

Carapace



NEWSLETTER FOR THE

Upper Gila Watershed Alliance

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Fifth grader Andrew Eggleston and other students enjoy getting their feet wet in the Gila River during the 2018 Children's Water Festival. See article on page 6. Photo: Raven Myers.

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Mission Not Yet Accomplished

by *Donna Stevens*

While the vocal outrage over the proposed Air Force military trainings over the Gila National Forest may have simmered down, it's still bubbling beneath the surface. There's much work to do to defeat this threat to quality of life in southwest New Mexico.

Opposition Has an Impact

In the last few months, opponents to the F-16 trainings have continued to pressure local and federal officials, and this activism has borne some fruit. The August 18 *Silver City Daily Press* published an op-ed by Senator Martin Heinrich. The first paragraph reads: "I am calling on the Air Force not to expand airspace over the Gila and surrounding areas. Especially when there are other more appropriate overflight options, it makes no sense to threaten what makes the Gila so special and unnecessarily create hostility between the public and the military in New Mexico."

At their August 16 meeting, the Grant County Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution with a dozen "Whereas" paragraphs and a two-page "Therefore" section outlining their concerns with the F-16 trainings, including increased risk of wildfire in the Gila National Forest, negative impacts on public safety and health, the threat of noise, degradation of wildlife habitat, loss of tourism income, and others.

The resolution concludes, "NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that unless the Air Force determines that no other alternative can fulfill this training mission, the Grant County Commission respectfully requests that the Air Force use the other proposed and existing areas for Holloman's F-16 training."

The Silver City Town Council, at its October 9 meeting, voted unanimously to send a letter to the Air Force stating their objections to military trainings over the Silver City area and Gila National Forest, including the Gila and Aldo Leopold Wilderness Areas.

Outreach

Because the Fourth of July parade in Silver City is arguably the most well-attended event of the year, we used this opportunity to spread the word about the threat of military trainings. Our supporters, dressed

as hikers, fishermen, backpackers, and Gila critters, were dive-bombed by F-16s as we walked the parade route, handing out information to spectators. At our Gough Park booth after the parade, we spoke to dozens of residents about the Holloman Air Force Base's proposal to conduct F-16 trainings over our area. Most people, upon learning about the proposed military trainings over the Gila, signed our petition opposing this action.

But Wait—There's More

Let's celebrate our hard-won victories and then get back to work. It would be foolhardy to interpret the op-ed, resolution, letter, and hundreds of petition signatures to signify "mission accomplished."

UGWA, along with our colleagues and dedicated volunteers in the Gila Conservation Coalition and Heart of the Gila, continue to educate ourselves about the complex issues in preparation for our response to the draft Environmental Impact Statement that the Air Force plans to release in early 2019. It's our job to inform the Air Force about the Gila National Forest's unique ecology, its value, and the many reasons why it's an inappropriate place for military trainings. We are working on interactive maps that overlay the proposed and existing Military Operations Areas with wilderness areas, critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, Important Bird Areas, and other places worthy of protection. Coalition members continue to meet with elected officials to keep them informed of new developments. We meet regularly to update our strategic plan. And, at the risk of sounding like a bad spy novelist, there is work happening behind the scenes that is not yet ready for prime time.

A Plea for Help

We all know that you don't get something for nothing. Our work opposing the F-16s takes time, and, like it or not, Time is Money. As you contemplate your end-of-year giving, or even if you're living so lightly that such a phrase is irrelevant, please consider donating to UGWA. Although we have a small, ultra-frugal staff

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and cheap rent, our bare-bones budget has no fat in it for working on unfunded campaigns. I urge you to remember why the Gila is important to you. Weigh the price of a restaurant meal with the priceless value of a quiet Gila. If you're reading this newsletter, I know you'll agree that the latter is worth far more than the former.

You can send a check to UGWA or give online at www.ugwa.org by clicking the "Donate" button on the home page. Thank you so much.

Front and back sides of informative "dollar bills" handed out along the July 4 parade route.



Holloman Air Force Base is proposing to expand military training flights for F-16s over the Gila National Forest, Gila Wilderness, and Grant County. The basic facts:

- 10,000 annual flights (30 per day); 1,000 at night; 1,000 with sonic booms
- Loud noise will hurt the tourist industry of Silver City & surrounding towns
- Extreme noise causes health & safety risks to humans, wildlife & domestic animals
- Loss of peace & quiet & quality of life in Southwest New Mexico
- Dropping flares that could increase the risk of forest fires
- Dropping chaff (aluminum-coated fibers) that could impact wildlife, streams, & human health

There are other options for military preparedness, such as using existing airspace at White Sands Missile Range.

To learn more and sign the petition, see PeacefulGilaSkies.com

Approaching the End of the Tunnel

by Donna Stevens

In the ongoing saga of the attempt to divert the Gila River, the last several months have been more eventful than usual. In July 2018, eight meetings (five in New Mexico and three in Arizona) were convened by the federal Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and New Mexico's Interstate Stream Commission, the agencies responsible for analyzing the diversion project's impacts. A total of 355 people attended the meetings and 560 comments were submitted, most of them opposing the diversion.

The Current Project

The project has changed many times over the last several years. In response to public outcry about the diversion's outsized price tag, the New Mexico Central

Arizona Project (CAP) Entity, or NMCAPE, the project proponent composed of municipalities, irrigation ditch associations, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, has scaled back the project to match the allocated funding of the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA), which authorizes up to \$62M that can *only* be used for a so-called NM Unit (diversion).

As it stands now, the project consists of diversions in the Cliff-Gila and Virden Valleys and the San Francisco River area. In the Cliff-Gila Valley, a diversion in the upper valley would store water in ponds situated on the private property of willing landowners as well as a larger reservoir in Winn Canyon. Existing ditches would have to be modified, some would be lined, and

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Upper Gila Watershed Alliance

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Mission Statement

The Upper Gila Watershed Alliance is a non-profit watershed protection and conservation organization working to promote the long-term health of the Upper Gila Watershed and its communities of life. Through advocacy, education, research and restoration projects, we are striving to build communities of stewards in more locally based economies.

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End of the Tunnel (continued from page 3)

extensions would require easements through private property. Another component requires the drilling of two types of wells, conventional and Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR), to recover water stored in the aquifer. It gets complicated fast when you realize that there are two “colors” of water: adjudicated water and AWSA water, and they will need to be accounted for separately.

