

### Game Commission rejects Marquez sale, delists desert bighorn sheep

New Mexico hunters will continue to have the Marquez Wildlife Management Area after the **State Game Commission voted Thursday in Farmington against the idea of selling it.** The neighboring Cebolleta Land Grant had asked the commission to consider selling the 15,000-acre tract in GMU 9, with terms yet to be negotiated. But in a unanimous decision, commissioners said they weren't interested. There was no discussion, so it isn't clear why the commission voted against the proposal, but many sportsmen opposed the sale.

**In other action Thursday,** the commission made history by officially **removing the desert bighorn sheep from the state's endangered species list.** The move was made possible by a long, research-driven effort to determine what was responsible for the bighorns' demise and establishing a program that over many years brought their numbers back from a few dozen to nearly 600. Hunters can probably expect to see about a dozen desert bighorn sheep hunts next year. Department staff and the Game Commission are justifiably proud of the delisting vote. *(Photo © 2000-2011 NM Department of Game and Fish)*



**The commission also approved** two new private upland game shooting preserves, adjusted off-range oryx hunt quotas, adopted new regulations on the 10 percent of Big Game Draw licenses set aside for guides and outfitters, and heard updates on a range of issues. **For a full roundup of the Game Commission meeting, [click here.](#)**

### Land Commissioner Powell meets with public on White Peak

Some 60 sportsmen and a number of grazing lessees in the White Peak area met in Las Vegas last month for an **update from State Lands Commissioner Ray Powell regarding public access, camping and other issues.** Powell updated the group on designated camping areas in GMU 48 and how they were extended from last year – instead of clustering hunters in small sites, longer stretches were open, he said. Sportsmen, in turn, told Powell that they didn't think much of the new access to the area, the Naranjos Road. "There wasn't single sportsman there who felt like the Naranjos Road benefited sportsmen," said NMWF sportsman coordinator Max Trujillo. Existing access routes into the area are enough, hunters told Powell, making the Naranjos Road leased by the Department of Game and Fish unnecessary.

### Economics of outdoor recreation underscored

**Northern New Mexico would see substantial economic benefit** if the management of Valles Caldera National Preserve and Bandelier National Monument were consolidated and run by the National Park Service, a new economic study has found. The independent study, conducted by the Harbinger Consulting Group, underscores an earlier study by the Park Service that suggested it could manage the preserve more efficiently than under the current management strategy. The Harbinger study found the preserve, if managed by NPS, would provide more than \$1 million in additional sales to local businesses and nearly 50 more local jobs than if managed by the Forest Service with a similar operating budget and staff. Congress is considering a measure sponsored by Sens. Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall to transfer management of the preserve to NPS, with the express mandate that hunting and fishing continue. [Click here](#) to read about the new study in the Albuquerque Journal (you may have to watch a short advertisement first.)

**Pennsylvania is providing an up-to-date example of the economic value of hunting.** A recent report by the state's bipartisan Legislative Budget and Finance Committee shows that allowing hunting on Sundays would create up to \$804 million in economic activity. Hunting is prohibited on Sundays in Pennsylvania (and is banned or restricted in 10 other states, the Associated Press reports). Sunday hunting could support nearly 7,500 jobs and bring in almost \$57 million in additional state and local tax revenue, the AP reported. Hunting is currently worth \$3 billion to the Pennsylvania economy, with deer hunting alone worth more than half of that amount. A bill now pending in the Pennsylvania legislature would allow the state game commission to allow Sunday hunting, though the idea is opposed by the local Farm Bureau, the AP reports. [Click here](#) to read the story.

**The enormous economic value of outdoor recreation** was also the subject of a recent Field & Stream blog. It cites a new study that found cutting programs and rolling back environmental regulations that protect and promote the outdoor way of life would put at risk 9.4 million American jobs, \$1.06 trillion in total economic impact and \$107 billion annually generated in tax revenue. [Click here](#) to read the story.

### In the news

**Two projects in New Mexico** are among the nation's most promising ways to reconnect Americans to the natural world, the U.S. Department of Interior announced recently. According to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, the projects represent some of the "best investments in the nation to support a healthy, active population, conserve wildlife and working lands, and create travel, tourism and outdoor-recreation jobs across the country." Both are part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. One is the **Middle Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge** designation for the former Price's Dairy in Albuquerque's South Valley – a so-called "urban national wildlife refuge" that would provide educational and economic opportunities in the area. "As one of the last undeveloped parcels along the Rio Grande, Price's Dairy is an important refuge and waypoint for migratory birds, like sandhill cranes, Arctic geese and varied duck species migrating along river from summer-breeding grounds in the North to wintering havens in the South," Salazar said in a release. The second project is a **pedestrian bridge over the Animas River** that would connect Aztec to the Aztec Ruins National Monument. For more information on the America's Great Outdoors initiative, click [here](#).

A federal appeals court in Denver last month **upheld the U.S. Forest Service's authority to restrict road development on millions of acres of public lands.** The decision will reinstate 1.6 million acres of wildlands as roadless in New Mexico, mostly in the Gila Wilderness. President Clinton established the roadless areas at the end of his term, but President George W. Bush overturned the rule when he took office in 2005. Several states including New Mexico sued in support of the roadless rule, and in October the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals found in their favor. More recently, members of Congress including Rep. Steve Pearce have supported a measure, HR 1581, that would allow development on millions of acres of public land throughout the West. The bill has the support of the Safari Club, but sportsmen's groups including the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation oppose it. To read more about the court decision in the Albuquerque Journal, [click here](#) (you may have to watch a short advertisement first).

Testing has found **Sumner Lake to be free of quagga mussel larvae,** the Department of Game and Fish and state Division of Parks reported this week. The mussel can cause enormous problems for fisheries, boaters and others who use the lake water. The lake was closed earlier in the year after tests found the possible presence of quagga mussels in the lake. The water level at Sumner Lake also has risen substantially since irrigation ended, allowing the east side boat ramp to reopen.



### Last call for hunting, fishing photos

**There's still time to submit your best hunting, fishing and kids photos** in New Mexico Wildlife Federation's first-ever Photo Contest. **Best of show wins a \$100 gift certificate** at Charlie's Sporting Goods. Other prizes are \$20 gift certificates at Sportsman's Warehouse. We're looking for photographs that tell the whole story of hunting, fishing and taking kids out into the great outdoors. Submit yours to [nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org](mailto:nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org), or send hard copies to our office at 121 Cardenas Drive NE, Albuquerque 87108. If you have questions, call us at (505) 299-5404. But hurry, the contest deadline is Nov. 15. We'll announce the winners in our December Sportsman's News Roundup.

### Business notes

The Santa Fe fly shop **The Reel Life has a new owner.** Steve Wright has taken over the business and is hosting an open house on Thursday, Nov. 10, at 5 p.m. Come by for refreshments and a chance to meet Wright. The Reel Life is located in the Sanbusco Center, beside the Santa Fe railyard.

If your hunting or fishing shop has an upcoming event or news to spread, send it to [nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org](mailto:nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org).

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#### 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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