are really into their role of helping the owls feel welcome in their new habitat. The burrowing owl is endangered in some states, and a “species of concern” in others, including New Mexico. The new burrows at the PNM power plant are made of hollow concrete blocks and are designed to resemble the burrows of prairie dogs where the owls like to raise their young. PNM plans to install a web cam between the established burrowing owl colony and the newly introduced rehabilitated birds. Wild Friends, who worked on black-tailed prairie dog conservation issues at the legislature this year, should be very interested to learn that the burrowing owl population is up at a ranch research site because of an active black-tailed prairie dog reintroduction program.

Finally, PNM teamed up with The Nature Conservancy to help create a unique urban nature preserve on Santa Fe’s east side. The Santa Fe Canyon Preserve, as it’s now called, is a 188-acre parcel that has long been habitat for birds, butterflies, and wildlife. PNM owned the land for more than 80 years, and at the urging of Marc Christensen, a PNM executive, PNM donated the land to The Nature Conservancy in April 2000 to protect it from future development. Since then, PNM has helped with the costs of restoring the land, building trails and making signs.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants to get the Gila Trout off the endangered species list—the way to do it is to establish new populations. The agency is seeking public comment by June 10. Its proposed recovery plan outlines what actions are needed to reclassify the trout and get it delisted. You can submit a public comment by calling 505-346-2525. Check out the recovery plan at http://fw2es.fws.gov/Library.

U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici has joined the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. He says he hopes to use the assignment to influence legislation related to New Mexico issues. Sen. Domenici in a letter to Wild Friends last year concerning the whooping crane petitions, said that he will “continue to … keep your concerns in mind.” Consider this an invitation to build a relationship with Sen. Domenici now that he is on the environment committee. Email him at senator_domenici@domenici.senate.gov or write/call/fax him at his Albuquerque office: Federal Building, Suite 120, 625 Silver S.W., Albuquerque, NM 87102-3173, Voice: 505-766-3481, fax: 505-766-1443.

The Wild Friends program is always looking for adult mentors and volunteers. Do you have a grandparent or know a teacher or someone in your community who is interested in wildlife conservation and likes working with students? Invite them to join your activities and field trips.
Butterfly—cont. from page 1

1959. It’s a New Mexico native and does not migrate except to flit about in the New Mexico landscape. Steve Cary, an interpretive planner for New Mexico state parks, known around the state as “The Butterfly Man,” met with the Wild Friends and helped them learn about butterflies. He also made use of his Lepidoptera expertise by testifying at the legislature. Wild Friends del- egates supporting the prairie dog memorial also testified for the butterfly memorial. The dancers helped write the memorial, as well as dance it through to passage, as part of an educational project combining arts, wildlife conservation and civics education.

The students performed under the direction of Lorin Saint, owner of Dance Alegre, Inc. in Albuquerque. HJM 1 this year was the “caterpillar” legislation. Wild Friends hope that next year the legislation will reach the “butterfly” stage, resulting in a state butterfly symbol being added to the New Mexico statutes.

Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you Thank you

Wild Friends legislation sponsors:


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Roundtable members

Aldred, Joel, NM Farm & Livestock Bureau
Bell, Larry and Scott Brown, NM Game & Fish.
Cary, Steve, NM State Parks Dept.
Coll, Max, Rep. (D Santa Fe) and Wild Friends Mentor

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Altamirano, Ben, Senator (D Silver City)
Alink, Roger, Wildlife West
Anaya, Toney, former New Mexico Governor
Baca, Jim, former Albuquerque Mayor
Cary, Steve, NM State Parks Dept.
Coll, Max, Rep. (D Santa Fe) and Wild Friends advisor
Davis, Michael, State Supt. of Schools
Ewing, Phil, Educ. Analyst for Speaker
Gardner, Ron, Conservation Comms. Analyst
Green, Gregory, Green & Associates
Hayes, Chuck, NM Game & Fish
Hibbard, Deb. Rio Grande Restoration
Kahn, Janet, APS Fine Arts Dept.
King, Gary, former State Rep.
Moore, Diane and staff, Leg. Maintenance
Powell, Ray, and staff, State Land Office
Rutherford, Tom, Bernadillo County Comm’t
Salazar-Henry, Roberta, NM Game & Fish
Sanchez, Raymond, Former Speaker
Sanchez, Stephanie, UNM Wild Friend
Silva, Dan, Rep. (D-Alb.) and Diane Thompson, Joe, Rep. (R-Alb.)

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Sanchez, Robert, Managing Ed. (D-Alb.)
Sanchez, Michael (D Belen)
Sharer, William (R Farmington)
Smith, John Arthur (Deming)
Snyder, H. Diane (R-Alb.)
Tosie, Leonard (D Crownpoint)

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Pinto, John (D Tocoma)
Papen, Mary Kay (D Las Cruces)
Martinez, Richard (D Espanola)
Maes, Roman III (D Santa Fe)
Leavell, Carroll (R Jal)
Lyons, Patrick (R Cuervo)
Mires, Roman III (D Santa Fe)