



The Wild News

Wild Friends

Website: <http://wildfriends.unm.edu>

Fall 2008

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Wild Friends: Vote for your 2009 legislation

Now is the time for Wild Friends to choose their next legislative project. Use the ballot on this page to vote for the project that you would like to work on. You'll research and help write legislation on the winning topic. The 2009 New Mexico legislative session will be January 20-March 21, 2009.

Choice A: Stop the Mussel Invaders: Game and Fish is looking for help to keep some aquatic invasive species from threatening our fish, wildlife and aquatic ecosystems. Zebra and quagga mussels are only the size of your fingernail, but they disrupt and destroy freshwater aquatic food webs wherever they go. They've invaded waters in all the states that surround us. These tiny, clingy critters hitchhike unnoticed on boats and trailers. Once in the water, they multiply by the billions, attaching to hard and soft surfaces, such as boats, canoes, water pipes, rocks, trash, and

even aquatic wildlife. This choice could be a bill for a law to require boats to be inspected before they are allowed in the water, or a memorial for a massive public education campaign.

Choice B: Support Wildlife Corridors: Migratory corridors are narrow strips of land that connect patches of wild habitat. Wildlife moves through these corridors in search of food, mates and enough room to live. Some corridors stretch from Canada all the way to Mexico. When these "animal alleys" are broken up (fragmented) by human activities, such as roads, housing developments, power lines, mining and climate change, vital migration paths are cut off. All levels of government – federal, state, local and tribal – need to cooperate to protect these corridors. This year, at its annual meeting, the Western Governors Association passed a resolution recommending ways to do this. Wild Friends could write a

memorial asking the legislature to adopt the Western governors' recommendations. (See handout.)

Choice C: Bear-proof containers: Some trash containers are bear-proof, however most are not. Bears are forming bad habits by learning they can count on people's trash for a meal. This is harmful for both bears and people. Bears have been relocated or sometimes destroyed for doing what comes naturally to them – eating. Bears need 20,000 calories a day to be able to survive their winter hibernation. A 2003 law allows Game and Fish to choose areas where bear-proof trash containers are required. This law does not define what a bear-proof container is, give time limits for people to get containers, or set any penalties for not having them. A bill to strengthen the 2003 law almost passed the Legislature in 2006. Wild Friends could write another bill to help strengthen the law.



Be informed. Read the handouts on the topics before you vote.

Wild Friends Ballot

- Choice A:** Mussel Invasion
- Choice B:** Wildlife Corridors
- Choice C:** Bear-proofing

**Vote your choice for
2009 Legislation
Deadline September 24!**

Students: After voting, fold and give your ballot to your teacher. Your teacher will tally the votes and report the results to the Wild Friends office (phone 277-5089, fax 277-5483, or e-mail cbyers@unm.edu).

Awards and Updates on WF legislation



- 2008:** Wild Friends received the New Mexico Recycling Advocate of the Year award. At the New Mexico Recycling Conference on June 3, Wild Friends from Rio Rancho ES and South Mountain ES, teacher Gale Borkenhagen from Highland HS, volunteers and staff accepted the award. The award recognized the Wild Friends for their memorial passed during the 2008 legislative session. Legislators will not forget Wild Friends carrying trash bags full of recyclables into committee meetings to make their point. The students told lawmakers that trash is bad for wildlife and argued for more recycling in the Roundhouse and in New Mexico.

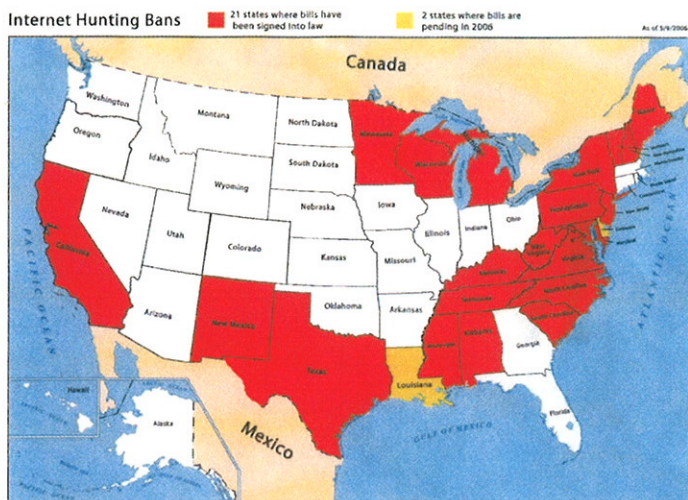
- 2003:** The WF 2003 memorial asked the state to act to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. Now I-40 through Tijeras Canyon has two kinds of wildlife-proof fences, escape ramps, electric mats, and a variety of wildlife underpasses. New Mexico received a national award last fall for the Tijeras Canyon Wildlife Safe Passage project, which was recognized as an Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative by the US Department of Transportation. Because the Wild Friends 2003 memorial got it all started, long-time Wild Friend Laura Finley was chosen to “turn it on” at a ceremony activating the electric fences, mat and the solar collector that power them.



