

BOSQUE WATCH



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FOOD NETWORK AT THE BOSQUE?? Leigh Ann Vradenburg

When Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge Manager Tom Melanson approached the Friends to assist with a special use filming request, it didn't seem like anything out of the ordinary. Then it was revealed that the Food Network would be here in just 2 weeks.

The Food Network wanted a place to film an installment in its *Burger Nation* series. This one would feature the famous green chile cheeseburgers of The Buckhorn Tavern in our local community of San Antonio. They wanted a site that epitomized the desert Southwest. The City of Socorro, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Refuge saw this as an innovative way to promote eco-tourism. Once the Friends sent pictures of the Refuge's picnic area, with its views of wetlands to the east and the flowering cactus garden and mountains to the west, the Network was hooked.



Bobby Flay, Bobby Olguin

After no fewer than 30 emails and phone calls, plans were set for a film crew to come from New York and Albuquerque. At the Network's request, the Friends worked with the Chamber of Commerce

to set up a Chile Festival in the Pavilion picnic area with regional chile product vendors and the Huckabee Junction band from Stage Door Grill in Socorro. Over 100 citizens signed up to participate in the 3-hour Festival and filming with the promise of one of the famous burgers. Bright and early on filming day, Friends and Refuge staff and volunteers met with the Network crew to set up lights, booths, and tables. Festival goers poured in by mid-morning and mingled as crews filmed, the band played, and burgers sizzled.



Bobby Flay cooking burgers

The great surprise of the day was the appearance of Food Network star Bobby Flay. He challenged Buckhorn owner-chef Bobby Olguin for the title of Greatest Green Chile Cheeseburger chef as part of *Throwdown! with Bobby Flay*. The two chefs cooked away under the picnic pavilion as locals, Refuge staff, and volunteers tasted the burgers. By five o'clock the tents were gone and the crew was on their way home.

The winner will not be revealed until the show airs July 22 on the Food Network. But from the smiles on

everyone's faces, the Friends of the Bosque helped to bring our little Refuge and community into the national limelight for a whole new audience.



Bobby Olguin cooking burgers

FROM THE EDITOR

What about that Bobby Flay Throwdown right here at our refuge?

Have you seen this guy at the Bosque Visitor Center?



Dennis Vicente

See inside for those stories and more.

Oh yes, one more thing: Please please mark your calendar: You are invited to the **FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING AND ARTIST RECEPTION HERE ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH**. This is NEW scheduling — instead of having our annual meeting in January.

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS *Paul White*

Every particle, every atom of our being comes from star-stuff, cast across the universe eons ago in the dying throes of the earliest suns in our universe. We and every other living thing, and all that is around us, are one with the cosmos. On this earth we also share our lives with – even owe them to – the rest of creation. The air we breathe has traveled around the globe, the oxygen in that air was expired by plants, the food we eat comes directly from plants and animals we cultivate and harvest, the nutrients in that food originate in the air about us and the soil beneath us.

We receive life itself from our surroundings, and we also find in them joy, wonder, and even inspiration. But what do we give back? Are we just consumers – takers and users – or do we return some of ourselves so that the life around us might be enriched? There are many ways to become more equal partners with nature, such as recycling, conserving, and walking more lightly through this world. But I want to talk about monetary giving. Can we be as expansive in giving back to nature and her preservation as she has so freely been with us?

Think for a minute or two of the need – at least from the perspective of the Bosque del Apache and its Friends. The Refuge has lost 3 staff positions since 2005 and the maintenance program has been particularly affected. The current budget climate for 2010 looks rather bleak. The Friends works hard to support appropriate Refuge projects but we, too, have been affected by the economic downturn. Membership and membership revenue has declined over the past year, perhaps in part because people are traveling less. What the

Friends is able to do for the Refuge also depends heavily on revenue from Nature Store sales. While total sales are doing well, though, the increasing cost of goods has resulted in a reduction in net revenues approaching 25% since 2007.

In spite of these difficulties, the Friends remains a committed and strong organization. We conduct a healthy series of educational programs, continue to back important Refuge projects, and look forward to an exciting Festival of the Cranes in November. We also expect to provide strong support for Refuge plans to update interpretive displays around the Tour Loop and in the Visitor Center. With your help, however, we could do more.

