

Galisteo Watershed Partnership Quarterly Forum

Friday, June 20th, 2008

“What can we *do* to protect Wildlife in the Galisteo Basin?”

Santa Fe Community College – Board Room, 223

Galisteo Watershed Partnership Future & Funding – Appeal for support! The GWP is running out of funding – please consider donating toward \$10,000. We have received an anonymous donation of \$1,000 and a few smaller donations – need to raise \$9,000 +. These meetings cost \$2,000 - \$3,000 each to organize and facilitate.

Working Group Sign-ups – We need everyone’s participation for the Galisteo Basin Wildlife Corridor Outreach Action! Thanks to those who have already signed up. The working groups and current volunteers are:

Wildlife Tracking Group: Group of community volunteers interested in simple methods for identifying specific animal species, tracks and other signs, and reporting them to NM Game & Fish and the GWP website.

Volunteers: Jan M. Saunders, Francois-Marie Patorni, Linda Patorni, Kathy Holian (SF County/Landowner), many members of the Galisteo Stewardship Team – Anna Cardenas, Kathleen Murphy, Janice Griscom, Judy Tuwaletstiwa, Richard Griscom, and Maria Ortiz y Pino

Safe Highway Passage Group: Works with the NM Department of Transportation (DOT) and Santa Fe County Public Works in identifying and establishing safe passage structures, including fencing, culverts, land bridges and underpasses for migratory and resident wildlife.

Volunteers: Amy Tremper (Galisteo Roads Committee), Gretel Follingstad (UNM, TerraPlanning.net)

Small Landowners Outreach Group: Contacts landowners and residents of relatively small tracts of land and associated homeowners associations or community groups to assist with land conservation strategies and incentives, and provides information on identifying and promoting resident and migratory animal species, habitat improvement, and systems for monitoring and reporting.

Volunteers: Jan M. Saunders, Francois-Marie Patorni

Media Group: Establishes working relationship with environmental editors and writers at the New Mexican, Journal North/Albuquerque Journal, and local neighborhood and community papers from Pecos to Cerrillos and Santo Domingo to Lamy, submits articles on all newsworthy GWP projects and events, and maintains library of published articles and photographs on the GWP.

Volunteers: Jan M. Saunders, Craig Chapman (New Mexico Wilderness Alliance), Thomas Seamster

Fundraising Group: Supports the GWP Steering Committee with raising funds and writing project proposals in support of the implementation of the Wildlife Corridor project in particular and the GWP in general.

Volunteers: Craig Chapman (New Mexico Wilderness Alliance), Thomas Seamster

Purpose of the Meeting:

Develop an outreach and action strategy toward a **wildlife corridor in the Galisteo Basin** – identify working groups to take on tasks such as landowner/resident outreach, collaboration with agencies, wildlife tracking group, media group, fundraising, etc.

June 25 – Conservation Easement Workshop at the SF Conservation Trust, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m., 316 East Marcy, Santa Fe – for more information call 505-989-7019 or susan@sfct.org

Expected Meeting Outcomes:

- Agreement on the proposed wildlife corridor and its geographical boundaries
- List of actions for establishing the wildlife corridor and adjacent wildlife preserve/core areas
- A list of key incentives offered by Game and Fish SF Conservation Trust and others
- A list of volunteers for outreach committees to enable the adoption and implementation of the corridor
- A list of obstacles and priority areas with physical wildlife barriers that need urgent attention

Panel Presentations and Q&A:

Dave Foreman – the Rewilding Institute:

- Really happy that this is happening!
- We found one big gap in trying to map wildlife corridors – right in the middle of where [the GWP] is working. It is one of the major gaps in knowledge of wildlife in the national wildlife corridors
- This is a keystone movement
- Need to work on this from the local to the international – from local actions like restoration of the Galisteo Creek to international work
- A lot of important habitat is on private land, First Nation land – critical to get people to cooperate voluntarily
- Finding a lot of cooperation across the spine of the continent
- Importance of large carnivores – when you remove, all kinds of things break down in the ecosystem
- With the reintroduction of wolves in Yellowstone – willows are returning, etc.
- Important to maintain wildlife habitat for large carnivores like mountain lions; may be “winked out” otherwise
- Need to also worry about prey species
- This is where the Galisteo Basin becomes important

