



The Wild News

Wild Friends

UNM Center for Wildlife Law

<http://wildfriends.unm.edu>

Spring 2009

Wild Friends walk Capitol halls for wildlife corridors

The annual migration of the blue-shirted Wild Friends to the Roundhouse

The saga began last summer at the Western Governors Association meeting, when all 19 governors voted unanimously to protect the wildlife corridors that transect their states. The governors were shocked by how much wildlife habitat is being fragmented throughout the West. They felt compelled to act.

The next step is for stakeholders from each western state to meet and make policy recommendations. Here in New Mexico, the Wild Friends voted to get involved and write a memorial to make this happen. Passed unanimously, HJM 4 calls for a workshop at which state agencies would work together with other agencies, Indian nations, industry, conservationists, and citizen-scientists to share information about and map wildlife corridors. The information from the workshop will be presented by Secretary of Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Joanna Prukop (see photo) at the Western Governors' meeting this fall.

HJM 4 passed the House 62-0, but not without drama. Bel Air 4th-grade students didn't want to miss the vote and waited two hours sitting in the gallery. It finally happened just when they thought they couldn't wait one more minute. It was the very LAST thing to get voted on before a recess. All agree that the memorial wouldn't have been voted on that day if the students in the blue shirts hadn't



Jemez Valley MS and Madison MS students pose with Rep. Mimi Stewart (center) who introduced HJM 4. Secretary of EMNRD Joanna Prukop (right) will host the wildlife corridor workshop in August.



Polk MS students ask Sen. Michael Sanchez about the status of the memorial. Sen. Sanchez carried the memorial in the Senate.



Carlos Rey ES students met up with Lt. Gov. Diane Denish before she went into the Senate one morning.

been there. Rep. Stewart also asked that two students and Sec. Prukop be available as expert witnesses. They waited outside the chamber doors the entire time and were ushered onto the floor of the House right before the vote.

On to the Senate, where the memorial passed 37-0. For the first time, WFs used the new Rail Runner to get to a Senate committee hearing. After that, two more groups from Albuquerque had the opportunity to take the train.

A record twenty-one field trips and hearings involving hundreds of Wild Friends made the legislative session a very busy one for Wild Friends staff, teachers, parents, volunteers and, of course, legislators. Wild Friends who didn't go to Santa Fe performed valuable behind-the-scenes work from their schools, such as writing and faxing letters. Wild Friends can be proud that they played an essential role in kicking off another historic effort to save wildlife.

The Wild Friends program now has a different type of challenge ahead. Due to the recession, across-the-board cuts were made to the budgets of state-funded programs. The WF budget was cut 12.5 percent for next year and staff are discussing ways to make ends meet. Because of the legislature's consistent support for the Wild Friends, we're confident that the program will return to full force when the economy improves.



Pleasing the Court

The New Mexico Supreme Court is a popular stop for many of the Wild Friends. Students visit the Law Library (photos to the left) where they are fascinated by the 400-year old law books. The pages are linen and do not deteriorate so the students get to hold the books (and take digital photos, too). This year, Librarians Rob Meade and Michael Poulson (photo) met with So. Mtn. ES, Polk MS, and Atrisco HS Wild Friends. At top right is Justice Charles Daniels with his aspiring "law clerks." Students get to model the robes belonging to Chief Justice Edward Chavez (mid right). Mission Avenue Teacher Jeff Maloney (right) is at the podium arguing a point of law before his students and the Chief Justice.



Beyond Grip and Grin



Shaking hands with lawmakers is an art with Wild Friends. They not only write and lobby their legislation, they practice eye contact and hand-shaking. Above, an Atrisco HS student shakes hands with Sen. Richard Martinez of the Conservation Committee.



Wild Friends always make a point of meeting the lawmakers who represent their schools. Rio Rancho ES students got to meet their new representative, Rep. Jack Thomas (above). Harrison MS students met their legislator, Rep. Ernest Chavez (right).