Here are a few possibilities for enhancing support for the Refuge through the Friends:

- If you're not already a member, consider joining (www.friendsofthebosque.org/joinus.html).
- If you are already a Friend, think about 'upgrading' your membership level. Could you be a Special Friend? How about becoming a Best Friend, a Lifetime Member?
- Do you have a friend or family member who could be honored through a gift to the Friends? You might consider such an option for a birthday or holiday gift, or in memory of a loved one.
- Have you thought about including the Friends in your will or in some other planned giving arrangement?
- And let's not forget how valuable a gift it would be to devote some of your personal time and effort to the Refuge and the Friends as a volunteer.

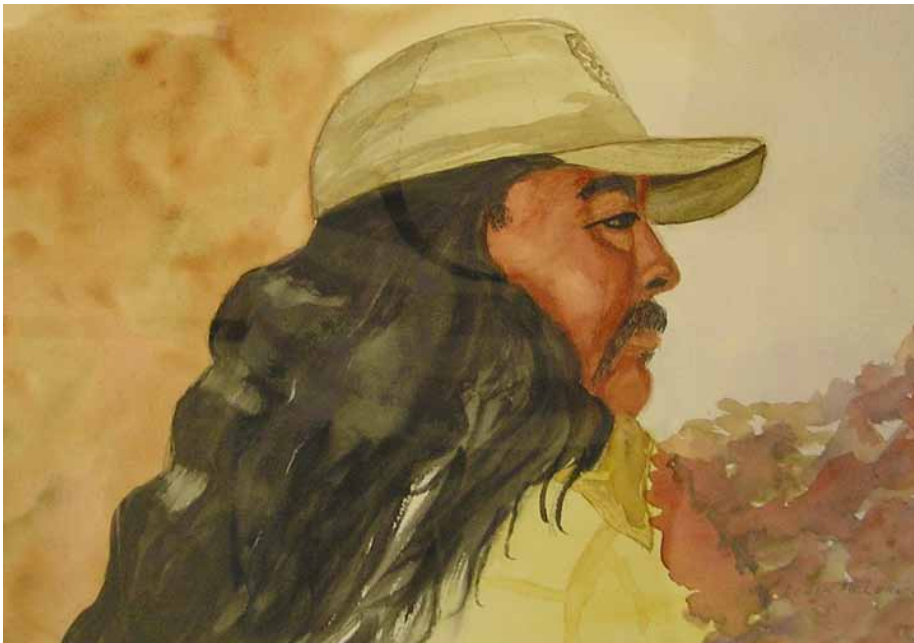
For further information on any of these options, please contact me directly or contact the Friends Office. We as a nation have a long history of generous giving, even in times of hardship. In recent years, charitable giving has increased steadily, with the total for 2007 (the most recent result available) exceeding \$300B for the first time. U.S. giving as a percentage of Gross National Product is more than double that of the next closest nation. We are a generous people. We give to those in need and we give back at least some of what is given to us. Nature gives to us of her bounty. What can you do for her?

DENNIS VINCENTE

by Leigh Ann Vradenburg

Although Bosque del Apache Maintenance Work Leader Dennis Vicente is usually behind the scenes, he is occasionally snagged for a Festival fly-out or maintenance tour. If you are fortunate enough to have him as your guide, you will see in action this sharp-witted, passionate and yet easy-going man we work with each day.

Born on the Alamo Navajo Reservation, Dennis grew up on his family ranch and at the boarding school that was set up for Native American children in Magdalena. From the tender age of six through high school graduation, Dennis and his classmates busied themselves with schoolwork and chores, only visiting their families on holidays and during the summer. After high school, Dennis enrolled at NM Tech but soon realized that he was burned out on classwork. He enlisted in the Army and served from 1974-1977 as a radar technician and also as a light weapons and mountaineering instructor. After his military service, Dennis spent some time hiking, camping, and working as a seasonal firefighter for the U.S. Forest Service in Magdalena. He then returned to



Dennis Vincente

his boarding school, this time working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs as an educational aide, coordinating after-school activities such as sports and recreation. He described this as one of the best experiences in his life, feeling that he could make a difference in these children's lives who were going through the same experiences he had.