This project comes with a price tag of approximately \$44 million, according to NMCAPE Director Anthony Gutierrez’s report dated September 27, 2018. Five days later, at a NMCAPE meeting, engineering consultant Stantec reported costs of individual project components, and some were considerably different from Gutierrez’s estimates. For example, Gutierrez’s report listed Gila Valley conveyance improvements at \$1.35M, but Stantec’s budget said nearly \$6.9M. No truly accurate comparison could be completed, however, because Stantec is still completing the field work necessary to determine the cost of storage reservoirs.

The Virden Valley diversion project is simpler and cheaper—a bargain at just \$4.2M—as it utilizes existing irrigation diversion structures and calls for the construction of two reservoirs.

In the San Francisco River area near the town of Alma, the project consists of a diversion structure and ditch conveyance improvements, for a price of \$2.2M. The NMCAPE envisions the construction of a reservoir at some future date.

Dueling Diversions

To complicate matters greatly, the Gila Basin Irrigation Commission (GBIC), a group of irrigators in the Cliff-Gila Valley, is planning an improved diversion of its own. This parallel project is in the design phase, with consultants working on the specs for a cross vane rock weir diversion structure, the least invasive of several diversion options. GBIC irrigators desire a more reliable structure than the current dirt push-up diversions that wash out in big floods and require frequent maintenance. How the GBIC diversion will interact with the AWSA-funded project is still very much up in the air. Is your mind boggled yet?

Continued next page

Water Loss

Stantec's October 2 report to the NMCAPE revealed the magnitude of water losses due to evaporation and seepage. In the Cliff-Gila Valley, an estimated 58% of the water diverted from the Gila River would be lost, and in Virden, 50%. Because no reservoir would be constructed in the San Francisco, and reservoir seepage accounts for most water loss, just 17% of the San Francisco's diverted water would be lost. Keep in mind that every drop of diverted water must be paid for, whether or not it is actually available for use.

Water Use

As with project details, the end water user has changed throughout the life of the proposed project. In the current configuration, diverted water is intended for agricultural use only and would benefit fewer than 100 total irrigators in all three areas. Stantec's report recommends growing crops of higher value than alfalfa and irrigated pasture, which constitute the bulk of the current use in the Cliff-Gila Valley. Stantec suggests using at least 20% of the diverted water to grow pecans, a very thirsty crop that cannot go fallow in drought years.

Concerns

From the beginning, conservationists have opposed a diversion because of the potential to degrade the ecology of the Gila River. At the July scoping meeting in Cliff, valley residents were alarmed to realize that, if the proposed Aquifer Storage and Recovery wells were part of the project, they would have to drill their own wells deeper in response—quite a costly proposition.

Big Bucks

The Arizona Water Settlements Act, passed in 2004, allocated \$66M for any project that meets a water demand in southwest New Mexico. Because of investments, the funding is up to about \$90M, which is transferred into state coffers annually in increments of approximately \$9M. The NM Unit Fund is controlled by the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC), which must approve the budget of the NMCAPE.

ISC Director John Longworth, in his report to New Mexico's Legislative Finance Committee on September 27, 2018, summarized the AWSA expenses

from the start of Fiscal Year 2012 through September 25, 2018, as follows:

- Interstate Stream Commission:
 - Operating budget: \$1.6M
 - NM Unit conceptual engineering and water modeling: \$1.46M
 - Studies: \$3.8M
 - Legal services: \$519,000
 - Other: \$109,000
- \$4.4M advanced to the Bureau of Reclamation in FY 2018 for the environmental analysis (NEPA) required for large federal projects, such as a Gila River diversion
- NM CAP Entity: \$1.32M
- Non-diversion projects: \$1.6M

Projected expenses for FY 2019 are:

- Interstate Stream Commission: \$1.15M
- Bureau of Reclamation: \$1.34M
- NM CAP Entity: \$700,000

The sum of these numbers is \$14,808,000. Subtract the \$1.6M spent on non-diversion projects such as water meter replacements, ditch improvements, and effluent reuse projects, and you're left with \$13.2M spent on planning for a Gila River diversion.

It's important to remember that AWSA funding can be used for any project that meets a water demand in Grant, Hidalgo, Catron, and Luna Counties. What water conservation projects could we have completed since 2004 (the year the AWSA was passed) with \$13 million? What projects could still be implemented with the remaining \$77M if we were to give up on planning a diversion?

Now is your mind boggled?

Timeline

A Trump administration Executive Order mandates that the analysis required under the National Environmental Policy Act (usually called NEPA), the Endangered Species Act, and other environmental laws must be completed within one year. When the Federal Register published a Notice of Intent in June 2018, the clock began ticking on the environmental compliance requirements of a Gila River diversion.

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End of the Tunnel *(continued from page 5)*

2019 will be a momentous year for the Gila River. The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Gila diversion is expected to be released in March, and will kick off a 45-day comment period and a series of public meetings. In response to the public comments received, the BOR will revise (or not) its EIS and release a final version in August. The Secretary of the Interior's Record of Decision will be released in December, ahead of the legal deadline on December 31, 2019.

What We're Doing

The Gila Conservation Coalition (GCC), of which UGWA is a partner, continues to attend monthly NMCAPE meetings, read project reports, and meet with BOR staff to keep tabs on the ever-changing project. We confer regularly with our conservation part-

ners on adaptive strategies to educate and influence elected officials and other prominent leaders. GCC's attorney wrote extensive public comments during the July 2018 scoping period and is preparing our 2019 EIS comments.

What You Can Do

At every opportunity, keep up the pressure on elected officials. In 2019, when the draft EIS is released, we will need all hands on deck to attend public meetings and submit written comments.

We should be using the AWSA funding for non-diversion projects. Please help us to protect the Gila River in perpetuity.

Big thanks to the Maki Foundation, which awarded us funding to redouble our efforts to protect the Gila River in this last year before the decision is made on whether to proceed with a diversion.

Children's Water Festival and the Healing Power of Nature

by **Carol Ann Fugagli**

Recently a friend, who is a local healthcare practitioner, described a young patient who has gone through some trauma and is usually reserved during their sessions. However, during the latest visit, the student suddenly lit up, exclaiming about a recent school field trip to the Gila River and describing the experience with enthusiasm.

