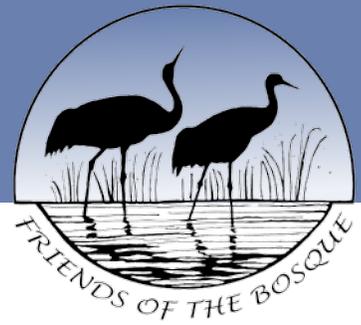


BOSQUE WATCH



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The 75-year history of Bosque del Apache is a story of people, place and a lasting commitment to our natural heritage. The refuge was created by the executive order of Franklin Delano Roosevelt on November 22, 1939 to be managed by the Bureau of Biological Survey – what is now the Fish and Wildlife Service. With that, two Survey officers were given charge of an initial parcel of 52,843 acres of what was described in a Department of Interior press release as a “biological wasteland.” In that moment the true saga of Bosque del Apache began, a decades long story of earth, wind, fire and water. What had centuries before been a natural marshland habitat, flooded and nurtured by the “Rio Bravo”, was now to be recreated by man (as described in *The Federal Register*, November 28, 1939) “as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife.”

So ‘man’ got to work. The first generation moved earth to create water channels and impoundments, moved water to create wetlands, built housing and work spaces, cut roads, planted crops and dealt with flooding. By 1947 the basic foundation for what we know as the refuge was done...and the birds began to come. In 1953, 590 sandhill cranes visited the refuge, in 1959, 1200, and in the winter of 1989, a record 17,200, along with 47,000 snow geese, and 11,000 ducks. For the first generation of officers and volunteers and every generation since, earth, wind, fire and water have been by turns the nemesis and creative force that brings constant change to this managed landscape. Drying winds, cycles of drought, abundant rain and devastating floods, destructive wildfire and renewing controlled burns, ice choked winter ponds, invasive plants and wandering cattle: all have been the constant companions of these humans who have indeed changed this biological wasteland into a teeming habitat. Their commitment has created a refuge, a breeding ground, the beginning and end of a natural lifecycle that is so critical to the survival of this planet.

Future caretakers may view these accomplishments as baby steps, but the foundation is strong, the commitment remains. That’s a pretty good legacy for the first seventy-five years. So, happy birthday Bosque del Apache. Though the future holds only the promise of earth, wind, fire and water, they are essential, they are the elements of life.

*(Editors note: My thanks to Robyn Harrison who helped frame this article and allowed my shameless borrowing from her book, *Bosque del Apache, a Brief History* which is available in the Nature Store.)*



CELEBRATING
75
YEARS

**Bosque del Apache
National Wildlife Refuge
1939-2014**



FROM THE EDITOR

October is here and on the 25th we will be electing some new officers to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting. All the old faces will remain, except yours truly, and the new guys, all of them long time Friends, will help build what is already a pretty impressive skill set on your Board. We need all the expertise we can get. There are, as always, 'issues.'

The monsoon rains brought at least some temporary relief from drought conditions but a shadow lingers which has nothing to do with the water-heavy clouds sailing overhead. With the signing of the current continuing resolution we are assured the refuge will remain open and preparations for the wintering birds will not be interrupted. BUT, come December, the resolution runs out and we are again in danger of a government shut down.

Despite the current reprieve, the refuge is still short handed. If you enjoyed yourself last year after the annual meeting, cutting brush and clearing the observation decks, get ready for a repeat.

The new Friends policy guidelines issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington have also had an impact changing the way the Friends raise funds for the refuge and requiring a costly restructuring of our operation of the Nature Store. While we are confident that we will work through these changes, this is a

distraction that comes at a time when continued FWS budget short falls and reduced staffing levels make our support for the refuge more important than ever.

This year at Festival we will be celebrating 75 years of refuge life and growth since its founding in 1939. I hope you will join us on Friday, November 21, for the evening birthday party in Socorro at the Bodega Burger Company (details and update in *Boardtalk*, pg. 6). Despite the many 'issues' that always seem to be with us, this is an occasion to remind ourselves once again of what the important issues really are. Through the efforts of the refuge staff and volunteers, and with your support as a member of the Friends, the wintering birds will once again find the habitat and safe haven they need this year and the next 75.

