

BOSQUE WATCH



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Visit to the International Crane Foundation

Situated on the edges of the Baraboo Bluffs, in the driftless area of south central Wisconsin, the International Crane Foundation (ICF) is a highly successful nonprofit with objectives that resonate with those of the Friends of the Bosque. ICF was established in Baraboo in 1973 by two Cornell University students



who shared a vision for an organization combining research, captive breeding and reintroduction, landscape restoration, and education to safeguard the world's 15 crane species. With 2016 revenues exceeding \$12M and net assets approaching \$30M, ICF supports a staff of 55 working with a network of hundreds of specialists in over 50 countries on five continents. While the goals of the Friends are more limited, we serve similar purposes. There is a degree of organizational synergy between our two groups, but ICF is clearly a more mature enterprise in age, scope and scale. We feel we have much to learn from this model organization.

So, in mid-September, three of us represented the Friends on a three-day visit to ICF: Deb Caldwell, Executive Director; Michael Hanauer, Special Projects Director; and Paul White, President, Rich Beilfus, ICF President, and Jen Stewart, Development Officer, were our hosts. These two were featured guests of the Friends at last year's Festival of the Cranes, and they really rolled out the welcome mat for us in Wisconsin.

All non-profit organizations like ours, whether Friends of a National Wildlife Refuge or a stand-alone like ICF, require systems for managing membership and raising funds. ICF generously arranged hours of contact time with its staff so we could benefit from their extensive experience in developing and nurturing membership and communicating with a spectrum of supporters,

including individuals and institutions. We also had thorough discussion with ICF personnel responsible for their well-developed systems for cultivating donors and searching for and managing grants. We learned a great deal, and some of what we learned may have application with the Friends. Our Board will be discussing

some of the possibilities and we can expect to see a few new things in coming months.

We also spent time outdoors, including visiting ICF enclosures for all 15 of the world's species of cranes. One Grey Crowned Crane even tried to dance with us! But speaking of partnering, our last day was highlighted by time with representatives of the extraordinary partnership involved with the Leopold-Pine Island Important Bird Area (IBA). (<http://www.aldoleopold.org/Programs/iba.shtml>.) This group of federal, state, nonprofit and private enterprises are working together to conduct research, provide education, and manage habitat for a range of wildlife, including many declining

bird species. As the Friends have learned, partnerships are key to achieving conservation objectives in such areas as New Mexico's Middle Rio Grande watershed. We learned from the IBA experience, and shared some of ours in working at the intersection of federal (Fish and Wildlife Service) and nonprofit (Friends, Save Our Bosque Task Force, etc.) interests. The western edge of the IBA encompasses the Aldo Leopold Foundation grounds, and we were given a tour, including a visit to the famous Leopold Shack.

Conversations during our ICF visit reinforced our thinking about possibilities for the future. We see opportunities for learning from ICF experience in managing water flows to sustain rivers, wetlands, wildlife and the people that depend on these areas for their livelihood and well-being. We learned about ICF efforts to minimize crane mortality in areas where power lines cross their flight-paths. This is an issue near Baraboo where a new power line will parallel an area of the Wisconsin River where many sandhill cranes nest during the summer, and may be a problem where the SunZia lines will soon cross the Rio Grande north of Socorro. The Friends can learn from ICF research and work with SunZia to reduce the potential for bird strikes.

We also shared the Friends experience in working with the refuge, the City of Socorro, Socorro County and other regional counties, and other area entities to enhance regional economic development. Our visit was an excuse for a first-time round table on this topic that involved representatives of Baraboo and Sauk County governments and economic development organizations as well as six area non-profit organizations. The discussion was rich, and helped launch their plans for future meetings.

Our time in the area was extremely well organized and productive, and we sincerely thank our hosts at ICF. For the future, we see many possibilities for sharing between ICF and the Friends. These include some specific areas for cooperation, for reciprocal learning on such topics as water flow management and economic development, and for mutual promotion. In the immediate future, make sure you stop by the ICF booth at the Expo Tent during the 2016 Festival of Cranes.

--Paul White, Deb Caldwell & Michael Hanauer



Help Beautify the Road to the Refuge – Join Trash Pickup Day on November 12

Last year the Save Our Bosque Task Force (SOBTF) added an additional Trash Pickup Day to its calendar in order to clean up the stretch of Highway 1 that leads to Bosque del Apache NWR. They timed this work to take place right before Festival of the Cranes so that the many visitors to our community and to the refuge would not be distracted by trash along their way. This year SOBTF is inviting Friends of Bosque del Apache members, refuge staff and volunteers to join them in this morning of exercise and community service. Depending on response, SOBTF will include Highway 380 from the Interstate to the flashing light as well. Please join us for this event on Saturday, November 12, 2016. Lunch will be provided in San Antonio following the work. Please contact Gina Dello Russo, Save Our Bosque Task Force, at gdellorusso@wildblue.net for information and to sign up.