This story is a reminder for me of yet another benefit of getting our youth into nature: the power to heal. Emotional scars and trauma can be deeply embedded in the brain and spirit, in a place so deep that "talk therapy" alone cannot reach them. While that type of therapy certainly has its place, many therapists now realize the importance of incorporating body-centered practices in their treatment, such as movement, breathwork, sound, and meditation.

Nature can help us to be grounded—to feel rooted in our bodies and connected to our surroundings with present-moment awareness. When we're grounded, we

can more readily tap into painful emotions and sensations without being overwhelmed.

Most of us are familiar with the word *biophilia*, a term that, in the late 1970s, American biologist Edward O. Wilson extended to mean "the rich, natural pleasure that comes from being surrounded by living organisms." I personally believe that contact with nature is essential for the human psyche and that this bond carries over to our physical health.

As UGWA's education and outreach director, I am proud to help connect elementary school students with nature. One way UGWA facilitates this is by organizing the annual Children's Water Festival (CWF). I have had the privilege of either volunteering for or helping organize the festival for the past ten years, and when I see the students in the river splashing and shrieking with delight at discovering and catching water insects, it fills me with pure joy. I am proud of our

Continued next page

community and all of our supporters who continue to help make this event happen.

On three days during the weeks of September 17 to October 3, several hundred fifth graders from Grant and Hidalgo Counties enjoyed a day of environmental immersion and fun at the river. The CWF was held at the Nature Conservancy's Gila River Farm in Cliff and at the Mogollon Box Day Use Area. Students explored the river bottom in search of macroinvertebrates, tested water quality, and followed the course of the river as they learned how oxbows, cobble benches, and sandbars are formed. There were also hands-on activities in river crafts, native plant and pollinator interactions, and bird migration.

Tricia Hurley is one of the founding members of the Gila Conservation Education Center, a group that organized the event from 2007–2014. She continues to work with the event. "I keep teaching," she says,

Above: An immature Spiny Softshell turtle was found in the mud during the CWF. This turtle is a rare and beautiful sight. If it looks familiar, that's because it's the model for UGWA's logo, created decades ago by Orien MacDonald. The Spiny Softshell occurs naturally in the Rio Grande and

"because I think it's important to connect children to their natural environment and teach them to recognize the plants and animals around them. This way, they identify with a sense of place and ultimately will care about protecting the place where they live."



Everyone's healing journey is unique to that individual's own experience. Connecting to the natural world can serve as a powerful tool in the journey to heal. In nature, we're reminded that painful experiences do not have to define the rest of our lives and that the natural beauty around us has the power to shape a new future.

We are grateful to the following funders for this year's festival: Lineberry Foundation, New Mexico Land Conservancy, and Heart of the Gila. It would not have been possible without a number of generous donations and the efforts of many instructors and volunteers.

Cimarron, Canadian, and Pecos Rivers, and was probably introduced into the Gila.

Below: Students from Lordsburg discover macroinvertebrates in the Gila River during the festival.

Photos: Carol Ann Fugagli



Nuestro Gila: A Hispanic-Centered Campaign to Protect the Gila

by *Cindy Renee Provencio*

Nuestro Gila is an initiative of the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance to engage the Hispanic population of Grant County in conservation issues. While members of the Hispanic community represent more than 50% of the county's population, they have little representation in local conservation issues. The Nuestro Gila campaign seeks to include Hispanic voices and perspectives in the conversation about the future of the Gila National Forest through its current forest plan revision process, which includes making wilderness area recommendations. (While the Forest Service can—and should—recommend additional wilderness areas, only an act of Congress can designate them.)

A lifelong resident of Grant County, raised in the Mining District, I have been working with UGWA as a community organizer since January 2018. Nuestro Gila is the result of that and has been quite a success, through a variety of outreach strategies. Well over 200 letters of support for wilderness have been collected as I table at community events and canvass door to door.

I've also been hosting monthly field trips to the areas being proposed for wilderness recommendation. These trips are proving to be a valuable tool in building the Nuestro Gila community and generating actions, such as writing letters to the editor and volunteering to table at community events, and help lead hikes. For example, Simon Sotelo attended the first two outings and has not stopped volunteering since. He submitted an impactful letter to the editor and, as an avid hiker, is always willing to help plan and lead a field trip. For October's River Day at Grapevine Campground, near the Gila wilderness boundary, Simon taught a lesson on the health of river systems by testing the water quality of the river. This simple demonstration engaged both the children and the adults, and helped us put into perspective the importance of wilderness protection.



Each Nuestro Gila outing brings a new leader for the next field trip. After Simon came Manda Strain Aguilera. Not only was she inspired to write a letter to the editor, she also stepped up as a co-leader for the Tadpole Ridge hike. In planning this hike, Simon, Manda, and I realized why the last Nuestro Gila Harvest Hike at the Gila Middle Box had felt so epic! The participants were predominantly women and included some who had never hiked before and who are now eager to continue participating in Nuestro Gila outings.

An important part of these outings is sharing a meal after the hike. As participants enjoy their sandwiches (provided by Nuestro Gila), I start a conversation about how we can help protect the Gila. These outings and discussions serve to remind us that there is no guarantee that special places in the Gila will always be available to us or our children, and that we must act now to protect them.

The Nuestro Gila campaign is bringing new faces and voices to the effort to protect our land, water, and culture. To find out more, or to join a future hike, please visit www.nuestrogila.org.



Nuestro Gila hike participants take a break.

Photo: Cindy Renee Provencio

Wild About Wilderness

by **Donna Stevens**

The Gila National Forest (GNF) is in the middle of the multi-year process of revising its forest plan. UGWA has been there every step of the way and will see it through to the end. The forest plan is important because it guides the Forest Service's (FS) policies and projects for the next ten to fifteen years. The current plan has been in place since 1986 and is badly in need of revision because of changed circumstances, such as climate change.

UGWA is the local lead in a coalition of conservation groups providing input to the FS to ensure robust protection of streams, watersheds, wildlife habitat, and quiet recreation areas. In the last few months, the Forest Service has made progress on the wilderness component of the forest plan revision process.

Wilderness

The GNF is required, under the FS's 2012 Planning Rule, to implement a four-step wilderness identification and evaluation process. The first step is to conduct an inventory of all lands that may have wilderness characteristics, as defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act. This is largely a GIS desktop exercise and is designed to be broad and inclusive. Each of the subsequent steps whittles down the wilderness areas.

