

Feb. 3, 2012

## Sportsmen's concerns register at Legislature

With this legislative session half over, bills affecting New Mexico sportsmen could start moving quickly, which means **hunters and anglers need to be ready to respond**.

Already it appears that sportsmen have had a positive impact. Members of the House Taxation and Revenue Committee told NMWF this week they had heard overwhelming opposition to [House Bill 24](#), a bill that would **negatively change the Habitat Stamp program and cause the Department of Game and Fish to lose \$150,000 a year**. Bill sponsor Rep. William Rehm of Albuquerque failed to appear at the Tax and Revenue Committee hearing on Monday, forcing postponement. On Wednesday he asked that the bill be pulled off that day's calendar, and on Friday it was not heard. So it isn't clear when – or if – HB 24 will come up for a hearing again, but the clock is ticking down and the bill's chances of getting through the Legislature look dimmer every day.

Unfortunately, a measure **paving the way for the sale of the Marquez Wildlife Management Area** in Unit 9 passed its first committee hearing in the House this week. State law requires legislative approval for a state agency to sell property worth more than \$100,000. [House Joint Memorial 7](#) would give the Game Commission permission to sell the Marquez **before a sale price has been negotiated, without further legislative approval or oversight, with no time limit and no promise that the public will be involved in the decision**. The Marquez is managed for high quality elk and deer hunting, and while the number of licenses is limited, all New Mexico hunters have an opportunity to try for a tag. (Thanks to Senate Bill 196 last year, all wildlife management area elk licenses are reserved for New Mexico residents.) The Game Commission voted in November against entering negotiations to sell the Marquez, but if HJR 7 passes there would be nothing to stop the commission from selling it in the future. The bill's next stop is the House Voters and Elections Committee. It wouldn't hurt for sportsmen to send Committee Chairwoman Mary Helen Garcia an email stating your opposition to HJR 7. Write her at [maryhelen.garcia@nmlegis.gov](mailto:maryhelen.garcia@nmlegis.gov).

The legislative session ends at noon on Thursday, Feb. 16. **For the latest updates from Santa Fe, visit the Legislative Watch** section of our website. [Click here](#), or go to [www.nmwildlife.org](http://www.nmwildlife.org).

## Game Commission eyes Habitat Stamp program – again

The State Game Commission holds its **first meeting of 2012** on Thursday, Feb. 23, in Hobbs. On the agenda are proposed changes in the way Habitat Stamp projects are funded, as well as a discussion of proposed new apprentice hunter program. [Click here](#) to see the full agenda. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. at the Hobbs City Hall Annex, 200 East Broadway.

The Habitat Stamp proposal **changes the way funds are allocated**. Half the annual expenditures would be split equally between the five regions. The remainder is distributed based on the percent of BLM and Forest Service lands in the state that fall within each region. Those so-called "land mass" funds will be awarded on a project-by-project basis as determined by competition as advised by citizens' advisory committees. **The upshot is that the Southwestern region would see an increase in funding, while most other regions would see declines**. [Click here](#) to read the proposal that could be approved by the Game Commission on Feb. 23. New Mexico Wildlife Federation supports the changes, but sportsmen are urged to look over the proposal and submit their own comments.

## New Mexico residents agree on habitat protection, poll finds

A new poll finds the vast majority of New Mexico residents of all political persuasions – nearly half of whom are hunters and anglers – **support strong protections for land, water and wildlife habitat**. Respondents also voiced support for funding those protections, even with the state economy ailing. The poll, conducted in early January on behalf of Colorado College, asked 2,400 likely voters in New Mexico and five other western states a range of questions regarding the environment and the economy. Respondents ranged evenly in age and across the political spectrum, with about 30 percent in New Mexico saying they support the tea party, 31 percent supporting the Occupy Wall Street movement and the rest in between. **About 43 percent of respondents also identified themselves as a hunter, angler or both** – a higher percentage than Arizona, Colorado or Utah, but less than Wyoming (63 percent) and Montana (58 percent).

Asked whether we can protect land and water and have a strong economy at the same time, 80 percent of respondents agreed, and 50 percent said the state should be doing more to protect water, air, natural areas and wildlife. Almost three out of four (73 percent) said loss of habitat for fish and wildlife is a problem in New Mexico, and 84 percent said that regardless of the state's budget problems the state should find money to protect New Mexico's land, water and wildlife. More than 90 percent said national parks, forests, monuments and wildlife areas are an essential part of New Mexico's quality of life, and 85 percent said those protected public lands are essential part of New Mexico's economy. To read the entire poll, [click here](#).

## Sportsmen and friends help avert conservation funding disaster

Sportsmen's organizations ranging from **National Wildlife Federation to Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited and the National Wild Turkey Federation** joined forces with more than 1,000 other nonprofit organizations and businesses to educate Congress on the value of conservation funding. And it worked. The sole purpose of America's Voice for Conservation, Recreation and Preservation is to make sure that conservation funding – which makes far less than 2 percent of all federal spending – did not take a disproportionate share of budget cuts, as some in the U.S. House of Representatives had proposed. Coalition members met with leaders from both parties and both houses of Congress in recent months, making the case that **conservation, recreation and preservation support more than \$1 trillion in economic activity, 9.4 million jobs and \$107 billion in federal, state and local tax revenues annually**. As a result of that effort, Congress refused to make the draconian cuts proposed, making minor cuts and in some cases increasing funding for programs with a proven track record of creating economic opportunity. As the budget discussion continues, however, conservation funding will continue to face challenges. AVCRP is committed to continuing this fight next year.