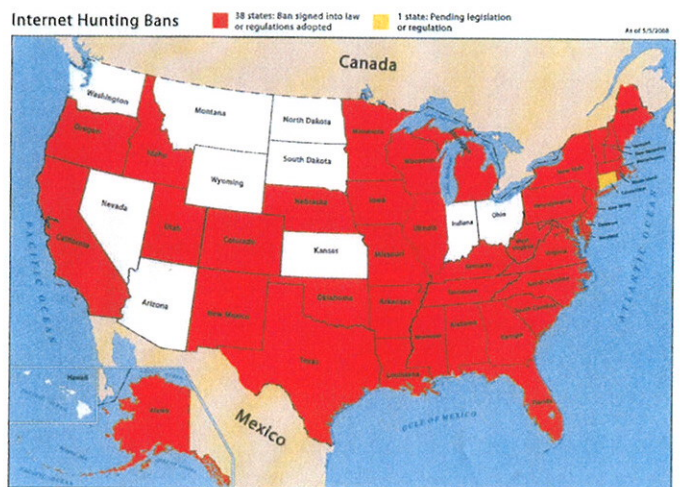
Wildlife underpass in Tijeras Canyon. Photo: Tijeras Canyon Safe Passage Coalition at www.safepassagecoalition.org/

- 2006:** Thanks to the 2006 Wild Friends bill, New Mexico became the first Rocky Mountain state to outlaw “cyberhunting” – shooting fenced-in wild animals with computerized rifles. Now only 11 states remain to get with the program. The Humane Society urges citizens to ask Congress to support a law called The Sportsmanship in Hunting Act.

2006



2008



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THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

Coming up: Get out there and enjoy ...

2008 NEW MEXICO STATE FAIR, Sept. 5-21: *Smokey Bear Day*, Sept. 16; *Environment Appreciation Day*, Sept. 19. Admission: Adults \$9, 3-12 \$4. Free parking.

ANNUAL DRAGONFLY FESTIVAL, Sept. 6-7, Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, 4067 Bitter Lake Road, Roswell, NM, contact Steve Alvarez 575-625-4009 or www.friendsofbitterlake.com. It's a wetland oasis full of wildlife. Free!

PEREGRINE FALCONS in free-flight demonstrations. Wildlife West, Sunday, Sept. 21, 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm, Wildlife West Nature Park, Edgewood, NM. Adults \$7, children \$4, under 5 free.

AQUARIUM OVERNIGHT at the Albuquerque BioPark on Friday, Sept. 26, 7 pm to Saturday, Sept. 27, 8 am. Sleep next to the sharks! Under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult. \$25/person. Call 505-848-7180 for information and to pre-register (required).


MAIZE MAZE "Made in the Shade" Farm and Wildlife Day on Sept. 27, 10 am - 1 pm. Rio Grande Community Farm, 1701 Montano Rd. NW, Albuquerque. Adults \$8; 4-12 \$4.

WOLF AWARENESS DAY, Living Desert State Park, Carlsbad, Saturday, Oct. 18, 10 am - 2pm, regular entrance fee, contact Kathryn Jones 575-887-5516. Adults \$5, 7-12 \$3, under 6 free.

2008 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF WILDLIFE FILMS, Friday, Oct. 24 and Saturday, Oct. 25, 7 pm. KiMo Theatre. Two evenings of feature length and short wildlife films. Adults \$15 for one or \$25 for both days, 12 & under \$5. Fundraiser for Rivers and Birds.

FESTIVAL OF THE CRANES at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, Nov. 18-23, celebrates the annual return of the cranes from northern climes. Exhibits, demos, activities, live animals, tours, and wildlife viewing. See www.friendsofthebosque.org/crane/

The Wild Friends from Horizon Academy West K-8 are featured in a group shot with Secretary of State Mary Herrera taken at the State Capitol during the 2008 session. Look for the Wild Friends photo on Secretary of State homepage www.sos.state.nm.us/KidsCorner/index.html



The Wild Side of Ecology
Wildlife Education Activities
and Resource Materials
for New Mexico Educators, Grades 4-12
Wild Friends Program
Center for Wildlife Law
University of New Mexico

A FEW COPIES OF the popular science-based teacher kit, *The Wild Side of Ecology*, are still available for Wild Friends teachers. First come first served if you call now: 505-277-5089



Bears, cougars, a shawl dancer and drummers were center stage for Wild Friends at the 2008 Bear Fair on Saturday, July 12. Koshari, the bear featured in past WF newsletters, is now 375 pounds. Koshari, left, started out as a hungry bear when he was adopted by Wildlife West Nature Park. Sandia Mountain BearWatch co-sponsored the fair.