In the summers he worked for the Forest Service as a crew boss cutting fire lines by hand until he returned to college in 1981, this time the University of New Mexico. He received his Associate's Degree in Recreation then moved back to his family ranch as a home base for more traveling and fire contract work. He ventured into the construction field and built houses from Albuquerque to Las Cruces. Dennis spent his first stint at Bosque del Apache working as a firefighter in the summer of 1984. After a brief period as a propane plant operator in Quemado, Dennis returned here in 1986 as a temporary tractor operator. He worked his way into full-time status and up the ladder to his current position as Maintenance Work Leader and Heavy Equipment Instructor. He enjoys his job here because he gets to do a little of everything. Each day could see him hauling or running equipment, training volunteers, or working on special

projects. He has participated in USFWS and specialized equipment trainings across the country, and was on the planning committee for the Region 2 wage grade workshop in 2004. Dennis has used his expertise to help out other refuges and hatcheries in the Southwest, and once spent 3 weeks camped out in the mountains on San Andres National Wildlife Refuge as the crew leader in charge of building their desert bighorn sheep enclosures. Recently he was selected to consult on some USFWS and private land partnership properties on Kauai, Hawaii.

Dennis is married, with two grown children, and the proud grandpa of Aleena, born in November 2008. He lives in Socorro and spends time at his family ranch raising cattle, sheep, and a big vegetable garden. If he is not outside working, Dennis is outside playing - fishing or packing into the wilderness for small game hunting. Dennis can make some mean fry-bread and is known as one of the Refuge's jokesters. If he's telling you a story, you'd better look out for that twinkle in his eye because he loves to get you with one of his tall tales. In the hustle and bustle of today's world, Dennis is a refreshing, smiling face reminding you that everything will get done in its own time.

REFUGE MANAGER'S COLUMN

Tom Melanson

Low-arsenic Drinking Water: We are working on an agreement with the San Antonio water department to determine an initial hook-up fee and water use rates for the Refuge. The lawyers have drafted the water sales contract and most of the five-mile domestic waterline from Refuge Headquarters to the north refuge boundary is installed, pressure-tested, and buried.

Personnel: Phone and on-site interviews have been completed for the recently vacated Law Enforcement Officer position. We are continuing to develop bunkhouse design plans and identify potential funding sources.

Stimulus \$: We will receive \$250,000 for "green" energy development to include installation of a 9 kw solar array on the farm building and a 13 kw array on the storage building adjacent to the mechanic shop. This will bring our total solar electric production capability to 40 kw.

We expect to get another \$210,000 for development of on-site sewage treatment. The facility would be capable of treating waste from all our facilities. Treated effluent water could be used to irrigate native vegetation between NM highway 1 and the RV sites. Return on investment for the system would be quick as we now spend more than \$30,000/year to pump out the storage tanks for the public restrooms.

In addition to the above, we've requested stimulus funds for a LIDAR survey of lands within the historic floodplain (\$100,000), a detailed soil survey of all current agricultural

Melanson, from page 3
lands (\$40,000), contract installation of a third Langemann water control structure (\$100,000), trail rehabilitation work (\$29,000), and burial of the north boundary power line plus water delivery infrastructure improvement (\$100,000).

Miscellany: We propose that \$30,000 remaining in the Ducks Unlimited John Taylor fund be transferred to the Friends. The money would be used for additional development of facilities at the overlook dedicated in his memory, to include a concrete slab, adobe wall, and interpretive panels. As a result of the 20,000-acre San Pascual prescribed burn last year, we are evaluating the potential for reintroducing Black-tailed prairie dogs on the east side of the Rio Grande.

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge 2009 Educational Events

The Friends of the Bosque and Bosque del Apache NWR are proud to present these programs during the rest of 2009.

HUMMINGBIRD BANDING with Bill Talbot

Saturday July 11

7 a.m.-11:30 a.m. *Refuge Visitor Center*
Join in at the Bosque del Apache to attend this unique experience of capturing and banding hummingbirds that call this refuge home during the spring and summer months. Enjoy the opportunity to gaze upon these small birds as Bill diligently works with them noting measurements, condition, sex & age. An added bonus to this expedition may include hearing the beat of a tiny but powerful heart, or a touch of exhilaration at a chance to release back into freedom one of New Mexico's most enchanting creatures. Bill will give

a slide presentation at the close of the day inside the visitor center. Your hummingbird identifying skills will be sharpened and improved during this easily understood classroom setting. Bring bug repellent, binoculars, layered clothing, hat, camera, a friend. *Limit 30 participants, reservations required. Please call 575-835-1828 for reservations.*

CANYON TRAIL AFTER THE MONSOON RAINS

Saturday August 22

8 a.m.-11 a.m. *NM Route 1 at the Canyon Trailhead*

This walk, led by naturalist Bob Merkel, is a moderate 2-1/4 miles from the sandy arroyo plain, up onto the bajada, through Solitude Canyon with its spectacular geology, and back along the arroyo bottom. Each area has scenic features, including views of the Rio Grande rift valley and volcanic mountains. The climate was also hot and dry here some 10 million years ago when the sands and gravels that made these rocks were deposited by wind, rain, and sometimes flash floods. If 2009 is a wet year here, the profusion of wildflowers will be mind-blowing. Even if it's dry, we'll see 50 or more different species of plants (plant list provided).

