

WILD AT HEART

THE WORD FROM WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

No. 9, Spring 2011

New Life

Working to
Rewild the
West





MISSION STATEMENT

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

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RESTORING THE VISION

John Horning

When we lose a battle to protect wild nature, our defeat is permanent. Once it's lost it's lost forever. Or is it?

Clearly the extinction of a species and the clear-cutting of a 500-year-old spruce grove are acts that have irreversible consequences. But I also believe that, with a little humility and a lot of will, we can restore, rewild, and reconnect the tattered fragments of nature that still exist. We have to take these steps if endangered plants and animals are going to survive.

As we've worked to restore streams and close old logging roads across the Southwest, we've done so knowing that rewilding the landscape is as much a part of our vision as is trying to prevent destruction in the first place—whether through Congress or the courts.

My experience informs my belief that restoration and rewilding isn't easy, but it can be enjoyable. Restoration is as much a social enterprise as it is an ecological one, and we've had lots of fun over the years while working to heal damaged lands. The bonus is that not only are we restoring our wildlands and waterways, but we're also creating popular support and political will for a new restoration economy.

As our efforts to heal damaged lands continue to gain ground, our greatest challenge will be to remind ourselves and our allies that real restoration will only come when nature's dynamism through fires, floods, and ecosystem engineers such as wolves, prairie dogs, and beavers is restored to its rightful place on the landscape.

GUARDIANS GIVER

REI Stores



“I love the west because of the wide-open spaces, the big blue skies, and the amazing mountains,” says Kerry Peavey, outreach specialist at nationwide outdoor retailer REI. “You can be in a different environment skiing, hiking, biking, or kayaking, all less than an hour away from Santa Fe.”

Kerry and REI have been supporting WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' Stream Team river restoration and tree-planting events for six years. In 2010, REI awarded WILDEARTH GUARDIANS a \$5,000 grant because Stream Team fits with REI's core value of stewardship and the company's commitment to getting people outside to care for the planet. It's also key for REI, says Kerry, to find ways to improve the environmental performance of the business while striving to generate positive environmental, social, and financial results.

REI's passion for the outdoors runs deep, as does Kerry's passion for our organization. “WILDEARTH GUARDIANS does a great job advocating for animals. I am always learning about new endangered animals and their plight,” she says. “Without WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, I probably wouldn't know about these creatures and the important role they play.”

NEW AND IMPROVED

Lori Colt



Have you seen our upgraded website? In November, we migrated our website and added a fresh new look, along with new pages and functions. We hope you find the new site easier to navigate, as well as more informative and inspiring. We've made our scientific petitions more accessible, highlighted our priority campaigns, and upgraded all the photographs. We've also unveiled a "Species We Work On" section, providing you with maps, listing petitions, fact sheets, and significant actions we have taken for your favorite plants and animals, as well as some you may never have known existed.

We've added an "Activist Spotlight" page to highlight our members who go above and beyond. In addition, for our social media fans, we now have RSS feed, Twitter, Facebook links, Flickr photo account and are currently working to set up a blog and podcast. News buffs will enjoy our new "In the News" feature highlighting a wide variety of articles from around the country covering our work. Signing up to be a paperless GUARDIAN has never been easier and updating your preferences and profile information is now a snap when you visit the "Learn More" button on our home page.

Stay tuned for future updates and upgrades. We have lots of exciting new things in store each time you visit our site! We welcome your feedback, so feel free to email our communications director, Lori Colt, with your website improvement ideas: lcolt@wildearthguardians.org.

