

Game and Fish director hire fast-tracked after just 5 apply

Only five people applied to become the next Director of Game and Fish, prompting the State Game Commission chairman to dissolve a search committee and shorten the timeline for replacing retiring Director **Tod Stevenson**. Chairman Jim McClintic had earlier named a committee to narrow applicants down to five finalists following a nationwide search. But after receiving just five applications total, the full commission will now **interview all the applicants at a special meeting Thursday, Oct. 13, in Albuquerque and announce a new director that same day**. The commission had originally planned to announce its final decision Nov. 3. ([Click here](#) to read the Santa Fe New Mexican's story on the new timetable.)

Four of the five applicants are current department staff members: (in alphabetical order) **Dan Brooks**, chief of the Law Enforcement Division; **Tim Frybarger**, assistant chief of the Wildlife Management Division until he retired last month; **Dale Hall**, coordinator of the Habitat Stamp Program; and **Jim Lane**, chief of the Wildlife Management Division. The final applicant, **Floyd Acord** of Oklahoma City, did not cite any experience in the wildlife management field, according to the Santa Fe New Mexican. ([Click here](#) to read a second New Mexican story on the applicant pool, including **statements from the candidates' cover letters**.)

Ray Trejo, president of the New Mexico Wildlife Federation, said he believes that **all four New Mexico candidates are capable of running the department**, but added that "It is a black eye for the commission to attract so few qualified candidates. The good news is that any of the New Mexico candidates are well qualified, but I don't think sportsmen will rest until we have a Game Commission that truly represents everyday New Mexico hunters and fishermen and not special interests. My hope is that when the next director is ready to retire we'll see people from around the country jumping at the chance to take the helm of a well-run and highly respected agency."

The commission will interview the candidates in a closed session at the Game and Fish office in Albuquerque on Thursday, Oct. 13. Afterward, the commissioners are scheduled to meet in a public session to announce their choice as director. **The meeting agenda does not call for a public comment period**, but [click here](#) if you want to discuss the candidates with your regional representative on the commission.

Marquez WMA sale under consideration

The Department of Game and Fish has been approached about **selling the Marquez Wildlife Management Area near Grants and is looking for permission to begin negotiations**. The area has reportedly been a headache for department managers for years because of trespass grazing and attempts by neighboring landowners to block public access to the area, but hunters love it because it is prime elk habitat. Now the adjacent Cebolleta Land Grant has proposed to buy the area. Department staff will ask the State Game Commission at its Nov. 3 meeting in Farmington for approval to initiate formal negotiations on the sale. The department has not yet revealed details such as the purchase price or what the department would do with the revenues, but hunters who appreciate the Marquez Wildlife Management Area should keep the issue on their radar.

Also on tap at the Nov. 3 meeting are final decisions on four proposals: deadlines for next year's Big Game Draw hunt applications; redistributing off-range oryx hunts from May and June to other months of the year; new regulations for guide and outfitter registration; and removing desert bighorn sheep from the state's endangered species list. [Click here](#) for details on the four proposals. In addition, the commission will be asked to approve two new private shooting preserves in Chaves County, both of which will offer upland game including pheasant and chukar.

Changes in the youth encouragement hunts for elk could also be in the offing. In the past, young hunters who applied for but did not draw any youth hunt (elk, deer, antelope or any other big game species) could apply for youth encouragement elk hunts held over the Thanksgiving and Christmas school vacations. Under the new proposal, kids who did not get any draw permits would get a second shot at buying an elk license online. But hunts still available after 14 days would be opened up to any youth hunter to purchase. Albuquerque sportsman David Walker proposed such a change at the commission's August meeting after seeing many hunts still available. **Hats off to Walker for speaking up and to the department's wildlife management division for quick action on a sensible idea from the public**. The proposal ([click here](#) to read it) is now open for public comment. It could be approved as early as Nov. 3.

Fishing issues are also on the Nov. 3 agenda. Staff will update commissioners on the **northern pike problem in Eagle Nest Lake** and about ongoing **habitat improvement work in the San Juan River**. (Public meetings on the pike issues have been scheduled in northeast New Mexico later this month - see the "In the News" section below.) To read the full agenda for the Nov. 3 meeting, [click here](#).



