

WILD AT HEART

THE WORD FROM WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

No. 11, Fall 2011

Will the River Run?

Major Water Policy Reforms
Needed to Sustain a Living River

BEAUTIFUL LARGE FORMAT BOOK OF THE RIVER
NOW AVAILABLE – *THE RIO GRANDE: AN EAGLE'S VIEW*



MISSION STATEMENT

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

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COVER PHOTO: Adriel Heisey

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RESTORING THE VISION

John Horning



For much of my life beauty has worked its magic on my soul, sustaining and inspiring me – whether through the stunning realism of a painting by Caravaggio, the master Italian renaissance painter, or the ruggedness of the Rocky Mountains framed by golden aspens in the fall.

My belief in the beauty of Adriel Heisey’s photographs led us to create and produce

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS’ new book, *The Rio Grande: An Eagle’s View*.

Though the book alone won’t change policy or write new laws, its beauty and inspiration can guide each of us on the path to protection. It can also lead us to ask the right questions, including questions that have driven me for 15 years.

Like, how is it possible that a river as important as the Rio Grande could go dry – as our Great River has on an increasingly frequent basis in the modern era – while the residents of the watershed seemed so oblivious to and unaffected by the impoverishment of the river? And how could we change things to secure the Rio Grande’s rights to its own waters?

The answers are complex and complicated.

But I do believe that Robert Redford in his foreword to the book said it best when explaining why these images and this book matters: “Photographs however, can’t surmount the Rio Grande’s many modern challenges. But they can show why it’s important that they be surmounted.”

My hope is that Adriel Heisey’s awe-inspiring images in *The Rio Grande: An Eagle’s View* will strengthen and renew each of us as we seek to surmount the challenges that face a living Rio Grande.

Visit our website at: [Top Priorities>Free Flowing Rio Grande](#)

GUARDIANS GIVERS

Jeff and Kari Keenan

BETHANY ORBISON



When Jeff and Kari Keenan started conceptualizing their new venture, Whoo’s Donuts, they wanted the owl on the logo to be more than just window dressing. They decided to launch Three for the Trees, a program any retailer can leverage that gives three cents for every item sold to support WILDEARTH GUARDIANS’ tree-planting efforts.

“We wanted to plant trees and we wanted to support a local organization. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS does a good job of identifying issues and prioritizing actions. You put money to good use. We built the three cents into our pricing strategy so that every customer can participate.” If you are interested in collaborating with GUARDIANS on a similar give-back concept, visit our ‘In the Market’ page on our website: Support Us>In the Market.

HOPE FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES

Historic Settlement Signed

Mark Salvo

It's done. Certified. *Perfectum*. Signed, sealed and delivered. Judge Emmet Sullivan of the federal district court of Washington, DC, finally approved WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' species settlement agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on September 9, 2011. The agreement will advance protection for hundreds of imperiled flora and fauna, ranking it among the most important landmarks in the history of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The settlement resolves 12 GUARDIANS' lawsuits that challenged the Service's failure to list species in a timely fashion under the ESA, and attempts to fix a listing program that hasn't functioned properly since the Reagan administration. Under the agreement, the agency will make listing decisions by September 2016 for 253 species, all but one of which are formal candidates for protection. The agreement also schedules petition findings, status reviews and critical habitat designations for more than 600 additional species. In return, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS consented to dismiss its lawsuits and refrain from suing the agency over missed listing deadlines for the next five years.

The heart of the agreement is the Service's commitment to make listing determinations for 252 candidate species. These are plants and animals that the agency has already determined warrant protection under the ESA. Some are well known, like the iconic sage-grouse. Others are rarely seen, such as the Mt. Charleston blue butterfly. Many candidate species have been reduced to tiny populations confined to small fragments of their historic range. Most of them (150) have been waiting for more than 20 years for listing; some (57) have been waiting for more than 30 years. We expect that the Service will list most, if not all,



J. N. STEWART/FLOCKER

The Fish and Wildlife Service will finally review New Mexico meadow jumping mouse for ESA listing in 2013 thanks to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' settlement agreement.

of the candidate species in our settlement agreement in the next five years.

The ESA is critical to protecting imperiled species. Over 99 percent of plants and animals listed under the ESA persist today, while scientists estimate that 227 species would have gone extinct if not for ESA listing. The ESA listing process had bogged down in recent years due to insufficient funding, mismanagement and unfavorable politics, creating a backlog of species listings. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' settlement agreement requires the Service to prioritize listing so that imperiled species will finally receive the protection they need.