SAVE THE DATES FOR THESE WILDEARTH EVENTS

MAY 12
Howling Affair, Denver

JUNE 23
House Party, Tucson

JUNE 30
Vegan BBQ, Santa Fe

SEPTEMBER 30
Guardian Gala,
Santa Fe

NOVEMBER 4
Tree Hugger Bash,
Albuquerque

Support WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in raising \$300,000 in new funding for our conservation work by 12/31/2011

CONSERVATION DESERVES MORE THAN 2%*



**EARTH FRIENDS
CONSERVATION FUND**
CONSERVATION'S™
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

JOIN US IN SUPPORTING



**WILDEARTH
GUARDIANS**



*Conservation only receives 2% of all charitable giving. Most people believe it deserves more. Source: Giving USA

There are many ways you can support the work of WILDEARTH GUARDIANS. Here are just a few.

PLANNED GIVING

Make your legacy a force for nature by naming the GUARDIANS in your will or creating an annuity.

MONTHLY DONOR

Make a monthly donation via your credit card or directly from your checking account to provide consistent funding.

GENERAL AND PROGRAM FUNDS

Select a specific program you would like to fund or provide the greatest amount of flexibility and give to GUARDIANS' annual fund.

STOCK DONATION

Stock transfer information is available on our website under "More Ways to Give."

MATCHING GIFTS

Take advantage of your employer's matching gift program.

IN-KIND GIFTS

Give merchandise or services from your business or donate your talents.

UNITED WAY

Give to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS as part of your United Way gift.

By supporting WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, a recipient of the **Earth Friends Challenge**, you are smartly leveraging your investment. Earth Friends Conservation Fund has challenged the Guardians to grow the percentage of donations given to the environment to more than 2%. The Earth Friends Challenge recognizes groups known for their efficiency and success in accomplishing their mission. Heed this call to action by investing in WILDEARTH GUARDIANS.

PHOTO: DAVENWALD PHOTOGRAPHY

We need your support to make our shared vision a reality. Please contact us at 505.819.5912

LEADER OF THE PACK

Nicole Rosmarino

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



When he isn't working with untamed horses, Hal supplies thousands of trees to be planted at our Stream Team restoration site near Cuba, always with a generous spirit and bright smile.

"I found out about Stream Team when I saw the crew working in an arroyo near the highway. I asked to join and have enjoyed working with the crew and the trees ever since."

— HAL YAZZIE
Cuba, NM

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She is the breadwinner of the family, has two lovers, and four children. She's gone on three-day solo hunts and has single-handedly taken down her prey. She is '06, the female adult of the Lamar Canyon Pack in Yellowstone. As we watch, her pups bravely charge a pair of elk, which steadily rebuff the youngsters. The pups also chase each other, playing ring-around-a-rosy near Slough Creek. Their fathers, males 754 and 755, curl up next to each other nearby. Scientists call this 755's Group (and now the Lamar Canyon Pack), after the alpha male. But, who's kidding who? This is the '06 Pack.

Silver Gate, Montana wolf-watcher Doug McLaughlin lives and breathes these wolves: He saw '06 strand an adult elk in the river for three days before she took it down. He saw her mate with 754 and 755 last year and watched her pups when they first emerged from their den. He viewed the pups participating in their first kill in late March. He's watched this family since they first became a family.

Jay Tutchton, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' General Counsel, and I met Doug and the '06 Pack the day after a Missoula court hearing on whether Yellowstone's wolves would remain protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Judge Donald Molloy was considering whether to approve a settlement proposal, negotiated by ten conservation groups and the federal government, to remove the Northern Rockies wolves from the ESA list. Judge Molloy later ruled that he could not approve the settlement, as it would violate the ESA.

Delistings are supposed to be based on biology, but the settlement itself would have been political delisting, as it is motivated by political fears rather than science. Representing Alliance for the Wild Rockies and Friends of the Clearwater, Jay argued that the settlement should be rejected.



DOUG MCLAUGHLIN

Northern Rockies wolves (except in Wyoming) will lose their ESA protections under a federal budget rider that passed in April.

Even while Judge Molloy was mulling over the settlement, Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) and other political grandstanders made it clear they could not be appeased. They kept at it in Congress and attached a wolf-delisting rider to the federal budget. As a result, ESA protections will be removed for wolves in Montana, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, and Washington.