National Wildlife Refuge for Albuquerque's South Valley moves forward

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar was in Albuquerque last week to announce his **support for a proposal to establish the Middle Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge** in the South Valley. The 570-acre site is the former Price's Dairy and is one of the last remaining large tracts of undeveloped land in the area. "This area is a 30-minute drive for nearly half of New Mexico's population, a place where people can come and connect to what is essentially the lifeblood of New Mexico," Salazar told a crowd at the Sept. 29 gathering. **"I'm pleased that the people of this community have made this happen."**

The refuge plan has had strong bipartisan support both locally and nationally. Bernalillo County pledged \$5 million toward the \$20 million purchase price of the land, while both the New Mexico Senate and the Albuquerque City Council unanimously approved resolutions in support of the new refuge.

As envisioned, the area would not be open to hunting, but would protect valuable habitat for migratory waterfowl and sandhill cranes. As the first "urban wildlife refuge" in the Southwest, it also would be incorporated into outdoor education plans for local students. One of the best potential funding sources to complete the refuge purchase is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was designed to use off-shore oil revenues for just such projects but which Congress has chronically underfunded by using those

revenues elsewhere.

(Above, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, center, speaks with Will Rogers of the Trust for Public Land, left, and U.S. Rep. Martin Heinrich at a ceremony at the proposed Middle Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Joel Gay)

National Wildlife Refuge system expands hunting opportunity

Hunters this year will have additional opportunity at 10 units of the National Wildlife Refuge system, including refuges in Colorado, Utah and Texas. Hunting is now offered on more than 300 national wildlife refuges, with fishing at 270 areas. New this year, elk hunters can use Arapaho NWR in Colorado and Ouray NWR in Utah (both areas are currently open to migratory bird hunting.) At the Trinity River NWR in Texas, three units will be opened to hunting upland game, feral hogs and white-tailed deer. In New Mexico, limited hunting is allowed at Bosque del Apache, Sevilleta and Las Vegas NWRs. For more information on hunting in the National Wildlife Refuge System, [click here](#).

ABQ council passes anti-trapping memorial

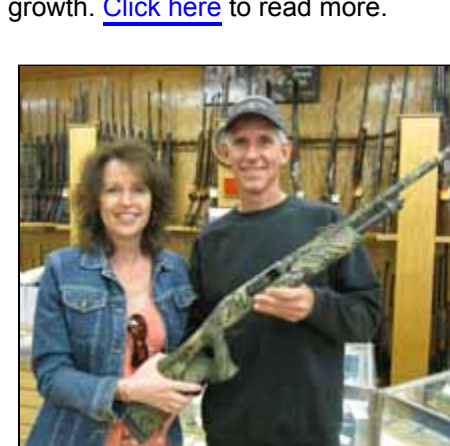
The Albuquerque City Council passed a poorly worded and non-binding anti-trapping memorial last month, despite the efforts of one city councilor to educate his peers on the issue. In September, the council voted 7-1 on a memorial that calls for a statewide ban on trapping on all public lands in New Mexico. **Councilor Dan Lewis said he objected to the memorial** in part because the sponsors and supporters did not fully understand the issue. "I made the point that it wasn't proper for this body to make decisions on an issue there was no clear understanding of," Lewis told NMWF later. "The State Game Commission and the Department of Game and Fish are tasked with managing the 2,000 permitted trappers in the state, and this wasn't something I felt like the city should weigh in on." The memorial was heavy on emotion and light on facts, Lewis said. It called for a blanket ban that included rodents and made no distinction for wildlife management professionals. **The New Mexico Wildlife Federation and National Wildlife Federation have long supported responsible, regulated trapping opportunity**. "This is a perfect example of why we have the State Game Commission and why the commission needs to be credible to the public," said NMWF President Ray Trejo. "When you have city councils or state legislators feeling they need to step in and try to do the commission's job, the facts get lost." There currently are no proposals at the state or federal level to ban trapping on public lands in New Mexico.

Polls, studies find support for hunting, fishing, conservation

As debates continue all over the country over land and water conservation issues, **several new surveys show support for sportsmen and conservation**. A recent survey of Hispanic voters in New Mexico conducted for the Latino Sustainability Institute and Project New America Latino found that **half of all households polled had members who hunted, fished or both** in the previous 12 months, and that substantial majorities favored strong protections for New Mexico's land, air and water. [Click here](#) to read more.

Almost three out of four Americans approve of hunting, a level of support that has changed little over the last 20 years, according to a new study conducted by the National Shooting Sports Foundation. And **94 percent of respondents said they support others' right to hunt**. "It's gratifying to see that strong public support for our great tradition of hunting is unwavering," said Steve Sanetti, NSSF president and CEO. Two out of three respondents said they had eaten wild game or fish in the previous year. [Click here](#) to read more.