While the settlement represents a major accomplishment in species conservation, it is also just the beginning of a new phase in GUARDIANS' species work. We will spend the next five years monitoring the government's adherence to the agreement, commenting on listing decisions, challenging negative listing determinations, and advocating for recovery plans and critical habitat designations for listed species. We thank you for your continued support in these endeavors.

Visit our website: [Top Priorities](#)>[Endangered Species Act List](#)

SAVE THE DATES FOR THESE WILDEARTH EVENTS

NOVEMBER 4

Tree Hugger Bash,
Albuquerque, NM

NOVEMBER 11

Rio Grande
Nature Center,
Albuquerque, NM

NOVEMBER 17

Festival of the
Cranes book event,
Socorro, NM

Keep an eye out for invitations to book events and other gatherings in Arizona, Colorado and Texas

Visit our website: [Support Us](#)>[Events](#).

LAUREN MCCAIN



Jay Tutchton, WGs' General Counsel, and Nicole Rosmarino, now director of the Southern Plains Land Trust negotiated the landmark agreement.

SUPER BEAVER!

Bryan Bird

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



"My main reason is for the wolves, I think they are grossly misunderstood and so hunted and cruelly trapped. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has the power and energy to make something happen for the wolves, with advocacy and legal strategies."

— MARYELLEN COLLINS
Santa Fe, New Mexico,
Marketing Consultant

Why are you
a GUARDIAN?
Visit our website
and let us know.

Climate got you hot and bothered? Fear not, Super Beaver to the rescue! WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is working side by side with our beaver heroes to mitigate the effects of climate change. Beaver restoration and protection of national forests and other public lands in the American West is a means to enhance the resilience of rivers and streams.

Restored beaver populations, with their dams and ponds and the associated wetland and aquatic ecosystems, will serve not only to greatly enhance the persistence and resilience of many imperiled native animals and plants, but also to increase water storage of streams undergoing dramatic changes in runoff patterns that endanger downstream municipal water supplies.

Climate change threatens headwaters in an unprecedented and nearly ubiquitous manner, especially in the American Southwest. Longer,

*Thousands of miles of
suitable streams and rivers
across the West
do not have, and have not had,
ecologically functioning
populations of beavers
in more than a century.*

more intense drought, earlier snowmelts and warmer temperatures will diminish or even dry up headwater streams and rivers. As a result, public water supplies of millions of



Super Beaver, our climate change hero. Look for him in a stream near you!

residents across the West will be at risk, the plight of dozens of endangered species—including the Rio Grande cutthroat trout, Northern leopard frog, Southwestern willow flycatcher and New Mexico meadow jumping mouse—will worsen and recreational opportunities will diminish. Enhancing the health and resilience of our headwaters at this critical juncture, while adaptation is still possible, necessitates more creative, systemic solutions.

Once abundant on streams throughout the American West, beaver populations are significantly depressed from their historic highs of the late 1800's due to historic and current trapping and stream habitat degradation.

Today, state and federal beaver and land management policies—including trapping and public lands cattle grazing—continue to actively and passively undermine beaver recovery. Habitat restoration and beaver reintroduction is key to the recovery and resilience of the streams.

Thousands of miles of suitable streams and rivers across the West do not have, and have not had, ecologically functioning populations of beavers in more than a century.

We are working with federal and state agencies including the Santa Fe National Forest and Valles Caldera National Preserve in New Mexico as well as state agencies such as the New Mexico Environment Department to restore the habitat and food source of the beaver. We will eventually partner to reestablish beaver populations where they will do the most benefit and encounter the least resistance. For beaver populations to be viable and have a significant effect countering climate change, state and federal agencies across the American West will have to join in welcoming back Super Beaver.

Visit our website: Top Priorities>Climate Laboratory>Beavers: Climate Heroes

KEEPING THE FRACK OUT OF THE AIR

GUARDIANS Spurs Pollution Cuts

Jeremy Nichols

ECOFLIGHT



Oil and gas flaring in North Park, Colorado.

Air pollution from oil and gas drilling is in the crosshairs thanks to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' efforts.

First on the list of sources to be cleaned up: a nasty process called hydraulic fracturing, otherwise known as fracking. The clean up will be great news for our health and our environment, as well as for our climate.