## Protect your dream fishing vacation

**If you've ever wondered what the fishing is like in Bristol Bay, Alaska**, you can see for yourself this month. Showings are planned in Albuquerque and Santa Fe of the award-winning film "Red Gold." The film depicts the world-renowned salmon and trout fishing opportunities in Bristol Bay, as well as the threat posed to those fisheries by the proposed Pebble Mine. If permitted by state and federal agencies, the mine site would become the largest open pit mine in North America. Straddling the watershed divide between two of Bristol Bay's most product salmon streams, the mine will produce copper and gold, along with millions of tons of toxic waste.

The **Santa Fe Road Show** is Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the Santa Fe Farmers Market, 1607 Paseo de Peralta. It starts with samples of Bristol Bay salmon prepared by local chefs at 5:30 p.m., followed by "Red Gold," door prizes and an opportunity to talk with Alaska fishermen. Tickets are \$25. [Click here](#) for Santa Fe tickets and information. The **Albuquerque Road Show** is Thursday, Feb. 9, with a 6:30 p.m. showing of "Red Gold" at the Guild Cinema, 3405 Central NE, and salmon tasting afterward at Scalo Restaurant. Tickets for the Albuquerque show are \$10. [Click here](#) for Albuquerque tickets or information.



## Bob Gerding Outdoor Adventures show on tap

If you miss the Bristol Bay Road Shows, you can learn more about the threats posed by Pebble Mine to Alaska's sportfishing industry at **Bob Gerding's 14th Annual Outdoor Adventures Hunting and Fishing Show**. It runs Friday through Sunday, Feb. 10-12, at Expo New Mexico. As usual, there will be dozens of exhibitor booths, fly fishing and fly tying demonstrations and activities for kids. New Mexico Wildlife Federation will have a booth there, so **plan to stop by and say hello**. Doors are open from noon to 6 p.m. on Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$8 for adults, kids under 12 free.



## Chukar Day Youth Hunt a success

It didn't have quite the turnout that New Mexico Quail had hoped, but the **Kids' Chukar Day Youth Hunt (left) was a success for all involved**. Held on the Burris Ranch between Las Cruces and Deming on Saturday, Jan. 28, only three of the 12 or more kids expected actually showed up. The good news, said NM Quail member Joe Fries, was that the kids who did participate got to hunt nine birds apiece instead of two. They were accompanied by 10 adults and eight dogs. The day was actually a dog training event for New Mexico Quail members that the group opened to kids from ages 12 to 17. "We believe it is extremely important to encourage our youth to learn safe and ethical hunting practices so their interest in wildlife and the need for managing wildlife habitat is heightened," Fries said later. "Events such as this are the catalyst that will grow our next generation of hunters and wildlife proponents." (At left, *Frank Rocha and his pointer Bonita flush a chukar for young hunter Joseph McAlister. Photo courtesy of Rob Hoffman.*)

## Get your Gould's turkey raffle tickets soon

**Wild turkey season begins April 15**, but two lucky hunters will have a chance to hunt the rare Gould's turkey. The National Wild Turkey Federation will auction one tag and raffle another to raise funds for habitat work to help bring expand the growing populations of Gould's turkeys. Raffle tickets are \$5 each. But hurry – the drawing will be held March 3 in Las Cruces. For tickets, send a check (made out to "New Mexico NWTFF") to Scott Lerich, Senior Regional Biologist, National Wild Turkey Federation, PO Box 1281, La Luz, NM 88837, and he will return your ticket stubs to you. Be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number. For more information, contact Lerich at [nmturkeyhunt@bajabb.com](mailto:nmturkeyhunt@bajabb.com).

## Reminders

**The Big Game Draw deadline is March 28**. Beginning this year, the Department of Game and Fish will only accept applications online. If you know someone who traditionally submits a paper application, **offer to help** walk them through the online application process. For more information, check the 2012-13 proclamation, or visit the department's website, [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us).

And don't forget to pack a camera when you hunt or fish this spring, summer or fall. After you take some great photos of the hunting or fishing opportunities in our great state, submit the best one to the **New Mexico Wildlife Federation 2012 Photo Contest**. We won't pick a winner until late in the year, so there's plenty of time. Once again, we'll offer prizes for the best Hunting, Fishing and Kids photos. Send your entry to [nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org](mailto:nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org). And call if you have questions, (505) 299-5404.

## Pass it on

**If you appreciate receiving the Sportsman's News Roundup**, please share this newsletter with a friend and ask them to get involved by joining our Sportsman's Alert network. New Mexico sportsmen need to stay involved to ensure our hunting and fishing traditions continue. **And please make a contribution to NMWF**. With sportsmen like you, we can continue to make a difference. [Click here to donate now](#).

### About the New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Founded in 1914 by sportsman and conservation pioneer Aldo Leopold, the New Mexico Wildlife Federation is New Mexico's first and most effective conservation advocate. We are dedicated to protecting New Mexico's wildlife, habitat and outdoor way of life. We spearheaded permanent protection of our hunting and fishing rights in the Valle Vidal, and stopped cold the previous sell-off of your public lands. We believe that the best way to get things done is to build consensus with common goals.

Our key priorities are: Opportunity Habitat Youth

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