FROM THE PRESIDENT EMERITUS

As I sat down to write for this issue, Margaret and I were housesitting for our son and daughter-in-law in Santa Cruz, California. Their house is a stone's throw from the beach, and the sea breeze and sounds of surf awaken memories of my childhood on the Eastern Seaboard. I'm also struck by the fact I can work on this article so far from our New Mexico home, collaborating with other Bosque Watch editors through email and shared drives in the cloud. In turn, thoughts make me wonder about other, often-unexpected threads that trace through our lives.

As described in a separate article, Deb Caldwell, Michael Hanauer and I spent several days in early September visiting and learning at the International Crane Foundation (ICF), in Baraboo, Wisconsin. You may recall that ICF representatives were featured at our Friends Dinner and in the Expo Tent at last year's Festival of the Cranes. Our two organizations are connected. Cranes are just one of the important links that tie us together. Cranes also link us with places along their flyways, with the San Luis Valley where they stop during migration, with nesting grounds at Grays Lake NWR in southeastern Idaho and in the Greater Yellowstone Basin in Wyoming. Ten other species of cranes are treasured – and endangered – around the world: from the majestic Sarus Cranes of India, to the White-Naped Cranes of Siberia and China. Encountering Grey-Crowned Cranes during a February trip to Kenya and Tanzania, I was compellingly reminded how these graceful birds connect us across the globe.

Now, with Festival around the corner and our wintering population of sandhills on the verge of arriving, other, more personal connections are surfacing. The most important links for this organization lie in our network of Friends across the country and abroad. We are joined in our common love of the outdoors, our shared affection for cranes, birds and other wildlife that frequent the refuge, and our committed support for the Bosque del Apache NWR. Thank you for partnering with us to help ensure the future of this magical place.

Finally, I come to an affectionate farewell. It has been my privilege to serve as President of the Friends for the past two years, and for the earlier four years that ended in 2010. Together we have accomplished some good things for the refuge and the Friends. I am confident you will generously support our new president, JR Seeger, and that even better things lie ahead. Please, know that wherever Margaret and I roost in the future, we shall remain forever connected with the refuge and with you. Thank you!

--Paul White



SAVE THE DATES

- 🦅 November 5, 2016: Star Stories from around the World: Stargazing & Night Sky Photography
- 🦅 November 12, 2016: Save our Bosque Task Force Hwy 1 Trash Pick Up Day
- 🦅 November 15 – 20, 2016: Festival of the Cranes
- 🦅 December 9, 2016: Cranes, Candles, Caroling, Cookies & Christmas Shopping – Nature Store & Bosque del Apache NWR Visitor Center (See Treasures Discovered).



BOARD TALK

Annual Meeting

Forty-four Friends of Bosque del Apache attended our annual meeting on October 15. The business portion of the meeting in the morning was followed by a catered lunch of traditional New Mexican foods, and then a hike through golden cottonwoods along the Rio Viejo Trail. During the meeting, Refuge Manager Kevin Cobble shared that, with many new employees, he is now up to full staff. He also gave updates on the San Pasqual fire remediation plan, and greening and research projects (see the "Greening" article on page 7). Our Executive Director Deb Caldwell noted that we currently have 1200 Friends members across 48 states and 3 countries. It's been a very successful year for our many projects and collaborations. She highlighted that November's New Mexico Magazine features Bosque del Apache on its cover and in an article on pages 46-51, and that Nat Geo Wild will be here in late November to capture refuge footage for a documentary on America's 10 best wild places. Gina DelloRusso spoke about the many goals that Save our Bosque Task Force has in common with the Friends and highlighted a developing collaborative project, Restore Our Rivers (to be featured in the next issue of Bosque Watch). Special Projects Director Michael Hanauer reported on the success of the 2015 Festival of the Cranes and plans for another record-breaking year in 2016. After a

financial report by Board Treasurer Jill Buckley, Friends members elected new Board officers and Directors. Officers elected to two-year terms are JR Seeger, President, and Mary Ruff, Treasurer. Jill Buckley, Vice President, and Lesley Urquhart, Secretary were elected to one-year terms. Three new At-Large Directors, Elveta Bishop, Stan Ford and Jack Lockridge, were elected to two-year terms. With parting thanks to those rotating off the board, including President Paul White, President Emeritus Lise Spargo, Secretary Sonja Mendoza, and At-Large Director Ann Adams, the business meeting was adjourned.