Watching the '06 pack alongside Doug, we asked him whether they ever left the park. He said they usually stayed within it, but sometimes ventured outside. We left the cold, snowy hill from which we had been watching this family with one thought: '06 would not go along with any actions that endanger her pack.

Epilogue: We won't give up on wolves in Yellowstone or elsewhere. We and conservation allies are set to challenge a Montana plan targeting a modest group of 30 wolves that have established themselves in a remote area of the Bitterroot National Forest. We're contending that, even if they lose their ESA protections, government killing of wolves will violate other federal laws.

*Visit our website:
Programs>Wildlife>Carnivore Protection*

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' General Counsel argued in court to ensure wolves continue to have the freedom to bravely charge elk in the Northern Rockies.



DOUG MCLAUGHLIN

ROUNDING UP WESTERN COAL

Jeremy Nichols

It's a roundup, all right, but in this case we're wrangling some of the West's oldest and dirtiest coal-fired power plants. And in the last few months, we've made some electrifying progress.

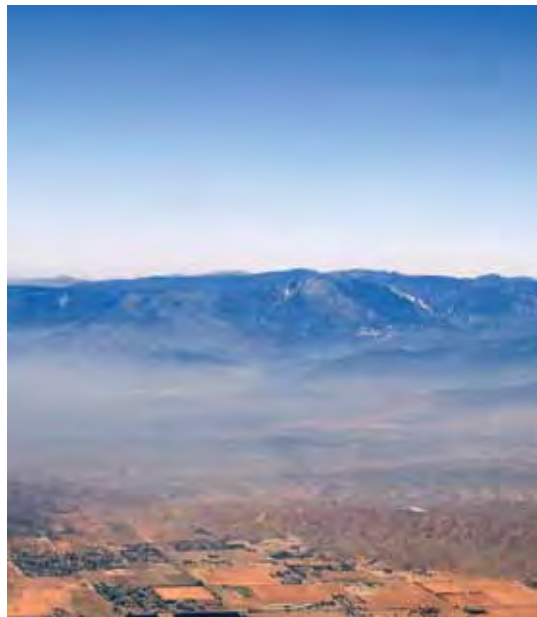
Our goal is to make the West coal-free by 2035. How are we doing this? By exposing the true cost of coal, and in turn exposing the fact that clean energy is both more affordable and more protective of our health and the environment.

We're successfully seizing unprecedented opportunities under the Clean Air Act to make the case. Under the law—and our vigorous enforcement of it—the nation's oldest and dirtiest coal-fired power plants are being required to clean up. Here's a summary of our efforts that are leading to cleanups—and even shutdowns—in several states:

- **IDAHO:** In January, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed that one of Idaho's coal-fired power plants slash its haze-forming pollution emissions by 80%. According to the plant owner, the proposal is likely to lead to a transition away from coal because of its cost.
- **NEW MEXICO:** Also in January, the EPA released a plan to force Public Service Company of New Mexico (or PNM) to retrofit all four coal-fired boilers at the San Juan Generating Station with state-of-the-art pollution controls. The proposal is the strongest yet for any coal plant in the nation and would reduce haze and smog-forming pollution by more than 95%.
- **OKLAHOMA:** In March, the EPA released a plan to force three of Oklahoma's largest coal-fired power plants to slash their sulfur dioxide pollution by as much as 95%. The EPA's proposal rejected an Oklahoma plan that would have allowed the state's coal-fired power plants to burn coal without any pollution controls.
- **OREGON:** Also in March, EPA proposed to approve a plan that would commit Oregon's only coal-fired power plant to retiring by 2020. The plan is a milestone as it represents the first time the EPA has proposed to approve a retirement plan to meet federally required pollution reductions.



BHM/WYOMING



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From ripping up Western landscapes to extract coal to the deadly air pollution its use leaves behind, coal is never clean. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is working toward a coal-free West by 2035.