Second, the Forest Planning Team evaluates all of the units identified in step one. The GNF is currently in this second phase; in June 2018, they released a draft Wilderness Evaluation Report. The Forest Planning Team used a ranking system that looks at criteria such as size and manageability. Two other criteria use language from the Wilderness Act: "apparent naturalness" and "opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation." Each unit was awarded a wilderness ranking of none, low, moderate, high, or outstanding.

Step three, to be undertaken in 2019, is the analysis of all areas that made it through the evaluation stage with a score of low, moderate, high, or outstanding wilderness characteristics.

The fourth step is recommendation of any lands that the Forest Supervisor determines should be in-

cluded in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

In September, our colleagues in the Wilderness Society and New Mexico Wild, with UGWA's input, submitted comments on the draft wilderness evaluation. Many other conservation groups signed on to this comment letter, stating our concerns with the Forest Planning Team's manageability process and our disagreement with some of the wilderness units' scores. We hope that these issues are resolved in the final Wilderness Evaluation Report, to be released in early 2019.

There are misconceptions about activities allowed in wilderness areas. Recreation activities that are appropriate and allowed in wilderness areas include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing. Recreation activities that rely on motorized vehicles or mountain bikes are not allowed. Wheelchair use is permitted. Livestock grazing is explicitly permitted by the Wilderness Act where it was already established at the time of an area's designation. The FS is permitted to fight wildfires in wilderness, and can authorize the use of motorized equipment and aircraft to support suppression operations where these tools are deemed necessary.

One crucial fact to recognize is that, although the FS may recommend wilderness areas, *only Congress has the authority to designate an area as wilderness.*

Draft Forest Plan

In early 2019, the GNF expects to release its draft forest plan. The draft will have a range of alternatives for issues that have received many public comments, such as additional wilderness areas, livestock grazing, riparian area management, restoration priorities, and special management areas.

The FS will host a series of public meetings where interested residents can provide comments on the draft forest plan. UGWA will keep you informed of these meetings and other developments. You can also sign up to be on the Forest Planning Team's email list by sending an email to gilaplan@fs.fed.us.

Gila River Festival: 14 Years

by *Donna Stevens*

As one of the co-organizers of the Gila River Festival, I can attest that coordinating such an event is exhausting, stressful, and expensive. So why do we do it? And who are “we”?

The Upper Gila Watershed Alliance is one of three partners that constitute the Gila Conservation Coalition (GCC). The others are Gila Resources Information Project, or GRIP, and the Center for Biological Diversity. GCC is the group formed in 1984 to prevent a dam on the Gila River. After the Hooker and Conner Dams and the Mangas diversion were defeated, GCC went dormant for several years. But when the Arizona Water Settlements Act was passed in 2004, GCC was resurrected in a different form, and UGWA became a part of it.

The purpose of the Gila River Festival is to high-

light the Gila River, its unique ecology, and the imperative to protect it. Those of you fortunate enough to live in the Cliff-Gila Valley need no such convincing. But many residents of New Mexico, the Southwest, and beyond are unfamiliar with the Gila and need to be shown its glories in order to understand the urgency and importance of defending this last free-flowing river in the state. It’s going to take a groundswell of people to prevent a diversion that would degrade plant and wildlife habitat and dewater the river.

And that’s where the Gila River Festival comes in.

September 20–23, 2018, hundreds of people gathered for presentations and hikes to explore the Gila River and learn why it is so worthy of Wild and Scenic River status (see article on page 11). Participants went on field trips to river segments that have been

proposed for Wild and Scenic designation; learned how to fly fish; rode horseback along the Gila River in the Gila Wilderness; kayaked the river; attended presentations on the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, New Mexico water law, and the use of film as an activism tool. They enjoyed Tim Palmer’s presentation of stunning photos of the nation’s Wild and Scenic rivers. Participants witnessed traditional Apache dances, joined in the merriment of the puppet parade, and savored a meal of local and native foods while listening to a talk about the quest for water in the West. They even boogied to the local Illusion Band. (Sound irrelevant to saving the Gila? Consider the words of Godfather of Soul James Brown, who theorized that “any problem in the world can be solved by dancing.”)

The planning committee—GCC, UGWA, and many dedicated volunteers—is beginning to organize the 2019 Gila River Festival. We hope you’ll join us for a weekend dedicated to honoring and defending the Gila River. You’ll never meet a cooler group of people than Gila River lovers.

Upper Gila Watershed Alliance

*invites you
to join us for our*

Annual Meeting & Potluck

Sunday, November 18

11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

TNC Lichty Center

426 Box Canyon Road in Cliff

Join us for some or all:

11:00 meeting

12:00 potluck lunch

Bring a dish to share, plate & utensils. Drinks provided.

**Join us on November 18
to (re)connect
with your UGWA friends!**

For more information or for directions,
email director@ugwa.org or call 575/590-5698



Gila Wild and Scenic River Designation: History in the Making

by *Donna Stevens*

1968 was so eventful that it merits a bookstore genre. How many years can claim that distinction? Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy were assassinated, Vietnam War protests raged across the nation, and Chicago's Mayor Daley told police to "shoot to kill" protestors at the Democratic National Convention. On October 2, just before the Olympics began, peaceful student protestors were gunned down by the dozens as army tanks invaded Mexico City's Zocolo.

But not all the news was bad in '68. Back in the US capital, October 2, 1968, was a day of great promise, as the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. A response to decades of dam building on the nation's largest, wildest rivers, this visionary legislation bans the construction of dams and other harmful water-development projects, ensures that water quality is maintained, and restricts activities that would degrade a river's value.

Background

In the decade before the passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, river lovers saw wild rivers tamed and impounded, and determined to give back to them in a permanent, protective way. Eventually, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall (Senator Tom Udall's father) joined the cause, and this broad coalition persuaded Congress to protect the rivers we love. The Act was passed in the House by a vote of 265–7 and unanimously in the Senate—unthinkable in these days of extreme partisanship.

River Classifications

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act has three distinct classifications: (1) Wild rivers are undiverted, generally accessible only by trails, and the shorelines are undeveloped. (2) Scenic rivers lack impoundments, are accessible in places by roads, and are more developed than wild rivers. (3) Recreational rivers are easily accessible by roads, may have shoreline development, and may have been diverted in the past.

