

Nationwide search begins for new director

Reflecting sportsmen's concerns, the State Game Commission has **launched a nationwide search for a new director of Game and Fish**. The commission said in a news release that it hopes to choose a replacement for Tod Stevenson in November. The commission has given itself a short timeline. The search was announced Aug. 31 and applications are due Sept. 21. Then a search committee consisting of commissioners Bill Montoya (a former director of Game and Fish himself), Dickie Salopek and Tom Arvas will sift through the applications and select no more than five names to present to the full commission. Interviews with the finalists will be conducted at a special closed-door meeting set for Oct. 13. If all goes according to schedule, the commission will announce their decision at their Nov. 3 meeting in Farmington.

Sportsmen had called for transparency in the hiring of the next director of Game and Fish and were glad to see the commission announce a national search would be conducted ([click here](#) to read an opinion piece on the issue by Jesse Deubel, president of the United Bowhunters of New Mexico). But it has not yet been determined if the finalists names will be released prior to a final decision, according to department and commission representatives. It is important that the commission allow the public to know who the top candidates are before a final decision is made. Announcing the names of the finalists under consideration is standard practice, and Gov. Susana Martinez has said she would make government transparency a cornerstone of her administration. Because the new director will run a department that spends more than \$38 million a year in sportsmen's dollars, **the commission needs to let New Mexico sportsmen know who is under consideration for the director job.**



Another barrier to White Peak access falls

Officials in Colfax and Mora counties brought out the bolt cutters in late August and **reopened the Red Hills Road, one of the main access routes into the White Peak area for sportsmen and the general public**. The road had been closed by rancher David Stanley after former State Land Commissioner Patrick Lyons approved a land trade that was later found to be unlawful by the state Supreme Court. New land commissioner Ray Powell overturned the transaction, but the gate across the Red Hills Road remained closed.

After the trade was nixed, Eighth Judicial District Attorney Donald Gallegos sent a letter to Stanley saying the locked gate **unlawfully blocked a public road that has provided access to State Trust Land for decades**. Stanley failed to remove the lock voluntarily. With a group of sportsmen and county officials watching, **Gallegos (left) cut the lock on a gate** across the road while a crew removed fence posts and wire from a cattle guard. Gallegos said he was also sending Stanley a letter notifying him that charges would be filed if the gate was relocked. *(Photo by Michelle Briscoe, NMWF)*

New Mexico Wildlife Federation Executive Director Jeremy Vesbach applauded Gallegos for standing up for the rights of the public. "The Wildlife Federation has been working hard for years to protect public access to the White Peak area and to other public lands all over New Mexico," Vesbach said. **"This shows that sportsmen's voices are being heard."**

Interior Secretary touts economic power of outdoor recreation

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar visited parts of storm-ravaged New England in late August talking about the **power of hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation to create jobs**. Outdoor recreation contributes an estimated \$730 billion to the U.S. economy each year, he said. "A store like L.L. Bean is a shining example of how a home-grown business can fulfill

the American dream," Salazar noted. "What started almost 100 years ago as one man's idea to sell a waterproof boot to hunters has grown into a company that today employs 5,000 people and generates \$1.4 billion in revenue." Hunting and fishing create jobs and spur economic growth, he added. **"When we invest in conservation and encourage people to reconnect with nature, we aren't just investing in the land, water and wildlife we love, but also in our economic future."**

Fire damage reduces GMU 6C elk hunt area

Hunters who drew elk licenses in GMU 6C will find less area to hunt in than usual. Santa Fe National Forest has **closed portions of 6C that were hit hardest by the Las Conchas Fire**. In response, the Department of Game and Fish is offering 6C hunters a refund, according to a story in the Santa Fe New Mexican. Archery season began Sept. 1, muzzleloader hunting is Oct. 10-14, and rifle seasons run from Oct. 17 to Dec. 9. Hunters who want a refund must return their hunting license to Game and Fish. New Mexico Wildlife Federation asked the department in July specifically whether hunting seasons in the Jemez and the Gila would be affected by this summer's fires but never received an answer.