Refuge is Ready for Cranes

The cranes are coming, and the refuge is ready. According to Kevin Cobble, Refuge Manager, farming on the refuge has been more successful this year than last and continues to improve. The current yield is roughly 700,000 pounds of corn, and 1 million pounds of other native grains that the returning cranes and other birds favor. The water allotment for flooding the fields and ponds this autumn is also looking good.

Festival of the Cranes Is Coming

Registration for the 29th Festival of the Cranes started with record registration numbers. The Festival brochure has received many positive comments and online registration is working smoothly. Over the six days, November 15 - 20, Friends is offering 158 exciting event sessions, a 17% increase in the number of events from last year. These sessions represent over 4,000 seats or places, and among them 46% are for birding and 37% are photography-related.

The remaining 17% of the spaces are for other events, such as the Friends Dinner, hikes, etc. The Expo tent is full of vendors, and Friends has a corner area to display information about refuge projects and volunteer opportunities. Our annual Friends dinner and Silent Auction will be on Thursday at the Bodega Restaurant in Socorro. On Friday night the Friends Keynote Social features Kenn Kaufman, a birding legend. Join us at Festival and refresh your refuge experience.

Special Giving Opportunity for Retirees

Many of us who are retired are in the position of having to take Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from IRAs or other types of retirement savings accounts. If you are among this group, you know that we have to pay taxes on these RMDs just as we do on other forms of income. Some in this group choose to make contributions to one or more of their favorite charitable organizations out of a portion of these distributions. Of course, if we make such a contribution and if we itemize deductions in our tax return, then we are allowed to take a deduction for such charitable contributions.

What many do not know is that the IRS now – thanks to Congressional authorization – enabled those of us who must take RMDs to gain a bit of an extra tax break. If properly handled, the amount of an RMD that one sends directly to a 'qualified' charity can be deducted from the total RMD distribution and will not count as income. Note that the contribution must go directly to the charity from the broker (or account) from

which the RMD would otherwise be made. This approach results in a slight tax advantage compared with the alternative of taking the full RMD, making a contribution after receiving the RMD, and then taking an itemized deduction for that contribution. This form of direct charitable contribution is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution, or QCD. The Friends is a 'qualified' charitable organization, and thus eligible to receive such a QCD should you so choose. If you think you might want to take a QCD, then please discuss this step with your tax advisor and or your investment advisor.

Here are the basic steps for pursuing a QCD:

- Instruct your broker that you wish some or all of your RMD to go directly to a Qualified Charity, e.g., the Friends, and provide the direct mailing address to which the check should be sent. This must be done before the end of the tax year.
- As a courtesy, inform the charity that you are making a QCD and that they will be receiving a check directly from your investment account.
- If you use tax preparation software, then that software provides an opportunity – when you enter the relevant 1099-R reflecting your RMD – to indicate that some or all of your RMD was taken as a QCD and should be deducted from your income.
- If you have your taxes prepared by a tax advisor, then inform them that you have made a QCD and from which RMD the QCD was made. Give them the name of the qualified charity.

Once again, please consult with your tax advisor or investment counselor about the possibility of taking a QCD. Please, consider the Friends as you make your end-of-year decisions about charitable contributions.

Support Friends with Amazon

Is Amazon one of your most frequently-visited shopping sites on the internet? Did you know that simply by going to “smile.amazon.com” instead of to “amazon.com”, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to the Friends? It's really that simple! Enter “smile.amazon.com” when visiting Amazon, designate The Friends of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge as your non-profit group the first time you visit, and one-half of 1% of the sale will be donated to the Friends.

From then on, every time you purchase something from Amazon using smile.amazon.com, Amazon will designate the same fraction of your purchase price for the Friends. It costs you no more than the effort to type 'smile' in front of the internet address for each visit. For more information about the Amazon program, go to <http://smile.amazon.com/gp/aw/ch/about>.

Just imagine - every shopping spree can be a boon to the Bosque del Apache NWR. Smile!



WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Like any volunteer organization, the Friends need willing hands to pitch in and help the organization. Our programs and other support for the refuge won't last long without your help. You can make a difference!

Here are some of the many ways you can work with the Friends to support the Bosque del Apache NWR.

