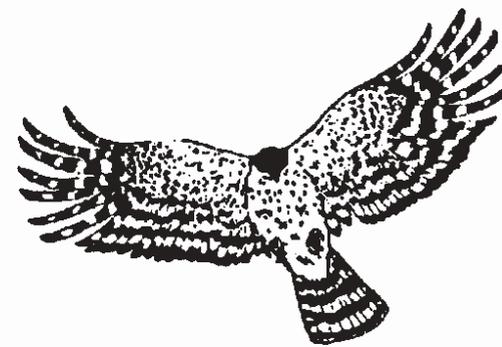


Restoring Connections



Newsletter of the Sky Island Alliance

Vol. 7 Issue 1 Winter 2004



INSIDE:
El Lobo
*Fate of
The
Once
and
Future
Wolf*

plus...

❖ Tumacacori update
❖ Sky Island outings
& other events



Sky Island Alliance

Protecting Our Mountain Islands & Desert Seas

520/624-7080 • fax 520/791-7709
info@skyislandalliance.org
www.skyislandalliance.org
P.O. Box 41165
Tucson, AZ 85717
Office:
Historic YWCA

738 N. 5th Avenue, Suite 201

Sky Island Alliance is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to restoring and protecting the unique diversity of the Sky Islands of South-eastern Arizona, Southwestern New Mexico, and Northern Mexico.

STAFF

David Hodges
Executive Director
dhodges@skyislandalliance.org

Acasia Berry
Associate Director
aciasia@skyislandalliance.org

Matt Skroch
Field Program Director
matt@skyislandalliance.org

Trevor Hare
Conservation Biologist
trevor@skyislandalliance.org

Cory Jones
GIS Specialist
cory@skyislandalliance.org

Janice Przybyl
Wildlife Monitoring Program
janice@skyislandalliance.org

Gita Bodner
Conservation planning
gbodner@post.harvard.edu

Caroline "Frog" Tinker
Events Coordinator
events@skyislandalliance.org

Jennifer Wolfsong
Legal Intern
jennifer@skyislandalliance.org

Lenny Alvarado
Legal Intern
lenmair@aol.com

Jennifer Katcher
Webmaster
jenniferkatcher@yahoo.com

Newsletter

Gita Bodner and
Dug Schoellkopf, *general editors*
Bob VanDeven, *feature editor*

Board of Directors

Rod Mondt, *President*
Randall Gray, *Vice President*
Nancy Zierenberg, *Secretary*
Dale Turner, *Treasurer*
Curtis Bradley
Paul Hirt
Lainie Levick
Rurik List
Carlos Lopez Gonzalez
Steve Marlatt
Todd Schulke

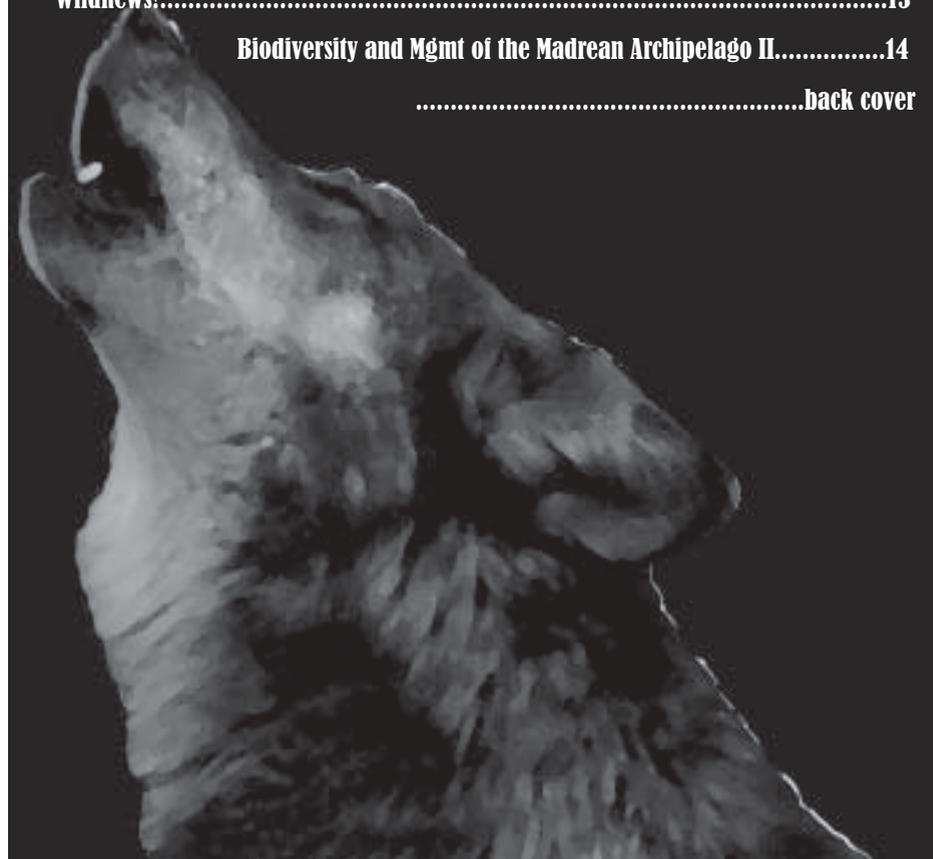


Front cover: Photo illustration based on photograph by Dr. Robin Silver of captive Mexican gray wolf "Chico," alpha male at the Phoenix Zoo's Mexican gray wolf breeding facility.

Back cover: View of the Sky Islands' Pinaleno Mountains, native territory for Mexican gray wolves, seen from the Blue Range region of the current Mexican gray wolf recovery area. Wolves can easily cross such distances, but current US Fish and Wildlife regulations call for wolves to be caught or killed if they wander outside the artificial boundaries of their release area. Photo by Tim Van Devender.

Table of Contents

Rambling Rants from the Director's Desk.....	3
SIA in the News.....	3
Wilderness in the Tumacacori Highlands.....	4
Help Protect Mo' Wilderness.....	5
The Once and Future Mexican Gray Wolf.....	6
Will the Real Mexican Gray Wolf Please Stand up.....	7
Reward Increases as Wolf Killing Continues.....	7
Predator-friendly Ranching.....	10
Booknotes: <i>Return of the Mexican Gray Wolf</i>	10
Poetry.....	11
Road Rattlings.....	12
Tracking el Lobo.....	12
Wildnews!.....	13
Biodiversity and Mgmt of the Madrean Archipelago II.....	14
.....	back cover



Many Thanks to Our Contributors!

Jane E. Evans, aficionado of native grasses; Jan Holder, Arizona predator-friendly rancher; Sky Jacobs, self-trained naturalist and artist; Craig Miller, Director of Southwest Programs for Defenders of Wildlife; Jean Ossorio, SIA tracker who represents the Southwest Environmental Center on the Southwest Gray Wolf Recovery Team; Dennis Pepe, owner of the excellent Green Fire Bookshop in Tucson, AZ; Kathy Pitts, exclusive Flora and Fauna columnist for *Restoring Connections*; Asante Riverwind, Chiricahua Mountains artist and activist; Nancy Reid, SIA tracker; Michael J. Robinson, who represents the Center for Biological Diversity on the Southwest Gray Wolf Recovery Team; Robin Silver, physician, photographer and activist; Bob VanDeven, photographer and writer extraordinaire; and Tim Van Devender, SIA volunteer and wolf enthusiast; and, of course, the SIA staff.

Upcoming Issue

2004 marks the tenth anniversary of the first conference to feature our "Madrean Archipelago" Sky Island area as a distinct region worthy of attention and protection. In honor of this, we're co-hosting a follow-up conference in May (see page 14). We're also focusing our next newsletter on the region's changes and trends, ten years back and ten years forward.

The newsletter feature "**Looking Back, Thinking Ahead**" will be a community effort. We invite submissions on this theme from all perspectives and all formats (biology, hydrology, culture, politics, etc., in prose, poetry, drawings, photographs, etc.). Look back and reflect on how the region has changed in the last 10 years (or longer, but using 10 years as a bench mark). Think ahead and speak about what you hope for, what you fear, what you expect, and what your intuition sees. What predictions of a decade ago have come to pass and which have not? Where have we made progress and where have we slipped back? Chart the history of your favorite issue and show us where its future meets the horizon. Submissions are due April 4, 2004 (see below).

Seeking SIA newsletter submissions:

Send us your poetry, your words of wisdom, your art!

We want to keep this newsletter filled with inspirational, informative material, and we'd like your help! Do you write poetry? Draw, sketch, paint, or photograph? Like to address regional conservation issues? Review books or websites? Anything that relates to the Sky Islands region is fair game! You can respond to items in our recent newsletter, comment on your experiences as a volunteer or conference-goer, etc. Also, let us know if you'd like to be a regular contributor, e.g. with a column each issue. The deadline for our next newsletter is April 4, 2004. Material submitted after that date may be saved for subsequent issues. Please email submissions to newsletter@skyislandalliance.org, or mail them to Sky Island Alliance attn: Gita, P.O. Box 41165, Tucson, AZ 85717. Resolution of digital images should be at least 300 dpi if possible, but we can work with some lower-resolution images. **Miss our restaurant reviews? That's because no one sent us any! C'mon, folks, you know there are some great eats out there. Give your favorite small-town restaurant a boost by letting us promote it!**

Rednecks for Red Wolves

During the summer of 1996 my family and I had the good fortune to spend time traveling and camping in North Carolina. Surprisingly, the most common bumper sticker we saw that summer proudly proclaimed "Rednecks for Red Wolves." Upon further investigation, we found that not only were rednecks for red wolves, but all sorts of other folks were as well. Young, old, rural, and urban folks were proud of the fact that a part of their heritage had been restored. We left the Carolinas impressed with how well people and wolves could live with one another.

In many ways the plight of the Eastern red wolf parallels our own Mexican gray wolf. In the early years of the 20th century the red wolf was believed to be responsible for widespread cattle losses. This combined with unfounded fear of the wolf created hysteria that led first to bounty killing followed by a systematic predator control program. Additionally, the red wolf was affected by mining, logging, road building, water diversion and drainage projects, and the clearing of land for development, which altered and destroyed its habitat. By 1980, the red wolf was extinct in the wild with 14 captive wolves forming the original breeding



population for this species. Reintroduction of the red wolf into North Carolina began in 1987 and today nearly 100 wolves live in the wild and range across an area covering a half million acres. This is a testament to the generosity of the people of North Carolina who embrace their own natural heritage to welcome back native wildlife.

