

WILD AT HEART

THE WORD FROM WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

No. 21, Spring 2015

A Story of Rewilding

Putting
the Pieces
Back Together





MISSION STATEMENT

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS protects and restores the wildlife, wild places, wild rivers, and health of the American West.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robin Smith, PRESIDENT	
Mimsi Milton, VICE PRESIDENT	
Todd Ringler, SECRETARY	
Shannon Larson, TREASURER	
Jess Alford	Marion Hourdequin
Cathy Bailey	Jon Spar
Nat Cobb	David Will

STAFF

Bryan Bird, MS, WILD PLACES PROGRAM DIRECTOR
 Bob Brister, ORGANIZER
 Madeleine Carey, GILA CAMPAIGN FELLOW
 Lori Colt, COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
 Bethany Cotton, JD, WILDLIFE PROGRAM DIRECTOR
 Greg Dyson, JD, PUBLIC LANDS DIRECTOR
 Kevin Gaither-Banchoff, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
 John Horning, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 Taylor Jones, MS, ENDANGERED SPECIES ADVOCATE
 Jim Matison, RESTORATION PROJECTS DIRECTOR
 Sarah McMillan, JD, SENIOR ATTORNEY
 Erik Molvar, MS, SAGEBRUSH SEA CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR
 Kevin Mueller, UTAH-SOUTHERN ROCKIES CONSERVATION MANAGER
 Jeremy Nichols, CLIMATE & ENERGY PROGRAM DIRECTOR
 Claire Nickel, OFFICE AND EVENTS MANAGER
 Carol Norton, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
 Jen Pelz, JD, WILD RIVERS PROGRAM DIRECTOR
 Sarah Peters, JD, PROGRAM ATTORNEY
 Ronnie Rael, ADMINISTRATIVE AND BOOKKEEPING ASSISTANT
 Samantha Ruscavage-Barz, JD, Ph.D, STAFF ATTORNEY
 Stephanie Sample, MA, DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE
 Tim Ream, JD, CLIMATE AND ENERGY CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR
 Jodie Wheeler, FISCAL MANAGER
 Marlies Wierenga, MS, PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONSERVATION MANAGER
 Ashley Wilmes, JD, STAFF ATTORNEY

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

SANTA FE OFFICE:
516 Alto Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501
TEL 505.988.9126

DENVER OFFICE:
1536 Wynkoop Street, Ste. 310
Denver, CO 80202
TEL 303.437.7663

OFFICES ALSO IN: Boulder, Eugene, Laramie, Missoula, Portland, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Tucson

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Janice St. Marie
COVER PHOTO: Tuomaslehtinen/Dreamstime.com

Like us: Facebook.com/wildearthguardians

Follow us: twitter.com/wildearthguard

100 percent recycled, 50 percent PCW

A BOLD VISION

John Horning

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS



Though I love my job and most all that it entails, a piece of me—probably the romantic—wishes that I could have the job of Bill Rose, GUARDIANS’ restoration volunteer par excellence, whose commitment is profiled in this issue of *Wild at Heart*.

I yearn not just for the satisfaction of a hard day’s work outdoors, but also the gratification that comes from working to heal wounded landscapes.

Restoring wounded landscapes has been a part of WILDEARTH GUARDIANS’ mission for nearly 20 years, and while we deploy a diverse suite of strategies, the target of our work is quite focused: the damage from roads and livestock. That’s because the biggest obstacle to thriving, dynamic landscapes in the west is the legacy of logging roads and the political and ecological effects of the western livestock industry.

As we see it, our challenge of rewilding fragmented western landscapes isn’t just about closing unneeded roads and grazing allotments. It’s also about changing culture, both that of the Forest Service and local communities. That’s why we’re working in Congress, with the Forest Service, in the courts, and on the ground, because the recipe for changing culture doesn’t always follow one simple path.

Our biggest culture changer to date was the creation and continued funding of the Legacy Roads & Trails program within the Forest Service, whose main aim it is to fund road closures and road rehabilitation work that improves degraded aquatic habitat and reconnects fragmented watersheds.