In 2009, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS and the San Juan Citizens Alliance filed suit against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over its failure to update clean air regulations for the oil and gas industry. In response, on July 28, 2011, the EPA finally issued a milestone proposal to rein in air pollution from oil and gas drilling.

Oil and gas drilling is messy, there's no other way to put it. The process releases toxic air pollution at every step and worse, is one of the leading sources of methane emissions. Methane is 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide in its heat-trapping abilities.

Here in the West, drilling is fueling record high smog levels in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Utah. A recent study found that there is

a "clear potential for oil and gas development to negatively affect regional O₃ [ozone] concentrations in the western United States, including several treasured national parks and wilderness areas in the Four Corners region." As the current drilling boom has expanded, other parts of the country, including Texas, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, are facing their own clean air challenges.

The EPA's proposed rules won't solve all our problems, but they're a big step forward. Once finalized, they would:

- Reduce volatile organic compound emissions by 540,000 tons, a reduction of 25%. Volatile organic compounds react with sunlight to form smog.
- Reduce methane emissions by 3.4 million tons, equal to 65 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, a reduction of about 26%. This will be like eliminating 15 coal-fired power plants.
- Reduce cancer-causing air pollutants, such as benzene, by 38,000 tons, a 30% reduction.

Because state air quality regulations must at least be as stringent as federal regulations, the rules will provide a much stronger safety net for our health and the environment.

To be clear, fossil fuels, including natural gas, are no substitute for clean energy. Every dollar invested in natural gas unfortunately is a dollar denied to rooftop solar, wind farms, and efficiency.

Yet as we push for a full transition from fossil fuels, we must address the current impacts. The EPA's proposed rules are a long time coming and they promise major improvements for peoples' lives and real benefits for the climate. Importantly, they promise to help expose the true cost of drilling and to make the case for real clean-energy solutions. Stay tuned for more on this story.

Visit our website: [Take Action](#)>[Current Actions](#)

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



"I'm very happy to be back in Santa Fe, working again with WILDEARTH GUARDIANS for the fall semester. I hope that my contribution aids in the conservation and restoration of a vital New Mexican resource – healthy, flowing rivers and streams. Overall, allocation, intensive management, growing water demands, and climate change all threaten our rivers' balance and ecological function. Damaged rivers and riparian areas in turn threaten native species and humans alike. I want to change that by conserving water at the local level, and planning for sustainable water use that leaves more of our water where it really belongs – in the rivers."

— JESSE TREMAINE
Santa Fe, New Mexico,
Summer 2010
Legal Intern, Fall 2011
Wild Rivers Intern

CLEAN AIR GETS NEW HOPE IN OVERDRILLED SAN JUAN BASIN

On August 1, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS won a precedent-setting ruling from the EPA holding the State of New Mexico failed to keep air pollution in check at the Sims Mesa natural gas compressor station. Sims Mesa is one of dozens of compressor stations in the

San Juan Basin of northwestern New Mexico, where over 23,000 oil and gas wells pump out millions of tons of toxic air pollution. The ruling gives us powerful leverage to rein in air pollution from drilling operations throughout the region.

Why are you a GUARDIAN?
[Visit our website](#)
and let us know.

IN THE HALLS OF JUSTICE

Samantha Ruscavage-Barz, Jay Tutchton, and Ashley Wilmes

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



"I worked at the University of Delaware as Associate Director of Student Systems for 17 years before retiring. I started volunteering for WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in the summer of 2010. My background with computers made it easy for me to take on projects such as updating the WILDEARTH GUARDIANS website species content and posting daily news in their In the News section. I enjoy volunteering for WILDEARTH GUARDIANS because it is another small way that I can contribute to saving the planet in addition to what I do at home, like recycling and composting. I am most passionate about WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' climate and energy campaign."

— SUSAN COVER
Santa Fe, New Mexico,
Computer Analyst

Why are you a GUARDIAN?
Visit our website and let us know.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' legal team has been hard at work to make sure the cries of the West's wildlands and wildlife are heard before it's too late. The following cases are a few highlights.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS LEADS CHARGE AGAINST SMOG



FLICKR-SIBBUSKYZ

On September 2, 2011 President Obama put politics ahead of public health, directing the EPA to abandon efforts to adopt scientifically justified limits on ground-level ozone, the key ingredient of smog. Those efforts sought to update limits adopted in 2008. Although they were stronger than previous standards, they were not strong enough. It's a setback, but we're stepping up. Now we're in court to enforce the 2008 ozone limits, which are our best hope. We started by filing suit against the EPA to force them to designate "nonattainment areas", or areas in violation of the 2008 limits, which will trigger much-needed clean ups. We're following up with two more lawsuits, to ensure states have plans to keep smog in check and to compel the EPA to prevent clean air from deteriorating because of smog.