Limit 20 participants, reservations required. Please call 575-835-1828 for reservations.

CREATING A BIRD CARVING FROM Balsa Wood

Saturday September 26

9 a.m. - 11 a.m., *Refuge Visitor Center*
Bill Strickler's detailed wood carvings of birds of many species, much sought after by private collectors, are noted for their attention to species detail and realistic settings. His works were featured during the month of May in an invitational showing at Audubon's Randall Davies Center in Santa Fe. In this lecture-demonstration, Bill will illustrate the steps, beginning with templates and making a pattern, to create a finished work. Then he

uses high-speed wood carving with a dremel-like tool. Whether you are interested as a birder, as an admirer and collector, or as a potential carver, this program will give you insights from a master carver.

Limit 24 participants, reservations required. Please call 575-835-1828 for reservations.

SCAVENGER HUNT IN THE NIGHT SKY: International Year of Astronomy Celebration

Saturday October 10

7 p.m. *Meet at Refuge Visitor Center*
Scavenger hunt: a search for items on a list. Some may be harder to find than others. That's part of the challenge and fun! Join Amy Estelle and amateur astronomers for a scavenger hunt in the night sky of Bosque del Apache. We will look for a dragon, butterfly, red giant, dolphin, swan, galaxy, flying horse, and black hole! Star charts and binoculars will be available. Prizes too. Bring a flashlight.

Limit 45 participants (ages 10 and above). Call 575-835-1828 for reservations.

BOSQUE FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING AND ARTISTS PARTY Saturday October 17

1 p.m. - 4 p.m. *at Refuge Visitor Center*
Annual Meeting: 10 a.m. - noon.

On a new early date (instead of next January) to open the wonderful Bosque del Apache winter bird season.

Artists Party: 2 pm - 5 pm. Meet the artists, try tasty treats, and maybe find something to take home. Also, be the first to get your 2009 Festival merchandise!

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY WITH LONG LENSES

with Jerry Goffe

Saturday November 14 -

Monday November 16

preceding the

22nd FESTIVAL OF THE CRANES

**Tuesday November 17 - Sunday
November 22**

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

Robyn Harrison

Work is nearly complete on this year's Festival brochure. Our theme this year is "Going Green," spotlighting the Refuge's efforts to use alternative energy and lessen the impact of staff, volunteers, and visitors on the environment. You'll be picking up your registration materials in a reusable grocery bag and learning about recycling efforts, alternative energy use at the Refuge, and the impact alternative energy can have on migrating bird populations.

You'll be able to choose from over 100 workshops, tours, lectures, and activities. There are perennial favorites such as Paul Tebbel's Sandhill Crane Behavior, Discover Sevilleta, and Deadly Beauty as well as tours to see the morning fly-outs and evening fly-ins of cranes and geese.

Our keynote speaker this year is Dr. John Marzluff of the University of Washington. His talk is titled "In the Company of Crows and Ravens." To get a taste of his fascinating research on how humans affect crow and raven culture and how they affect human culture, just Google "marzluff youtube"--and then come to hear about it firsthand!

Photographers, take note: Jerry Goffe's 3-day Digital Photography for Long Lenses will be offered as a PRE-FESTIVAL event this year, on the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday before the Festival. It is designed for those eager to learn how to photograph the Refuge using a digital SLR camera. Once you've experienced the hands-on activities Jerry and his co-instructors have designed to help you build your skills, you'll be able to enjoy more fully the Festival and all it has to offer. A

new tour on Wednesday this year is a "behind-the-scenes" wildlife excursion specifically for photographers. Jerry will accompany the group (limited to 25) to places on the Refuge known to harbor the opportunity for your perfect photograph.