Yet the Forest Service is often still a reluctant participant in the rewilding agenda, which means that in 2015 we intend to deepen our commitment to creative and forceful litigation to require the agency to minimize its massive road network.

While neither Congress nor the courts may present as romantic a face of restoration as does Bill Rose, effectiveness in those arenas is just as necessary as is Bill’s personal commitment if we are to rewild and restore the millions of acres that are in need of healing.

For the Wild,

GUARDIAN GIVER

Alan Hamilton

“The rivers and wetland habitat in New Mexico have served as important wildlife corridors for hundreds of thousands of years, but they are especially vulnerable now because of development and climate change.” Alan loves doing restoration work with GUARDIANS’

Restoration Director Jim Matison. “We work really well together because we share similar environmental ethics, but even more importantly we are both committed to getting restoration projects done.” Alan and his extended family knew GUARDIANS was the right organization to support when it became clear that we were committed to finding innovative solutions like our grazing buyout strategy in the Gila. “I know that there are times when there is no alternative but to fight for the protection of wildlife through the courts, but I appreciate that GUARDIANS’ is working on both fronts, and that they are increasingly looking for collaborative and on-the-ground solutions.”



GET ON THE BUS

Carol Norton



I admire GUARDIANS for the million trees they have planted in New Mexico.



ZELIPOLTON
NORTON

Marc Powell loves trees. “I love that they ground themselves so powerfully but are always reaching for the heavens,” he says. “Trees have changed everything in my life.” The trees Marc has planted have changed everything for so many.

When Marc was twelve he was reading so many books that he began to feel guilty about the trees that were dying for his passion. He wanted to make recompense and began to think about planting trees. His grandfather also loved trees and was happy to oblige; the elder was already planting on the ranch he lived on in Texas.

Marc really got started during his senior year of high school. He had moved in with his grandparents and begun seeing the power of trees restoring a landscape from his earlier efforts. By the time Marc graduated, planting trees had become what would be a life-long habit.

New Zealand was Marc’s next stop. The previous owners of a ranch where he was staying had denuded the land for cows and sheep. There was plenty of grass but no shade for the animals—and perhaps more importantly, nothing

to break the endless winds. What better way to prove once again that planting trees changes everything than to restore this wasteland?

Eighteen hundred trees later, the land was renewed. The ecosystem recovered, supporting additional microclimates resulting in greater biodiversity. And the trees themselves were beautiful.

Marc has planted in California and in New Mexico. While he has not yet planted with WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, he says, “I admire GUARDIANS for the million trees they have planted in New Mexico. I have a deep relationship with trees. Trees breathe in our breath. We are inextricably linked. More trees makes us all healthier.”

*Visit wildearthguardians.org:
Take Action / Activist Spotlight*



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

GUARDIANS discussing how to best plant a cottonwood.



We invite you to join the Wild Bunch, our amazing monthly donors. Whether your contribution is \$5, \$20 or \$250 a month, monthly givers form the backbone of our organization, and provide the sustainability and flexibility that enables us to work on urgent and critical issues. Your pledge deepens our capacity to respond quickly and decisively.

SIGN UP TODAY!

WHY ARE YOU
A GUARDIANS
MONTHLY
DONOR?



"I became a monthly donor because of the passionate and effective work being done by WILDEARTH GUARDIANS on behalf of life on Earth. The success of the Mexican wolf program is important to me, as well as ensuring species diversity and wild places. My home is surrounded by wilderness, and in my gratitude I give back as I can, so that future generations can know the wonders of the natural world."

—RANDALL BOZELLE,
Abiquiu, NM

Interested in becoming a GUARDIANS Monthly Donor? Visit our website for more details: wildearthguardians.org: Support Us / Monthly Giving.