- There is a group of landowners in Placita and Glorieta Mesa also concerned
- We talk about “corridors” and we think of corridors in a building like this – this is not how it works
- Rather is “**Landscape Permeability**” – how friendly a landscape like the Galisteo Basin is to wildlife species. Larger than narrow corridors. He likes to talk about “wildways” or “freedom to roam”
- We now know what different species need to get through highways, barriers – deer need a lot of space, bears crawl through culverts under I-25 – DOT has done a lot of work with this
- Have a tracking/training workshop – teach you how to do this – Sky Highway (?) alliance has done this for years
 - o A lot of fun
 - o Set up regular transects – keep track of how black bears, deer, mountain lions etc. moving through habitat
- Nobody has this information – need us as citizen scientist to do this!
- Map – shows connectivity – important areas between Sandias to the South to the Sangre de Cristo to Jemez. The map goes from Mexico to southern rockies, glacial National Park in Canada and to Alaska.
- **This is a big continental effort – we are the keystone to make it link up on a continental scale**
- www.rewilding.org for more information – “Rewilding America” – book goes into detail about all of this

Q&A Session:

- The serious issue we have on the border – is the border wall. Blocks wildlife migration. The border wall will block major routes for wildlife. Secretary Chertoff has decided to ignore environmental concerns related to the wall. Need to contact our reps about this!
- The Galisteo Basin – an area where four eco-regions come together
- Catastrophic climate change we’re experiencing – is key
- Western Governor’s Association – is looking at a “Freedom to Roam” campaign that the government should encourage their agencies to work on this, Richardson has been very involved
- A lot of questions about what you do when you see wildlife
 - o We have moved into their habitat – Defenders of Wildlife has done a lot of work on this, have brochures and information that we can get to people if they are interested

Ann Watson, Santiago “Jimmy” Nieto, Santo Domingo Pueblo

- Done over 800 acres of work on the Rio Galisteo
- Drainage is visible off of I-25 when driving to Albuquerque
- Showcase area – would like to continue management, corridor between Eastern Ortiz mountains and going north
- Have removed a lot of salt cedars – now the water is running again
- Bought wildlife cameras to see what kind of wildlife are using the drainage
- Continuing to manage the drainage for wildlife, bird habitat, etc.

- Traditional springs – have been useful to the tribes – water coming from ground since salt cedar removal
- Have piezometer – a well that measures groundwater depth – use to see the effects of our management, Army Corps is helping with this at the dams
- Have not seen running water there before
- Migrating bird survey for the southwest willow flycatcher
 - o Take pictures
 - o Counted 87 birds (different species) in one day – after two weeks they were all gone
- Trying to protect traditional sites

Q&A Session:

- Folks in the Galisteo Basin – any way for us to work with you and you with them to coordinate with what you are working on?
 - o Interested if anyone upstream has any wildlife sightings
 - o Dam upstream – Army Corps removing salt cedar – need to address the same issues upstream or what we do does not have much impact
- I've heard bad things said about salt cedar and then not so bad (studies that show that transpiration rates are not as high as we thought). Drainage used to have more birds – are their negative unintended consequences?
 - o Several ongoing studies that show that salt cedar transpiration rates are lower than previously thought, and what kinds of bird species use salt cedar
 - o Salt cedars usually have advantage over indigenous species
 - o Willow flycatcher may be using it more than they use to
 - o Should invite Army Corps of Engineers here to GWP meetings

Mitch Johnson- Pathways

- Pathways is about connectivity throughout the state – started focus on the Sandia Mountains, looking where corridors are pinched off
- Goal – keep all mountainous areas connected
- Watering holes – important
- Largest barriers for wildlife are us!
- Stewardship – the way we do that is put them first and know in the end we'll be taken care of
- Need to take the same approach we use for our cars, homes, families to wildlife
- Opportunity we have in the state – in a lot of states they are trying to re-establish connectivity – not too bad in NM yet
- Anyone who would like to volunteer to help – we welcome that!
 - o Several ways of collecting data
 - o Provide data sheets for residents for collecting wildlife data
 - o Supportive data for transects
 - o See animals hit on highways, etc.
 - o Reports in sighting can go back in memory too
 - o Transects – have sign-up sheets for folks to sign up to do transects – monitoring is very helpful
 - o It is groups like this (the GWP) that are going to get it done