Board of Directors or Board Committees

The Friends always needs willing volunteers to serve on its Committees – where the real work gets done. Opportunities include:

- Education Committee
- Festival Committee
- Nature Store Advisory Committee
- Development Committee
- Finance Committee
- Ad Hoc IT Committee –

Infrastructure, Communications and Website

Other Volunteer Opportunities

- Festival of the Cranes & Special Events
 - Outdoor Education Workshop Support (See article in this *Bosque Watch*)
 - Nature Store Customer Service
 - Cactus Arboretum – Restoration and Education
 - Landscaping – Restoration and Maintenance
 - Library – Cataloging and Archive Work
 - Publications – *Bosque Watch*
- For more information, call 575-838-2120, or email to friends@sdc.org.

"The Magical Things You Can Do..." *

You, the members of the Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR, are the lifeblood of our volunteer organization. Your donations and your paid memberships do magical things on the refuge. Just look at some of the examples in this newsletter alone: Festival of the Cranes; Greening projects on the refuge; and outdoor education activities both this year and next. Remember some of the magical things you have done in the past: the purchase of Chupadera Peak land; construction of the Lannan Annex for the Visitor Center; purchase of Langemann Gates for the refuge water system; support for mountain lion and rattlesnake research; and supporting a biology research library for the refuge. With your help, the possibilities go on and on.

Now the Friends wants to do a better job of honoring your generous support. At the same time, we want to bring our membership structure and rates, as well as our benefits, up to date. These elements have not changed for more than ten years. With much discussion in committee, and after research into what comparable nonprofit organizations are doing, the Board is implementing some changes during 2017.

Membership Levels & Benefits

All members enjoy a 10% discount at the Nature Store, and can register early for Festival of the Cranes. Members will also be able to join the Friends Blog discussions on the new web site when it goes live in 2017.

Our **Snow Goose** membership starts at \$25 per year, and is for individuals. The snow goose is among the earliest of migratory arrivals at the refuge in the fall, and at its peak is the most populous resident. In their numbers, they catch the color of the sun in fields or sky everywhere. Become one of the flock today.

Northern Harrier memberships start at \$50 per year, and include all family members. Northern Harriers are slim, agile hawks. You and your family can rely on seeing one or more of these white-rumped raptors skimming over fields and maneuvering over brush lines on the refuge. Introduce your whole family to the refuge and the Friends at this level of commitment.

Sandhill Crane memberships are for individuals and families, and start at \$120 per year. The Sandhill Crane is one of the iconic species at the refuge, and providing a wintering stopover was a principal reason for establishing the Bosque del Apache NWR. Cranes are seen in family groups, feeding in fields or gliding elegantly overhead. Join and bring your family to the refuge.

Peregrine Falcon members demonstrate powerful, high-flying support for the Bosque del Apache. Like their namesakes on the refuge and elsewhere, they are increasing in number and elegant in pursuit of their objectives. Peregrine Falcon memberships include the entire family, and start at \$250 per year. Show your dedication to the refuge by joining this distinctive level.

Golden Eagle members are among the highest-level supporters of

the Friends and its mission to support the refuge. This bird is a majestic symbol of leadership and power, seen soaring over the Bosque and keeping a sharp eye on all within its range. Golden Eagle memberships start at \$1,000 per year, include the whole family, and enjoy membership in the Echelon Society – see below – in addition to all other individual benefits.

This new membership structure will be implemented during 2017. All current memberships will remain valid until the 2017 anniversary of joining, at which point current members will be individually contacted about their preferences for the future. All members are encouraged to sign up for automatic annual renewal at their chosen level. For information about how to make such sustaining membership arrangements, please email friends@sdc.org or call 575-838-2120.

Business Support

Our business sponsors are partners with us in serving our shared interests. Together we provide enhanced support the refuge, and attract visitors that benefit the area economy. The Friends is now tailoring arrangements with our business supporters in order to serve our mutual interests better. Beginning in 2017 we will offer four categories of Business Sponsorship.

- **Business Sponsor** – For small businesses at \$350 per year;
- **Corporate Sponsor** – For larger enterprises at \$500 per year;
- **Eco-Travel Sponsor** – For business engaged in eco-tourism at \$500 per year; and
- **Professional Photographer** – For photo professionals at \$500 per year.

The benefits of business sponsorship are personalized to commercial interests appropriate to each type. Depending on category, these benefits will include: listing in *Bosque Watch* and Festival of the Cranes literature; advertising space in the Festival brochure; and business description, photos, business website link, and professional bio, as appropriate, on the Friends website. In supporting Friends as a sponsor, we can help publicize your business offerings and you let others know about your values. For further information about specific benefits tailored to your business needs, please contact the Friends at friends@sdc.org or call 575-838-2120.