Visit our website: [Top Priorities](#)>[Wild Skies of the West](#)

THE FIGHT CONTINUES TO PROTECT MEXICAN SPOTTED OWL



PETER STACEY

Last year, GUARDIANS sued the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in federal court, alleging the agencies were incrementally removing the strong protections for the Mexican spotted owl won by environmentalists over a decade ago. One of the strongest protections required the agencies to monitor the numbers of owls and the effects of Forest Service activities on the owl. However, the agencies have failed to collect the critical information while continuing to approve activities that harm the threatened owl. Represented by attorney Steven Sugarman, in September 2011 GUARDIANS argued that the court should find the agencies in violation of the Endangered Species Act and enjoin activities that harm the owl until they commit to tracking population numbers. GUARDIANS expects a decision from the court soon.

Visit our website: [Top Priorities](#)>[Endangered Species Act Listing](#)

WAITING ON A FINDING: FIGHTING AIR POLLUTION IN PUEBLO, COLORADO



PERSONCOMHOLIC.FLICKR

On August 24, 2011, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS filed suit against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for failing to take action on a petition we filed on March 24, 2011, asking EPA to overturn an air pollution permit that would allow Evraz Rocky Mountain Steel to jeopardize clean air in and around Pueblo, Colorado. In late 2010, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment renewed Rocky Mountain Steel's permit, despite finding that air pollution from its steel mill contributed to violations of federal ambient air quality standards. GUARDIANS' petition called on the

EPA to veto the state-issued operating permit for the steel mill, which is the second largest source of mercury emissions in Colorado. The petition also challenged Colorado's failure to ensure sufficient monitoring of air pollution and to protect minority and low-income communities in Pueblo. Although EPA was required to respond to the petition within 60 days, five months had passed without any response.

Visit our website: [Top Priorities](#)>[Wild Skies of the West](#)

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

NEW SOLUTIONS FOR SAVING THE MEXICAN WOLF

FLICKR/SIBBUSKY2



Public lands grazing remains the greatest obstacle to Mexican wolf recovery in the Gila Bioregion of Arizona and New Mexico. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is piloting a solution: voluntary grazing permit retirement. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has released approximately 99 Mexican wolves into the designated recovery area since 1998; today, only 50 wolves remain in the wild. To date, FWS has killed or removed approximately 70 wolves in response to complaints from ranchers who graze cattle on U.S. Forest Service lands. We recently met with ranchers and officials with

the Apache-Sitgreaves and Gila National Forests to seek resolution to continued grazing conflicts through permit retirement. Though obstacles remain that make permit retirement more elusive than we expected, we continue to believe that with willing ranchers waiting for a buyout that time is on our side.

Visit our website: [Top Priorities>The Greater Gila: America's First Wilderness](#)

THE PEOPLE'S FORUM ON PUBLIC LANDS TRAPPING

When the New Mexico Game Commission ignored 12,000 comments to ban traps on public lands and lifted the trap closure in Mexican wolf country, the TrapFreeNM coalition held the People's Forum on Public Lands Trapping. Along with receiving extensive media coverage, over 130 people attended, including members of the Legislature. Our citizen panel included a judge, a retired legislator, a former game commissioner, and a county commissioner. The TrapFreeNM coalition gave testimony, as did a small carnivore expert and many members of the public. The panel will take comments from New Mexico citizens for a 30-day period until November 5th and will issue its own public findings.

Visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/NMTrappingSurvey



The TrapFreeNM Coalition after the People's Forum on Public Lands Trapping event. L-R: Charles Fox, Mary Katherine Ray, Maureen Harvey, Karen Hackey, Wendy Keefover, Phil Carter, Cat Cannon, Monica Engebretson, Laura Bonar.

RELIEF FOR SAGE-GROUSE?

ALAN ST. JOHN



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' species settlement agreement may have unexpected benefits for the greater sage-grouse. The grouse became a candidate species in March 2010. Under our agreement, the Fish and Wildlife Service must address sage-grouse listing in FY 2015. This sudden, short deadline has spurred the Bureau of Land Management—which has fumbled, stymied and stalled sage-grouse conservation for years—to announce a new westwide conservation strategy to obviate the need to list the grouse. GUARDIANS has hounded the agency for a

decade to develop stronger conservation measures for sage-grouse, and we will participate in every step of this new planning process. We'll see in four years whether the agency has produced a plan sufficient to recover the species.