Eligibility

There are two requirements for Wild and Scenic River eligibility. The river must be free-flowing and must possess one or more of such "outstandingly remarkable values" as "scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values," according to the 1968 legislation.

River Segments

Commonly, only a segment of a river—not its entire length—is designated as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational. Rivers can have multiple reaches with different classifications. For example, the Gila River through the Gila Wilderness Area could be classified as Wild, then be classified as Scenic near the Turkey Creek Campground, and then Wild again down to the Mogollon Creek confluence. Segments with different classifications can be contiguous or separated by miles of river not designated as Wild and Scenic.

Effects of Designation

Wild and Scenic designation neither limits the public from accessing public lands within designated river corridors, nor opens private land to the public. There is no effect on fishing and hunting, because these uses are regulated by the state. Livestock grazing continues as before designation, with the stipulation that the nature and intensity of the use remain the same as before designation. Private lands can still be developed, and water rights are not affected.

Fifty Years of Wild and Scenic

More than 12,700 miles of rivers have received Wild and Scenic River status. While that sounds impressive, that number represents less than one quarter of one percent of the nation's total river miles.

New Mexico Rivers

In 1968, with the passage of the act, eight rivers, including the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, with

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Wild and Scenic (continued from page 11)

its tributary, the Red River, were immediately designated as Wild and Scenic. Since then, the East Fork of the Jemez River, the Pecos, and Rio Chama in New Mexico have also been protected as Wild and Scenic. Residents enjoy these rivers, and local economies continue to prosper as visitors flock to them.

But there are no protected rivers in the southern part of the state, and not for lack of deserving river segments. In this arid landscape, rivers and streams are the lifeblood of the land.

Gila River

The Gila River, with its headwaters in the Gila Wilderness—the nation’s first designated wilderness area—is uniquely qualified for Wild and Scenic status. The last free-flowing river in the state, the Gila is unmatched for activities like hiking, fishing, rafting, camping, and just enjoying the outdoors. Miles downstream of the Gila’s three forks—East, West, and Middle—is the Gila Middle Box, a tight canyon of towering pink cliffs “boxing in” the river, with river-spanning flood debris wedged twenty feet overhead.

There are many such wild river segments in the Gila National Forest: the Lower San Francisco, with its soothing hot springs; McKnight Canyon, where the East Fork of the Mimbres is lush and shady; White-water Creek above the Catwalk; Black Creek, arising from high headwaters at Reeds Peak in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. There’s an intriguing litany of history in these names: Indian, Mineral, Mogollon, Diamond, Sapillo, Turkey, Iron, Gilita, and Little Creeks—not to mention Holden Prong. These streams feed our imaginations and provide a home to native fish, resident plants, and wildlife, and enhance residents’ overall quality of life.

Conservation Proposal

A broad coalition of sportsmen’s and conservation groups (including UGWA), local business owners, private property owners, tribal leaders, and farmers have endorsed a proposal for Wild and Scenic designation for many of the rivers and tributaries listed above. These rivers and streams flow through public lands, mostly in the Gila and Aldo Leopold Wilderness Areas of the Gila National Forest.

Gila National Forest Input

The Gila National Forest is in the process of revising its Forest Plan (see article on page 9). As with all national forests across the country, the Gila is legally required to identify all free-flowing rivers, determine whether they possess outstandingly remarkable values, and, if so, assign a classification of Wild, Scenic, or Recreational.

To be clear: *only Congress has the authority to designate Wild and Scenic Rivers through legislation.* That said, if the Forest Service determines that a river or stream is eligible for Wild and Scenic River status, it must be managed to retain those qualifying characteristics.

Senator Tom Udall

Conservationists are encouraging Senator Tom Udall to continue the conservation legacy of his late father Stewart Udall and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act by introducing Wild and Scenic River legislation for the Gila River and some of its major tributaries, including the San Francisco. Senator Udall needs to know that there is widespread support for adding the Gila River—the last free-flowing river in New Mexico—to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

What You Can Do

(1) Write a Wild and Scenic letter of support and send it to Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich (visit their official websites for email, or send letters to the addresses below). If you own land along the Gila or San Francisco, be sure to mention that. (2) Encourage your friends and neighbors to write letters. (3) As mentioned above, the Forest Service is required to evaluate rivers and streams for Wild and Scenic eligibility. Forest Service personnel have written a draft Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility Study process paper and are currently soliciting input on this draft. They also want feedback on rivers and streams that have outstandingly remarkable values and/or circumstances that have changed since their previous eligibility study in 2002. To review the draft eligibility study and to submit comments, please visit the Gila National Forest’s website; under “Quick Links” on the right side of

Continued next page

the page, click on “Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Study.” There you’ll find a link to the draft Eligibility Study, as well as an interactive map where you can view rivers and streams and make comments on why they should be designated as Wild and Scenic. The comment deadline is November 26, 2018.

Perhaps 2018, like 1968, will be a year with its own shelf in bookstores. Let’s make sure that future historians, as well as studying the more troubling events of

this year, will add a hopeful footnote about Wild and Scenic River designation for the Gila River.

Senator Tom Udall

531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Martin Heinrich

303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Good Work Continues

by Carol Ann Fugagli

In May of 2018, UGWA was awarded a grant from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance to continue eradicating salt cedar (tamarisk) along the Gila

River in the Gila Wilderness. Since single-treatment approaches to controlling salt cedar have proven ineffective, we developed a multi-year program. The work was initiated in 2016, and for two growing seasons we worked along the main stem of the river. The focus area of our work for 2018 was on the West and Middle Forks in hopes of eliminating some of the sources of seeds that were most likely making their way down to the main stem.

Two of our field technicians, Zack Crockett and Mike Fugagli, used pack animals to carry their tools, herbicide, camping gear, and other supplies up the West Fork. Despite traveling nine miles up river, they found zero occurrences of salt cedar and ended their search at an upper elevation of 6,117 feet. The only salt cedar found on this stretch of river was at the immediate confluence of the West and Middle Forks.