- As doable as it is – there is only one way it is going to get done – the folks in this room. Coming together with a common cause. A huge responsibility but the hugest opportunity for any of us right now.
- Globally – see people getting involved
- Would like to see resolution out of Washington that recognizes corridors
- Estimate 60 lynx in our state now! Get to see a good example of what people can do makes a difference. Saw a lynx a couple of weeks ago.
- We get the magic of these results! (when we see wildlife)
- Galisteo – may be able to take the tracking training, tie into former pueblo sites, etc.
- Would like to connect with surrounding states so that this can grow in this power
- Not government that gets it done – it is the people

Q&A Session:

- See motion from south to north as climate is warming?
 - o We monitor some movement – to get data needs to be done with volunteers
 - o Wildlife movement in both directions
 - o Have seen more roadrunners in the past year – may be random
 - o Will probably see species moving up in elevation as things get hotter

Michael Scialdoni – NM Wilderness Alliance

- Manages volunteer service projects
- About 20 people – usually on weekends – restoring and protecting places
- Single biggest project they do = stream restoration structures - simple rock structures in arroyos to aid in their restoration – many arroyos down cut, become straight channels
 - o Make one rock dams, baffles, etc. – get water to slow down, drop sediment, hold more water so that vegetation can establish itself
 - o Baffles – triangular, built out of rocks. Built at 30 -60 degree angle to the channel to increase sedimentation and water
 - o Currently working in arroyos de las Vacas on this
- Has lists of projects for 2008 – do them all over the state (mainly in the north)
- Salt Cedar – need to look at project and at timeframe
 - o Looks industrial at first – not going to look pretty at first, but give it time
 - o Project specific project – follow up with planting – Wild Earth Guardians – take down non-natives with bulldozer and replant with native
 - o Can transform river habitat overnight
- Worked with Tijeras Canyon Safe Passage Coalition – worked with DOT as they did reconstruction, looking at how we can allow for wildlife to migrate with highway and road barriers
 - o Did volunteer projects where cleared out vegetation under highways for deer migration, etc.
 - o Connection exists on the ground often – need to allow these to flourish

Q&A Session:

- Deer are now using those portals after vegetation removed
- A concern is the aesthetics of all of this. A whole other discussion has to do with the aesthetics of restoration. Sometimes areas look really ugly when being restored.

- In a beat up system like the Rio Puerco – methods may be more brutal
- Restoration is a balance between aesthetics and functionality
- Good conversation to have concerns this balance
- It is amazing what 20 people can do in a weekend
- Along 285 corridor – was revegetated instead of just putting under rock as DOT has planned. Plants watered once with super gel – watered one more time, high survival rate. Takes 5 years, but 5 years is nothing! It now looks good.

Bob Findling – The Nature Conservancy

- TNC – a collaborative science-based organization to identify places with the highest conservation values
- Strategies for protecting areas
- Became involved in GB through a relationship with Ed Ball – the Ball Ranch (Ortiz Mountain Ranch), south of Madrid, includes Turquoise Trail (NM 14)
- Ed placed a stringent conservation easement on his land
- Worked with BLM with Santo Domingo Pueblo land exchange to block of area of critical concern to the west of the ranch
- Map of Ball Ranch and surrounding areas is hanging up – wildlife corridor is largely a result of the fact that much of the GB is unfragmented
- It is good that we are not trying to re-establish, but need to ensure that unfragmented areas exist into future
- Galisteo Creek – an obvious important wildlife corridor
- Landscape – is still largely intact
- These corridors exist – don't have particular documentation of each species movement – this is important because all species have particular corridor needs.
 - Need to id bottlenecks
 - Tecton and oil & gas = 500 lb gorilla in the room
- Need to have a strategic vision – is achievable! Happy so many people are involved.