Visit our website: [Top Priorities>Endangered Species Act Listing](#)

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



From the moment Walter "Ski" Skymanski discovered that New Mexico permits trapping of public wildlife, he dedicated himself to the elimination of this inhumane and cruel practice. He successfully wrote a formal resolution calling for the banning of trapping on public lands in NM and got the resolution passed through the town of Silver City. Now, a year and a half later, 12 additional New Mexico municipalities, counties and other government bodies have also approved resolutions calling for a ban on trapping on public lands. Ski will not rest until the governor and state game commissioners banish trapping in New Mexico. We salute Ski for his efforts to end cruel traps on public lands.

—SKI SKYMANSKI
Gila region,
New Mexico

Why are you
a GUARDIAN?
[Visit our website](#)
and let us know.

A VOICE FOR THE RIO GRANDE

Securing the River's Flow

John Horning

ADRIEL HEISEY



Emergence of the Rio Grande from Santa Elena Canyon, Big Bend National Park, Texas

In the spring of 1996 the Rio Grande went bone-dry for 60 miles in the Middle Rio Grande valley of New Mexico and at several other points along its nearly 1,885-mile course from the San Juan Mountains in southern Colorado to its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico.

In past decades, and even centuries, when the Rio Grande had gone dry—whether in Albuquerque, El Paso or points further south—conflict erupted about the over-allocated waters of the river; conflict between Native Americans and farmers, farmers and cities, between neighboring states and even between nations, all of which had tenuous agreements to share the Rio Grande's waters.

But this time the conflict was different.

This time the Rio Grande itself became a part of the conflict over the river's increasingly contested, and scarce, water supplies. This time the river, through a few of its endangered dependents—the Rio Grande silvery minnow and the Southwestern willow flycatcher—asserted a right to its own water and, for the first time, it had the legal standing to back it up: the Endangered Species Act.

In the two preceding years both the silvery minnow and the flycatcher had been listed under the Act and that required the federal agencies which managed much of the Rio Grande's waters to reconsider all of their decisions to ensure that they wouldn't jeopardize the species' existence.

Though 10,000 endangered silvery minnows perished that spring, the water management paradigm along the Rio Grande would never be the same again. Nor would WILDEARTH GUARDIANS.

FOR WILDEARTH GUARDIANS that spring marked the beginning of an intensive 15-year organizational commitment to ensure that the Rio Grande is a living, flowing river with a secure right to its own waters.

To secure those waters, we've contested how the river's dams are managed, waging a decade-long legal battle in federal court. We've created environmental water check-off programs on municipal water utility bills so citizens can vote with their checkbooks to restore the river, and we've challenged dozens of

ADRIEL HEISEY



PHOTOGRAPHER OF GUARDIANS' NEW BOOK CELEBRATES RIVER'S JOURNEY

Adriel Heisey has this to say about photographing *The Rio Grande: An Eagle's View*: "The first plane I used to shoot the Rio Grande, I had built myself years before the project began. It was an aircraft perfectly suited to aerial photography—an ultralight that could fly very slowly, was inexpensive to operate, and was completely open, which let me shoot unobstructed.

"Two-thirds of the way through the ten-year Rio Grande project, I upgraded to a new Light Sport airplane. Made in Germany using carbon fiber technology, it is very sleek, quiet, and efficient. It can fly as slowly as my original ultralight, but it affords me much more comfort. Although it is enclosed, it is a high-wing design just like the ultralight; for shooting I open one of its large side doors and secure it under the wing, so the whole side of the plane is open. I strap the control stick to my knee and steer by leg movements, freeing my hands to hold and aim the camera as I'm flying.

"In this manner I become one with the plane. It's an extension of my vision, and I intuitively move toward those points in space where I see special magic in the river scenes below me."

individual decisions that degrade and damage the river's fragile ecosystem.

This year our commitment deepens in an exciting new way with the publication of our first-ever book: *The Rio Grande: An Eagle's View*. We believe the stunning aerial photographs of the river from its headwaters in Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico will inspire citizens to renew our commitment to protect the Great River.

The challenge in 1996 and every year since has been that the federal, state, and private interests which share in the Rio Grande's waters created a water management paradigm that has allowed people to divert nearly every last drop of water from the river.