KILLING CONTESTS: NOT ON OUR LANDS

Bethany Cotton

We are seeing a disturbing trend of wildlife killing contests on our public lands across the West. Our work to address these gratuitous displays of violence against animals is occurring on many fronts. We are working to support passage of a bi-partisan bill in New Mexico that will ban coyote killing contests on public lands. In Idaho, we are litigating against the Forest Service over that agency's failure to require permits—and therefore its failure to conduct a thorough public process—for wolf and other wildlife

killing contests. We are working with our allies in Congress to pressure federal agencies to keep these events off our shared public lands while continuing our efforts to educate the public on the importance of carnivores to the landscape.

Though we were able to shut down the killing contest near Salmon, Idaho, on over three million acres of our Bureau of Land Management-managed public lands, the contest occurred on private and Forest Service-administered land. Thankfully, no wolves died, but thirty coyotes were killed, and ill-informed, anti-carnivore rhetoric was on full display. After a killing contest in late 2014, hikers discovered 34 coyote carcasses illegally dumped like garbage in the desert outside Albuquerque,



Native carnivores play an important role in healthy ecosystems

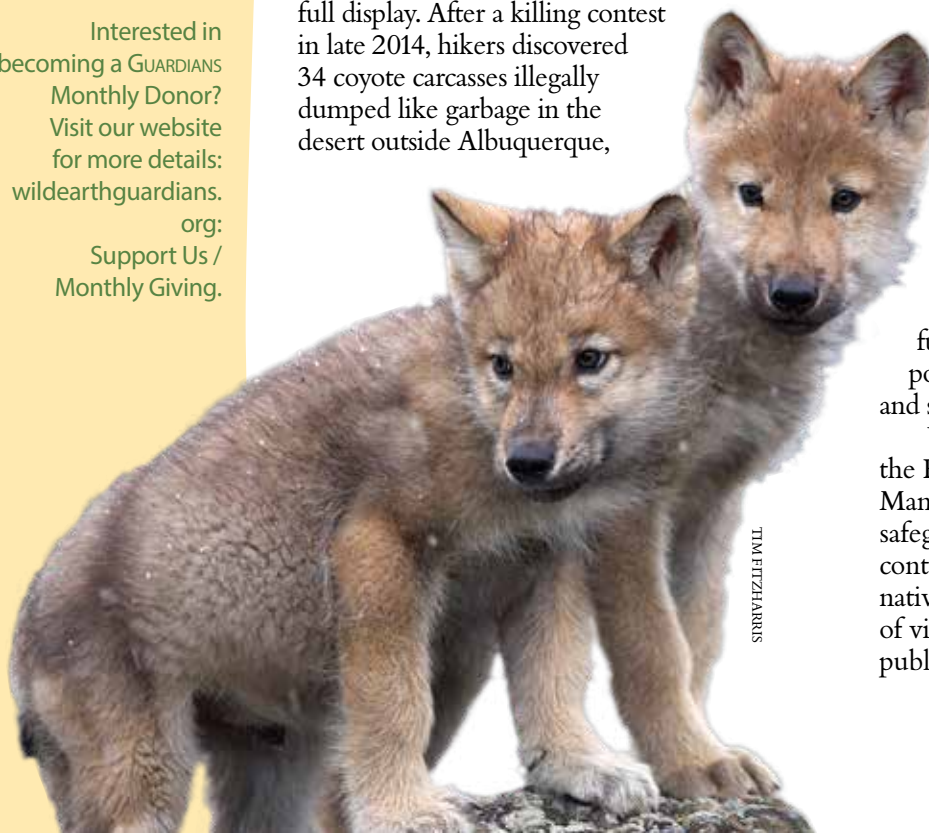
SAMPARKS

N.M. These and other killing contests are a stark reminder that much work remains to ensure that dangerous myths about native carnivores are unraveled, and their importance to healthy, thriving ecosystems is understood and celebrated. In fact, the more scientists study the role of carnivores in ecosystems, the more we know they are absolutely essential to vibrant habitats and functioning ecosystems.