Echelon Society

The Friends is establishing an Echelon Society to recognize particularly generous commitments to our organization and to the refuge. The Echelon Society will comprise all Golden Eagle members, all individuals or couples who have made a financial commitment to the Friends in the form of a planned gift, e.g., have designated the Friends as a beneficiary in a will, and all persons who joined the Friends as Lifetime Members prior to 2017. When we use the term 'echelon' in this context, we have in mind several connotations. Migrating cranes, geese, ducks and others often fly in v- or j-shaped echelons. These are particularly efficient arrangements for flying long distances. Other meanings of 'echelon' imply a degree of elevated status, achievement and worthiness. Persons who have made qualifying commitments to

the Friends are indeed worthy and should be acknowledged.

Members of the Echelon Society will be recognized in the following ways.

- Listing in *Bosque Watch* and Festival Literature, including the Brochure;
- Exclusive, specially scheduled events, including tours of the refuge as approved by the Refuge Manager; and
- An Annual Dinner with the Refuge Manager, the Friends Board of Directors, and the Friends Executive and Special Projects Directors.

The Things We Can Do

You, as Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR, are part of an active, growing organization doing magical things with the refuge and outdoor education. We now have twelve hundred members in forty eight states and overseas. If you aren't already a member, please, join us. If you are one of our number, please, consider enhancing your level of support. There are great things ahead for the Friends and the refuge. And together with us, "Oh, the places you'll go!"

--Paul C. White

President Emeritus

**With thanks to the Dr. Seuss classic, Oh, The Places You'll Go!*

Greening Projects Save Refuge Plenty of Greenbacks

Friends and the refuge continue to partner with a commitment toward carbon neutrality. We often call these efforts "greening". A number of greening projects have saved significant amounts of money that can be redirected to cover other

pressing refuge needs. Friends has installed new energy-efficient lightbulbs and purchased solar panels for the refuge. The refuge has installed new heating and air conditioning (HVAC) units in most buildings. Kevin Cobble, refuge manager, says these steps are important for three major reasons: 1) It's the right thing for the planet; rising carbon dioxide levels are the biggest threat to our current lifestyle and ecosystem health; we need to convert as soon as possible to more energy-efficient and clean methods. 2) The savings we achieve can be used to fund at least part of a needed refuge staff position. 3) Savings can be used on a range of other refuge projects.

Friends has purchased LED light bulbs to replace 85% of the incandescent and fluorescent bulbs previously used all around the refuge. LEDs are much more efficient than traditional light bulbs, using 60% less energy. The remaining incandescent bulbs will be replaced next year. LED lighting can now be found in the Visitor Center, Nature Store, Lannan Room, most casas and bunkhouses, the maintenance building, and the farm and fire shops. Between these changes and the move to new HVAC (heating, ventilation & air-conditioning) systems, refuge electric bills have already been cut in half. Electricity usage that previously cost approximately \$36,000 per year is now conservatively costing \$18,000. Kevin says the vision for the future is for the refuge to have no electric bill and even bigger savings.

In another important greening initiative, solar panels have been

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SAN PASQUAL WILDLAND FIRE

placed on the the building that houses the Visitor Center and refuge offices, the fire shop, and the farm and maintenance shops. Friends recently bought a solar system for the sewage treatment plant. Now we plan to cover the biology building with solar panels as the next step. In the future, the Friends will buy solar panels for the Friends House, Volunteer Commons Building and RV park. Solar projects will continue for years to come.

What can you, as a citizen and a Friend of Bosque del Apache do to help? Not only can you donate toward Friends' greening projects, but also you can take steps to save energy in your own environment. You can replace traditional light bulbs with LEDs; purchase new energy-efficient appliances when you are able; and install solar panels – renewed tax credits at the federal and state levels make this more affordable, as do rebates on utilities via your electric company. Visit cleantechnica.com for more ideas about how to be energy and water efficient. It's important that each of us follow the advice of President Theodore Roosevelt, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

Lightning struck Bosque del Apache NWR on July 4 at approximately 3:45 pm, igniting the San Pasqual Fire. The initial smoke was reported by refuge personnel around 4:00 pm, and 911 and refuge fire personnel were notified. Luckily, two refuge fire engines, numbers E2061 and E2062, along with Fire Operation Specialist (FOS) Andy Lopez, were on duty on that Independence Day Holiday. FOS Lopez and engine E2062 were first on the scene around 4:15 pm, and took an initial look at the fire to decide a plan of attack. They determined that the fire was already established on both sides of the Rio Grande, near the southern refuge boundary, and was approximately 5-10 acres in extent.