More specifically, the guiding laws and regulations that divvy up the river's waters—from the Rio Grande Compact to state water policies—deprive the Rio Grande of any water. Our aim has been, and continues to be, to change that.

IT WOULD BE EASY TO DISMISS the river's plight in 1996 (and in other dry years since) as little more than a severe drought and a limited snowpack in the headwaters. After all the Rio Grande is "the only river...in need of irrigating," Will Rogers reportedly once said after seeing the river on one of its leaner days.

But drought only tells half the Rio Grande's story. That very same spring, farmers' irrigation ditches— which diverted (and still divert) nearly 80% of the river's water on its journey to the Gulf—ran brim-full where the river ran dry, and federal and state agencies rarely,

if ever, gave serious consideration to the river's needs.

Likewise the urban planners, developers and elected officials who oversee the cities and towns along the Rio Grande and its major tributaries barely paused on the road to enabling the population in the watershed to grow to more than 10 million people.

As a result it isn't only the silvery minnow and the flycatcher whose existence continues to be threatened. In fact 16 of the river's native fish are extinct, including the shovelnose sturgeon, the American eel and four other native pelagic spawning fish similar to the silvery minnow.

Ultimately it isn't just a handful of species but the Rio Grande itself whose existence is endangered, primarily by the seemingly countless dams, diversions and levees that have been built to control the river to make its once variable water supplies more reliable for human use.

In fact, the conservation group American Rivers has three times declared the Rio Grande one of America's most endangered rivers. In my lifetime, unless major changes are implemented the Rio Grande's great cottonwood bosques, one of the river's iconic features, could disappear.

And now climate change is casting a dark shadow over the river's future. A recent report by the Bureau of Reclamation found that the Rio Grande is the most threatened by

A PROFESSIONAL TEAM

It takes a team to make a book, and the team that made *The Rio Grande: An Eagle's View* was all-star.



BARBARA MCINTYRE, Managing Editor, led the team. She used her perseverance and expertise to get the project across the finish line after years of effort. Formerly Vice President of Marketing for Sotheby's Worldwide in New York, Barbara began working in Santa Fe as a Managing Editor for various publications, including Contemporary Art in New Mexico. She soon developed an infatuation with the beauty and vibrancy of the Rio Grande and her devotion to this project is with the hope that it will protect the life of the river.

Designer **ALEX HANNA'S** design work created a book that allows the reader to experience the river. His image selection and the clarity of the layout helps us grasp the magnificence and scope of this great river. Alex moved to Santa Fe to work as Nedra Matteucci's head of marketing and design before starting Invisible City Designs specializing in high quality print work. Clients include The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, The Essential Guide, The Museum of New Mexico Foundation, High Road Artisans, Victoria Price Art & Design, and *Local Flavor Magazine*.

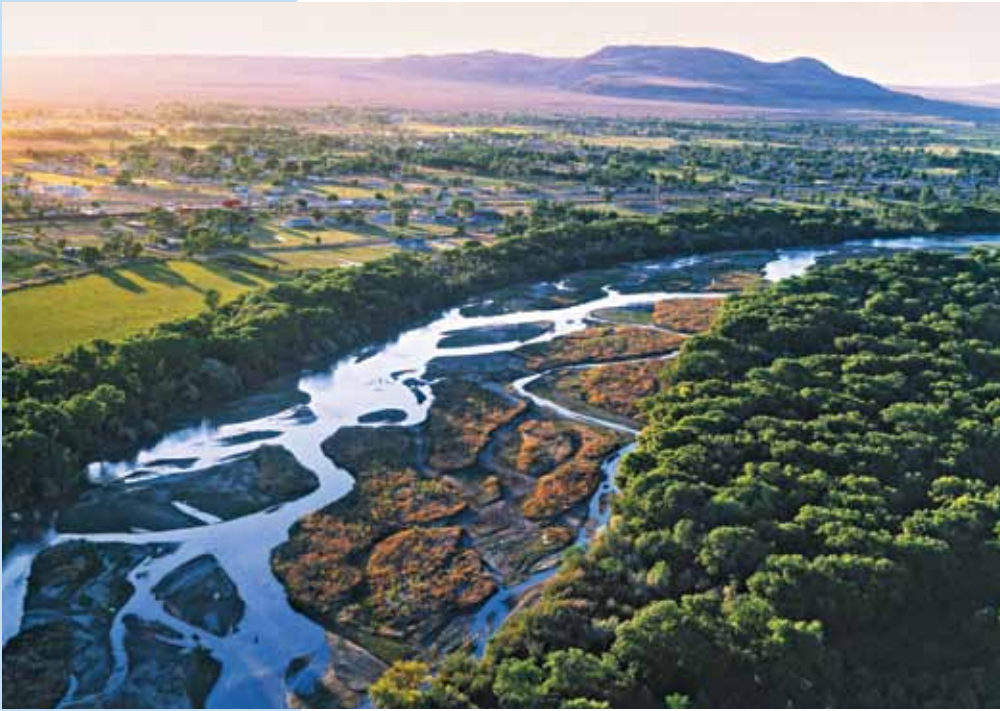
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We would like to think that *The Rio Grande: An Eagle's View* will always be their favorite project, but this dynamic duo plans on continuing their work together with Barbara McIntyre acting as Managing Editor in conjunction with Invisible City Designs to oversee complete editing, design, and publication of fine art books.