Other new offerings at this year's Festival include:

2 watercolor workshops
Raptor tours
Lectures on birds and mammals specific to the Bosque
Introduction to tracking
Counting birds
Battling invasive plants
Loggerhead Shrikes
Songbirds of the Rio Grande Valley
Birds in Winter
Hikes!
And much much more...

Sandy Seth, our webmaster extraordinaire, is continually updating our Festival website (www.festivalofthecranes.com). Bookmark it for the latest in Festival information and watch for your brochure in the mail in early August.



Earlier this year, Stephen Reimus of Los Alamos was awarded his Boy Scout Eagle badge. His qualifying project, carried out at Bosque del Apache, was to install artificial prairie dog burrows. Those burrows helped to establish the (Black-tailed) prairie dog town now visible just off NM Highway 1 a short



distance south of the Tour Loop entrance. The photos above, taken in late May, are evidence of the town's success. Reimus will attend Texas Tech in Lubbock this fall. He expects to major in engineering and hopes to also play trumpet in the marching band. [From the Los Alamos Monitor.]

BIRDS OF BELIZE AND TIKAL : FEBRUARY 20-28, 2010

Jon Morrison

The 2010 Friends fundraiser trip is to Belize (618 species of birds) and Tikal in Guatemala (410 species). A fuller description of the details is an attachment to the electronic version of this *Bosque Watch* at www.friendsofthebosque.org.

If you book before July 31st, you'll get 5% off the ground portion of the trip.

If you have questions, please contact Jon Morrison of the Friends at 575-838-0717 or Debbie Sturdivant of Holbrook at 866-748-6146.

The complete trip flyer and enrollment form can be found at www.holbrooktravel.com/FriendsoftheBosqueBelize2010.



BOOK REVIEW

PETERSON FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

Houghton Mifflin, 2009. \$26.00

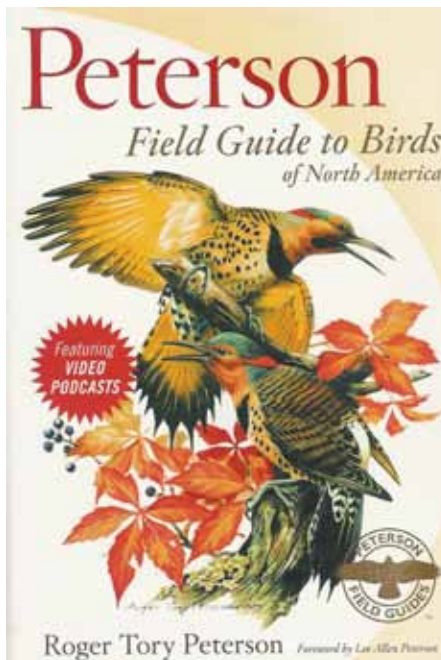
Reviewed by John W. Shipman, john@nmt.edu

My first bird guide, in 1976, was Peterson's "Field Guide to Western Birds". At that time it was the only decent field guide out there. It helped me with one of the hardest skills for a beginner to learn: What do I look for? Which parts of a bird are important in identification? Peterson's guides have a great system that addresses this need. On the paintings, thin black arrows point to the important features. For example, Bonaparte's and Franklin's gulls can both have solid black hoods; Peterson's illustrations point at the wingtips, which make the distinction easy. I needed this information in late April this year at Bosque del Apache, when both species were present.

In the last few decades, the growth in birding has made the market for field guides quite competitive. My current gold standard is the Sibley guides: the full North American guide by my desk at home and the western U.S. guide in the field (it fits in a large pocket unlike the full guide). The new Peterson guide, a combination of his eastern U.S. and western U.S. guides, is large for even a sizeable pocket. So what would make a birder prefer one over the other? The presence of several new features suggests to me that the publishers have been doing market research among active birders at all levels.

For beginners, a new expanded section on "How to identify birds" is a great summary. It presents a quick set of tests for narrowing down the bird: overall shape, wing shape, bill

shape, tail shape, general behavior, and so on. The back endpapers have a large set of bird silhouettes. A common complaint of beginners is that they don't understand the overall arrangement of birds in the book. I don't think field guide authors should bend over backwards to address these complaints. Some guides organize the birds by color, but this is a superficial and very variable characteristic. I feel that beginners are best served in the long run by learning the phylogenetic ordering of birds. Until then, rely on silhouettes, the section on field marks, and the index.



