



Contact Sue George, Director
Telephone 505-277-5089
Cell 505-730-3995
Email Sgeorge2@unm.edu
Website <http://wildfriends.unm.edu>
Twitter @WildFriendsNM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 27, 2020

New Mexico Students Create Pollinator Protection License Plate

New Mexico's first Pollinator Protection License Plate, featuring student artwork, is almost here! Sales of the license plate will fund pollinator-friendly planting on state roads. Wild Friends students from around the state worked to pass a bill at the 2019 Legislature to create the new license plate.



Wild Friends students met with legislators to advocate for their bill in 2019.

Albuquerque, NM, January 27, 2020— This spring, New Mexicans will be able to buy a Pollinator Protection License Plate featuring a native plant and pollinator. Proceeds from the license plate will fund pollinator-protection activities by the New Mexico Department of Transportation, including increasing habitat by seeding roadsides with native plants and creating educational gardens.

The license plate features artwork by Jazlyn Smith, a sixth grade student at Albuquerque Sign Language Academy. Jazlyn, a lifelong artist, illustrated a blanketflower and green sweat bee to portray the relationship between native flowers and pollinators.

"I think the license plate will help people understand that it's important to try to protect plants and pollinators in any way we can," said Jazlyn Smith.

Jazlyn's art was chosen by a panel of esteemed judges, including a bee scientist and botanist, from entries submitted by Wild Friends students from around New Mexico. Wild Friends is a civics education program for grades 4-12 based at the UNM School of Law. Students studied pollinators and their critical role in sustaining both food systems and natural ecosystems, and helped pass a bill (SB 234) at the 2019 Legislature.

The license plate will be available in the spring, and will cost \$25 for the initial registration and \$15 for yearly renewal. Plates may be purchased online (mvd.newmexico.gov), at Motor Vehicle Division offices, or at MVD Express offices.

"We are thrilled with the beautiful license plate that students worked hard to create to protect pollinators, and appreciate the partnership with MVD and DOT to bring it to life," said Sue George, Wild Friends Director.

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If you would like more information about this project, please contact Sue George, Director at 505-277-5089 or email at Sgeorge2@unm.edu.