Fire behavior consisted of groups of trees torching, and embers spotting and running in both of the fine fuels (grass and brush) on the east side of the river and in the heavy fuels (tamarisk/saltcedar) on the west side of the river. Initially the fire was influenced by southwest winds, but there were numerous thunderstorm cells active in the area and these produced gusty outflow winds that can spread the fire in all directions. The fire was burning mainly in a monotypic stand of saltcedar with stringers of large cottonwoods interspersed in the burn area. An initial order for three additional fire engines, 2 bulldozers, and 1 water tender was placed through Albuquerque dispatch. Rick Rios from the Bosque del Apache NWR fire crew took over as the Incident Commander trainee with Andy Lopez as the qualified incident commander on scene. One refuge engine and one utility vehicle (UTV) were assigned to the East side of the fire, referred to as the "East Division". Another refuge engine E2062 and Engine captain Ryan Aeby were assigned to the West side of the river, referred to as the "West Division". Incoming local resources, including from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and several local volunteer fire departments, were placed on both sides of the river where they were most needed at their time of arrival. After a discussion between the Incident Commander, Fire Management Officer Eric Krueger, and Refuge Manager Kevin Cobble, it was decided to go with a full suppression strategy and limit the fire growth to as small an area as safely possible. At that time, around 6:00pm, the fire was influenced by northerly winds after the thunderstorms had passed and was setting up to burn through some large stands of cottonwood trees that refuge management wanted to save.

There were several fuel breaks on both sides of the river that had been constructed by the NM Fire District in prior years. Experts agreed that these fire breaks would serve as the final control lines for the fire if they could not get control of it sooner. Both divisions utilized existing roads as control lines along the flanks of the fire. These roads worked well, but there were several spot fires on both sides of the river that had to be put out before concentrating on the main fire. The East Division contained several slop-overs ranging in size from 1-5 acres. The West Division contained three spot fires, with the biggest reaching one acre.

A bulldozer line was put in place on the West side of the river to stop the fire from burning any further north. This line was placed as close as possible to the front of the fire and pockets of unburned fuel between the fire break and the fire front were intentionally burned out in order to create enough space to stop the forward movement of the fire. On the east division, the fire progressed north to an existing fuel break where with a small amount of work by firefighters stopped the advance. By 11:00 pm, bulldozers were creating lines at the southern edge of the fire on both sides of the river. At that time, the fire was estimated to be over 500 acres. Due to rising humidity and cooler temperatures as the night wore on, fire intensity dropped after midnight and firefighters were able to secure existing lines, burn out pockets of unburned fuels, and widen the southern control lines.

On July 5, the weather forecast called for temperatures nearing 100° and relative humidity levels decreasing to 14%. Winds were northerly 7-10 mph then shifting to the west. There was a 10%

chance for dry thunderstorms that could produce gusty outflow winds. Firefighters continued strengthening control lines and burning interior pockets of unburned fuel. Firefighters concentrated on holding the existing lines and mopping up hotspots on all the spot fires and slop-overs. There were over 120 firefighters and support personnel assisting with suppression efforts. The agencies represented were as follows: US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), NM State Forestry, National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Socorro county resources, and one private contractor. Equipment and resources utilized to contain the San Pasqual fire included 9 fire engines, 3 water tenders, 4 bulldozers, 4 UTV's, 1 twenty-man handcrew and 1 twenty-man Hotshot Crew.

Starting on July 7, because the fire was contained within the established control lines, most of the firefighters were released to go home. On July 8, all non-USFWS firefighters were released from the

San Pasqual fire. The fire was fully contained on July 10 with a final burned area of 808 acres. USFWS/ NM Fire District resources continued to patrol, secure control lines, and remove hazardous trees until the fire was fully controlled on July 25. The San Pasqual fire continued to be monitored by the NM Fire District until August 11 when it was finally declared fully extinguished.

Refuge personnel began planning for rehabilitation of the burned area as early as July 13. Resources are currently being pursued from the USFWS Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) fund to begin the recovery process for the burned area. The San Pasqual fire has given the refuge a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to recover a large area of the Rio Grande active floodplain. By burning off most of the dead and down saltcedar, the San Pasqual Fire made it much easier and cheaper to go in and mechanically remove the saltcedar. If the refuge can secure funding for this recovery effort, it should be able to move rapidly forward in restoring over 800 acres of riparian habitat in the next couple of years.

--Eric Krueger

*Fire Management Officer
US Fish & Wildlife
Service*



**Operational Briefing
7/5/2016**

Treasures Discovered

I have two grandsons – Colton is 3 and Taylor is 9. I have the joy of being a part of their lives on a weekly basis. Of course, there are times when I’m a caregiver, rushing to get the kids dressed and out the door. The times that I treasure the most are when we have an outdoors adventure; when we - the 2 boys, Grandpa and Grandma - slow down and immerse ourselves in the moments of wonder and discovery. These are the opportunities for teaching moments – Grandpa sharing his love of wildlife and photography, Grandma teaching respect and stewardship for the wild creatures and plants, and the boys teaching the grandparents to experience the awe and wonder of the adventure through children’s eyes.