Killing contests reveal a larger flaw in our nation's wildlife management strategies where carnivores continue to be treated as a nuisance, including by the very state agencies responsible for wildlife management. Sound science and wildlife management best practices show that indiscriminant killing of carnivores often increases rather than decreases conflicts with livestock. By destabilizing pack structure, killing contests that result in high body counts disrupt the natural balance of ecosystems. Coyotes, like wolves, serve a valuable ecological function by helping control rodent populations and maintain ecological integrity and species diversity.

We need federal agencies, including the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, to live up to their duty to safeguard wildlife on our public lands. Killing contests perpetuate false stereotypes about native carnivores and contribute to a culture of violence. They have no place on our public lands.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: Top Priorities / Carnivore Protection



TIM FITZARRIS

Bryan Bird

The Gila Bioregion: Yellowstone of the Southwest

Ecological restoration is often passive, meaning sometimes it simply entails removing the causes of degradation or allowing natural processes to reestablish. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS recently facilitated the removal of cattle from 44 square miles of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. The Deep Creek grazing allotment is a pinnacle



of biodiversity and a perfect example of what is at stake in the west. Deep Creek is home to no less than five animals listed under the ESA including the Mexican wolf, spotted owl, and Gila trout. Working with the rancher, the US Forest Service, and conservation investors, we

orchestrated a last roundup, and closure of the allotment to grazing for at least ten years. To protect our investment, we repaired 2.2 miles of fencing to keep cows out of sensitive habitat, including a wolf denning area. Wolves can now den free from persecution, streamside habitat will flourish again, and fire can clean up the forests once more as it has for millennia.



Visit wildearthguardians.org/ Top Priorities / Greater Gila: America's First Wilderness

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



"I am Vicki Henry, a citizen of the Earth, living in Laramie, Wyoming. This very sparsely-populated state (Wyoming) is being constantly barraged by energy development on public and private land. Wyoming needs WILDEARTH GUARDIANS to correct lawlessness and protect habitat for wildlife and plants that have no voices audible to most humans. In this era of deregulation, the best way I can speak out against big oil and monoculture agriculture is to enroll in monthly giving to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS. I trust them to use my dollars in the best way possible to create, conserve, and preserve harmony in my grandchildren's and my world."

— VICKI HENRY, Laramie, WY

Interested in becoming a GUARDIANS Monthly Donor? Visit our website for more details: wildearthguardians.org/ Support Us / Monthly Giving.

REWILDING THE WEST

A New Paradigm for Public Lands

Bryan Bird

Our western public lands are in a perilous state from more than one hundred years of plunder by powerful industries like timber, mining, and livestock. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is working to reverse the damage and set a new course for the 21st century. It's a fresh possibility for public lands where wildlife, recreation, air and water are the highest values managed for all Americans.

Ecological restoration gets our hands dirty and reconnects us to the wild places and wildlife we've devoted our lives to protecting. It also demonstrates commitment to the places we work and the people who live there.

Bill Rose grew up in the wild places of New Mexico. As a Boy Scout he rambled the cold, clear streams of the Jemez Mountains. When he returned home to Albuquerque from service in the Navy he noted the degraded condition of New Mexico's high-mountain streams: banks were trampled, algae thick, and the shade of dense willow bunches absent. To correct what he saw as an affront to nature, Bill began a decade-long promise as a volunteer on WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' restoration team. (See sidebar).

It's not unusual to see Bill with his German shepherd Claus, hauling fencing material or running an excavator with an 8-ft. auger to plant native vegetation. He's there as the sun rises and always the last to climb into his truck whistling up his canine companion.

Bill's passion and energy come from a desire to set things right, to ensure that antelope fawns are not entangled in barb-wire, to see cutthroat trout streams run cold and clear once again. Bill's a GUARDIAN because he shares our belief in the power of restoration.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' renewal plan isn't just about our sometimes backbreaking labor. It also includes our efforts in the halls of Congress and in the federal courts to advance a new paradigm for western public lands management. Each approach is a cornerstone in our vision for a 21st century paradigm: repairing the damage done by unfettered commodity extraction and placing value on clean water; increasing biodiversity; recreation; and inspiring spiritual renewal.