For more than a decade much attention has been focused on the efforts to reintroduce the Mexican gray wolf to the Southwest. What hasn't always been clear during this time is that *Canis lupus baileyi*, the Mexican gray wolf, rarely existed in the United States outside the Sky Islands region and then only after adjacent regions suffered the extirpation of their own native wolves. In 1986, Fish and Wildlife Service wolf expert Ronald M. Nowak (and subsequent researchers utilizing genetic analysis) emphasized how different *baileyi* was from all other gray wolf subspecies. He advised releasing them in "an area relatively close in ecological conditions to those that *baileyi* lived under, and also an area within one of the states that bordered Old Mexico." The Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area into which wolves were reintroduced in 1998 comprises the Gila and Apache National Forests, approximately 80% of which is outside of *baileyi*'s historic range. This Sky Island subspecies of the gray wolf has yet to be restored to its native range (see back cover for range map). If politics and special interests continue to drive the gray wolf recovery program in the Southwest, wolves will not return to the Sky Islands.

The recovery plan calls for two separate populations of the wolf. The original five areas studied for reintroduction efforts were three mountainous complexes in the Sky Islands, the Blue Range of east-central Arizona, and the White Sands Missile Range. Eventually, the Blue was chosen for initial reintroduction efforts. Of grave concern to us is that the current recovery team does not appear to be considering the Sky Islands as a second recovery site, but

is looking at other areas within the Southwest, far from *baileyi*'s native range.

This in itself would not affect the return of wolves to the Sky Islands, however the Fish and Wildlife Service has taken the position that any wolf found outside of the arbitrarily derived recovery zone will be removed. Nowhere else that the Fish and Wildlife Service is involved in wolf recovery does this onerous burden exist--not in the southeast, the Great Lake states, or in the northern Rockies. In the case of the red wolf, the recovery program started out using a model similar to ours with poor results. Only after this boundary restriction was lifted did red wolves begin to flourish. If this barrier to recovery is not removed and/or the decision is made to establish the second population outside of previously studied sites in the Sky Islands, *Canis lupus baileyi* will likely never exist in the US portion of its former range.

One glimmer of hope is the Paquet Report, prepared for the Fish and Wildlife Service by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group in 2001. It contains many recommendations designed to improve the recovery efforts on behalf of the Mexican gray wolf. Several key recommendations are to "immediately modify the final rule and develop the authority to conduct initial releases into the Gila National Forest." and "immediately modify the final rule to allow wolves that are not management problems to establish territories outside the Blue River [Range] Wolf Recovery Area." If the Fish and Wildlife Service adopts the Paquet Report as management policy, wolves would once again populate the Sky Islands on their own. With the potential future reintroduction of the gray wolf to the northern Sierra Madres, our Sky Island population would be a bridge between wolf populations in Mexico and those in the Blue Range and the Gila Wilderness. Only then would we be able to consider *Canis lupus baileyi* recovered in its native range.

Recently, I received a copy of an op-ed that ran in the *Rocky Mountain News*. In

this piece, long-time wolf advocate Michael J. Robinson captured the issue dead-on. "Mexican gray wolves would successfully adapt to Colorado, as would Northern Rocky Mountain gray wolves from Yellowstone National Park. But there is more at stake. The Endangered Species Act is intended to 'provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved.' Putting lobos in Colorado should not come at the expense of allowing them to recover in the habitats in which they evolved along the US-Mexico border. The diminutive Coues white-tailed deer deserves the predator which graced it with keen alertness; the pig-like javelina should not be cheated of the reason for its inch-long tusks and occasionally aggressive disposition."

Those of us who would like to see our native wolf restored to the Sky Islands must act fast and forcefully. Decision makers need to hear your voices. Please send a letter today to H. Dale Hall, Southwest Regional Director, US Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103, and send copies to members of the Arizona and New Mexico congressional delegation, especially Senators John McCain (AZ) and Jeff Bingaman (NM). Please demand a federal rule change that would follow the recommendations of the Paquet Report, including direct release into the Gila National Forest and especially allowing wolves to roam outside the boundaries of the recovery area, *just as all other endangered wildlife is permitted to do*. We must bring sound science and common sense into this program, and public input is the key to making this happen. Thanks for your help.

—David Hodges, Executive Director

For more information, the Paquet Report (recommendations on pgs.65–68) is online at: mexicanwolf.fws.gov/Documents/R2ES/Mexican_Wolf_3_Year_Biological_Review.pdf.

Sky Island Alliance in the News

by Acasia Berry, SIA Associate Director

The Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness campaign continues to draw media attention. Both the *Green Valley News and Sun* and *Nogales International*, the two newspapers closest to the proposed area, have run extensive stories along with several pro-wilderness letters to the editors.

Some of the highlights of the coverage include the *Green Valley News and Sun's* Diversions Section on January 14. Staff writer Tim Hull inspired readers to visit and experience the vast wild expanses of the Highlands. "It is so quiet here. Nothing but the wind and an occasional screech disturbs the wonderment that even the most hardened human will likely succumb to standing on the windy plains or hiking along a wet and misty ri-

parian trail." The map depicting the area on the full-page piece was created by our own Cory Jones.

January 20, *Nogales International* editor Kathleen Vandervoet's editorial *Tumacacori Wilderness Area Must be Created* urges readers to "take a little time at least once a year to ask ourselves what kind of Earth we want to live on." She then called on citizen's to fulfill their "responsibility to look out for the protection of the land around us" by calling our elected officials. She goes on to say "A wilderness is something we can enjoy now, and it's also a gift we can give to our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Now is the time to act to preserve the current wild area and assure that

it always remain this way."

Here in Tucson the proposal is also getting a fair amount of ink. The *Tucson Citizen* ran a January 9 editorial stating that the "Tumacacori Highlands warrants the protection because it is an exceptional area for native plants and animal species..." Meanwhile on January 25, in *The Arizona Republic*, Mary Jo Pitzl's wrote on the history of wilderness in Arizona and the specifics of our proposal while quoting our own Matt Skroch: "We're looking at this and saying, 'We like it as it is,' " said Matt Skroch, a member of Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands, the group pushing for the wilderness label. "We don't want it cut up with roads, we don't want it blown out with campsites."

Wilderness designation is not the only story that put the work of Sky Island Alliance in the news though. Phelps Dodge stepped closer to opening a massive open pit copper mine outside of Safford. In its December 11 story the *Arizona Daily Star* quoted SIA executive director David Hodges who refuted claims by Wayne King of the BLM's Safford office that the proposed mine won't have any significant problems. "I'm always skeptical when a mining company says there's not going to be any impacts. We've heard that a few thousand times, and it's never turned out to be true," said Hodges This story also ran in the February 2 edition of *High Country News*.

Following the Trail to Wilderness in the Tumacacori Highlands

by Matt Scroch, SIA Field Programs Director

On January 10, more than 100 folks gathered at the base of Tumacacori Peak in Tubac, Arizona, to hear Congressman Grijalva and local residents release a plan to designate a portion of the Coronado National Forest as wilderness.

The proposal would add approximately 84,000 acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System, which currently encompasses about 106 million acres of public lands across the country. The

to wandering jaguars, rolling hills of oak grassland, and deep canyons, the Tumacacori Highlands represent the largest remaining roadless area on Arizona's National Forests not designated as wilderness. If so designated, it would become the fourth largest wilderness area on Arizona's national forests.

Wilderness areas are created by the United States Congress through legislation brought by one or more congressional members. The purpose of wilderness is embodied in the 1964 Wilderness Act which states, "In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the

United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Con-

"In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness."

gress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness." When passed unanimously almost 40 years ago, Congress had the foresight to protect areas from degradation for future generations. Through the decades that legacy has continued to grow. Without wilderness protection, places like Pusch Ridge and the Chiricahua Mountains as well as Aravaipa Canyon might not offer the solitude and unspoiled beauty they do today. These places, including the yet undesignated Tumacacori Highlands, provide a unique opportunity to enjoy untrammeled lands and experience our public wildlands in their natural state. While hunting and ranching are not affected, wilderness restricts motorized vehicles to existing roads that do not penetrate the designated area. While illegal roads increasingly plague the Coronado National Forest, wilderness provides a strong mandate requiring their closure.

The Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness Campaign is led by an *ad-hoc* coalition called the Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands, of which Sky Island Alliance is a cooperating organization. This coalition, consisting of more than 70 businesses and organizations in addition to hundreds of individuals, continues to build a strong groundswell of support throughout our communities.

This wilderness proposal is founded on public support. To ensure that the Tumacacori Highlands remain as they are today, the Friends are dedicated to working with all interested stakeholders. We share common ground with the ranching community, the business community, and those who work or recreate in these fantastic mountains. Our outreach efforts have already made great strides. In the small community of Tubac alone, more than two dozen businesses have signed on to support wilderness. Local elected officials from Santa Cruz County have also expressed their support for designation. In addition, hunting-oriented groups are beginning to appreciate the wildlife habitat that Wilderness design-

nation protects.

In Congress, we look to the Arizona Delegation for support. Arizona's last Wilderness bills in 1990 (BLM lands) and 1984 (Forest Service lands) were led by the late Congressman Morris K. Udall—a champion of public lands management and advocate for wild places across the country. Those bills enjoyed support from Democrats and Republicans alike, and we aim to bring a diverse range of voices to Congress when the Tumacacori Highlands bill is ready.

Representative Jim Kolbe—who supported Wilderness in 1990 and takes credit for important environmental legislation such as the San Pedro National Riparian Conservation Area and Las Cienegas National Conservation Area—represents a portion of the Santa Cruz River Valley and could be an important spokesperson for preserving the natural characteristics of the Tumacacori Highlands. We hope Senator John McCain, who also has supported



Rep. Raúl Grijalva at January 10 press conference

Tumacacori Highlands, about 15 miles northwest of Nogales, Arizona, contain outstanding resources of wildlife, cultural sites, and recreational opportunities. Home

photo by Sky Crosby

Powerline Update

Tucson Electric Power's proposed powerline through Arizona's largest remaining unprotected roadless area continues to threaten this magical landscape and nearby communities. In October 2003, the Coronado National Forest and Department of Energy closed the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement they released in August. Today, we await the final planning document that will outline the preferred route and foreshadow the Dept. of Energy and Forest Service's eventual decision on where the line would be allowed, and with what restrictions. **Thank you** to all our dedicated members and volunteers who took time to write letters opposing this disastrous project!

During the public hearings held in September 2003 in Green Valley and Nogales, communities of southern Arizona spoke out against this huge powerline. In solidarity, citizens called for real solutions to Santa Cruz County power needs—not a massive proposal that sidesteps the interests of the public. After the Green Valley hearing resulted in almost unanimous opposition to all proposed routes, TEP representatives tried to salvage their public image by stating that citizens in Nogales support the proposal. Two days later in Nogales, the hearing again showed almost unanimous opposition—sending a strong message to the federal agencies, the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), and TEP that this powerline proposal does not benefit southern Arizona.