There are opportunities for you and your family to enjoy treasure-filled moments through free events supported by the Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. My oldest grandson, Taylor, has enjoyed many of these events and venues – the Wildlife Zone at the Festival of the Cranes, Field Day (he’s been to every one offered), and the Desert Arboretum’s plants and creatures. Given the lineup over the next year, I’m sure he’ll want to attend some of the others (and, of course, 2017 Field Day!). Colton, who just recently went on his first “storm chase” with Grandpa and Grandma, loves to go on adventures with us; he’ll be joining his older brother on some of these events this coming year.

The Friends Environmental Education Subcommittee, in collaboration with the Bosque del Apache Refuge staff, have planned several events over the next 9 months, shown in the following table. Some events (such as the November 5 “Star Stories from Around the World” and Field Day in 2017) require reservations - but no fee - as attendance is limited for maximum enjoyment of participants. Check our Facebook page and website or call us at 835-1828 for more information about these events. Hope to see you for family fun on the refuge!

*--Ann Hodges,
Chair, Environmental Education Subcommittee*



Taylor and Grandpa enjoying a new discovery at 2016 Field Day

Outdoor Education Events - <i>Open to the Public at No Cost</i>	Planned Date
Stargazing and Night Photography event “Star Stories from Around the World” Consider the stories in the night sky. The dark canvas is alight with tales of sea monsters chasing maidens, winged horses, and messenger eagles. Let a trained astronomer and a night sky photographer be your guides to unravelling the secrets in the stars. Meet at Bosque del Apache NWR Visitor Center at 7 pm for a brief presentation and star wheel creation before heading out to a dark sky site to observe the mysteries of the universe through a telescope. This event is intended for up to 40 participants, aged 8 and above. Call 575-835-1828 ext. 0 to reserve your spot!	Saturday, 11/5/16 7-9 pm
Wildlife Zone @ Festival of the Cranes During the Friday-Sunday of Festival of the Cranes, we host many free exhibits and events for the entire family. Visit the Wildlife Zone to view rehabilitated raptors and other birds up close, try your hand at archery, enjoy a hayride, and much more!	Fri-Sun 11/18-20/16 all day
Holiday Event - Cranes, Candles, Carolers, Cookies, Cocoa & Christmas Arrive at the refuge in time for the fly-in of cranes and geese and then spend some time with us on the grounds between the Visitor Center and Friends House. Start your tour at the historic Friends House, and then stroll through the cactus gardens, lined with luminarias and lights. Continue your walk on the lighted path to the Visitor Center where you’ll enjoy caroling, cocoa, and cookies. Purchase holiday gifts at our Nature Store and delight your friends and family!	Friday, 12/9/16 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm
Water Conservation Presentation - Panel discussion Learn about the challenges of a resource more precious than gold in the west - water. From a panel of experts, learn how water is managed along the middle Rio Grande and on the refuge. Understand how you can do your part to save water and advocate for water issues.	Feb 2017 TBD
Desert Arboretum Stroll Stroll through this lovely garden, located around the Friends House, while it’s in full bloom. Learn from our volunteers about the many cacti and other plants of the Northern Chihuahuan Desert which are present in this garden. Check out our Nature Store for educational books on what you’ve seen.	Saturday, 4/22/2017 Earth Day
2017 Field Day This event connects kids and their chaperones to nature, encouraging them to get outside! The event will support 50 kids aged 7-13 across 5 interactive stations on the Rio Viejo Trail, including archery, turkey-calling, and identifying animals by their tracks and scat. Each participant receives a free lunch, T-shirt, hat, and lots of other goodies.	Saturday, 4/29/2017
Celebrate Pollinators! Join us for education about pollinators and crafts for the kids in the Lannan Room of the Visitor Center. Outside, participate in hummingbird banding or a photo shoot. On the plaza, immerse yourself in the wonder and magic of butterflies via our butterfly tent run by Wings of Enchantment.	Saturday, 6/25/2017

Chasing Cranes



Creamer's Field Waterfowl Refuge near Fairbanks, Alaska, and the surrounds of central Alaska are the summer home of nearly a quarter million sandhill cranes. The three distinct breeding groups summering here include 200,000 birds which breed on the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta, 20,000 which are part of the Pacific flyway population and a few which belong to the population which winters in California's central valley.