All of this was spurred, in large part, by a 2009 lawsuit filed by WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, which committed the EPA to take these actions. And even more progress is on the horizon: Because of our ongoing legal efforts, the EPA is also on track to require clean ups at coal plants in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, and Utah.

Our aim is simple: to use these retrofit proposals as springboards for coal plant retirement or re-powering. Instead of spending millions to make coal clean, let's invest in something that's clean to begin with, like wind, solar, and greater efficiency and conservation. With coal-fired power plants throughout the West facing millions of dollars in upgrades, the time is ripe for clean energy to come out ahead.

Visit our website: [Programs>Climate and Energy](#)

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



With a degree in Parks & Recreation Management from Northern Arizona University and a passion for the outdoors, Billy Meyers was already connected to the idea of rewilding. But he was eager to volunteer to plant trees when he first heard about WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' restoration work. "I enjoy working in beautiful places and do this for the learning experience."

— BILLY MEYERS
Santa Fe, NM

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IN THE HALLS OF JUSTICE

Samantha Ruscavage-Barz and Ashley Wilmes

WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



Steve loves the outdoors and has a degree in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in water, so he found our river restoration work to be a great personal fit. His job with WILDEARTH GUARDIANS: Selecting just the right spot to plant the trees and working with the team to position them deep enough to reach the water table so they can successfully take root.

"I want to learn, meet new people, and help protect the resources and the beautiful landscapes of New Mexico."

— STEVE BOGOTT
Gunnison, CO

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

CLEAN AIR

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS v. Lamar Utilities Board and Arkansas River Power Authority

On March 23, 2011, Guardians filed suit against Lamar Light and Power over thousands of violations of the Clean Air Act at the Lamar coal-fired power plant in eastern Colorado. Since converting from natural gas to coal in May 2009, the Lamar Plant has been dumping illegal amounts of pollution into the air, including nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter. These toxic pollutants spew from a large smokestack

PHOTO COURTESY OF RAY RAFFITI PHOTOGRAPHY



in the middle of the town of Lamar, posing serious threats to the health of local residents and the surrounding environment. With the aid of the University of Denver Environmental Law Clinic, Guardians has also been litigating a case against the coal plant over its failure to use the Maximum Achievable Control Technology to reduce emissions of mercury and other hazardous air pollutants.

CLEAN LAND

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS et al. v. Salazar et al.

In 2009, Guardians petitioned the Secretary of Interior, Ken Salazar, and Bureau of Land Management to have BLM change its process for selling access to the nation's most productive coal deposits. The Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana provides upwards of 42 percent of the nation's coal. Under BLM's current leasing policy, the coal companies drive the leasing process by deciding the number and size of coal leases, and BLM limits its environmental analyses to impacts from individual leases. Guardians' Petition asked Secretary Salazar and BLM to recertify the Powder River Basin as a Coal Production Region, which would require BLM to drive the leasing process, set regional leasing levels, and perform environmental analyses of impacts to the Powder River Basin



ECOFLIGHT

as a whole, as well as consider climate change impacts from burning Powder River Basin coal. On January 28, 2011, BLM denied Guardians' Petition, a denial that flies in the face of all reason given that the Powder River Basin is the single largest coal producer in the nation, and among the largest coal producers in the world. On March 30, 2011, Guardians filed a lawsuit in federal court challenging BLM's denial of GUARDIANS' Petition.

CLEAN WATER

Petition to Nominate Surface Waters in Forest Service Wilderness as ONRWs

On November 30, 2010, the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission designated perennial waters in U.S. Forest Service Wilderness Areas in New Mexico as Outstanding National Resource Waters. ONRWs are intended to prevent further degradation of water quality and, in so doing, create an opportunity for water quality restoration. The New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, a trade group opposed to strengthening water quality protections for some of New Mexico's most pristine waters, challenged ONRW designation in the New Mexico Court of Appeals. Guardians has moved to intervene on the side of the Water Quality Control Commission to defend ONRW designation and keep these important water quality protections in place for New Mexico's most fragile resource.