No matter where the current powerline proposal goes, it will be met with stiff opposition and litigation if necessary. We will continue to advocate for cheaper and better solutions – a smaller powerline, local generating plant, or renewable resource technology. The ACC would be wise to listen to the communities of southern Arizona and change their hardline stance on such a massive, destructive, and unneeded project. As long as TEP hides behind the ACC and pretends to be interested in solving Santa Cruz County's power needs while greedily eyeing speculative Mexican power markets, the citizens here will not look favorably upon their proposals.

Many of you are asking how this relates to Wilderness designation. If the Tumacacori Highlands had not been left out of the 1984 Wilderness Act, this area would have already been protected against such damaging powerline schemes. Wilderness designation now would, of course, prevent future assaults of this type. As it stands, however, TEP's current powerline proposal will likely have to be defeated on its own lack of merit.

This issue may take a while to resolve. We'll keep you posted!



The overwhelming majority of people at the press conference support wilderness designation for the Tumacacori Highlands.

photo by Kate Mackay

Wilderness—both the 1984 and 1990 Acts—will also be an important advocate in the Senate as we head to Congress later this year. Your voice is needed to help convince these legislators of the value of this new Wilderness bill (see page 6).

We have a challenging but rewarding road ahead of us. Building support, writing letters, and seeking endorsements from a wide spectrum of viewpoints is no small task. We look forward to this worthy work and will continue to advocate for a solid proposal built upon the hard work of citizens who care to see the Tumacacori Highlands remain as they are—a wild and special place.

Help Protect Mo' Wilderness

by Diana Rhoades, SIA Wilderness Organizer

This September our nation will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the 1964 Wilderness Act, the landmark legislation that has protected more than 106 million acres of public lands as road-free wilderness in 44 states. Thanks to volunteer action and progressive leadership, Arizona is one of those states, with some 4.5 million acres protected in congressionally-designated Wilderness areas. Legendary congressman Mo Udall led the legislative fight, sponsoring Wilderness bills for Arizona in 1984 and 1990. But between the passage of the 1990 Wilderness Bill and the next census in 2000, Arizona's population increased by 40 percent (from 3.7 million to 5.3 million) and roadless acres have declined. Clearly it's time for new Wilderness designations.

According to US census data, Arizona's population is growing three times as fast as the rest of the nation and shows no signs of slowing. Motorized recreation—which has a large per-person impact on fragile, arid lands and on the sense of solitude sought by other users—has boomed during this same time. As valuable as our past Wilderness bills were, only some six percent of Arizona's land base is currently protected under the Wilderness Act. This tiny amount is simply not enough to protect the fragile parts of our natural heritage against this onslaught of new residents. And six percent is nowhere near enough to provide opportunities for solitude and low-impact recreation for this growing population.

On January 10, Congressman Raúl Grijalva kicked off the new year with legislation to protect southern Arizona's Tumacacori Highlands. Like they did for the 1984 Pajarita and Mt. Wrightson Wilderness areas, residents and businesses from Tucson to Tumacacori, Tubac to Nogales, and Arivaca to Green Valley are working hard to protect approximately 84,000 of public land in their back yards. These people see that Wilderness designation will help preserve the charms of southern Arizona in the face of growing populations drawn by these charms. These people choose to defend our collective natural legacy and recognize that the longer we wait, the harder it will be to protect the dwindling amount we have left. The *Nogales International* and the *Tucson Citizen* have published editorials in favor of Wilderness, and *The Connection* and *Green Val-*

ley News have also run favorable articles.

Located southwest of Tucson and northwest of Nogales in the Coronado National Forest, the Tumacacori, Atascosa and Pajarito mountains are an exceptional arena for the intermingling of sub-tropical and northern species of plants and animals. They're home to 50 sensitive species—one of the highest concentrations of imperiled or rare plants and animals in the state.

Plants of the area include sub-tropical trees, epiphytes, rare annuals and cacti, and numerous species of wildflowers. Animals of the area include the Mexican spotted owl, Chiricahua leopard frog, gray hawk, Mexican vine snake, tropical kingbird, great plains narrow-mouthed toad, buff-collared nightjar, desert tortoise, and of course the jaguar! Since 1900 there have been only 60 sightings of jaguars—all in southern Arizona.

Join the Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands

One way people are getting involved is by joining Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands, a grassroots coalition of organizations, businesses, and citizens supporting the Wilderness designation. Groups include Sky Island Alliance, Friends of the Santa Cruz River, Santa Cruz River Alliance, Rex Ranch, Arizona Quail Alliance, Arizona Wilderness Coalition, Tucson and Arizona Audubon Societies, Ruby Mine, Arizona Native Plant Society, Republicans for Environmental Protection, Southwestern Biological Institute, Sierra Club, and hundreds of citizens in Santa Cruz county and throughout Arizona.



Contact these key elected officials!

Call and write Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ, 8th District) and Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) and ask them to add their support to Rep. Raúl Grijalva's Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness legislation.

The Honorable John McCain

US Senate
241 Russell Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-2235
Fax: (202) 228-2862
Local: (520) 670-6334
www.mccain.senate.gov/

The Honorable Jim Kolbe

US House of Representatives
2266 Rayburn House Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: (202) 225-2542
Fax: (202) 225-0378
Local: (520) 881-3588
www.house.gov/kolbe/

Write letters to the editor to help rally friends and neighbors. These letters do make a difference!

Nogales International

P.O. Box 579
Nogales, AZ 85621
(520) 281-9706
kvander@nogalesinternational.com

Arizona Daily Star

P.O. Box 26807
Tucson, AZ 85726-6807
(520) 573-4141 fax
letters@azstarnet.com

The Connection

P.O. Box 338
Arivaca, AZ 85601
(520) 398-2379
(520) 398-3025 fax
SoAZVox@aol.com

Tucson Citizen

P.O. Box 26767
Tucson, AZ 85726-6767
(520) 573-4569 fax
letters@tucsoncitizen.com

Green Valley News & Sun

P.O. Box 567
Green Valley, AZ 85622
(520) 625-8046 fax
kengle@gvnews.com

We want to gather all the letters for a big wilderness event—so please send a copy of your letter to Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands, P.O. Box 8102, Tumacacori, AZ 85640, or email: info@tumacacoriwild.org.

Talking Points on the Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness Proposal:

- Protects Arizona's largest unprotected national forest roadless area from destructive road building, unregulated off-road vehicles, new mining claims, new utility lines, and other damaging development;
- Protects non-motorized recreational activities such as hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and camping;
- Protects habitat for magnificent species such as the jaguar, gray hawk, Chiricahua leopard frog, tropical kingbird and mountain lion;
- Protects clean air and water in the Santa Cruz River watershed;
- Protects cultural and historical sites;
- Preserves access roads including Ruby Road and several Forest Service roads for reaching wild areas;
- Does not affect existing grazing operations or existing mining claims;
- Reduces proliferation of roads used by smugglers, but does not prevent Border Patrol agents from doing their law enforcement jobs.

The Once and Future Mexican Gray Wolf

by Michael J. Robinson, Center for Biological Diversity

In August 1915, a 25-year-old drifter from Oregon landed on his older brother's ranch along Turkey Creek in southeastern Arizona's Canelo Hills, and decided to stay. Stanley P. Young, smart and ambitious but rudderless, had been drifting in and out of colleges for years and working in gold and mica mines. He had grown up hunting, and developed skills as a trapper during his wandering years. In October 1917, the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey hired Young as a hunter for its two-year-old program to exterminate predators that threatened livestock. One of Young's first tasks directly benefited himself and his brother: killing a pair of wolves whose territory ranged from Mexico into the Canelo Hills.

The wolf pair had been killing newborn calves. Their tracks were unmistakable—the male was missing the middle toe on his right front foot, lost to a leghold trap that had made him perpetually wary. The pair shunned poisons and avoided attempts to run them down with hunting dogs. It took Young four weeks of tracking them on their regular 70-mile circuit, crossing the international border at two places, before he located a spot where cattle and mounted cowboys wouldn't stumble into a trap and yet the wolves would. At a 6,000-foot-high pass in the Canelo Hills he carefully concealed two steel traps.

The female wolf stepped into his trap, pulled it from the ground, and dragged the trap and its chain through brushy ravines while fighting off the dogs that Young brought in to track her. Young caught up to her on horseback in the San Rafael Valley below, ending her travails with a shot from his Colt revolver. According to Young, she was the first wolf in Arizona killed in this federal program. The male wolf, his caution overpowered by longing, became the second victim 17 days later when he stepped into a trap baited with his deceased mate's urine, and ground-up gall bladder and anal glands.

The federal government had entered the wolf-killing business in 1915 after ranchers and bounty hunters failed to exterminate the species in previous decades. To make room for domestic livestock, millions of deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, and bison had been gunned down in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The gray wolves, largely deprived of their natural prey, readily turned to livestock as a new food source. The Bureau of Biological Survey's program of salaried hunters proved far more efficient than the bounty laws that often allowed a few savvy wolves to escape and perpetuate their kind.

Poison soon became the government's primary tool and by the early 1920s the agency was producing around three million tabs of strychnine each year. These were concealed in one-inch chunks of horseflesh and dropped around water sources and wildlife trails.

By 1928 Young had worked his way up to national chief of predator control. Consistent use of the word "control" was Young's innovation to assure critics that there was no danger of complete extinction. Yet by 1928 only scattered lone wolves and few if any breeding packs were left in the western United States. In Mexico's Sierra Madre Mountains, however, the Mexican gray wolf subspecies (*Canis lupus baileyi*) was still abun-

dant, and individuals periodically crossed over into Arizona and New Mexico.

From the 1930s through the 1960s, the Biological Survey (which in 1940 became the US Fish and Wildlife Service) sta-



Let me out!

tioned a hunter along the Mexican border to prevent "re-infestation" of the Southwest with wolves. In 1950 the agency sent salaried personnel and a new, deadlier poison called Compound 1080 to Mexico (and Young went to Canada) to duplicate the cooperative, district-by-district extermination program that had been successful in the U.S.. Ten years later, all but a few of Mexico's wolves were gone. By 1970, after years of the Fish and Wildlife Service's defensively insisting in Congressional hearings that it would never drive a species to extinction, wolves crossing into the U.S. were an almost unknown rarity—but still were given no sanctuary from the agency's ubiquitous poisons.

Only President Richard M. Nixon's signing of the Endangered Species Act on December 28, 1973, reversed these policies and led to the capture of the last five wolves in Mexico between 1978 and 1980 for an emergency captive breeding program to stave off extinction. Their progeny joined a handful of others already in captivity, some of which were the offspring of a lobo captured in 1959 in southern Arizona's Tumacacori Mountains.