Some guides use photographs instead of paintings. This sounds like a good idea, but the whole point of paintings is that they can emphasize subtle differences that may be hard to see in a photo. Peterson executed his paintings with field identification in mind, so the poses and features are just what birders need. For readers who have gotten past the basics, a telling feature of a good field guide is good organization. In addition to the well-organized full index in back, there is a one-page index by common name right inside the Peterson guide's

front cover. When looking for a page number, it helps when page numbers are on the outside corners of pages; the Sibley North American guide's centered page numbers annoy me, although they are properly placed in Sibley's western guide.

Another misfeature of some guides is forcing the reader to jump around in the book to get from plates to text. Not a problem here: each two-page spread has plates on the right, text and small (one inch square) range maps on the left. Because it's sometimes hard to portray range information clearly on the small maps, there is an 86-page section near the back containing larger versions of all the range maps. This strikes me as good design. You can use the small range map to find out quickly which birds on that page might be expected in your area. The larger maps are present if you need them, but there's no reason to take up the extra space in the main section.

In summary, if you are in the market for a highly usable field guide for birders at just about any level, and you have a pocket big enough, this new Peterson guide is a good choice.

457 REASONS WHY WATERFOWL FUTURE IS BRIGHT

John Bertrand

The future of New Mexico waterfowl is in good hands if the quality and quantity of artworks submitted by young folk in our 2009 Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest* are an indication. Four hundred fifty-seven young artists in grades kindergarten through high school entered their drawings and paintings of ducks, geese and swans in this statewide competition. It concluded May 2 with an awards ceremony for 76 winning artists and their families in the Macey Center at New Mexico Tech University in Socorro. "Best of Show" top honor and a \$500 U.S. Savings Bond were awarded to 18-year-old Cesar Rios, a senior at Gadsden High School in Anthony, NM.

Rios' winning entry was of a wood duck rendered in Prisma colored pencil.

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge conducted the 2009 competition in New Mexico, as it has in 12 of the 16 years since the program was initiated here in 1993. Entries were received from students at 13 public schools, one private school, three art studios, and 11 home-schooled children. Bosque resident volunteers Joe and Bonnie Nemmers coordinated the

program with participating schools, under direction of Refuge Volunteer Coordinator Daniel Perry. As in past years, financial and logistical support was provided by Friends of the Bosque del Apache.

Judges for the competition were Bill Howe, FWS Regional Non-game Coordinator in Albuquerque; Skeeter Leard, award-winning wildlife artist; wildlife photographer Jerry Goffe;



Bosque biologist Colin Lee, and Cyndie Wolfe, an officer of Ducks Unlimited New Mexico. Entries were divided into four school grade categories: K-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. Three 1st place winners selected from each category received a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond provided by the Friends of the Bosque del Apache. All 2nd and 3rd place and honorable mention winners were presented with contest ribbons and certificates.

Students entering the design contest also were invited to accompany their

artwork with a brief conservation message, which would be judged separately from the artwork. Eight-year-old Christopher Voelkel of Albuquerque's Young at Art Studio won the New Mexico contest and the national contest with his conservation message: **Our environment, our responsibility, our future.** Voelkel also received a \$500 U.S. Savings Bond from the national Junior Duck program.

Following the awards ceremony, artworks awarded First, Second and Third Place ribbons were mounted in a display in the Visitor Center during May and June. They will be exhibited in succeeding months at the FWS Regional Office, Bitter Lake and Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuges, and other locations.

** The design contest is an annual art- and science-based program developed for schools by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Statewide contests are held in each of the 50 states and the U.S. territories. The top designs from each state and territory then are rated by judges to select a national winner. That design is to be imprinted on the current year's official Junior Duck Stamp and then sold at selected locations throughout America. Proceeds go to support conservation projects.*

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THE 2009 NATIONAL FRIENDS CONFERENCE - "FRIENDS UNITE"

Jon Morrison

On Feb 21st Jerry Goffe and I flew to Washington D.C. for the 5th National Friends Conference sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA). The conference started the next morning with a focus on three major issues facing the refuge system: water, climate change, and invasive species. Our wildlife refuges have become, in effect, national laboratories for finding solutions to these problems. Another goal of the trip, therefore, was to visit Capitol Hill to ensure that the system was adequately funded.

Attending were over 350 Friends members from 160 Friends organizations in 49 states. A general mood of hope and renewal was expressed because the future, in spite of the current economic conditions, appears to be more promising than the recent past.