Elk hunters support roadless areas, wilderness

After hearing from its members who believe roadless areas are crucial elk habitat, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation reversed its support for a bill in Congress that calls for allowing motorized access and development in currently protected elk country. RMEF President and CEO David Allen announced in August that the organization was withdrawing its support for HR 1581 because of the bill's potential negative impacts to roadless areas. He said **feedback from RMEF members and a review of the scientific literature led to the decision**. "We strongly believe in managing habitat to its best condition for elk. Along with controlling invasive weeds, managing forests, restoring grasslands and riparian zones, another element of habitat that's growing in importance is roads. The roadless-area impacts of HR 1581 include too many unknown risks for us to remain supportive," [Allen said in a press release](#).

Department seeks hunters' input

Hunters and trappers have until this Friday (Sept. 9) to comment on **proposed unitization agreements in southeast New Mexico**. The agreements are between the State Land Office, the department and private landowners. If the agreements are approved, State Trust Land would be treated as private property and would be closed to hunting and trapping, while the private lands covered under the agreements are open to public hunters and trappers. [Click here](#) to read more about the proposed agreements.

Public comment is also being taken on the **proposed removal of desert bighorn sheep from the state endangered species list**. The public can submit comment through Oct. 6, including at public meetings set for tonight in Deming and Truth or Consequences. The department had hoped to delist the sheep last year but hit some administrative hurdles. The goal now is to complete the delisting process by the Nov. 3 meeting of the State Game Commission. [Click here](#) to read more about the desert bighorn program and for information on how to comment.



Outdoor Expo hits record

Participation in the annual Outdoor Expo smashed the previous record, with more than 3,245 people crowding the grounds at Albuquerque's Shooting Range Park the weekend of Aug. 20-21. The previous record was about 2,100 men, women and children, according to Lance Cherry of the Department of Game and Fish. The most popular events were, as usual, the shooting stations. Kids and adults had the opportunity to try shotguns, pistols, .22 rifles and muzzleloaders. Altogether they fired off some 45,000 rounds of .22 ammo, Cherry said. **There also was an archery and even atlatl – an ancient but effective device (left) that throws a spear at amazing speed and distance**. Also new this year was a kayak pool, where people could try their hand at paddling under the watchful eye of an instructor. The catch-and-release catfish pond was particularly popular this year it was in an air conditioned tent and the cats were biting. "It was an absolute circus over there," Cherry said. Participants could also try their hand at fly and spin casting, and watching the fishes' reactions to various lures in the transparent "bass tub." *(Photo by Joel Gay, NMWF)*

Another popular event at Outdoor Expo was the state duck calling championship, and **for the second year in a row it was won by Ryan Garrett of Albuquerque**. That qualifies him as New Mexico's official entrant in the [World Duck Calling Championships at Stuttgart, Ark.](#), in November. Garrett was using a call made by Kevin Herbst of Los Lunas, who was one of the top 10 duck callers in the world in the late 1990s, he said. His calls have won the state championship for three years in a row, Herbst said. **Look for a story** about his business, [doagamecalls.com](#), in the next Outdoor Reporter.

Photo contest reminder

Send NMWF **your best outdoor recreation photos** for a chance to win prizes, including gift cards to Charlie's Sporting Goods and Sportsman's Warehouse. There are three categories: hunting, fishing and kids. We encourage you to send photos that depict the whole hunting and fishing experience – anything from there to camp life to cleaning what you caught. Be creative. Send your best photo to nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org. Good luck! **We'll announce the winners in our December Sportsman's News Roundup.**

NMWF hires Sportsman Coordinator for northern NM

New Mexico Wildlife Federation welcomes lifelong Las Vegas hunter and angler **Max Trujillo (right) as our new Sportsman Coordinator for northern New Mexico**. Max was president of the Las Vegas chapter of Sportsmen Concerned of Northern New Mexico, and has been an outspoken advocate on behalf of White Peak. He is an avid bowhunter and fly fisherman, but said he will hunt or fish anywhere, at anytime, "whatever's in season and I can get a tag for." He built two successful businesses, Max Trujillo Insurance and Trujillo Real Estate in Las Vegas, but is eager to put his energy into organizing the sportsmen of northern New Mexico, he said. "Having so much experience in our regional land issues, **I feel like sportsmen need a voice**, and NMWF gives us that voice." If you don't know Max, give him a call at (505) 617-1851 or e-mail him at max@nmwildlife.org.



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