We have our work cut out for us. Public lands were logged, drilled and grazed into submission, with possibly the largest road systems in the world to do it. The federal land system is a uniquely American concept, but government land managers are too easily co-opted by



Putting the pieces back together is hard work, but always rewarding.

Below: WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' staff and volunteers spend countless hours giving back to the land we've mistreated for so long. Volunteers remove unneeded livestock fencing.



extractive industries and their agents in Congress. Public land managers have a history of rolling out the red carpet to the raiders of America's natural capital, leaving taxpayers to fix the mess.

Effective political advocacy and use of the courts steered federal land agencies towards a culture and ethic of restoration and ecological sustainability, at least rhetorically. Timber sale levels on the national forest system dropped by more than 80% between 1989 and 2004. Advocates also curtailed destructive activities like grazing livestock in streams and anarchic motorized recreation.

In 2010, the Forest Service analyzed the condition of all 15,065 sub-watersheds it manages and found 67% ranked in poor or fair condition. The map shows the extent of the damage from past management and failing roads. Healthy, functioning watersheds that provide clean and abundant water, wildlife habitat, and recreation are not possible without tackling the root causes of the dysfunction.

Twenty years ago, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS began an effort to restore life to the Santa Fe River in New Mexico where cattle grazing completely denuded

“*Today a thriving bosque or cottonwood forest and beaver ponds are a testament to our vision of reclaimed public lands and resilience.*”

all vegetation. Partnering with the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, the state, and the EPA, volunteers fenced out cows and began replanting banks with willow and cottonwood. Today a thriving bosque or cottonwood forest and beaver ponds are a testament to our vision of reclaimed public

lands and resilience. GUARDIANS' restoration work is now a half million-dollar annual program fostering biodiversity, water quality, and wildlife habitat, and shines as a modern ideal for federal lands in the West.

The work is established with the premise of light-touch action and expediting the return of ecological processes. Building resilience into western ecosystems will help wildlife and humans endure the effects of climate change. Returning natural fire to western forests, beavers into high-mountain streams, riparian vegetation to stream banks, and rehabilitating watersheds disfigured by logging roads are priorities. We've literally planted millions of trees, removed miles of old road, rebuilt wetlands, recreated prairie dog colonies, and fenced out cows and elk from streams and rivers. But the work is only effective when matched with strong advocacy.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' advocacy is targeted at Western Congressional and state leadership. We build coalitions and work in partnership to convince lawmakers who hold the purse strings, that restoration of western ecosystems will pay dividends in employment and income as well as climate adaptation. Our success on the ground is a compelling example in the halls of Congress.

For example, in Washington State, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS founded the Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative to demonstrate diverse, political support for the new paradigm. The Initiative includes tribes and state agencies, as



IN THE BLACK CLOUDS OF CONGRESS A SILVER LINING

Trout Creek Basin on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Washington is prime habitat for threatened steelhead trout, yet for years forest roads in disrepair have blocked their annual migration. But late last year the final barrier to spawning was removed. As contractors worked in the forest to replace an old culvert with a bridge, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS worked persistently building Congressional support for the Legacy Roads and Trails program, and over 3,000 supporters signed our letter of support. The efforts paid off when \$40 million for the watershed rehabilitation work was included in the 2015 federal budget – a 14% increase over 2014.





WILDEARTH GUARDIANS partners with the country's newest national park unit, the Valles Caldera National Preserve restoring its splendor. Volunteers literally "free" elk mothers and their calves from lethal livestock fencing.

well as recreation and environmental organizations. A priority was to secure funding for maintenance, repair, and reclamation of roads on the national forests. (See sidebar).

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS launched a pioneering campaign to restore over-grazed public lands through

“ *Bill's dedication to redressing the wrongs of western manifest destiny is noble and a testament to his deep connection to the land that shaped him.* ”

voluntary grazing permit retirements. Removing a primary cause of degradation also works to protect wolves, native bighorn sheep and sage grouse. In concert with land managers, ranchers and conservation philanthropists, we can equitably set the land on a course for recovery and resilience, but also return a key ecosystem process—predation.