In January 1982, an interagency and bi-national recovery team released a Mexican wolf recovery plan. It contained a plea for resources, recommending "that money be made available for additional intensive survey work and attempts to capture wolves located during the survey. The feeling is that this final

attempt is a now-or-never effort." Such funds were never allocated and no additional wild wolves have since been confirmed in Mexico.

Although a few progressive minds in the Fish and Wildlife Service were in favor of reintroducing the wolf, it took 18 years of litigation and political maneuvering to begin to overcome the agency's predator control legacy and agree on a plan to get Mexican gray wolves back into the wild. The extended process included an evaluation by Arizona's Game and Fish Department of three potential wolf habitats in the Sky Islands Ecosystem—the Chiricahuas, Galiuro/Pinelenos, and Patagonia/Atascoscos—each wholly within the historic range of the Mexican wolf and each drawn to include more than two million acres. All were found capable of sup-

porting wolves. But attention turned instead to the larger roadless areas above the Mogollon Rim. These lay in the historic range of a neighboring but now extinct gray wolf subspecies; the accepted range of the Mexican gray wolf extended only as far north as the Gila River in southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona. With more roadless acres and greater availability of certain prey, the first lobos were released in March of 1998 in

the Apache National Forest with a recovery area that also included the Gila National Forest of New Mexico.

As part of a political compromise made to meet the livestock industry's strident objections, the wolves were officially confined to the artificial boundaries of these two national forests. El Lobo was formally banned from the Sky Islands—its true home—even when the recovering wolves' territories are on national forests or BLM public lands. Today, the population above the rim is struggling due in large part to the government's policy of killing or repeatedly removing wolves that leave the official recovery area. Even when re-released, wolf packs that have been moved almost invariably break apart and the separated animals are much more vulnerable to poachers.

On April 1, 2003, the Fish and Wildlife Service codified a gray wolf reclassification rule that essentially lumped *Canis lupus baileyi* together with several very different subspecies, all of which are now extinct. This rule superseded a 1978 regulation that had ensured that any wolf recovery effort be informed by knowledge of the various subspecies and their historic ranges. The new regulation created a so-called Southwest Gray Wolf Distinct Population Segment area extending from Mexico to northern Utah and Colorado. On the surface it looks as though the wolves have gained more territory in which to roam. In reality the regulation simply grafts onto the already artificial range map a chunk of land

completely foreign to *Canis lupus baileyi* while ignoring the value to the wolf of returning to its native range.

Today, a new recovery team has been convened to decide where within this area wolves will be allowed to live—and required to recover—as a standard for removing them from the endangered species list. Under this scheme, wolves might well be de-listed merely for inhabiting areas in northern Arizona and Colorado (as well as their current recovery area), without any population of lobos established in the sole part of the United States where they evolved: the Sky Islands.

Recovery of the Mexican gray wolf can be seen as a journey of three steps. The first is simply the survival of individual wolves beyond the confines of metal cages and captive breeding facilities. Founding of a stable breeding population in the wild represents the second step, of greater importance for the future of the species. Finally, the third critical step involves return of wolves to the mountains and grasslands they once inhabited. Unfortunately for the wolves, the recovery process has stalled since we achieved the first step back in 1998. The Blue Range/Gila wolves have not yet reached the status of a viable breeding population, largely because of the unyielding boundary encircling them and the continued poaching described on page seven. The Endangered Species Act is intended to "provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved," and Congress has directed the Fish and Wildlife Service to prioritize listings of species precisely where the greatest conflicts with extractive interests lie—partly to ensure that the most imperiled landscapes receive the conservation attention they deserve. By failing to recognize the unique character and historic range of the Mexican gray wolf, the Fish and Wildlife Service has set the stage to write off conservation of the habitat in which it evolved.

Ultimately, to ensure the lobo is allowed to roam the hills it once knew, an active constituency of people must demand its return. A broad coalition of conservation groups, including the Center for Biological Diversity, is suing to overturn last year's pernicious Southwestern Gray Wolf reclassification. As the 1982 recovery plan notes, Mexican wolves evolved in sparse habitats that required them to roam vast distances to find sufficient prey. That roaming is part of their essence, and the lobo is part of the spirit of the Sky Islands and part of the functioning of its ecosystems. The tentative first step toward recovery has been taken, but the journey is far from over.

Michael Robinson represents the Center for Biological Diversity on the Southwest Gray Wolf Recovery Team. This article is drawn from his recently completed history of the federal wolf extermination and reintroduction programs, for which he is seeking a publisher.

Will the Real Mexican Gray Wolf Please Stand Up

by Kathy Pitts, Special to *Restoring Connections*

It turns out, the wolf is one of those animals you think you know a lot about and don't. You grew up on tales of Red Riding Hood and at some point switched to Farley Mowat, but what you know may still be more legend than fact.



Female Mexican gray wolf at the Phoenix Zoo's captive breeding program

Serious research into wolf biology and ecology didn't begin until something like 30 or 40 years ago, when the animals were already so reduced by habitat loss

and extermination efforts that extinction loomed south of the Canadian border. What we know of wolf family structure, communication skills, hunting habits and life cycle has come to us since then from field studies of eastern and arctic gray wolves in the northern latitudes.

Meanwhile, a review of the popular literature proves that romantic notions die hard. Do wolves only kill the weak and small? Do they really mate for life? What does *dominance* mean when it comes to wolf packs?

And then there's the Mexican gray wolf, *Canis lupus baileyi*, the subspecies native to our Sky Islands. Old accounts are reliable only in their relentless litany of the slaughter of the wild canids, with descriptive information typically limited to tall-tale bragadocio about how fierce, large, and cunning the beasts were.

This smallest and southernmost of North America's gray wolves was exterminated from this country long ago. Remnant populations remained in Mexico long enough for stragglers to be seen here into the '50s and for a select few to become the founding generation for the current effort to re-establish wild populations.

One of those wild-caught lobos was

picked up from the Peck Canyon area of the Tumacacori Mountains in 1959. Designation of this area as wilderness (as proposed by Friends of the Tumacacori Highlands) might someday allow the return of a once-native son. (Is this appropriate and/or likely?)

The wolves have already been returned to another of their haunts, made famous by Aldo Leopold's conversion to conservation in the dying light of a wolf's eyes. It is here, in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, that we may once more have an opportunity to learn about these intelligent and adaptable predators and their importance to the Southwestern ecosystem.

For, as wolf specialist David Parsons noted in a 1996 report, "Wolves pursue their prey by chasing, sometimes over long distances, and often hunt in groups, while other large predators [mountain lions or bears] hunt singly and usually rely on ambush or opportunistic encounters with their prey. Thus, the evolutionary influence of Mexican wolves on their prey was unique and was not replaced in their absence."

We may learn whether it's true, as they say, that Mexican wolves have smaller packs and larger ranges than their northern cousins. Or maybe this won't turn out to be any more true than the idea that Mexican wolves choose small prey over

large. (Instead, it's becoming apparent they prefer elk to deer.)

Perhaps we will have an opportunity to begin studying what writer Barry Lopez called "the conversation of death"—the moment of decision between predator and prey as to who will be chased and who will live another day. We may even put to rest that old cliché about how wolves mate for life. We don't and they don't, and it would be edifying to understand why not.

But in order for us to have this "conversation of life" there is still much work to be done to ensure the establishment of Mexican wolves in their old home. According to Parsons, illegal mortality—continuing attacks on wolves by humans—presents a serious problem. He is hopeful that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be more responsive to the issue now that a new recovery team is in place.

Because somewhere out there is the real wolf, whom we have yet to meet.

* Parsons, D.R. 1996. Case Study: The Mexican Wolf. Pages 101-123 in E.A. Herrera and L.F. Huenneke eds. *New Mexico's Natural Heritage: Biological Diversity in the Land of Enchantment*. New Mexico Journal of Science, Vol. 36. Parsons, USFWS wolf recovery program leader from 1990 to 1999, is now a consulting wildlife biologist in Albuquerque.

Reward Increases as Wolf Killing Continues in Southwest

by Craig Miller, Defenders of Wildlife

Stop the tide of lawless wolf killings in Arizona and New Mexico, Defenders of Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a coalition of conservation and civic groups are announcing a significant increase in the reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of wolf killers. The current \$20,000 reward is being increased to \$45,000 for information leading to the conviction of the individual(s) responsible for the shooting deaths of Mexican gray wolves. The reward increase results from breaking news that two more endangered Mexican gray wolves have been found dead, bringing the total to 11 deaths in New Mexico and Arizona since March.

Anyone found guilty of killing an endangered wolf is subject to criminal penalties of up to \$25,000 and/or six months in jail, or a civil penalty of up to \$25,000. The recent killings include a female wolf from the Hondah Pack that was found dead on the White Mountain Apache Reservation on Christmas Eve and an alpha male of the Cienega Pack that was found on the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona on December 21. Both deaths are under investigation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Anyone with information about any of the incidents is urged to contact one of the following agencies:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Arizona at (480) 967-7900 or in New

Mexico at (505) 346-7828

State Game and Fish Departments in Arizona at (800) 352-0700

or in New Mexico at (800) 862-9310.

All calls will be strictly confidential.

New Mexico and Arizona residents take action! We need your help to protect the Mexican gray wolf! Please help us distribute reward posters at local businesses including post offices, schools, grocery stores, libraries, town halls, and laundromats... especially in wolf country. If you would like a copy of the reward poster or if you would like to sponsor an ad in a regional publication, please contact: gschrader@defenders.org. Any way you can get the word out will help.

REWARD

Mexican wolves are protected by federal and state law.

They are threatened by illegal killing.

Public-interest organizations and private individuals will contribute to the current reward offered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for a total of up to

\$45,000

for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone illegally killing a Mexican wolf or transporting Mexican wolf hides or parts.

contact:

US Fish and Wildlife Service

(480) 967-7900, (505) 346-7828

or your nearest state game and fish office.

Arizona (800) 352-0700, New Mexico (800) 862-9310

Posted by private individuals and public-interest organizations representing millions of concerned people.



“Of 7,563 beverage containers retrieved from Sky Island wild lands, 96.5% belong to one brand...”



MAKING THE BEER THAT YAHOOOS C



Analysis of beer can and bottle numbers found on wild lands in the Sky Island region of Arizona and New Mexico

by Trevor Hare, Sky Island Alliance, PO Box 41165 Tucson, Arizona 85717. 520 624-7080, trevor@skyislandalliance.org

Disclaimer: some of us do, in fact, drink this stuff, but we ALWAYS bring back more cans than we take out.



HOOSE!

Between 2001 and 2004 Sky Island Alliance staff and volunteers counted and identified beer cans and bottles found on wildlands in the Sky Island region of Arizona and New Mexico during the normal course of Sky Island Alliance road and wilderness boundary surveys. Beer cans and bottles were only counted if seen on or within 10 meters of either side of an assigned transect. During approximately 65 two-day volunteer field weekends or 1,300 person/days a total of 7,563 containers were documented, of which 7,426 were cans (98%) and 137 were bottles (2%).