Hearings, hear hear
Mock hearings (Jefferson MS and Harrison MS above) help prepare students for the real thing (Carlos Rey ES left). Rep. Mimi Stewart makes an introduction before turning it over to the Wild Friends. Sometimes hearing rooms are so packed that not all students can get in. It happened this year to the Jemez MS delegation.

Photo: M.G. Bralley



After the real hearing, Rep. Kiki Saavedra joins students hoping to see the Governor.



Working the Halls
Wild Friends spend months studying their issue and getting ready to visit the legislature. By the time they converge on Santa Fe, they're eager to meet lawmakers, but nervous too. Nothing can prepare them to overcome their nerves except on-the-job experience. The legislators help a lot by listening and putting them at ease.

Left top to bottom: Sen. Carlos Cisneros is waiting for the Governor, but takes a few minutes to see St. Teresa WFs from Grants.



Harrison MS students meet Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino. This photo was included in the spring UNM Foundation newsletter.

New legislator Sen. Sander Rue talks to students from Rio Rancho Cyber Academy. Sen. Rue may hold the record this year for the number of WFs he met.



Right top to bottom: Rep. Gail Chasey talks to Harrison MS students. Rep. Chasey helped the Wild Friends pass the state butterfly bill in 2003.



Sen. Linda Lopez gets down with Carlos Rey ES students. She may have the most Wild Friends students in her district.

Sen. Mary Jane Garcia, Senate majority whip, gets ready to take a photo of the Horizon Academy West WFs. She was awarded the 2007 Milagro Award titled, "The Mary Jane Garcia Champion for Animals Award."





Moving up in the world: Daisy Morgan, our long-time WF science educator, is off to NM Tech for an advanced degree in hydrology. Grown-up WF Stephanie Sanchez is moving to Grants to do field work for her Ph.D. in cultural anthropology.

Silver City WF students talk with Sen. William Sharer. Teacher Bob Anderson has been bringing students to the Roundhouse for 14 years. Here is an excerpt of a letter he wrote to the Appropriations Committee in support of the program. "WFs' learning of civics, social studies, history, biology and the use of formal and informal language has not been an isolated act in the classroom; it has been a result of their active engagement and motivation to accomplish something significant. This sort of engagement is likely to result in adults who educate themselves on the issues, vote, and assist in campaigns, or even run for public office and serve the public themselves. In short, they learn both that they can make a difference and that they want to do so."



Students hopped the Rail Runner on a Saturday for an unplanned final trip to Santa Fe. The memorial was still waiting for its final vote in the Senate. They ran into Todd Stevenson, Director of Game and Fish, who had been the working with the Wild Friends to get the memorial passed..

Wild Friends Schools: Atrisco Heritage Academy HS, Bel Air ES, Carlos Rey ES, Grant MS, Guadalupe Montessori School, Harrison MS, Highland HS, Horizon Academy West, Jefferson MS, Jemez Valley MS, Madison MS, Mission Avenue ES, Polk MS, Rio Rancho ES, Rio Rancho Cyber Academy, St. Teresa of Avila School, South Mountain ES



(above) Casey McFarland, professional wildlife tracker, shows South Mountain ES students the fine art of ID'ing animal tracks. (below) Hawks Aloft's Kim Villescas and her WF friend from Madison MS show off a Swainson's hawk at Community Night.



Just before Jack Pickering's 93rd birthday -- still taking Wild Friends to visit his friend Rep. Ed Sandoval. This will be the 16th visit. Just ask Ed.



The Cat in the Hat dropped in at the legislature to promote reading. New WF teacher Michele Varoz of Mission Avenue ES and UNM's WF legal educator Sue George got to pose with the famous cat on the Senate floor.



Thank you ...
Wild Friends volunteers for everything -- Administrative Office of the Courts and Secretary of State's Office for coat and lunch space -- PNM for t-shirts -- Center for Civic Values for bus money -- State Land Office for educational programs.



WE WELCOME new groups of Wild Friends. 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, Kathy Grassel, Daisy Morgan