Q&A Session:

- Water available for wildlife on the Ball Ranch?
 - There is a spring west of the highway that is utilized
- One of the unfortunate downsides of maintaining a lot of windmills – encouraged trespass grazing. Most of the native wildlife has adjusted to not having artificial water sources (to a varying degree). Have decided to not maintain all windmills.
- Mitch – has list of what landowners can do (not complete, but a start), and a list of resources for landowners

Rachel Jankowitz - New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

- How landowners and residents can accommodate wildlife basin the Galisteo Watershed
- Handouts on funding/grants/etc. available to private landowners
- Fact sheet on potential impacts from oil & gas on wildlife
- Schematic of particular fence designs for wildlife movement
- Habitat conductivity – species of greatest conservation need – gunnison's prairie dog, ferringous hawk and burrowing owl, pronghorn and mule deer, etc.
- Things you can do:

- Locate new develop outside of important habitat areas – raptor nesting areas, prairie dog colonies, wetlands – where can't be done, create similar site nearby
- Footpaths, driveways, structures – build to take up as little area as possible
- Use areas already impacted by development
- Retire and close unneeded roads – seed with native vegetation
- Pumps or other areas that require a lot of maintenance – use solar energy and other methods to reduce human disturbance/presence
- Things apply to both oil and gas and to residential development – largest things potentially impacting the Galisteo basin
- Some things you can do to accomplish those actions – development ranch or property plans under existing ecological programs
- Fencing
 - When fencing to restrict livestock – better to use barb wire rather than woven wire generally
 - Areas where pronghorn – do not jump over fences, get under, bottom wire 16” or more above ground, smooth not barbed
 - Leaping deer – hind feet can get caught in top wire. To prevent this, space the top two strands of fence 10-12” apart, keep top wire no more than 40” off the ground.
 - Keep fences tight – no more than 10 feet between stays
 - Identified areas heavily used – use smooth top wire, cover top strand of fence with 1” pvc pipe – makes it more visible to the animal
 - Game & Fish available to help any individuals with this
 - Fencing is also used to delineate property, exclude ATVs – be creative, make these permeable to wildlife
 - Through the Natural Resource Conservation - Game & Fish – technical assistance and potentially funds – US Fish & Wildlife – partners for wildlife, potentially funds
- Water Developments
 - Species that may benefit – tiger salamander, mountain plover, bats, mule deer, etc.
 - Bats Conservation International – put out a great publication about wildlife and water development – located on bat conservation international website
 - Human created water areas – provide sources of water, habitat for water animals, usefulness depends on how they are designed.
 - For bats – use of water sources increases with size of water source (greater than 100 feet in length – need clear flight path to access water)
 - Natural vegetation (not excessive because hides predators) improves water area for habitat
 - If you want to maintain access for livestock but grow vegetation – can partially fence off stock tanks
 - Steep sided troughs, etc. – should have escape route or other structure – climb up a gradual slope to get out of tank. Wildlife often drown in stock ponds. Needs to be effective at any level of water, including empty.
 - Water sources – free of posts and wires above and around to protect drinking animals
 - Water sources that are used for oil & gas, other extraction – may be harmful, nets, etc. should be used to protect wildlife

Q&A Session:

- Very passionate about these issues - two mountain lions have been killed in the GB, goats were used with bait – Game & Fish said they could not help – this is contradictory to everything we just heard
 - o Bating is not legal – but difficult to prove
 - o Would need to talk to law enforcement about this issue
- Pets chase, harass and kill wildlife (cats kill enormous amounts of rodents and birds)
- For 16” lowest smooth wire for pronghorn – Is that low enough to prevent young calves from getting underneath?
 - o In most cases, we hope it is
 - o They use that type of fence, and have had success
 - o Calf gets separated from mom – can run and gets scared and dies, so there are some problems in some ranch experience
 - o Other ranchers saw cows get through anything – so it is worth doing it for the pronghorn for them
- Law enforcement is a big problem – when people have called, G&F has said there is nothing they can do. What can we do?
- Dan Brooks – is the chief law enforcement – call him if need help with this

Break Out Groups:

See separate document for break out group notes.