An analysis of brands shows that of the 7,563 total containers found 7,298 or 96.5% were Bud Light containers, and 151 were Natural Light containers (2%), 76 were Coors Light containers (1%), and 30 were Budweiser containers (<0.5%). One Fat Tire Amber Ale bottle was found in the Chiricahua Mountains, and seven Tecate cans were found in a migrant camp in the Huachuca Mountains. The predominance of Bud Light cans was surprising, and the only conclusion we could draw from the evidence is that yahoos have terrible taste in beer.

Better Beef by Far: Raised Predator-friendly

by Jan Holder, Anchor Ranch

The Anchor Ranch is located in east central Arizona near Eagle Creek in a beautiful grassland valley west of Clifton. The valley butts up against the Mogollon Rim and the ecology of the surrounding area is incredibly diverse; within half an hour one can travel from desert scrub to Ponderosa pine forests. Because of these qualities the region was incorporated into the primary recovery area for the Mexican Wolf.

At the Anchor Ranch we have made a commitment to allow predators to coexist with our cattle. Unless we encounter a rabid or deviant animal, we allow nature to take its own course. Through non-lethal, pro-active management practices we have been able to minimize loss due to predators. We encounter predators—cougars, wolves, bear, coyotes, and bobcats—on a regular basis. Dealing with these animals is complex; each acts a little differently and requires different management techniques. To make things more complicated, each animal has its own particular personality, and environmental changes such as drought or cold can alter their behaviors. All this aside, there are some broad techniques that we've found effective. Here is a brief description of some of these techniques:

Change: Predators like to be confident and leave as little to chance as possible. Even small changes in their habitat make them uneasy. When a predator is in the neighborhood we try to move our cattle to different places within the pasture, even if it's only the other side of the canyon. We can even put up a string with some ribbon tied to it and the predators won't cross it. Any sort of change seems to work. Of course they can grow accustomed to these things,

so a string with ribbons tied to it will work for a day or two but might not work after that. It may, however, work for another couple days if we move the string or swap the ribbons for tin cans.

Strength in numbers: Predators can be efficient killers but they are extremely vulnerable to injury. Injury prevents them from performing their best and may ultimately end in starvation. Predators see large herds as a greater threat than single cows or small groups. For this reason we like to keep our cattle together instead of spread out all over the place. From a predator's point of view, it's easier to attack a single cow than a group of 100; believe it or not, large herds can actually seem frightening. In one instance I saw a group of 300 yearling cattle chasing two coyotes.

Avoidance: This isn't very glamorous, but it works. When predators show up in one part of the country, we move the cattle to another area. It's simple and nearly 100 percent effective. The only downside is that during a drought the cattle may already be stressed for pasture and moving them to another spot may not be an option. We can't use avoidance all the time, but when we can, it works well.

Human interaction: Predators are like

people in that they will do whatever seems easiest to them. They don't go looking for trouble, and in fact they'll go to extremes to avoid it. This isn't necessarily the case with reintroduced wolves raised in a captive breeding program, but that's a whole separate issue. For all intents and purposes, predators don't like trouble. When we're around our cattle, we try to spread our scent around the area. Predators know that humans are trouble and don't hang around to find out what we're doing. They leave us alone, we leave them alone, and everyone's happy.

This would probably be a good time to admit that I am no Tim Treadwell [Editors note: Tim Treadwell became famous for "befriending" Alaskan grizzlies. In October 2003, he and his girlfriend were killed by one of these animals]. I don't want to be a "brother" to the wolf. I would imagine my flanks are pretty tasty, and the fact that I have small children gives me pause when thinking about predators. We at the ranch have a tremendous respect for the killing potential of lions and wolves as well as lightning storms, rattlesnakes, and hanta virus for that matter.

Having respect for predators is all a part of living out in the wilderness. I could say it's a good trade off, but it isn't really a trade off at all. We've simply learned what we can and can't do, and it's become a way of life—we bring the dog food in at night, we don't step or reach where we can't see, etc. In re-



The Holder family peacefully co-exists with predators.

photo courtesy Jan Holder

turn we get to hear the elk at night as we're going to sleep, their bugles echoing off the hills until they sound like whale calls.

Of course, there are those rare nights where the stillness is broken by the shriek of an animal going down under the claws of a predator, but that's how life works. And there is even some beauty in that.

Editor's note: For more information, visit www.ervins.com. In Tucson, you can buy Ervin's Grassfed Beef at Tucson Cooperative Warehouse, (800)350-2667. For Phoenix delivery, e-mail ervins@cablone.net. We made green chile stew with Ervin's Natural Beef last week. It was scrumptious! We were glad to know that no predators were killed for our meal, and that this cow had never been fed ground-up animal parts. No mad cows here—just happy dinner guests!

Book Notes

Return of the Mexican Gray Wolf

review by Dennis Pepe, owner of Greenfire Books, Tucson, AZ

What is it about the wolf? Like the buzz of the rattlesnake's tail, the deep chesty bawl of the wolf seems to transcend the traditional bounds of communication between species. Every living thing pays heed. Whether it is shivers up the spine of a lone hiker, a reminder of the way of all flesh to the deer, or the sensation of a shared integration with the mountain by the pine tree, the howl of the wolf has been the call of the wild for more than a million years.

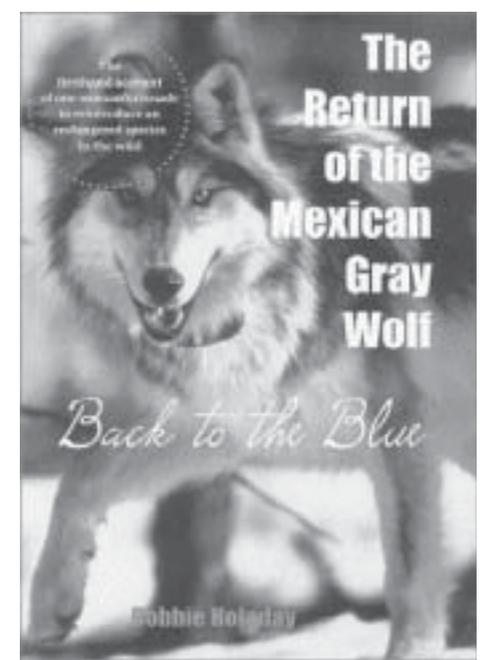
Not long ago human beings brought the frontier lifestyle to the West. Since domestic livestock proved to be easy prey for the wolf, the wolf proved to be enemy number one to the frontiersmen. By 1970, with the help of the federal government, wolves had been wiped out of every one of the lower 48 states except Minnesota. As years passed and attitudes about nature and wolves shifted, wolf reintroduction became one of the conservation movement's success stories. Truly wild wolves were captured in Canada and simply transplanted to the Yellowstone or Rocky Mountain regions in states to the north. In the Southwest it's been a dif-

ferent story. All the Mexican wolves have been captive-raised, thus, no matter what is done to prevent them from getting used to people, it is nowhere near enough. They end up hanging out too close to roads, susceptible to the many wolf-haters that still roam the same terrain. Nevertheless, the Mexican wolf restoration effort is succeeding thanks to the efforts of folks like Bobbie Holaday.

Far from a career environmentalist, Bobbie Holaday got started by joining her employer's hiking club and gradually transformed herself into one of the most dedicated and energetic wilderness advocates in the Southwest. In *The Return of the Mexican Gray Wolf*

she gives us a firsthand account of her successful crusade to reintroduce wolves to their natural habitat. She takes the reader back to 1988 when she attended a wolf-dog club meeting and first made the decision to take on the reintroduction project as a retirement project. The book follows her path and manages to give a thorough and easily accessible history of the struggles that both she and the wolves have overcome. Thanks to Holaday's approach of getting to know the ranchers' perspective, she was able to bring them into the fold almost as allies. She lauds the practicality and success of working collaboratively with ranchers and agencies to avoid the extremist stance that has crippled many environmental efforts over the years.

This book is unique because of who Bobbie Holaday is. It is an in-depth read on her approach at influencing wolf reintroduction and a must read for anyone truly interested in wolf reintroduction in the Southwest. It gives insight into wolf behavior, which I found fascinating, but ultimately this book shows that Bobbie Holaday "thinks



like a mountain." As a mountain understands the importance of the wolf, the deer, and the trees to its existence, Bobbie Holaday shows us the importance of bringing wolf-huggers and wolf-haters to a middle ground where wolves and people and mountains can mutually exist and we can still enjoy the call of the wild.

Grassland

I stretch out, back pulled
hard to Earth
I don't mind the boisterous silence
broken by westerly heaves
wind sighs
all over this grassland
its dry tongue drags across my skin I'm thrilled
to be stroked by this
formless lover

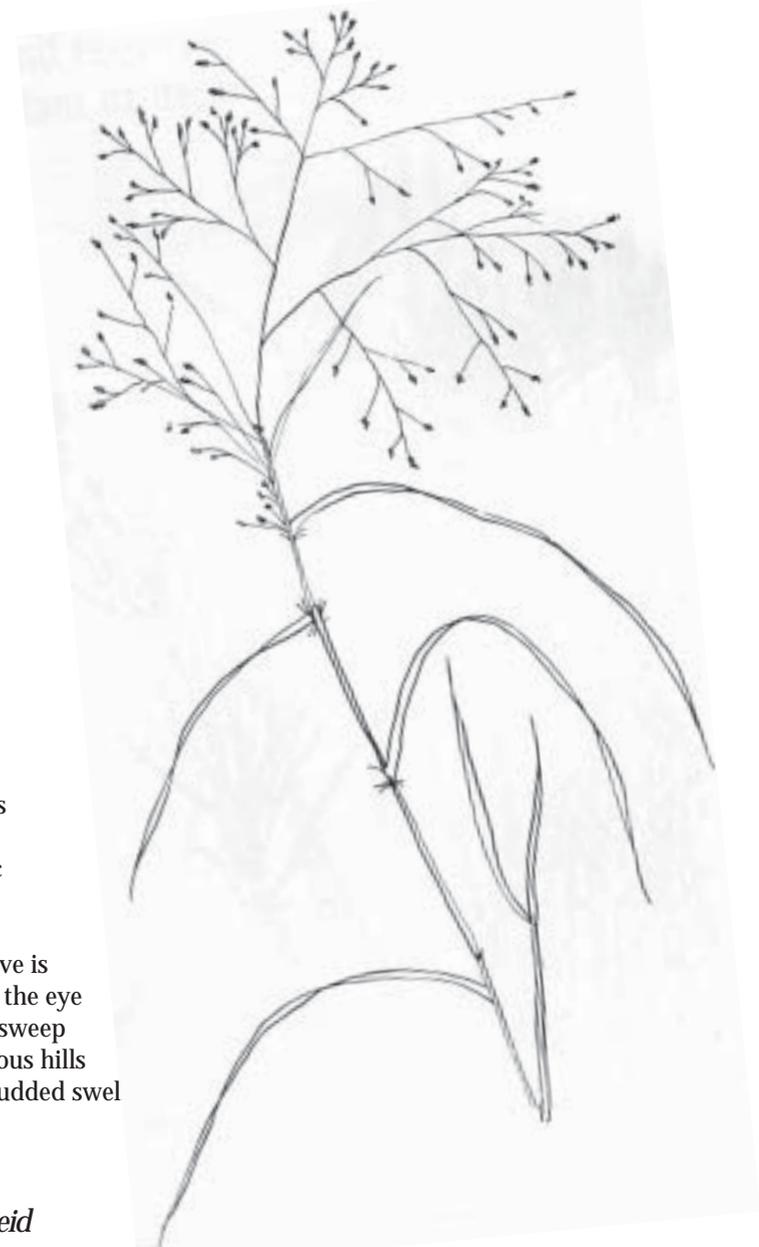
I'm surrounded by many tribes
they dance, shake their heads
wildly wave to the sky,
Apache blue, these natives know
how to make the wind sing
different songs

the sounds I try to spell
SSShheesheuessiiuuoh
ffhhwuehffhsseouhhaah
but think it better to say