ADRIEL HEISEY

Below Pole Creek Mountain, Rio Grande National Forest, Colorado



Above: Las Caves, New Mexico, with El Cerro de Los Lunas

Below: The Rio Grande Watershed



Ultimately it isn't just a handful of species but the Rio Grande itself whose existence is endangered, primarily by the seemingly countless dams, diversions and levees that disrupt its flow.

climate change of any river in the United States.

So the real ecological and existential crisis for the Rio Grande was and still is all about water.

For us the solution to that challenge begins and ends with reforming agriculture and limiting diversions by thirsty cities.

SINCE 1996 WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has worked to reform agricultural practices along the Rio Grande, especially in New Mexico,

where most farmers not only flood-irrigate crops but also grow alfalfa, which uses more water than any other single crop.

In a climate-stressed era we simply don't believe that flood irrigation of water-intensive and low-value crops is sustainable—for the Rio Grande or for all water users. We also believe the entire irrigation infrastructure could and should be upgraded and modernized to convey water more efficiently. That means drip irrigation instead of flood irrigation and high-value, less water-intensive crops instead of alfalfa.

The key in each of these scenarios is that conservation for conservation's sake is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. Conserved water needs to become the river's water, not water to subsidize the next alfalfa field or subdivision.

Though this ambitious re-envisioning of agriculture is where we need to be in the years ahead, it's going to take some time. In the interim we believe a program of leasing water from farmers is the best way to sustain the Rio Grande and its endangered fish and wildlife.

We've already taken the initial steps to create a water-leasing program in central New Mexico by establishing an account to fund a pilot water-leasing program. Now we're working to secure the support of the federal and state agencies, both of which will be essential if this type of program is to succeed.

In addition to securing environmental water we've also laid the groundwork to create the first-ever storage account for environmental water at Abiquiu reservoir. We'll need to store water and release it to mimic the natural peaks and low flows that sustained the river's ecological balance through the millennia.

Over the last decade we've made some progress but much work still needs to be done. Beyond water acquisition the list of high priority river restoration projects includes a new approach to flood risk reduction that doesn't straightjacket the river with an archaic system of levees, limiting development in the floodplain and giving the river more room to roam.

THERE WAS A TIME when the Rio Grande was a grand and magical thing, when its flow pulsed with the seasons; when the seven large dams that now impede its life-giving late spring floods did not exist; when the levees and the channelization projects did not choke its once sinuous shape; and when one of the world's largest cottonwood bosques covered the river's expansive floodplain.

Though the Rio Grande is not as grand as it once was, it's still a river that can inspire, that hopefully can endure and that is well worth preserving.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS will continue to advocate for the river's endangered species, to enforce the Endangered Species Act and to inspire people with *The Rio Grande: An Eagle's View*. But that alone won't be enough for the Rio Grande and even for its growing list of endangered species.

Federal enforcement of the ESA has been the catalyst for a restoration agenda and that likely will continue to be the case in the future. But if we are to get past crises management we need a new vision for agriculture and for the human communities that depend upon the Rio Grande.

We also need federal leadership, both from our Congressional delegation and from the federal agencies, namely the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers that oversee the river. With so many different interests involved, a unifying restoration vision will require the resources and coordination that the federal government can provide.

Regardless of how it evolves you can count on WILDEARTH GUARDIANS to provide what the Rio Grande lacked for centuries: a voice when decisions are made to invoke the law to reclaim the river's rights to its own waters.