WFs work the Annual Bear Fair



Background on the Roundhouse

Here are some things about the legislature in Santa Fe that every Wild Friend should know.

We participate in our New Mexico state government by electing (voting for) people to represent us, or we run for office to get elected ourselves so that we can represent everyone. The government has three branches: the Legislative (the Legislature), the Executive (the Governor), and the Judicial (the Courts). We elect Senators and Representatives to serve in our Legislature and make decisions about state laws and how to spend our tax dollars.

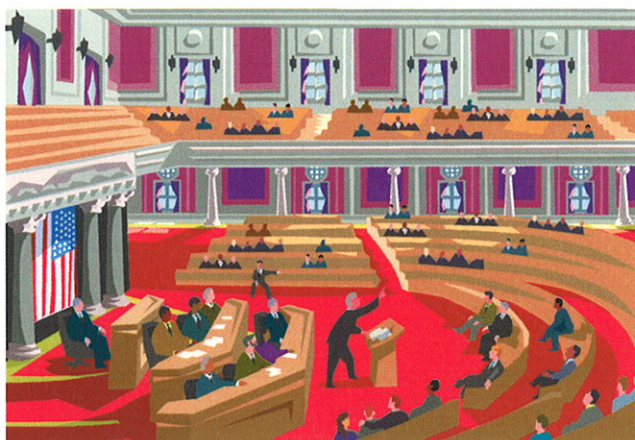
Citizens have a voice. You can suggest new laws or changes to current laws. The Wild Friends do this by writing a bill or a memorial to help wildlife. You can also call, write, fax and talk in person with legislators to ask them to vote for legislation that is important to you.

Legislators run for office in the communities they live in. You are a constituent of a legislator when you live in his or her district. The legislator has been elected to serve you.

The legislators meet every year in the State Capitol — the Roundhouse. The New Mexico State Legislature has 112 members: 70 Representatives and 42 Senators. Representatives are elected every two years and must be at least 21 years old. Senators run for office every four years and they must be at least 25 years old.

The House of Representatives meets in a huge room on one side, and the Senate meets in a huge room on the other side. These rooms are known as the House and Senate chambers. In even numbered years, the session lasts 30 days. In odd numbered years, such as 2009, the session lasts 60 days.

Part of the Legislature's work takes place in the chambers with all the Senators and Representatives. The other part is done in committees where small groups of legislators gather information. They invite citizens to testify (talk) about why they think a certain bill or memorial should be passed or not passed. Every year, some of the



Wild Friends testify about their legislation.

A bill proposes a new law or changes an existing law. For example, Wild Friends wrote the bill making the Sandia hairstreak the New Mexico State Butterfly. A memorial is a call to action from the legislature. One year, the Wild Friends wrote a memorial to ask state government to act to reduce wild-life-vehicle accidents on our

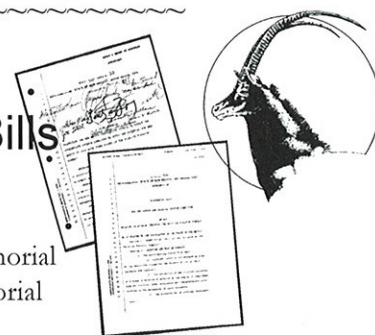
highways. That memorial led the way for safer wildlife crossings on Interstate 40 east of Albuquerque.

During a session, a legislator takes charge of a memorial or bill and takes it on its journey to passage. This person is called the sponsor.

Wild Friends have presented 17 memorials and bills over the years. Most of them were passed. Win or lose, Wild Friends always get respect for their hard work. And Wild Friends are always ready to come back the next time.

Wild Friends Memorials and Bills 1992-2008

- 1992: Endangered Species Memorial
- 1995: Common Ground Memorial
- 1996: Anti-Poaching Memorial
- 1997: Anti-Poaching Bill
- 1998: State Whooping Crane Day Memorial
- 1999: Anti-Cruelty to Wildlife Memorial
- 2000: Wildlife Violator Compact Memorial
- 2001: Wildlife Violator Compact Bill
- 2002: Prairie Dog Memorial; State Butterfly memorial
- 2003: State Butterfly Bill
- 2003: Reduce Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions Memorial
- 2004: Wildlife Crossings Memorial
- 2005: Penalties for Wasting Wildlife Memorial
- 2006: Prohibit Computer-Assisted Remote Hunting Bill
- 2007: Global Warming Memorial
- 2008: Recycling Memorial



WE WELCOME new groups of Wild Friends. Call 505/277-5089, or email cbyers@unm.edu. Take a look at the

Wild Friends home page at <http://wildfriends.unm.edu>.

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