Bill Rose will be retiring soon from a career in mechanics, and expects to dedicate himself full-time as a volunteer in WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' restoration program. Bill's dedication to redressing the wrongs of western manifest destiny is noble and a testament to his deep connection to the land that shaped him. We owe Bill a great debt of gratitude that can only be repaid in pristine rivers, leaping trout, towering ponderosa pine, and the howl of wolves.

Visit wildearthguardians.org /Programs / Wild Places / Rewilding

FACES OF RESTORATION

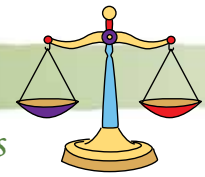
In the late 17th century Leo Sandoval worked in a lumber mill in Cuba, New Mexico, called the Duke City Mill. Years later, he delighted his great grandson, Bill Rose, with stories of catching cutthroat trout in the Rio Puerco right in town. Bill only knew this tributary of the Rio Grande as a down cut, intermittent arroyo with little or no vegetation. He could not believe it once supported New Mexico's state fish. Bill was drafted into the Navy and trained in electronic engineering, eventually returning to Albuquerque. He read a newspaper article around 2003 about WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' volunteers restoring the Rio Puerco. He thought to himself, "I gotta do this for great grampa." Bill's been with us since, often accompanied by his trusty German shepherd Claus, who carries supplies in a saddle bag.



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

IN THE HALLS OF JUSTICE

Bethany Cotton, Jen Pelz, Jeremy Nichols



HEADING TO COURT TO PROTECT MEXICAN WOLVES

USFWS



After years of delay, in January the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finally updated its management of Mexican wolves. Unfortunately, the Service ignored GUARDIANS' strong objections and caved to anti-wolf interests by including immunity for Wildlife Services employees who kill wolves, capping the wild population of wolves, delaying more reintroductions, and liberalizing trapping and shooting. These provisions and the Service's refusal to change the lobo's "experimental non-essential" designation under the Endangered Species Act undermine efforts to recover the most endangered mammal in the Southwest. With just 109 wolves in the wild at last official count, it is essential that wolves have every opportunity to thrive. In the coming months we'll be headed to court to ensure that Mexican wolves have all the protections they need.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Wolves in the American West*

SUIT FILED TO ENSURE THE RIO GRANDE'S RIGHT TO ROAM

This month, GUARDIANS again led the charge to protect America's Great River by filing suit to stop the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from constructing 43 miles of engineered levees in central New Mexico near the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. This project would permanently strangle the river and eliminate hundreds of acres of key habitat that support the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher and threatened yellow-billed cuckoo. We aim to preserve the opportunity in this reach for large-scale restoration and non-structural flood control options that will allow the river to once again roam across its floodplain. As one of the last relatively wild stretches of the Rio Grande, we believe it is our obligation to stand up for a living river and chart a new path forward that preserves these crown jewels of the southwest.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Rio Grande: America's Great River*



ADRIEL HENSEY

GUARDIANS TO COURT: "GLOBAL WARMING VIOLATES PUBLIC TRUST"

OUR CHILDREN'S TRUST



As New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez has rolled back rules to curtail carbon pollution, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has fought back, arguing that protecting our atmosphere is a matter of public trust. In January, Staff Attorney Samantha Ruscavage-Barz, made our groundbreaking case before the New Mexico Court of Appeals. On behalf of Albuquerque youth, Akilah Sanders-Reed, we called on the Court to rule that the public has an inherent right to a safe climate, and to order greenhouse gas reductions consistent with the recommendations of scientists. Our case is one of several challenging the legal authority of states and the federal government to turn their backs on climate change, even as the case for curbing carbon is clearer than ever. A ruling is expected in 2015.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Programs/Climate & Energy*

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS MONTHLY DONOR?