Visit our website: [Take Action](http://TakeAction.org)



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAY RAFFITI PHOTOGRAPHY

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS



CLEAN WATERS, WILD FORESTS

Now that we have made significant progress in protecting headwater streams and rivers in New Mexico, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is bringing this distinctive campaign to Colorado, where over 6,000 miles are suitable. Since the beginning of the year, we've met with conservation allies and municipal leaders in Colorado and traveled to the nation's capital to brief officials in the Obama Administration. So far, the reception to Clean Waters, Wild Forests for Colorado is overwhelmingly positive. Look for action opportunities to educate Colorado's political leaders on waters in National Forest roadless areas in that state.

Visit our website: [Top Priorities>Clean Waters, Wild Forests](#)

TELLURIDE PRAIRIE DOGS

On January 11, 2011, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS presented a slideshow to the Telluride Town Council on the need to protect Gunnison's prairie dogs, one of five species of prairie dogs that exist, all of which are imperiled. Citizens showed up in force and many spoke eloquently of their personal connection to these animals. The town councillors unanimously agreed that lethal control be taken off the table when it comes to the valley floor prairie dogs. GUARDIANS is now working with the community on a prairie dog management plan.

Visit our website:

[Top Priorities>Protecting the Prairie Dog Empire](#)



JESS ALFORD

CHALLENGING BOBCAT TRAPPING

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS continues our work against trapping by extending our campaign to bobcats. Bobcats have tufted, black ears and short, six-inch tails. Their name is a shortened version of "bob-tailed cat." Their scientific name, *Lynx rufus*, refers to their beautiful reddish-brown, spotted coats, prized by fur buyers. U.S. bobcats enjoy no federal protections and few state protections. New Mexico supplied a jaw-dropping 22,961 bobcat furs to the world's fur market during the years 2000 to 2010, while Colorado contributed 11,044. WILDEARTH GUARDIANS works in both states to stop bobcat trapping and the trapping of other species.

Visit our website: [Top Priorities>Trapping](#)

DAVE JONES



WHY ARE YOU A GUARDIAN?



Bill, a maintenance technician for Sunwest Silver, joined the volunteer restoration crew after reading a 2003 *Albuquerque Journal* article about our Rio Puerco planting.

"When I was eight, I visited my great grandfather, Leo Sandoval, in Cuba. He told me that when he was my age he used to catch trout in the Rio Puerco right in town. I couldn't believe it. So when I heard about tree planting on the river, I decided I'd try to bring the stream back to the way it had been for my grandfather."

—BILL ROSE
Albuquerque, NM

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wildearthguardians.org

Working to Rewild the West

John Horning

MUD CAKED AND SWEAT SOAKED

Each year, from January through May, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' dedicated restoration crew spends long, hard days preparing sites for our volunteer tree-planting events.

These crew members expose themselves to harsh and varied weather conditions, often living on site for several weeks at a time. They usually finish the day coated in mud, dirt, and sweat from their efforts to prepare, plant, and protect native riparian vegetation.

A salute to our hard-working advance team. Without them, we couldn't plant 100,000 trees each year.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

Before: June 2005



After: September 2010



After winning the first-ever New Mexico grazing lease for conservation on the Rio Puerco in 1997, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS began the painstaking task of planting thousands of native trees to rewild the area in central New Mexico. Inspired? See more about our restoration projects at wildearthguardians.org.

It was a cold, crisp blue spring morning in 1997 when a hardy group of 25 souls ventured out to the muddy, barren, and, in some places, still snow-covered banks of the Rio Puerco in northwestern New Mexico. We had gathered with one goal in mind: to bring this degraded river back to life by planting native cottonwoods and willows.