Late in August, 2016, crane-lover, artist, writer, and cyclist Sarah DeGenarro sold or gave away all of her belongings except what she needed for her trip and set out on her bicycle to follow the sandhill crane population from Creamer's Field, to the Texas coast. Riding about 60 miles a day and stopping occasionally to paint she rode the Richardson Highway and the Alaskan Highway to make it to Calgary, British Columbia, by early October.

You can find examples of her artwork and follow Sarah on her blog at www.sarahdegennaro.com or on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ArtbySarahDeGennaro>.

When she finishes her trip, Sarah plans to join her boyfriend in Norway and write a book about her journey chasing cranes. Her website and blog are charming and entertaining, and her book should be also.

--Patricia Noell

Cranes, Candles, Carolers, Cookies, Cocoa & Christmas Shopping!

Join us on Friday, December 9, from 4:30 -7:30 PM for a fun holiday event. If you arrive on the refuge in the late afternoon, you can enjoy the spectacle of thousands of cranes, geese, and ducks returning to their roosts. Then, drive to the refuge Visitor Center for a festive evening. Wind along the luminaria-lined paths between the Visitor Center and Friends House to enjoy carolers, illuminated cactus and trees, and a tour of the historic Friends House, one of the original 1940's houses built by the Civilian Conservation Corps when the refuge was new. Stroll back to the Visitor Center to enjoy cocoa, hot tea, and cookies, and do your holiday shopping at our Nature Store, where every purchase benefits refuge projects! The Nature

Store is filled with handcrafted one-of-a-kind fetishes, pottery, ornaments, and jewelry - many locally-made. Our children's section is filled with toys, books and puppets to delight the kids. For your nature-loving friends and family, polartec shirts and jackets are the perfect gift

for those crisp mornings out on the flight deck or you can choose from our extensive book selection. We have beautiful cards to top off your purchase. If you want to delight your friends and family with unique gifts this season, while also supporting the refuge you love, come visit us!

A photograph of various handcrafted items for sale, including mugs, puppets, and books, displayed against a red background with string lights. The items include a plate with a crane illustration, a mug with a crane, a puppet, and several books.

Bosque del Apache Nature Store
The Friends of the Bosque del Apache invite you to join us this holiday season. We have delightful gifts for all ages.
Toys * Puppets * Soaps * Puzzles * Books * Art * Jewelry * Apparel
Join us in San Antonio at the Bosque del Apache NWR visitor center.
www.friendsofthebosque.org/store www.facebook.com/Bosque-del-Apache-Nature-Store



Goodbye Western Scrub-Jay, Hello Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay!

We have three common, or fairly common, jays in New Mexico: Steller's Jay (high elevation with a distinct crest), Pinyon Jay (plainer blue, often come in flocks) and, until a few weeks ago, Western Scrub-Jay. The American Ornithologist's Union (the group of scientists who decide such things) have just split the Western Scrub-Jay species in two.

There have always been differences between the "coastal" form of the Western Scrub-Jay, now called the California Scrub-Jay and the "interior" form, now called the Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay. The now-called California Scrub-Jay lives in California, Washington and Oregon and is bolder in color and personality than is the now-called Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay. We are firmly within the Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay territory. This split has been considered for years. It became official recently when genetic testing determined that the species rarely interbreed when their ranges cross in Western Nevada.

These splits happen when science tells the experts that a species of bird is really two species. Many of you might remember that what is now called the Spotted Towhee used to be called the Rufous-Sided Towhee. Now the Spotted (in the West) and the Eastern (in the East), these two species used to be considered just the Rufous-Sided Towhee. You may even have an old field guide that still lists them as Rufous-Sided. These towhees cross-over a bit in the plains and will occasionally interbreed but genetics tells us that they are two, not one species.

So add a bird to your life list. Welcome Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay!

--Anne Schmauss

Reprinted by permission. Anne Schmauss is the co-owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Santa Fe.

The Friends of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge is a registered 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation incorporated in New Mexico. The Friends promotes appreciation and conservation of wildlife and habitat through environmental education and natural history experiences at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

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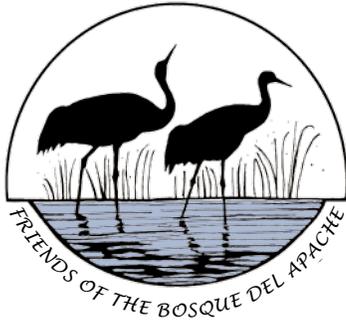
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about Bosque del Apache with decision
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 - Please contact me about Sustaining Membership or planned giving.

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