"I love the outdoors in large part for the way that being out in wild nature renews and refreshes my spirit. I want my kids and grandkids to have that experience too, but so many greedy folks and corporations are continually threatening to take that away. I watched closely the excellent work that WILDEARTH GUARDIANS did during my recent 10 years in Santa Fe, and feel it is the top organization fighting for our wilderness way of life. I will remain a part of the Wild Bunch forever."

— PETER FESSENDEN,
Highlands Ranch, CO

Interested in becoming a GUARDIANS Monthly Donor? Visit our website for more details: wildearthguardians.org: Support Us / Monthly Giving.

LEGACY GIVING

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIANS LEGACY GIVER?



“Bold, persistent, creative, and successful. These are the words that describe WILDEARTH GUARDIANS to us and why we’ve chosen to include GUARDIANS in our estate plans. The recent buyout of grazing permits on 50 square miles in the Gila is just one example of how GUARDIANS embodies these values. This huge tract will be the basis of a protected area large enough to successfully reestablish Mexican wolves. It makes us happy to know that we can help GUARDIANS continue their work in the future.”

— MIMSI AND TOM MILTON, Highlands Ranch, CO

Contact Kevin Gaither-Banchoff at kevin@wildearthguardians.org or 520.869.4673 to learn how easy it is to give a legacy gift.

Or visit wildearthguardians.org: Support Us / More Ways to Give.

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Erik Molvar, Jeremy Nichols, Bryan Bird



CONGRESSIONAL SNEAK ATTACK ON ESA TARGETS SAGE GROUSE

ERIK MOLVAR



Last year’s budget legislation in the U.S. Congress carried an unwelcome parasite, a “policy rider” that prevents the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from finalizing Endangered Species Act protections for greater sage grouse. The funding moratorium lasts through September of this year, but could be extended. Attacks on the Endangered Species Act, and conservation generally, are increasing in frequency and in impact. Efforts to block or undo protection for our most rare and endangered plants and wildlife are done at the behest of corporate campaign donors, most prominently the filthy oil and gas industry. GUARDIANS is working to ensure that Congress leaves Endangered Species Act decision-making to qualified professionals and that imperiled species get the protections they need to survive.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Saving the Sagebrush Sea*

KEEPING THE FRACK OUT OF NEW MEXICO

MIKE EISENFELD



With fracking encroaching upon Chaco Canyon and Navajo communities, we’re putting the brakes on the oil gas industry’s plunder of the American southwest. Our campaign, focused on safeguarding northwestern New Mexico,

has three aims: (1) Halt new drilling plans, including proposals by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to auction off public lands for fracking; (2) Stop the “Piñon Pipeline,” which threatens a five-fold increase in oil drilling; and (3) Secure protections for our climate, clean air, and communities. So far, we’re succeeding. At the end of 2014, we thwarted plans by the Bureau of Land Management to auction 3,000 acres of Navajo lands for fracking near Chaco Canyon. And in January, we rallied massive opposition to the Piñon Pipeline. We won’t stop until we turn the tide on fossil fuels.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: *Programs / Climate & Energy/Wild Skies*

REBUILDING A HOME FOR PRAIRIE DOGS IN THE GREAT PLAINS

RAMONA GATLOND



Prairie dogs are central to healthy prairie grasslands in North America, sustaining entire wildlife communities. The black-tailed prairie dog population once numbered in the billions and ranged across 11 U.S. states and parts of Mexico and Canada, but has been eliminated from 99 percent of historic range. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Commonwealth Conservancy, and Great Plains Restoration Council (which takes former inmates into wild places to reshape their lives and the environment) are restoring a home for at least one population of prairie dog on the eastern plains of New Mexico. Our objectives are to restore 320 grassland acres for prairie dogs and a small wetland. So far we have removed juniper and cholla on 30 acres, constructed 50 prairie dog burrows, reseeded native grass in disturbed areas, and planted native vegetation in the wetland. We intend soon to relocate prairie dogs from where they would otherwise be eradicated to their new home in the prairie.