Oceanic grass
its rise and fall rustles
blades and spikes, golden heads
bend in worship
windstream motion, symphonic
sway, swirl, and swoosh

So, this is what true love is
I stand up to look it in the eye
breathe deep the long sweep
stretched far to flirtatious hills
I laugh at these oak-studded swel
they beckon me to
lose my way
discover secrets

—Nancy Reid



Road Rattlings

by Trevor Hare, SIA Conservation Biologist

Beer and dust. Beer and mud. Beer and snakes. Beer and bears. Beer and mountains. Beer and deserts. Beer and downpours. Beer and droughts. Beer and cowboys. Beer and hippies. Beer and beaches. Beer and peaks. Beer and wildlands. Beer and cities. Beer and back roads. Beer and highways. Beer and confusion. Beer and lucidity. Beer, beer, beer, beer, beer, beer, and beer. Why beer? Why not? Beer is a gift, a gilded shining gift. A foamy, fuzzy, fizzy, fantastic gift. More beer, less beer? More beer, less stress. More beer, less anger. More beer, more smiles. Beer. So had enough beer? Hops, barley malts, spring water. Simple and refreshing on the brain. There is only one thing better!

So why this paean to the golden elixir? Number one—we work hard out in the field and for those who do indulge nothing beats a cold beer! Number two—we work hard in our field, my brain hurts sometimes, trying desperately to get a handle on the conservation measures we must take. Number three—because we work hard and it numbs the pain. But enough about beer, although sometimes I think it is the fuel that drives the conservation community and inspires creative thinking, dialogue, and cooperation.

I myself rarely drink...when I am driving. But driving I do, too much of it, and I do not like it. I want to walk, and not on roads. I want to walk the Sky Islands and desert grasslands from the Rio Grande to the Rio Colorado. I want to walk the desert

from Baboquivari to the palm oases in the Kofa Mountains. I want to walk the Peloncillo Mountains from the Nantec Rim to the Rio Bavispe. And I do not want to see a road, I do not want to see a vehicle, I do not want to see a man, and I do not want to see a cow. I want to see a wolf, a grizzly, a pack of coati. I want to see a gray hawk, a black hawk, a golden eagle. I want to hear a ridge-nosed rattlesnake, a chorus of native frogs, the running of a desert stream. I want to feel the cold rain of the Huachuca's and the warm rain of the Mohawk Dunes. I want to smell cottonwood and mesquite campfires and the creosote flats after a monsoon storm.

But as I have lamented before in this space, it is off to drive and walk more roads. But the good news is this spring we get to

close some roads! Sky Island Alliance has been contracted to close roads on the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. We will also get to do other fun things such as riparian and wildlife inventories, and riparian restoration.

Since my last missive Sky Island volunteers have checked the integrity of Wilderness boundaries in the Chiricahua Mountains, chased water and frogs in the San Rafael Valley and the Southern Peloncillo Mountains, hiked through the proposed Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness, helped New Mexico Wilderness Alliance finish their roads inventory of the Burro Mountains, and finished the roads inventories on Turtle Mountain and around the Peloncillo Mountain Wilderness. And by the time you read this we will have double-checked the boundaries of the proposed Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness, and started a roads and wildlife linkage inventory in the Mule Mountains in cooperation with a bunch of dedicated Bisbeeans, the Mule Mountain group.

We found amazing sights and sad facts out there, but our enthusiasm never flagged. We came across an unmapped cliff dwelling and then vacation lots for sale next to a Wilderness boundary. We found a Mexican vine snake and then ATV tracks inside Wilderness. We saw a

bear near camp and then bullfrogs where they don't belong (which is anywhere in the West). We saw native grasses standing thigh high and then drought and cow-blasted rangelands. We talked to ranchers who care and ATV enthusiasts who don't. We talked to hunters who don't care and ATVers who do.

I know that as sure as we find these sad facts and circumstances out there, amazing sights and opportunities will present themselves. So hang on and enjoy the ride because we all can make a contribution to preserving the wild places and animals we love. And off we go: In March we will be closing roads in the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and exploring and learning about the proposed Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness; In April we will backpack into the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness to check the integrity of the wilderness boundaries. Then during the summer we will mix it up with monitoring some old friends, exploring and inventorying new areas, restoring roads and riparian areas, and of course sitting around the campfire, imbibing our favorite beverages and telling stories of conservation.

Following in the Tracks of El Lobo

by Jean Ossorio, SIA tracker and member of the Southwestern Wolf Recovery Team

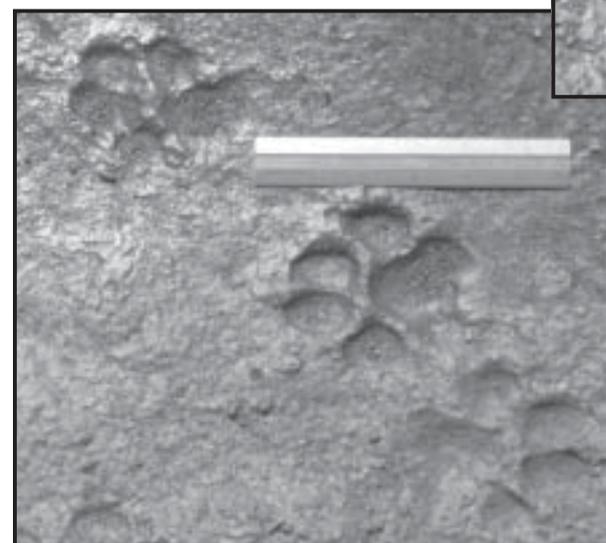
We arrived in the Blue Range Mexican wolf recovery area on the sunny October weekend in 1999 when the Fish and Wildlife Service opened the area closure surrounding the Campbell Blue pen. The Hawk's Nest pair, released from their half acre holding pen in early June, was still roaming the immediate vicinity with their three pups.

Near the pen, empty now except for a scattering of bleached bones from the road-killed elk and deer that fed the pack during their captivity, the road had been turned to mud by heavy rains. Now dry, it formed a record of animal activity in the area. Among the tracks frozen in mud were a group of very large canid prints. Near them we found a reasonably recent scat, nearly as big around as one barrel of my binoculars. We were such novices at track identification that we didn't even have a ruler for measurement.

Our suspicion that these were Hawk's Nest tracks was given ample justification, however, when we were suddenly startled by a long, low howl from the slope above the road, followed by a second "deep, chesty bawl," a moment later. We looked up and caught a brief glimpse of alpha male 131 (identified for us later by Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officer Doug McKenna, at the road junction with US 191, using a tracking radio).

Our first experience with wolf tracks illustrates one of the best ways to become familiar with Mexican wolf tracks: Find them in association with scats, and preferably, with real, live wolves! The following year, in October 2000, we had the incredible luck to camp in the vicinity of the Francisco pack, at Double Cienega, after an eight-inch snowfall. Their tracks led through our camp, allowing ample time to study them. Volunteer wolf trackers confirmed the identification, and let us hear the pack's signals, which placed them very close. The cooperative wolves howled three times during the night, in various directions from our tent.

The following morning, the seven wolves themselves appeared, as we were cooking breakfast. They milled around among the trees, and then struck out across the snowy cienega, sniffing here and there. The four pups rolled and wrestled in the snow, just like a litter of half-grown domestic puppies. It should



Tracks of adult Mexican wolf and pup (top). The ruler is six inches long for scale.



photos by Jean Ossorio

the situation became clear. Our feet barely sank into the snow, frozen to a hard crust overnight. The wolves, whose weight was perhaps half of ours, and distributed over four large, soft paws, were making scarcely any impression on the snow. Placing the presumed wolf trail between us and the sun, we looked closely and picked out a neat row of tracks, barely etched into the crust. The

importance of careful observation not only of the tracks, but also of substrate conditions, cannot be overestimated.

Tracks of *Canis lupus baileyi*, the undisputed Bigfoot of southwestern canids, are sometimes difficult to positively identify. Distinguishing wolf tracks from coyote tracks is relatively easy. Although both share the characteristic "x" pattern between the toes, and sometimes leave a little raised pyramid in the center of the track, just in front of the plantar pad, coyote tracks are much smaller than wolf tracks. An average adult wolf will make an imprint in mud approximately 10 x 10 cm.

continued on next page

Wildlife Monitoring Year in Review

by Janice Przybyl, Wildlife Monitoring Program Coordinator

Here it is 2004 and time to sit back and reflect on our accomplishments of the past year. There is no stopping the momentum of the Wildlife Monitoring Program! Last year we conducted two training workshops, one in Tucson, and our first ever in New Mexico (more on that later). We plan to keep on track with this pattern: spring workshop in Arizona and fall workshop in New Mexico.

With the influx of new volunteers from the spring workshop, we were able to expand monitoring in the Cienega Creek watershed. For two years, volunteers have surveyed four transects north of Interstate 10, and now we established three new transects immediately south of I-10. The purpose of this project is to document the presence of our six focal species in the region between the Rincon Mountains and the ranges further south, the Empires and the Whetstones, and then on to the Santa Rita and Patagonia mountain ranges. The Spring 2004 workshop—to be held on the Las Cienegas NCA in conjunction with the BLM and the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership—will fortify our surveying efforts throughout this corridor.