Though the river pulsed with possibility brought on by the early snowmelt from the flanks of the giant caldera that forms the heart of the Jemez Mountains, its ecological condition did little to inspire optimism—even for those of us who were energized by the challenge.

A rapid ecological assessment we conducted the previous fall revealed that the once-lush cottonwood-and-willow forest had been nearly eliminated. Remnants of heavily

grazed willow thickets in hard-to-reach places provided hints of the river's ecological past. But the stream was shallow and wide instead of narrow and deep, and was choked with sediment that bled into the water from its trampled and unstable banks.

The culprit in this ecological disaster: two centuries of year-round cattle grazing. Dozens of plants and animals that had once used this riverbank for nesting, feeding, and rearing their young had been forced out. As a result of the ecological collapse, this entire ecosystem was now endangered.

But we were not there to assign blame. We were there to begin the healing process. Earlier that fall WILDEARTH GUARDIANS had won the privilege of restoring the Rio Puerco by outbidding a rancher and securing the first-ever grazing lease for conservation purposes. But in winning the lease and solving one problem—removing the cows—we had created another. How would we restore the land?

I had no direct experience to draw on and WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, up to that point, had only been a bare-knuckled advocate for changes in how public lands are managed. We knew what was wrong and who we thought was responsible, but we didn't know how to make it right.

Somehow we persevered through the uncertainty. On that cold spring morning we had assembled enough knowledge and warm bodies to begin to restore the Rio Puerco.

By the end of the first day, with the river's mud caking our shoes and pants, we had planted more than 100 cottonwoods and

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS



Restoration Director Jim Matison (center) has spearheaded the ecological rebirth of dozens of streams.

nearly 2,000 willows. We left exhausted, but exhilarated that we had taken real steps to heal a wounded landscape.

BIGGER AND BETTER

Since those early days when we relied almost exclusively on borrowed equipment and volunteer labor, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' restoration operation has been transformed under the leadership of our restoration program director, Jim Matison.

Not only does Jim now have nearly a dozen full- and part-time staff members and a budget of more than \$600,000, he and WILDEARTH GUARDIANS have also significantly expanded the number of sites where we work. In addition to New Mexico and Arizona, we're also working to expand into Colorado.

We've also gone from working exclusively on lands we control to partnering with the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and many private landowners. And over the last 15 years we've planted hundreds of thousands of cottonwoods, willows, and other native shrubs and trees.

Our work has expanded, but our vision has remained the same, which is that grassroots restoration and rewilding efforts are a critical aspect of WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' brand of environmental advocacy. Getting our feet wet and our hands dirty to jumpstart restoration is just as important as winning lawsuits.

We also still believe that restoration isn't just an ecological enterprise; it's a social one as well. That means we need to involve communities and inspire citizens in addition to ensuring a high rate of success for our cottonwood and willow plantings.

BUILDING WITH BEAVERS

As I returned year after to year to watch the Rio Puerco transform into a narrow stream with a native cottonwood-willow bosque shading its banks, a highlight was



Cottonwoods chiseled by beaver signify the return of healthy, functioning ecosystems on our river restoration sites.

finding that one of our largest cottonwoods had been cut down by a pioneering beaver. Instead of greeting that chiseling castor with disappointment, I was excited because its presence signaled a whole new cycle of restoration.

Beavers don't plant trees, but they are ecosystem engineers. Their dams create ponds and wetlands. As they move up- and downstream their dams can recharge an entire floodplain, transforming it into one huge, wet sponge.

Their work had already begun to transform the Santa Fe River, which had also been the beneficiary of a multi-year WILDEARTH GUARDIANS restoration campaign. Thanks to a few wet years and the work of the beavers the river corridor had been transformed. We may have lost cottonwoods and willows by the hundreds to the beavers' hearty appetite, but new cottonwood and willow saplings grew by the thousands.