Visit www.wildearthguardians.org: *Top Priorities / Protecting the Prairie Dog Empire*

GOOD NEWS FROM THE GUARDIANS

Jeremy Nichols, Bethany Cotton



TOXIC COAL MINE POLLUTION TO BE REINED IN

Our efforts to rein in fossil fuels scored a major victory at the end of the year as the federal government announced plans to limit poisonous air pollution at coal mines nationwide. The move comes in response to a petition filed by WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in April of 2014, which called on the U.S. Office of Surface Mining to ban toxic orange clouds produced from blasting. Consisting of dangerous concentrations of nitrogen dioxide gas, these toxic billows signal reckless explosive use. In spite of this, they're a common occurrence—especially at the large strip mines in the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming—putting public health at grave risk. Thankfully, the coal industry's free pass to pollute is coming to an end.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: Programs / Climate and Energy / Power Past Coal



WOLF NUMBERS FINALLY BREAK 100, THREATS REMAIN

We are celebrating the announcement by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the official 2014 count of Mexican wolves in the wild is 109. Up from 83 wild wolves last year, the progress is very good news. Unfortunately, it's a milestone that should have been met a decade ago. The Mexican wolf recovery program remains deeply flawed. The Service needs to increase releases from the wild, further expand the recovery area boundaries, ensure two more viable populations, and better protect the wolves in the wild from hunting, trapping and other threats. In the coming months we'll be every chance, not just to hover on the brink of

headed to court to ensure that Mexican wolves have every chance, not just to hover on the brink of extinction, but to recover and thrive.

Visit wildearthguardians.org: Top Priorities / Wolves in the American West

COLORADO 'WOLF PACKS' ADVOCATE FOR RETURNING WOLVES

Last autumn, GUARDIANS launched a new effort in our work to restore wolves to Colorado by organizing local wolf education and advocacy groups called "Wolf Packs." The Vail, Denver, Boulder, and Pueblo Wolf Packs are building the social and political support needed to restore an ecologically effective population of wolves to the state with the most suitable, but unoccupied wolf habitat. Beginning with internal education, the Wolf Packs are hosting speakers and showing wolf films. Pack members will meet with local, state and federal legislators, write letters to the editor and host events. Look for an all Wolf Packs gathering at Rocky Mountain National Park this summer during the park's centennial celebration.

To join a local Wolf Pack or to organize one, please visit www.wildearthguardians.org/stand4wolves



RAY RAHFTI



DONATE WITH CONFIDENCE!

Good news is made possible by your generous donations. As evidenced by our consistent 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS gets the job done with your dollars. Help keep the good news flowing by making a gift to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS today.

505.988.9126 x3
or donate at wildearthguardians.org.

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR TODAY!

Fill out the attached envelope to become a WILDEARTH GUARDIANS member or a monthly donor today.

DOLLARPHOTOCLUB





Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albuquerque, NM
Permit #476

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

Greg Dyson



GREG DYSON joined WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' staff in late 2014 to lead our Rewilding Campaign. He got his start as an environmental advocate in Portland, Oregon, where he founded the group Bark after witnessing old-growth clearcuts along the Pacific Crest Trail on Mt. Hood.

Drawn to the beauty of Hells Canyon and the Wallowas in NE Oregon, he later worked for and then ran Hells Canyon Preservation Council. More recently, he was Executive Director at High Country Conservation Advocates in Crested Butte, Colorado. He has a J.D. from the University of Cincinnati, and in the distant past worked as a criminal defense attorney in Portland.

Ronnie Rael



RONNIE RAEL joined WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' in February of 2015 as the Administrative and Bookkeeping Assistant. A native Santa Fean, Ronnie spent his youth immersed in the city's vibrant culture and developed a lifelong passion for the high desert. Always drawn to nonprofit work, Ronnie visited Thailand while still in high school and upon returning to New Mexico he helped to coordinate Global AIDs Awareness Week in Santa Fe and raised funds to be sent to families affected by AIDs in Thailand. After attending Berklee College of Music and spending a few years on both the East and West Coasts, he is excited to be back in Santa Fe. Ronnie enjoys music, traveling, and taking time to appreciate the beauty of the Southwest.