Along the Middle Fork, they found that salt cedar had an upper elevation limit of 6,120 feet, which is similar to that of sycamore trees. The crew took GPS coordinates of each salt cedar stand, recorded the required data, and

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Zack Crockett along the West Fork looking for Tamarisk. Photo: Mike Fugagli

The Good Work Continues (continued from page 13)

cut and treated the stems. A salt cedar stand was defined as a grouping of trees within a 10-meter radius. A total of 42 stands were located and 250 stems were treated, with the majority of these being one inch or less in diameter. Ninety percent of the invasive plant occurrence in this river reach was within one to three meters of the river channel.

Interestingly, all of the salt cedar stands were the same age as adjacent native tree species such as box elder, cottonwood, willow, and alder, and the same height—about five to six meters. We hypothesize that the Middle Fork of the Gila River is in a recovery stage from



Male Montezuma Quail near camp. Photo: Mike Fugagli

the record flooding event of September 2013, when all vegetation was scoured from the banks and adjacent floodplain of the river. As a result, salt cedar and native trees germinated at the same time and are the same height. We think that under conditions when salt cedar does not have to outcompete tall native trees, it has a greater than normal opportunity for germination and growth.

Another interesting finding was the clustering of salt cedar at Jordan and Light Feather Hot Springs, where a humid, almost subtropical microclimate seems ideal for the species.

We are especially pleased that these recent salt cedar findings will be included in a new book, *Trees of the Gila*, by botanist Dr. Richard Felger, to be published in winter 2018.

A big thank you to our field technicians, Isaac Bruemmer, Zack Crockett, and Mike Fugagli, and also to Scott Zager, our GIS specialist, for helping to keep our beloved river free from this rogue invasive species.

Thinking ON a Mountain: An Update on UGWA's New Climate Justice Project

by Mike Fugagli

Two summers ago, when I finally saw for myself the very significant impact that feral cattle were having on the wilderness reach of the main-stem Gila River—with a growing population now impacting over 20 miles of wilderness river corridor between Alum Camp and Turkey Creek—I think I was struck most by the absolute absurdity of it all. It just seemed crazy to me that those animals were still down there, mowing down the green line, preventing the recovery of near-channel bars and banks by decreasing willow-stem density and eliminating the floodplain friction necessary to allow normal riparian processes like soil retention, cottonwood stringer formation, and channel migration to occur. The cattle were directly preventing the recovery of the riparian ecosystem by continually decreasing the vegetative resistance on the river's edge. By leaving the channel at the mercy of gravity, the fe-

ral cattle were creating a river corridor with a very low resistance to flood energy, and a channel prone to repeated bouts of catastrophic scouring.

To me, this was not only absurd, it was unacceptable. Not only is this supposed to be wilderness, but the climate science is just so clear. By the end of the current century the American Southwest is predicted to experience unprecedented (on a human time scale) ecological change, with over 90% of the land area of Arizona and New Mexico expected to be well outside of its historic climate envelopes by 2090. Cold-affinity habitats, like the Gila's now highly threatened coniferous forests and woodlands, are predicted to be the most at risk, with species-specific physiology studies confirming the high probability of massive forest mortality across the region as the average land tempera-

Continued next page

ture continues to rise in the decades ahead.

I began to think about the birds I knew . . . the pine forest specialists. What would happen to them? And why, I thought, as I began to press my concerns into the forest plan revision process, was there no inclusion of climate-threatened species, like our resident Piñon Jays and Olive Warblers, on the new forest plan's required Species of Conservation Concern list?

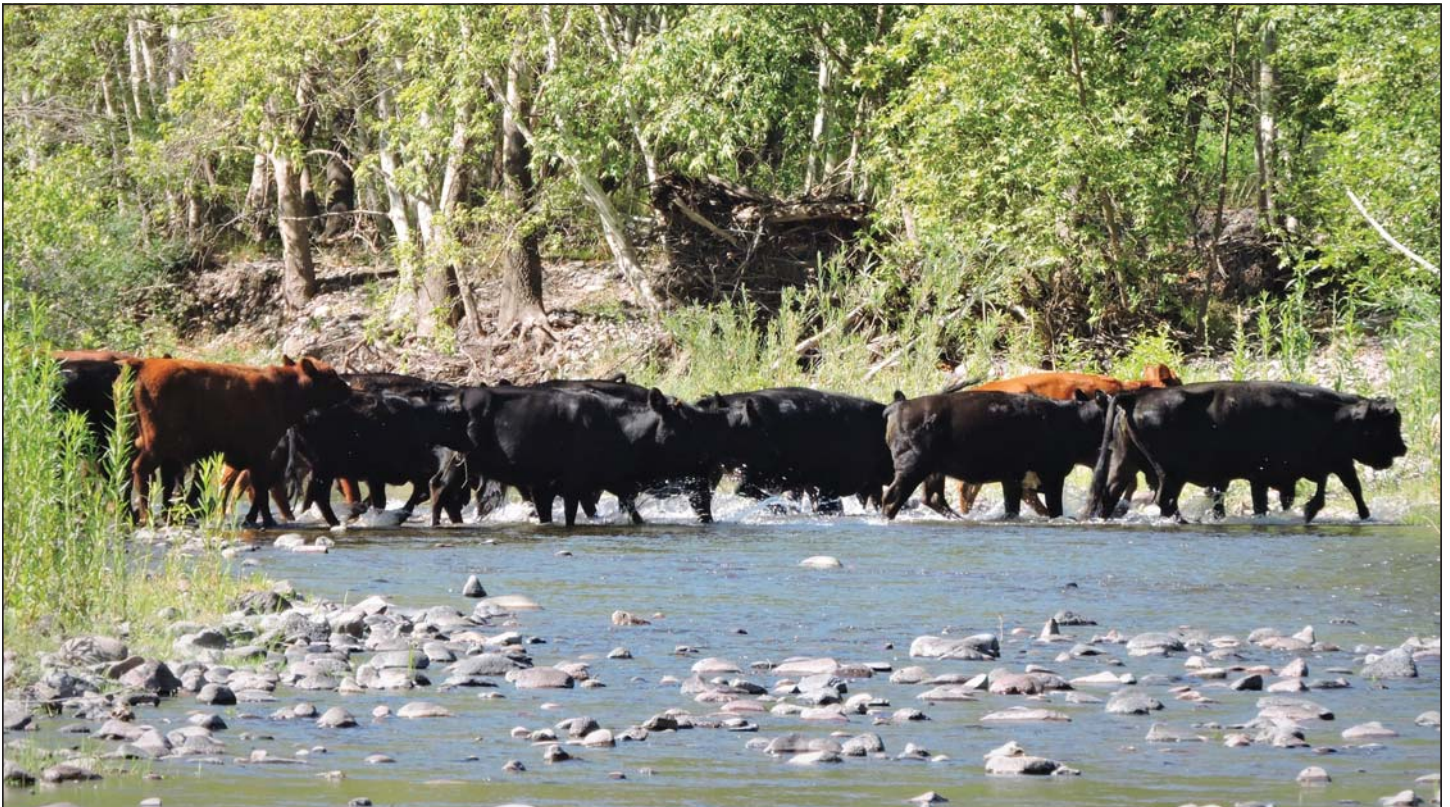
For me, ecological planning has to start with a deep understanding that climate change will be, by orders of magnitude, the principal driver of ecological change in the American Southwest this century. It's a bona fide crisis. With climate change firmly in the driver's seat, managing ecosystems for their structure and function will require land managers to think differently, to understand that ecological function is a moving target. Our main-stem wilderness river is no longer just important as a rare headwater riparian corridor. Its function has changed; it is now a climatic refugium: a refuge for life in the difficult years ahead.