The conference program included workshops such as Developing and Energizing Your Board, Building Coalitions, Working with Diverse Audiences, Working with Media, and the National Wildlife Refuge System's Birding Initiative. There were more workshops that Jerry and I wanted to attend than there were hours available.

At the awards dinner, the *2009 Refuge Manager of the Year* Award went to Greg Siekaniec of Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Greg, a 24-year veteran, recently oversaw development of the Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center and also supervised the third largest

rat removal program in the world (at a place called Rat Island). He was recently promoted to Assistant Director for the entire refuge system. Horticulturist Baron Horiuchi was named Employee of the Year. Over the last thirteen years he developed and implemented propagation and out-planting methods for endangered Hawaiian plants at the Hakalau Forest NWR in Hawaii.

The *Friends Group of the Year* award went to Friends of Pool 9, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (a 31-mile stretch of the river). The group is only three years old and already 400 members strong. They have an annual river clean-up and an Adventure Day for kids and their parents. Each year they host the Rivers and Bluffs Fall Birding Festival.

While in Washington, Jerry and I visited the office of Senator Tom Udall and met with his staff personnel for almost 30 minutes. We discussed needs of the refuge system and Bosque del Apache in particular. Jerry also visited Senator Jeff Bingaman. I had met with our U.S. Representative Harry Teague before the trip to Washington.

Friends groups make a difference for the Refuge System through the giving of their time, talents, and advocacy. We are a part of something bigger and one can see it at these conferences. If you'd like to join the NWRA or learn more about it, check out their website at <http://www.refugeassociation.org/>.



MAPPING THE RIO: WATERSHED EDUCATION PROJECT

Alexis Rykken

There is a rich history of the early Pueblo peoples in the Southwest and the Rio Grande.

Wherever they touched the river's story they were connected to life itself. Elemental. Fluid. Vital. Rivers and lakes and springs were sacred; doorways to the world below. Gods and heroes were born of water. Early people and nature were interconnected. All aspects of daily life; their pottery, their homes, their ceremonies, their stories; reflected nature. Today the Rio Grande is seen as an economic resource, a site for recreation, or a place to dump toxic waste or it is simply ignored. People say "What river"?

We adults are beginning to recognize that some things are not right in our world. But most of us do not seem ready to let go of all our wants, our needs, our lifestyle choices to make the necessary deep-down changes to protect our river. We are seriously lacking in humility. Our technocratic blinders allow us to distance ourselves from the natural world and the most basic understanding of ecology.

If children are to keep alive their connection to nature, their humility, this fragile inborn instinct, they need role models and companionship and care. They need you! Especially now. Kids are hammered by a pace of life beyond their years. Walking to explore the smooth bark of a fallen tree patterned by insects, a rock, a butterfly, a frog, the dancing sparkles of a passing river ...takes on mystery for the child. Almost any adult who walks with a child to the forest or desert or river or pond will help.

We need to respond to the need for children to be outdoors in ways that are healthy, non-destructive, and quiet. We need to ramble with our kids. We need to support our children's heart sense of care and wonder and love for the natural world, because it is being lost, folks. We need to let go of our egos and get out there with a kid. We need to dump our big cameras, our cell phones, our e-mail, our precious meetings, and all our self importance. Find a kid to walk with. No one may notice how wonderful you are, except a child, but you will make a difference.

NATIVE BEES

Colony Collapse Disorder! Varroa mites! Africanized bees in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas! What's a beekeeper to do? And what about the rest of us who love honey, healthy vegetables, and tasty fruits?

Farmers and fruit growers are rightly concerned because beehives placed near the fields are often a critical factor in stocking our grocery shelves. In recent years agricultural researchers have sought all sorts of ways to deal with honeybee problems.



One alternative approach is to recruit pollinators from among the ~4,000 species of native bees that live in North America. Doesn't do any good for the honey supply but would be a great backup plan for our future supplies of fruits and vegetables.

An organization called The Xerces Society (for Invertebrate Conservation) has a website (www.xerces.org) and distributes Invertebrate Conservation Fact Sheets. One of these, "Nests for Native Bees," is all about how you the reader can provide nesting sites around your house for them. Unlike honeybees most native bees are solitary, although bumblebees do live in small colonies. Among the solitary species, some 30% nest in wood and the rest nest underground.