The beavers' hard work on the Santa Fe River made us realize that we needed to use their skills on a much larger scale: climate change and increased drought and loss of water was adding urgency to our efforts.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Restoration of natural ecosystems can be a boon for the economy and the environment. Forest Service economists estimate that for every \$1 million spent on forest watershed restoration, 13 to 17 jobs are created.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS created 22 jobs and spent more than five years closing and obliterating more than 32 miles of roads that damage watersheds and wildlife habitat in the Santa Fe National Forest, creating a win-win situation for everybody.

Before: September 2006



After: September 2010



After planting native cottonwood and willow trees, the change at WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' restoration site in central New Mexico is dramatic.

GIFT OF LIFE

If you've ever hugged a tree, sat in the shade, or reached for a branch to climb, you already know that trees can heal and bring joy.

Two years ago, Win Allen and Elizabeth Hightower asked friends to donate trees to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in lieu of traditional wedding gifts. Today they have a grove in their honor.

To start your own grove, we will put any amount of trees (\$10 per tree) in your name or the name of a loved one and send a beautiful card commemorating your generous gift.

Not only that, but WILDEARTH GUARDIANS' donor Chris Otahal will match, two to one, all donations given for this year's tree plantings, up to \$20,000.

Visit "Plant a Tree" under "Support Us" at wildearthguardians.org.

Recovering beavers, which had been extirpated from thousands of streams due to trapping and habitat degradation, seemed like an elegantly simple and wildly ambitious approach to restoration.

And so, in 2007, we started our beaver restoration and climate adaptation project. The goal: To restore beavers to the headwaters of as many Southwestern streams as possible. For the last few years we've been working with the U.S. Forest Service to identify potential, suitable, and occupied habitats to overcome obstacles to beaver reintroduction.

ROAD RESTORATION

As we restored more and more miles of river we came to realize that healthy stream corridors, though biologically critical, weren't enough to reconnect and rewild whole ecosystems. Important wildlife corridors also exist in the forested highlands of the West, many of which have also been severely tattered by logging, road building, and fire suppression.

On the northern edge of the same caldera that spawns the headwaters of the Rio Puerco, a system of old, abandoned logging roads had fragmented forest ecosystems, altered hydrology, and disrupted wildlife dispersal patterns.

Thankfully the Santa Fe National Forest had also recognized the problem and completed an environmental analysis that made it easier to begin decommissioning and closing old roads to slowly reconnect small, isolated patches of forest into one bigger whole.

Five years ago we secured a pioneering \$360,000 grant from the federal Collaborative Forest Restoration Program that brought together a diverse partnership between the Gallina Middle School, local contractors, the Forest Service, and the New Mexico Game and Fish Department. Our challenge was to close and decommission unnecessary roads, which would help bring the area one step closer to complying with the Santa Fe National Forest's land use standards.

Firewood cutters cut some trees while another company helped re-contour the landscape to remove the roads' imprint. The Gallina Middle School did much of the monitoring to assess changes and evaluate the project's effectiveness. Having the local community participate in and benefit economically from the work was critical.

By the time we completed the project last fall, we had removed more than 30 miles



JESS ALFORD

Connecting people to local rivers and streams and building relationships as volunteers return to plant trees year after year is inspiring and rewarding.

of old roads, double what we had originally set out to do.

One of its greatest successes wasn't just the roads we closed and the wilder landscape we left in its place. We also began to shift the public discourse about restoration from its narrow and misguided focus on "thinning" fire-prone forests to the much more important challenge of closing the tens of thousands of miles of old logging roads that pockmark our public lands all across the West.

And there is much more work that needs to be done. There are more than 386,000 miles of roads on the national forests throughout the country that could be decommissioned and closed. Restoring these roads would heal damaged watersheds, reconnect fragmented wildlands, and reduce taxpayer expense for road maintenance. We can't do it all, but we are off to a great start.