As mentioned earlier, we held the fall workshop in New Mexico. On November 7-9, 14 new volunteers, instructors, and SIA staff gathered at The Nature Conservancy's Lichty Ecological Research Center on the Gila River for an

incredible weekend of learning and fun. The cooperative local wildlife provided the right teaching aids when needed. The first morning, Chris Hass discovered a long set of tracks left the previous night by a mountain lion who passed within 20 feet of the house where staff lay snoozing (actually one staff member was sleeping outdoors at the time). Later that morning, after lessons on the differences between canine and feline tracks and on how to measure tracks, the students went outside to scrutinize the tracks for feline characteristics. Because the mountain lion was so kind as to walk down a dusty dirt road, we had plenty of tracks to measure. But that's not all; later on a coati sauntered by! After Chris' lecture on coati ecology, including plenty of photographs of coati tracks, she took the group outside to study the real thing. I'm going to hire that mountain lion and coati for all future workshops.

On that first Saturday evening, we watched the moonrise over the mountains and held front row seats for the lunar eclipse. During both weekends, flocks of sandhill cranes regaled us with their elegant beauty and their morning and evening calls from the surrounding farm fields. On the final day of the workshop, volunteers conducted a full track survey in the TNC's Gila Preserve along the Gila River. The



Tracking on the Gila River. Volunteers search for beaver tracks and other wildlife sign along the Gila River in The Nature Conservancy's Gila Preserve.

bountiful wildlife sign we discovered and documented emphasized to us the importance of protecting the upper Gila River watershed.

Graduating volunteers from this workshop will adopt transects in our new project area in the Peloncillo Mountains along the New Mexico-Arizona border. We will concentrate efforts in the Steins Pass area where I-10 bisects the mountain range. The Peloncillos form a mountain link with the southern end originating south of the border in Mexico and stretching all the way north to the Gila River. What mammals travel its mountainous spine, and how do they and where do they get over or under the formidable barrier of four lanes of interstate highway? We hope to help address these questions with the data collected by our new volunteers.

In parting, I would like to welcome the new volunteers. Many are from New Mexico—from Gila, Silver City, Deming, and Las Cruces. We also have new members from Tucson, Green Valley, and Sierra Vista. I appreciate their willingness to travel great distances to their newly adopted transects in the Peloncillos. So welcome to George Carlisle, Jo Ann Caruthers, Josh Ferris, Mike and Carol

Fugagli, Tom Gibbons, April Green, Rich Griffiths, Matilde Holzwarth, Billie Hughes, Jean and Peter Ossorio, Donna Stevens, and Cynthia Wolf.

Sky Island Alliance's Wildlife Monitoring Program

trains and mobilizes volunteers to collect data on wildlife presence between the mountain ranges of the Sky Island ecoregion. These "grassroots naturalists" conduct track surveys along pre-established transects. We are particularly concerned with the movement of four large, wide-ranging mammals: black bear, mountain lion, jaguar, and Mexican gray wolf and two smaller mammal species, bobcat and coati. Sky Island Alliance's long-term vision is to use data to advocate for protection of wildlife corridors threatened by human development of open spaces. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Janice Przybyl at janice@skyislandalliance.org or call 520-624-7080 x203.



Looking for tracks in trees? No, that's Mike Fugagli with son Dominic, Donna Stevens, and Carol Fugagli finding hairs from a black bear that scratched and rubbed on the tree along Rain Creek trail in the Mogollon Mountains, Gila Wilderness.

continued from previous page
(4 x 4 inches). Coyote tracks, on the other hand, average around 7 cm. long, and about 5 cm. in total width (about 2 1/2 in. long and 1 3/4 in. total width). (Wolf pups may leave coyote-sized tracks, but they will often be associated with adult tracks.)

The real problem arises in telling a wolf track from the track of a large domestic dog. Authors of some tracking books (e.g. Paul Rezendes), suggest that dog tracks have a more rounded appearance than wolf tracks, caused by the splaying out of the dog's toes as the foot hits the ground. While the contrast be-

tween rounded dog tracks and more oval wolf tracks may be a distinguishing factor among more northern wolves, we have observed that most Mexican wolf tracks appear quite rounded, especially when impressed in mud or snow. A track we cast in the Apache National Forest, which was later observed and confirmed as a wolf track by project personnel, measured almost exactly 10 x 10 cm.

Total confidence in wolf track identification is often impossible. One strong indicator of wild canid tracks is the tendency of wolves to place the rear foot almost directly on top of the correspond-

ing front foot track (direct or double registration). Wolves also generally walk along in a straight, deliberate line, doing considerably less moseying around—a characteristic of domestic canine behavior any dog owner will recognize.

Finally, circumstantial evidence such as human or horse tracks accompanying suspect canid prints along roads or trails may lend weight to an identification of the tracks as those of dogs, rather than wild wolves. On the other hand, tracks not associated with humans or horses, and the observation of wolf howls or wolf scats (with a diameter greater than

about 3 cm. and often full of hair and bone fragments) in the immediate vicinity tend to support an identification of Mexican wolf.

Jean Ossorio and her husband, Peter, have observed and photographed tracks of at least five Mexican wolf packs in the wild: the Hawk's Nests, the Franciscos, the Saddles, the Cienegas, and the Bluestems. Following a spate of wolf killings by gunshot and vehicle in 2003, only two of those packs remain intact in the wild.

Biodiversity and Management of the Madrean Archipelago II

Connecting Mountain Islands and Desert Seas

May 11-15, 2004

(5th Conference on Research and Resource Management in Southwestern Deserts)



What's the best way to learn a lot about the Sky Island region in a short time? There's no replacement for spending time out in it. But spending time with an expert, someone with intimate knowledge of a place or a species or a topic, can give you a jump start on understanding the depth of a place. You'll get many chances to do just this during five days in May.

Ten years after the first conference to feature our Sky Islands as a distinct region, the second conference on Biodiversity and Management of the Madrean Archipelago, "Connecting Mountain Islands and Desert Seas" will bring together current research and long-term perspectives on what makes this region special and what can be done to protect it. With more than 160 presenters from many backgrounds and perspectives, it will cover such issues as:

- **fire** - its ecological role in these systems and how best to manage it;
- **hydrology** - relationships between biodiversity and surface and ground water;
- **biogeography** - the distributions of species and implications for conservation;
- **ecology** - the region's distinctive relations between species and their environment;
- **invasive species** - the newcomers that threaten native biodiversity;
- **global climate change** - changing abiotic patterns that will affect all other issues;
- **ecosystem monitoring** - challenges and benefits of monitoring at different scales.

Concurrent sessions will run all four days so we can bring you as many excellent talks as possible.

Registration: All presenters and attendees are expected to register. Registration fee covers session attendance, lunch every day, abstract volume, evening entertainment, break refreshments, and a copy of the proceedings.

Conference Venue: DoubleTree Hotel Tucson at Reid Park, 445 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson AZ 85711. Phone: 520-881-4200. The hotel is offering a special conference rate of \$58/night plus tax. **Make your reservations before April 10, 2004 to receive this rate.** Check the conference website for a direct link to the DoubleTree.



Field Trips, Saturday May 15,

all day. Register soon; trips will fill early.

Dispatching Buffelgrass in Saguaro National Park. Join resource management staff Mark Holden and Danielle Foster in the Rincon Mountains to learn about invasive buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*). Tour a study site testing control methods (joint study with University of AZ and USGS). Feel virtuous by assisting with mechanical eradication (aka pulling) of buffelgrass at a nearby site. Expect moderately strenuous activity (hiking and working on steep terrain).

Ironwood Forest National Monument Botanical Dream Team Tour.

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum botanists Tom Van Devender, Mark Dimmitt, and John Wiens lead an expedition through the new monument. Visit the limestone Waterman Mountains and dine at Ragged Top, home of the Southwest's richest little microflora. Plant walks in the scenic Arizona Upland Sonoran Desert will note effects of substrate changes on paloverde-saguaro-ironwood desertscrub, regional biogeography, ice age environments, and take a look at encroaching buffelgrass.

Santa Catalina Mountains Aspen/Bullock Fire Survey.

The Catalina Ranger District of the Coronado National Forest will guide a trip to look at aftermath of the Catalina fires of 2002 and 2003. Fire Management Officer Rocky Tow will take the group to the Bullock and Aspen fire sites, stopping to survey a variety of habitats. See fire effects from widely varying fire intensities and how the landscape, and sites treated before the fires, fared. Emphasis will be on vegetation and watershed effects.

Sustaining Corridors between the Dragoon Mountains and San Pedro River.

Join David Hodges and Sky Island Alliance (SIA) for a day in the Dragoons, home to tall granite spires, hoodoos, boulder-filled canyons, and the stronghold fortress of great Apache chief Cochise. SIA is working with a subdivision on the west side of the mountain to maintain wildlife corridors as the area is developed under a low-density, "sustainable" scenario. Visit SIA monitoring sites, assist with restoration work, and learn about efforts to protect this golden Sky Island.

Plenary talks:

We've assembled a star studded cast of speakers to talk about the key issues affecting us all, including:

Gary Nabhan: Corridors, Barriers, and Biodiversity in the Sky Island Region

Leonard DeBano and Peter Ffolliott: Ecosystem Management in the Madrean Archipelago: A 10-Year (1994-2004) Historical Perspective.

Diana Hadley: Between the Sky Islands: Historic Land Uses in Cross-Border Valleys.

Tom Swetnam: Fire History and Climate Cycles.

Ann Lynch: Insects as Agents of Change in the Sky Islands.

Dave Goodrich: Research and Decision Making: Making Two Worlds One in Watershed Management.

Julio Betancourt: Ecological Responses to Climate Variability in Time and Space: A Southwestern Synopsis.

Paul Martin: Sky Islands and Near Time: Revisions for the Future.

See www.madreanconference.com for complete schedule.

Other ways of knowing

Along with the research and management knowledge, we'll celebrate the aesthetic ways of knowing this region. The conference will include:

An invitational art show - photography by some of the best artists around (with help from the Etherton Gallery)

Janos and the Grasslands of North America - a photographic narrative on a threatened biotic community

Art from the field-sketches from the field notebooks of astute observers (like you? See website for contest and submission details)

Petey Mesquitey-stories and songs about growing native in a glorious land

Free public reception

Thursday May 13:

View art, meet presenters,
socialize at cash bar

Doubletree Hotel Boojum-
Bonsai rooms, 5-8pm

Clip and send - or register on line at www.madreanconference.com

Pre-registration (February 11 through April 10)

\$245 Regular

\$195 Student*

Late Registration (after April 10 and at the door)

\$295 Regular

\$245 Student*

*Advisor's name _____ Phone _____

Single-day Registration (same price early and late)

\$100 Tuesday May 11

\$100 Wednesday May 12

\$100 Thursday May 13

\$100 Friday May 14

Field Trip Saturday May 15 (lunch included)

\$25 Saguaro/Buffel grass

\$25 Catalinas/Fire

\$25 Ironwood Forest

\$25 Dragoons

Make my meals vegetarian!

