



The Wild News

Wild Friends

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

Fall 2010

UNM Center for Wildlife Law, 1117 Stanford NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131, email cbyers@unm.edu (505) 277-5089

Wild Friends: Vote for your 2011 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 a memorial on the winning topic. The 2011 New Mexico legislative session will be January 18-March 19.

Choice A: No Speeders in Wildlife Crossing Zones

Save the world by making drivers slow down for animals. Vehicle-animal collisions cause damage to both humans and animals--especially in western states where lots of big critters such as deer, bears, and mountain lions cross highways. In 2003, Wild Friends worked hard to pass legislation that resulted in building safe passageways for wildlife at risk for getting killed trying to cross highways. Now, more work needs to be done. Wild Friends could work on a memorial similar to a new law in Colorado that allows state highway officials to make wildlife crossing zones with lower speed limits and higher speeding fines -- like "school zones for animals." A memorial could request the Game and Fish Department, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, to form a pilot (experimental) program for a double-fine wildlife crossing zone set up in a place where crashes are already known to occur.

Choice B: Bring Your Own Bag

Save the world with one reusable bag. Make "Paper or Plastic?" a thing of the past. We are hearing about animals all over the world that are dying after swallowing plastic bags thrown away by people. Making paper bags requires cutting down trees and destroying wildlife habitats. Neither paper nor plastic bags are a good choice. Choosing reusable canvas bags is the way to go. They can be used 500 times in their life cycle. Some countries have already banned throwaway bags. Wild Friends could encourage lawmakers and the public in New Mexico to join the "Bring Your Own Bag" movement. Since many government departments and schools buy promotional materials with their logos and a message printed on them, Wild Friends could write a memorial urging them to choose

canvas bags or bags made from recycled plastic products. The bags could be used over and over for shopping or toting while also advertising their school or workplace. The memorial could also remind all departments and schools to reduce their use of plastic bottles and packaging as requested by the 2008 Wild Friends memorial.



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

Wild Friends Ballot

- Choice A:** No Speeders in Wildlife Crossing Zones
- Choice B:** Bring Your Own Bag

Vote your choice for 2011 Memorial

Deadline:
Monday, September 20!

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).

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.

You as 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.

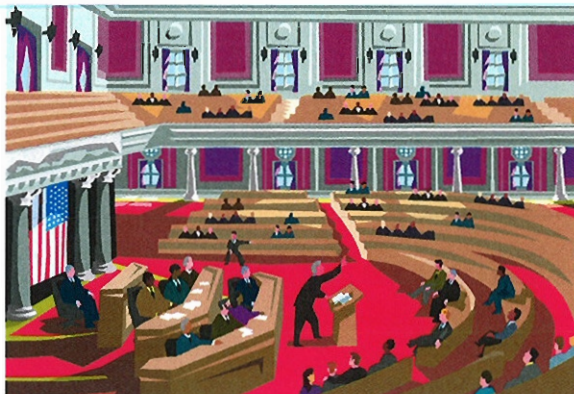
Legislators run for office in the communities they live in. You are a constituent of a legislator when you live in his or her district. The legislator has been elected to serve you.

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 must be at least 25 years old. Elections will be held in November 2010.

The House of Representatives meets in a huge room on one side of the Roundhouse, and the Senate meets in a huge room on the other side. These rooms are known as the House and Senate chambers. In odd numbered years, such as 2011, the session lasts 60 days. In even numbered years, the session lasts 30 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 asking state government to take action to reduce wildlife-vehicle accidents on our highways. That memorial led the way for safer wildlife crossings on Interstate 40 east of Albuquerque. ABC News reported the Wild Friends project in an online story in December 2008, following a feature

story in a national newspaper.

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 19 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 1992-2010

- 
- 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
 - 2002: 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
 - 2009: Wildlife Corridor Memorial
 - 2010: Protect Native Pollinators 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>

Newsletter Staff: Carolyn Byers, Kathy Grassel, Sue George