Another pair of studies found a **strong correlation between healthy public lands and a vibrant economy** based on recreation and tourism. The Center for American Progress report outlines the **economic value of conservation**, especially in rural areas. [Click here](#) to read more. Headwaters Economics also found a strong correlation between presidential action to protect public land as National Monuments (many of which promote hunting and fishing) and local economic growth. [Click here](#) to read more.



NMWF shotgun goes to avid bow hunter

Kelly Baird of Bloomfield used to hunt dove when he was a student years ago at New Mexico State University. These days he's an avid bow hunter, and in fact will be going out soon to hunt ibex in the Florida Mountains, he said. **But he can rejoin the ranks of upland game and turkey hunters after winning a new Remington 870 shotgun in the latest New Mexico Wildlife Federation raffle**. "I'll probably hunt turkeys," he said as he and his wife, Karen (left) admired his new, camouflage 12-gauge recently at Charlie's Sporting Goods, which supplied the gun. **Baird said he strongly supports NMWF because it provides something he can't get elsewhere** - up-to-date news and information about important issues. "Lack of information is one of the biggest dangers to sportsmen and hunters," he said. "I think the Wildlife Federation provides a valuable service because most of us are so busy in our everyday lives that we don't keep up to speed on the things that are affecting us - and our passion," he said. If you know hunters and anglers who are not on the NMWF Sportsmen's Action Alert network, urge them to **sign up and get informed**.

Photo contest

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. They could be kids in sleeping bags, an elk draped over a horse's back, casting out of a boat on a sunny morning at Heron Lake - anything at all. Submit your photos to 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.



In the news

A major habitat project on the San Juan River Quality Waters is set to begin Oct. 10, the Department of Game and Fish reports. The \$300,000 project is aimed at reducing silt deposits from Rex Smith Wash, as well as creating deeper pools in the bedrock of The Braids (left) where trout can hold when the water flow drops. The Rex Smith Wash work is not expected to inconvenience anglers, but The Braids work will likely have to be closed to public access for about a month in November and early December, the department says. Estimated completion date is Jan. 8.

The department will hold public meetings this month on a proposal to address the **northern pike problem in Eagle Nest Lake**. The lake's trout fishery was threatened when people illegally introduced pike into the lake. Some fish have grown to 30 inches, according to Game and Fish fisheries biologist Eric Frey. To help manage the invasive species, the department is proposing to **allow unlimited take and possession of pike**, and to require Eagle Nest Lake anglers to keep all northern pike they catch. To learn more or to comment on the proposal, you can attend meetings **Tuesday, Oct. 11**, at Eagle Nest Lake State Park visitors center and **Wednesday, Oct. 12**, at the department office in Raton; both meetings start at 5 p.m.

Taos County resident and **Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Director Carl Colonius**, whose young charges have provided crucial manpower on conservation projects throughout northern New Mexico, was honored at the White House last month for his efforts at building and strengthening the future work force in the Southwest. As part of the "White House Champions of Change Initiative," Colonius was honored as one who is "helping the country rise to the challenges of the 21st century," the White House said in a release. Rocky Mountain Youth Corps offers young adults ages 16-25 an opportunity do meaningful work as they continue their education. "I'm honored to be invited to our nation's capital to speak to the important work that RMYC is doing in New Mexico," Colonius said. "Rural communities are extremely underserved, and the youth corps organizational model addresses multiple issues in a cost-effective, flexible manner." (*Carl Colonius, in cowboy hat at right, talks with NMWF Conservation Director Alan Hamilton about the possibility of using Rocky Mountain Youth Corps at the Buckman recreation site near Santa Fe.*)



And don't miss this

Virtually every fisherman in the world would like to fish the fabled waters of Alaska, but a massive gold and copper mine threatens some of the best salmon and rainbow trout rivers on the Last Frontier. Learn more about the proposed Pebble Mine and the threat it poses to the multi-million-dollar sport and commercial fishing industry in Alaska at a special showing of the award-winning film **Red Gold**. The film shows the breathtaking fishery resources of the Bristol Bay region as well as what might be lost if Pebble is built. Trout Unlimited and the Save Bristol Bay campaign are hosting the film at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 25, at the Center for Contemporary Arts, 1050 Old Pecos Trail in Santa Fe. In addition to the film you can expect food, drinks and gear give-aways. But hurry because seating is limited. To reserve tickets, [click here](#). **To learn more about the Save Bristol Bay campaign, click here**.

Pass it on

If you appreciate receiving the Sportsman's News Roundup, please share this newsletter with a friend and multi-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