Wood-nesting bees usually look for prefabricated tunnels made by beetles in snags or other dead wood. A female bee will stuff enough captured or collected food to feed one offspring into the end of a tunnel. After she's laid an egg on that larder she walls off that part of the tunnel and repeats the process. Wood blocks (preservative-free), natural deadwood, or even adobe blocks can be used. Closed-

end holes 3-6" deep and from 3/32" to 3/8" in diameter are drilled at intervals in the wood or adobe. The prepared nests need to be placed in spots sheltered from bad weather and with the hole openings facing southeast. Another type of nest site can be created from hollow-stemmed plant stalks such as bamboo or reeds. Stems 6-8" long with closed nodes at one end can be bundled with all the closed ends together. Bundles are then firmly attached to a support some three to six feet above the ground and with the stems horizontal.

For ground-nesting bees, clearing patches of bare ground in open, well-drained, and sunny places will work. Some species prefer flat ground, others like steep slopes. It's even possible to make raised beds of a compact sand-loam mixture for the bees. The female bees will excavate their own tunnels and stock brood cells with their larva's favorite food. In nature, bumblebees often use cavities under grass clumps to establish their colonies. A square wooden box seven inches on a side can be buried in a suitable location, filled with soft bedding material, and provided with an entrance tunnel.

Further details can be found in the Xerces publication mentioned above. Native bees at both Bosque del Apache and the Sevilleta refuge were the subject of a recent ecological study by Karen Weatherill. Also see "Native Pollinators: How to Protect and Enhance Habitat for Native Bees," by Mace Vaughan and Scott Hoffman Black, in *Native Plants* v. 9, #2, Summer 2008.



GOATHEADS

Bob Merkel

"Better take your shoes off before coming into the house." So I do and, often enough, find a few dry, prickly seed capsules (to be polite) stuck to the soles. Here in New Mexico they're usually "Goatheads," although we also sometimes pick up "Sandspur" seeds. The two are near look-alikes and equally painful to remove with bare hands but Goatheads grow on a so-called dicotyledonous plant, or "dicot," while Sandspurs (*Cenchrus spinifex*) are seeds of a "monocot" grass.



Like any other dicot plant, our Goathead (*Tribulus terrestris*) has leaves with a branching network of veins and seeds that can be split in half like beans or peas. In Florida and elsewhere it's called a Puncturevine (they're death on bike tires!). For your information, the Goathead is NOT a native of the New World but was brought here from Eurasia. One hopes it was by accident.

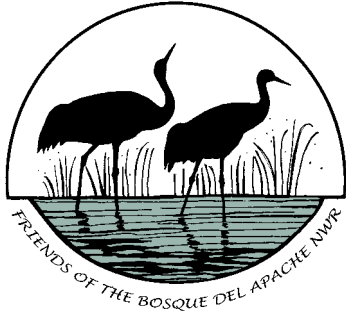
The plant family that includes the Goathead, the *Zygophyllaceae* or Caltrop family, is also represented in central New Mexico by two more-benign members. One of them is the well-known Creosote Bush (*Larrea tridentata*),

which often dominates dry desert slopes. The other, like the Goathead an annual plant, is called Carpetweed (*Kallstroemia parviflora*). All three plants have very similar yellow-to-orange flowers with five petals but only the Goathead has spiny fruits.

Goatheads and Carpetweeds usually grow flat on bare ground with stems radiating from a central taproot. Both have pinnately compound leaves with pairs of leaflets growing from a central stalk. Although similar in general appearance, the Carpetweed has hairy stems and only four or five pairs of

leaflets per leaf while the Goathead has smooth stems and typically around six pairs of leaflets per leaf – not to mention the Goathead seeds.

The good news is that Goatheads only start growing if we have adequate rain and they don't usually bear their "fruits" until summer. If you learn to recognize the small plants, they are very easy to pull up by the taproot. Also, the spiny goatheads develop away from that central point so you can still grasp at the taproot area without getting impaled. At our house, I pulled up all the plants for a couple of years and now I rarely find one in the yard.



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Membership Level: Individual \$20 Family \$25 Student \$15
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Interests: Help with Friends activities Help with the Festival
 Serve on a Friends Committee.

Please mail with your check to: **Friends of the Bosque del Apache**
 P.O. Box 340, San Antonio, NM 87832

SPEAK UP!

Government decisions determine the fate of the Bosque del Apache. You can let key decision makers know how you feel about the Refuge and other natural resource issues.

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President@WhiteHouse.gov

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