REAL CONNECTIONS

As we've completed these restoration projects, we've come to realize that our progress can't only be measured by the work we've done. Rather, the greatest satisfaction comes in the relationships we've built with people and places—people who return year after year to dig, plant, pull, sweat and connect with those engaging in the same restorative acts; and places that contribute to our need for awe and beauty.

For us, one of the greatest pleasures of rewilding is not only the doing, but also the watching. We've watched the Rio Puerco transform from a bare, naked skeleton of itself into a full and complete river corridor. We feel tremendous pride and hope from our work on the Rio Puerco—and the many other places that we've restored—and those wells of emotion continue to fuel our advocacy work today and will do so into the future.

Visit our website: Programs>Wild Rivers

GOOD NEWS FROM THE GUARDIANS

BIG WIN

Late in 2010, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS participated in weeks of technical hearings on Outstanding Waters in New Mexico. Despite strong opposition from the public lands cattle industry, including an 11th hour court battle, we won! In addition to presenting five technical experts, including a green economist and a fisheries biologist, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS generated public comment overwhelmingly in favor of Clean Water, Wild Forests. The Water Commission voted to protect the state's cleanest waters in Forest Service Wilderness Areas on November 30. Unfortunately, this victory will have to be defended, as the cattle industry is mounting a court challenge.



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

Visit our website: Top Priorities>Clean Waters, Wild Forests

RICH READING



ANNUAL PRAIRIE DOG DAY INSPIRES

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS celebrated Prairie Dog Day by releasing our fourth annual "Report from the Burrow: Forecast of the Prairie Dog," grading state and federal agencies on prairie dog conservation. The report was distributed to state agencies, prairie dog activists, the media, and selected senators, representatives, and governors. At the Denver Zoo, we helped kids discover what animal they would be if they lived in a prairie dog town. And along with the Prairie Dog Coalition of The Humane Society of the United States, we took students from Lowry Elementary School to the Plains Conservation Center to meet wild prairie dogs and explore the amazing diversity of grassland wildlife.

Visit our website: Top Priorities>Protecting the Prairie Dog Empire

STREAM TEAM 2011

In 2011, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS and our many hard working volunteers planted thousands of trees to restore critical habitat in Ojo Caliente and Valles Caldera National Preserve, two important and beautiful places that have been wounded by years of degradation. Over the course of 20 days, volunteers such as Norbert Sperlich, Mona Kay, and Dennis Letters placed 20-foot cottonwood poles and bundles of willows into holes up to eight feet deep. They worked hard and got dirty, and as a result, San Antonio Creek and three other streams like it will someday host trout and willow flycatcher and even beavers. We love planting trees!

Visit our website: Programs>Wild Rivers>Stream Team



WILDEARTH GUARDIANS



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GUARDIAN PROFILES

Ashley Wilmes



Ashley Wilmes is a staff attorney for WILDEARTH GUARDIANS, where she focuses on fighting polluters and holding our federal agencies accountable for protecting wildlife and wild places of the West. Ashley comes to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS after working as a project attorney at the University of Denver's Environmental Law Clinic and as a public

interest attorney. She received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Oregon School of Law in 2002, with a specialty certificate in Environmental and Natural Resources Law. During law school, Ashley helped organize the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference and was a student attorney at the Western Environmental Law Center. She earned her bachelor's degree from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, and spent semesters in London and the Central African Republic. Ashley lives in Boulder, Colorado, with her husband, Tom, and their son, Thomas.

Taylor Jones



Taylor Jones joined WILDEARTH GUARDIANS in 2010 as our Endangered Species Advocate. She received an M. Sc. in Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2010, where she was a member of the Carnivore Coexistence Lab. Before entering graduate school, she did a variety of conservation work in New Mexico

and Colorado, including prairie dog relocation and riparian area surveys. She has been fascinated by animals and plants both great and small throughout her whole life, from watching ants as a child to completing a Master's thesis on the Andean bear. She intends to apply one of the Bodhisattva vows to her work with endangered species: "Beings are numberless; I vow to save them all."