Visit our website: Programs>Wild Rivers



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GOOD NEWS

LOTS OF LITTLE LOBOS

RAY LABBLE



Although the total population of Mexican wolves in the wild is dangerously small, it was a good year for wolf pups. Lobos in the wild successfully reared 30 puppies this breeding season, up from 18 last year. Assuming the same survival rate as 2010, at least 23 of those newborns will make it to see another year. Seven of the wolf pups were born to the legendary Middle Fork Pack. Despite both the mother and father having only three legs, they were quite fruitful, bearing almost a quarter of all the puppies in the wild. These numbers are inspiring for us here at WILDEARTH GUARDIANS and their presence renews our resolve to protect the lobo in the wild.

*Visit our website: Top Priorities>
The Greater Gila: America's First Wilderness*

LOTS OF LISTINGS

Our historic settlement agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service advancing protections for over 900 plants and animals was finally approved on September 9, 2011. But even while we waited for court certification, species included in the agreement began to benefit from the deal. For example, 42 species included in the settlement have been proposed for listing or finally listed as "threatened" or "endangered" under the Endangered Species Act, including the sheepnose mussel, spectaclecase, dunes sagebrush lizard, San Bernardino springsnail, Three Forks springsnail, Chupadera springsnail, 16 Hawaiian plants, and 3 Hawaiian damselflies. The Miami blue butterfly was emergency-listed and proposed for formal listing. As of September 27, the Service has issued positive petition findings for 419 species and positive 12-month listing determinations for 19 species.

Visit our website: Top Priorities>Endangered Species Act Listing



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THE RIO GRANDE: AN EAGLE'S VIEW

The Making of GUARDIANS' New Book



Author Steve McDowell

Flowing nearly 2000 miles through the landscapes and history of the Southwest, the Rio Grande has well earned its placename as a Great River. As a tribute to the river, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS recently published *The Rio Grande: An Eagle's View*, a dramatic portrait of the entire river – from Colorado's Continental Divide to the Gulf of Mexico – by the talented (and intrepid) aerial photographer Adriel Heisey, accompanied by author Steve McDowell's essay *Toward a Long-Running River* and a foreword by Robert Redford.

Complementing Adriel's inspiring imagery, Steve McDowell's beautifully written essay evokes

both the river's deep history and its place in Southwestern conservation. Steve is a long time scholar of the river and his research of first hand accounts brings the river alive.

In characterizing the river, Steve writes, "... beholders have seldom agreed about what sort of place it is, or ought to be. Why? In part, at least, because the Rio Grande changes character so often, and so abruptly between its sources and the sea, that it might fairly be described as an array of rivers. In its loftiest incarnation, it's an icy, capering, clear-watered creature of glaciated tundra, stealthily gathering snowmelt and strength from alpine cirques, tarns and moraines. Downriver, it cuts a thundering cascade of whitewater through sagebrush basins, relentlessly carving at deep canyonsides among bastions of obdurate black basalt. And in yet another reach, it's a placid, lackadaisical current easing its way past Sabal palms, thickets of thorn-bearing brush, and stands of tees whose names – Ebano, Tenaza, and Anacuita among the many – nicely suit their almost tropical air..."

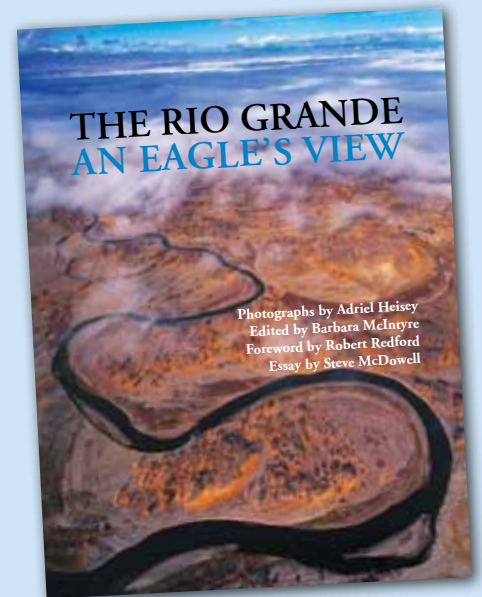
To share the Eagle's (unique and extraordinary) View, drop by a WILDEARTH GUARDIANS office to look at the book, or order a copy online at www.theriograndeaneaglesview.com.



KRISTINA LOGGIA

Foreword by Robert Redford

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