Please Print

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Email Address _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip + 4 _____

Phone/Fax _____

Make checks payable to Sky Island Alliance. Mail form and check to:

Sky Island Alliance, P.O. Box 41165, Tucson AZ 85717

Or register on-line by credit card at www.madreanconference.com

Thanks Y'all!

Sky Island Alliance would like to thank the following businesses for making our November and December fundraising events a success: Barb's Frame of Mind, Centric Photo Processing, Colibri Vineyard and Winery, Nimbus Brewing Company, Gentle Ben's Brewing Company, Food Conspiracy Coop, Wild Oats Natural Marketplace, and Trader Joe's. Please patronize these businesses and let them know that you appreciate their support of Sky Island Alliance and our various projects. We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to Bob VanDeven for donating his breathtaking photographs for our art auction. Thanks Bob! The following bands and musicians played at our events despite the cold temperatures and frozen fingers: Libre de Grasa, Matt Cordes, Caliche con Carne, and Rich Hopkins and Luminarios. We highly recommend that you buy their music and see their performances when they play around town. Support your local musicians! We also wish to thank Zuzi! Dance Company for co-sponsoring our December event. Please support them by attending their performances and classes. Support local arts! And finally, a deep heartfelt thanks to Frog, event organizer extraordinaire, and our numerous volunteers without whom these events would be impossible!



Field Schedule for Spring/Summer 2004

Please contact the Sky Island Alliance office at (520) 624-7080 or trevor@skyislandalliance.org if you are interested in attending any of the following events.

February 13-15. BLM Inventory in the Mule Mountains. We're moving into the BLM lands! Help us kick off our BLM inventory here just outside of Bisbee in these little-traveled mountains (except for critters!). Two and a half hours from Tucson.

March 5-7. Road Closure and Restoration Project on Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Get your hands dirty and play a direct role in improving the ecological health of your public lands! One hour from Tucson.

March 13-14. Tumacacori Highlands Proposed Wilderness Trip (Note: We will meet on Saturday). Arizona's Next Wilderness! Join us as we explore the Tumacacori Mountains. We will have a presentation on the area and natural history hikes. The Tumacacori Mountains are one of the most sub-tropical and species-diverse mountain ranges in the US. Two hours from Tucson.

March 19-21. Road Closure and Restoration Project on Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Get your hands dirty and play a direct role in improving the ecological health of your public lands! One hour from Tucson.

April 2-4. Riparian Inventory and Monitoring Weekend. San Rafael Valley. Join the Sky Island Alliance's Riparian Inventory/Monitoring Program in a project to assess the San Rafael Valley as a site for the conservation and management of our sensitive riparian fauna. Two hours from Tucson.

April 23-25. Return to Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Same as March 19-21.

May 21-23. Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Inventory Backpack. Join the Sky Island Alliance in one of the most gorgeous areas of central Arizona. Birds galore! Flowing Water! Two and a half hours from Tucson.

June 11-13. Riparian Inventory and Monitoring Weekend, San Rafael Valley. Join the Sky Island Alliance's Riparian Inventory/Monitoring Program in a project to assess the San Rafael Valley as a site for the conservation and management of our sensitive riparian fauna. Two hours from Tucson.

We will also host a Riparian Inventory and Monitoring Training Program in May. If you are interested in volunteering to assess riparian areas and look for riparian animals please contact Trevor Hare.

Join Us Sky Island Alliance

If you received this newsletter and it's time to renew your membership, please send in your check! If you are reading a friend's newsletter, consider joining us! We rely on members for our basic operations. Contributions are tax-deductible; we are a 501(c)3 organization.

Basic membership is only \$25, but if you add a little to that, here's a sampling of what your dollars can do:

- \$50 will help us survey 30 miles of roads.
- \$75 will sponsor volunteer training workshops.
- \$100 will close one mile of road.

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Sky Island Alliance

P.O. 41165
Tucson, AZ 85717

Thank you!

Farming with The Wild:

Enhancing Biodiversity on Farms and Ranches

free public lecture and discussion with

Gary Nabhan, Dan Imhoff, and Valer Austin

Feb. 25, UA campus, Harvill Auditorium 7:30pm

Join us!

Become an SIA Program Fund Donor

Stories in recent newsletter issues have featured projects in our Rewilding Program: road inventory and restoration, wilderness work, wildlife monitoring, and ecosystem defense.

All the necessary road closures, tracking workshops, and wilderness advocacy gets done only with extra funding, so please consider a special donation to one of the following funds:

- Roads & Restoration,
- Wildlife Monitoring (Tracking),
- Missing Link,
- Wilderness, and

- Mexico—the Chihuahua Research Station in Janos, and the Jaguar Program in Sonora.

Please make your check out to Sky Island Alliance, with a note in the Memo line about which fund you'd like to support. We'll make sure your money goes to the programs that mean the most to you, and we'll send you reports!



Tim Van Devender

Sky Island Wolves

“The Santa Rita, Tumacacori, Atascosa-Pajarito, and Patagonia mountains were well known as wolf county, as were the Canelo Hills. At least equal numbers inhabited the steeper and rougher, but larger Chiricahua, Huachuca, and Pinaleno Mountains. A number of wolves were also recorded from the Catalina Mountains—some of them as recently as the 1950s (Lange 1960). All these mountain ranges were, and are, good Coues white-tailed deer country.”

—David E. Brown, *The Wolf in the Southwest*

“... the catching of a wolf is not so much a difficult matter as the locating of his range. We have found during the past two years since wolves have gotten down to a very few individuals, that they travel long distances... possibly hunting for other wolves, possibly fearing the consequences of what happened to the remainder of their kind.”

—M.E. Musgrave, trapper, 1925

It is an unfortunate truth that some creatures have become more conspicuous in their absence than they were in life. The Mexican gray wolf, once an elusive and skillful predator in the Sky Islands, was trapped, shot, and poisoned until it became little more than a ghost. Though approximately three dozen now roam the high country above the Mogollon Rim, the truth is that *Canis lupus baileyi* has been functionally missing from the Sky Islands for nearly three decades. Its absence has been noticed, not so much by the residents of this region, few of whom can remember the howl of the wolf or its sandy coat melting into the sacaton grass, but by the deer, javelina, coyotes, and numerous other creatures that evolved in its shadow.

Mexican gray wolves have been bred in

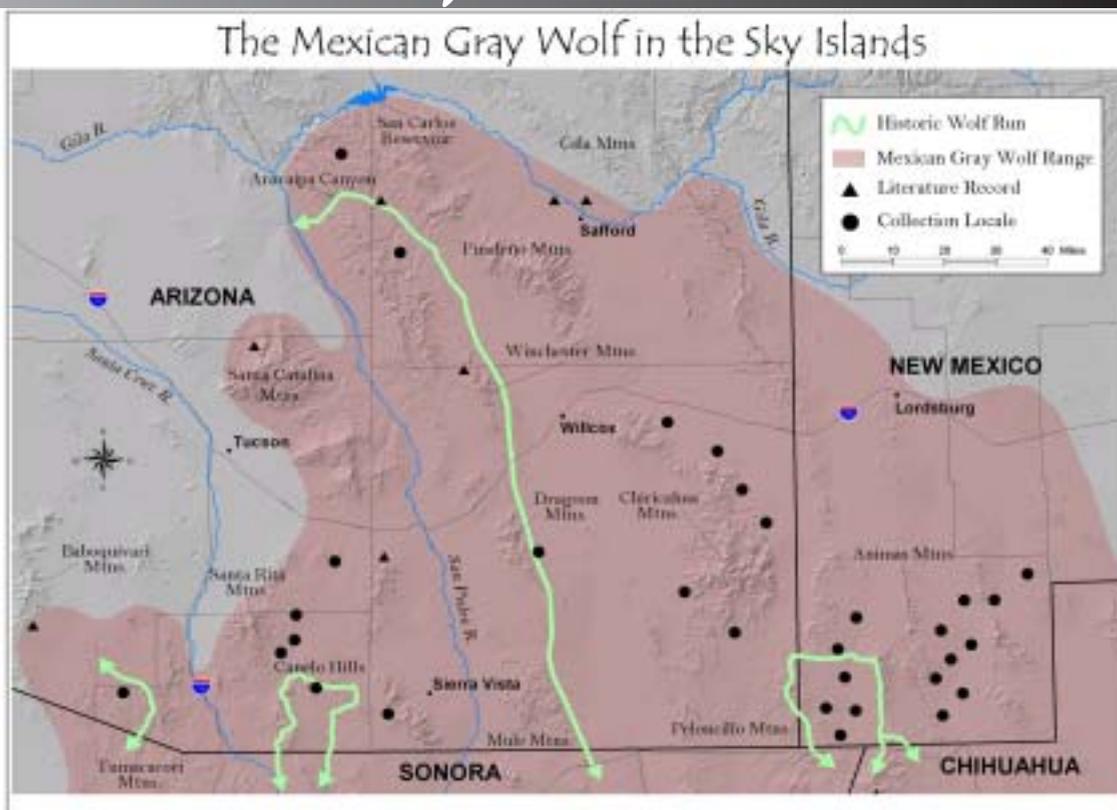
captivity, scrutinized by biologists, x-rayed, autopsied, and tracked, but little is really known about these wolves in the wild. Accounts from the time the wolf was extant in the Southwest were mostly the creation of trappers and ranchers, those who had a stake in the extermination of the animal. Stories of bloodthirsty wolves killing 60 sheep in one night sound more like tall tales than hard data.

What we do know is that *Canis lupus baileyi*, the species that now stalks the Apache and Gila National Forests, never strayed much further north than the Gila River. No matter where you live in the Sky Islands, stories of wolves passing through

your back yard probably exist in the literature. Routes that certain wolf packs used to cruise the Sky Islands were thoroughly documented as individual wolves were tracked through the seasons (e.g. the Peloncillo/Animas run and the Canelo Hills run on this map). Other runs are more anecdotal (e.g. the Mule Mountain / Driagoon/Galiuro run and Pajarito/Tumacacori/Arivaca runs mapped here). In most areas, however, wolves were killed

before their habits were ever understood (represented here by the smattering of dots across the map, each of which denotes one or more wolves killed and carcasses kept in collections. What we suspect is that wolves released above the Mogollon Rim will seek out their ancestral routes and the island mountain ranges they once inhabited. With help they may one day return home, and this is a good thing. They've been absent too long.

~Bob Van Deven



Adapted from maps and verbal descriptions in David Brown's *The Wolf in the Southwest* (1983), and in Stanley P. Young and Edward A. Goldman's *The Wolves of North America* (1944). SIA takes responsibility for any errors in this adaptation.