As I struggled to find ways to introduce some climate science into the forest planning process, to help

bring to the attention of the Forest Planning Team the need to create a climate adaptation plan based on restoration, resilience, and recovery, I had this thought: who better to lead a climate conversation than those with the most at stake—our young people, born into a psychologically challenging threshold moment when our actions as a species over the next ten years will determine what kind of planet we'll have for the next ten thousand.

This past week, during a long gentle rain, I sat inside with my eco-monitors at Aldo Leopold Charter School (ALCS), and we talked about the future. ALCS is UGWA's first academic partner in its new climate-justice, youth-empowerment project called "Thinking ON a Mountain," and the students decided to use their rain day to write status reports to the land managers on whose landscapes they have worked this semester. They wrote letters to the Forest Supervisor, thanking him for the Forest's ongoing management of both the Fort Bayard area and the Mogollon Box, where restoration efforts are significantly im-

Continued page 16



Feral cattle crossing the mainstem reach of the Gila River three miles below the Sapillo Creek confluence, in the Gila Wilderness, summer 2018. This photo shows only some of the herd—there were at least 30 in all. Photo: Mike Fugagli

Thinking ON a Mountain (continued from p. 15)

proving landscape resilience. They told the Supervisor how disappointed students were by the feral cattle they encountered, and the impacts they witnessed, on their fall 2018 backpacking trips. They wrote letters to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to report on the bird populations they studied at TNC’s Iron Bridge Preserve, where, this past summer, the eco-monitors spot-mapped the breeding territories of Willow Flycatchers, Common Yellow-throats, and Arizona Bell’s Vireos, by ear. Recently, they also began bird-banding at the Iron Bridge and will continue to track changes in avian populations there as the recovery of this remarkable refugium continues.

UGWA created Thinking ON a Mountain because the best way to meet the challenge of climate change—creating a resilient community within a resilient landscape—is by empowering our youth with the

kind of experiential learning that leads naturally to the development of a land ethic. Aldo Leopold learned to think like a mountain because he did his thinking on a mountain. Our region’s youth need the same opportunity, and that’s UGWA’s goal. We want to show them the resilience of nature, especially in refugial areas like the rivers and streams, north-facing slopes, and the deep, cool canyons of the Gila . . . places where life is the most robust, tenacious, and hopeful.

So far, UGWA’s Thinking ON a Mountain project is a working partnership between UGWA, Southwestern New Mexico Audubon, TNC, and ALCS, and the program has been funded, in part, by a generous grant from the Lineberry Foundation. But to keep the project moving forward, to successfully build a youth-based climate-justice movement in the greater Gila region, we are going to need member support. So . . .

If you believe that empowering our youth with resilience-thinking is a necessary path forward in the face of climate chaos, if you believe that a stable, safe atmosphere is a basic human right, and if you care deeply about intergenerational equity and the sustainable stewardship of our public trust resources, then please consider supporting our youth-centered Thinking ON a Mountain project directly with a targeted gift to UGWA.

Because here’s the thing: creating a regional cadre of 21st-century planetary stewards is going to require more from us, because we’re asking so much more from them. We’re asking our young people to become ecologically aware, to open their hearts and minds to Aldo Leopold’s “world of wounds,” to shoulder the burden of an ecological education. Carrying that burden, our young people need to know that we have their backs. First, let’s pay them for their work and show them that it has value. Then, they’re going to need signs and banners, cameras and binoculars, access to experts, and the monitoring equipment necessary to track climate-driven ecological change. And lastly, but most important of all, they need to know that we care, that we’ll treat the wounds, and that working together, we’ll help them create a just and meaningful future.

Thanks so much for giving to the future!

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Let Our Nation's Youth Be Heard

by Carol Ann Fugagli

In 2015, 21 young people and their lawyers from Our Children's Trust and Earth Guardians filed a suit against the United States government. The suit claims that the government has known for more than 50 years that burning fossil fuels would cause climate change to progress at an unnaturally rapid rate, resulting in negative, irreversible, catastrophic global impact. Yet the federal government not only ignored this fact, it actively supported the fossil fuel industry with a range of policies and practices that promoted fossil fuel dependency. The plaintiffs claim that these actions infringe on their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property, as well as put their lives in danger. During the past three years, the lawsuit has withstood at least a dozen attempts at dismissal by the government.

UGWA is following this case—*Juliana v. United States*—because of our work to educate and empower young people. Our Thinking ON A Mountain project (see article on page 14) aims to teach students about the threats of climate change and give them the knowledge and skills they need to respond to this crisis.

The lead lawyers of the case believe the Trump administration does not want to put climate science on trial. They also believe that the administration is worried about the type of order the presiding judge will issue. The young plaintiffs do not seek monetary damages but have demanded that the courts force the government to “implement an enforceable national remedial plan to phase out fossil fuel emissions” in an effort to “stabilize the climate system.” The courts could then supervise the government’s efforts.

The trial date was scheduled for October 29, 2018. The Trump administration has been using unusual procedures to try to stop this case from going to trial. The latest attempt resulted in the Supreme Court issuing an administrative stay. Basically, this means there is a pause in the case so that the Supreme Court can decide whether to put a longer temporary stay in place. A similar request went to Justice Kennedy in July 2018, and he recommended that the case proceed to trial—one of his final acts on the Supreme Court before retiring.

Continued page 19



Local youth rally for climate justice in support of *Juliana v. United States*, a landmark climate lawsuit, October 27, 2018. Photo: Mike Fugagli

Thank You!

New Members

[April 10, 2018–October 28, 2018]

Chris Overlock • Jeff Copeland • Laura Waldman • Margaret Hadderman
Mary Bechelli • Nancy Brennan • Nelson Murphy (recurring monthly donations)

Returning Members

[April 10, 2018–October 28, 2018]

Alex Tager & Keith Knadler • Ama Rivers • Ann Hedlund • April Crosby & Merritt Helfferich • Barrett Brewer • Betty & Ray Lawson • Betty Spence & Dennis Switzer • Bo Hunter • Carol & Richard Martin
Carolyn Morrison & Larry McLaud • Catherine Swain • Ceil Murray & David Rose • Constantina Herzberg
Damie Nelson • Diane LaFrance • Donna Stevens • Ed & Beth Leuck • Elaine & William Halbedel
Eleanor Wootten • Ellen Soles • Emily Pollom • Gail & Emanuel Stamler • Gerald Schultz • Howard & Corinne Smith • Hugh Epping • James & Jackie Blurton • James & Marcia Bowden • Jan & Pat McCreary
Jane & Paul Riger • Jay & Madge Slavec • Joan Bacon • Joan Uraneck • Joanne Adams & Victor Heath
John & Deanna Mooney • Joseph & Marilyn Gendron • Karen & Tom Weller-Watson • Katherine Gould-
Martin & Bob Martin • Linda Pafford • Linda Zatopek & George Farmer • Lita Furby • Lynda Aiman-
Smith • Mariam & Al Lopez • Marilyn Fogleman • Marion & Jamie Newton • Martha & Tom Cooper
Mary Crombie & Bill Bertsch • Melissa Amarello • Monica Rude & Kyle Johnson • Pam Bryant &
Ron Groves • Peter & Sharman Russell • Ray & Carol Pittman • Robert Pittman & Kathleen Wigley
Ron Parry • Sandy Hathaway • Sara Boyett & Terry Timme • Sarah Johnson & Kevin Keith
Scott & Hara Davis • Shelby Hallmark • Spike & Angela Flanders • Steve McGarity • Susan Berry
Susan Van Auken & Gurnie Dobbs • Thomas Dwyer • Tim Evans • Tom Krohley & Esperanza Quintero
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New Venture Fund • Resources Legacy Fund
T & E, Inc. • The Wilderness Society

Special Thanks

Dr. Jack L. Carter, for donating copies of *Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico*
Simon Sotelo, for volunteering with Nuestro Gila
Dr. Dale A. Zimmerman, for donating storage space for UGWA files

Let Our Nation's Youth Be Heard (continued from p. 17)

Judge Ann Aiken, who is scheduled to preside over the trial, has been receptive to the plaintiffs' theory of the case. "I have no doubt that the right to a climate system capable of sustaining human life is fundamental to a free and ordered society," she said in a November 2016 decision allowing the case to go forward.

Levi Draheim, 11-year-old plaintiff from Satellite Beach, Florida, said: "I'm supposed to be in Eugene right now for my deposition and to start my trial. I was excited to leave my home in Florida because the air is so toxic from the red tide, which is being made worse by climate change. I feel like I need to get out of here for my health. We need to go to trial so that I can protect my home."

Juliana v. United States is one of many related legal actions brought forth by youth in several states and countries, all supported by Our Children's Trust and all seeking science-based action by governments to stabilize the climate system. Plaintiffs and their attorneys plan to hold a video press conference after the Supreme Court issues its decision.

Our Children's Trust (www.ourchildrenstrust.org) is a nonprofit organization leading a coordinated global human rights and environmental justice campaign to implement enforceable science-based Climate Recovery Plans that will return atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations to below 350 ppm by the year 2100. It elevates the voice of youth, those with most to lose in the climate crisis, to secure the legal right to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate on behalf of all present and future generations.

Earth Guardians (www.earthguardians.org) is a Colorado-based nonprofit organization with youth chapters on five continents, and multiple groups in the United States with thousands of members working together to protect the Earth, water, air, and atmosphere, creating healthy and sustainable communities globally. It aims to inspire and empower young leaders, families, schools, organizations, cities, and government officials to make positive change locally, nationally, and globally to address the critical state of the Earth.

UGWA Membership Application

Your membership and additional financial support sustain UGWA and are critical to the organization's ongoing health. Share in the protection and conservation of our watershed and become an UGWA member today.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail _____

Membership Categories—Annual Dues:

Chiricahua Leopard Frog	\$ 20
Gila Trout	30
Mexican Gray Wolf	50
Beaver	100
River Otter	250
Other Amount	_____



Make your check payable to
UGWA
and send to
PO Box 383, Gila NM 88038

I don't wish to join at this time, but please notify me of upcoming events:

Name _____

E-Mail _____



UGWA's Statement of Philosophy

The members of the UGWA recognize a vital and necessary connection between our individual and collective rights and responsibilities as landowners and community members and the long-term stewardship of the Upper Gila River Valley and Watershed.

The members of the UGWA share a love and concern for our community which is an integral part of our lives and, therefore, seek to harmonize our presence and activities within the watershed for the health and integrity of the entire "community," which includes the soil, the air, the water, the people, the plants, and animals.

The members of the UGWA share the conviction that men and women work best together in a spirit of cooperation, conflict resolution, and consensual agreement that builds upon a common ground that benefits from the views and concerns of each individual acting as uncoerced free agents.

To realize our vision for the common benefit of the entire community served by the Upper Gila Watershed, and for the sake of future generations, the UGWA seeks ways and means to bring people and organizations together in constructive dialogue and activities aimed at clear communication, education, land restoration, research, and local economic health.

UGWA Meeting Schedule

Monthly board meetings are *usually* the second Monday of the month, from 9–11 a.m.

All are welcome to attend.

For meeting location, please e-mail director@ugwa.org or call 575-590-5698.

Upper Gila Watershed Alliance
PO Box 383
Gila, New Mexico 88038

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