--Lise Spargo

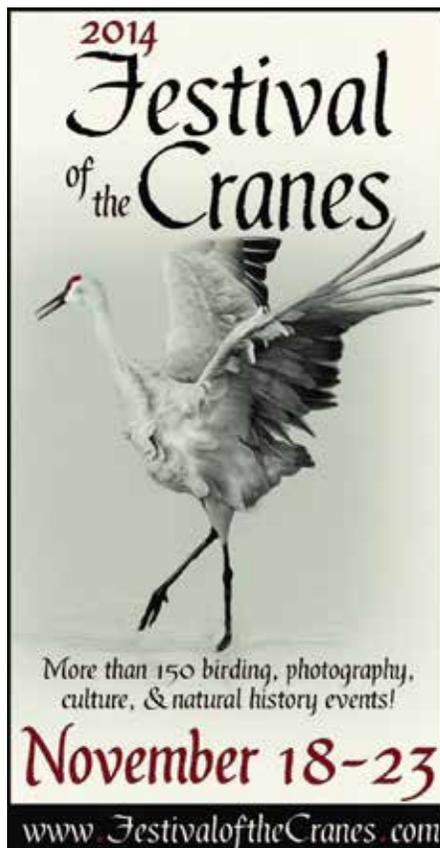
ONE OF OUR OWN...

Martha ReJune Stewart Hatch, one of the founding members of the Friends of Bosque del Apache NWR organization, passed away at the age of 80 in Socorro on July 26.

Martha and her husband and their three children moved to Socorro in 1966 where her husband, Dr. Melvin Hatch, joined the faculty at New Mexico Tech. Martha, a devoted member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also gave generously to Socorro as a member of the Friends of the Library, as a contributor to the local newspaper and countless other community activities. But for those associated with the Friends Martha is best known as the founder and editor of the Friends newsletter. For almost a decade her wit and wisdom reached the membership, sharing the news and chronicling Friends activities in support of the refuge.

No one speaks of Martha without recalling her kindness, warm smile and sense of humor. As remembered by her friend Barbara DuBois, while working together folding newsletters for the Friends, "we discovered that we were both collecting surnames that were meaningful, like Baker, Cook, Taylor; I got ahead of her with Tyler. It wasn't easy to get ahead of her. We traded jokes the whole time."

Martha personified the volunteer spirit and in her honor the Martha Hatch award is given each year to a Friends volunteer whose dedication and work for the Friends sustains her tradition and legacy of commitment.



Artist Profile: Kevin Abbott

More than twenty years ago, when Kevin Abbott made a pair of earrings for his fiancé, he never imagined that it was the beginning of a whole new career for him. Kevin had a degree in wildlife biology, and a love for drawing and making things. At the time, he was teaching science at a small secondary school in Kakamega, Kenya, as a volunteer with the Peace Corps. Less than a year before he had met Mary, who was teaching at an international school in nearby Kisumu, and they were already engaged to be married.

Kevin had presented Mary with some hand-made gifts in the time they had been together, but this time she had a specific request. She wanted a pair of earrings with a sun on one ear and a moon on the other. Kevin thought about how he might do this and get the detail he imagined. In the end, he made them out of paper. He drew them on a full-sized sheet of paper and used the black and white photocopier in the Peace Corps office to shrink them down to earring-size. He then painted them using a toothpick and mounted them on several layers of paper to give them a little heft.

Of course, Mary loved them! But so did her friends... and then the mothers of her students. He started making more pairs as gifts and to sell, adding

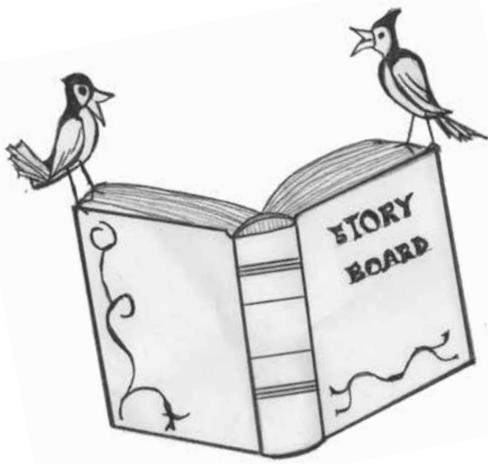
additional designs, still with each pair made painstakingly by hand.

A lot has changed in the earring-making process since then. He now does the artwork on the computer and can print them out in the quantity and size that he needs. He makes them in batches instead of just one at a time. He has hundreds of designs instead of just a couple.

But many things are still the same. He and Mary are still together and she still loves wearing his earrings. She is now a full-time partner in the business. The two sides of each pair of earrings are still different, harkening back to that original sun and moon pair (which is still part of their product line). They are still made out of paper, utilizing post-consumer cereal box cardboard to provide the base for each pair of earrings as well as the cards they are hung from. And they are still made by hand by Kevin, Mary, and by the creative team of people who help make them. Jabebo Earring earrings are now sold at wildlife and nature locations across the US and even abroad.

Through Jabebo Earrings, Kevin has found a way to bring together many things he is passionate about: finding a way to be creative and to depict the world through a unique lens, a love of the environment and a belief in the importance of recycling, an interest in plants and animals, and the desire to work closely with the parks, nature centers, and gift shops that share his convictions.





Driving Miss Ashley

Every two weeks, from November through February, a refuge biologist ventures out along the back roads between the refuge and Albuquerque in search of birds to count: specifically sandhill cranes and snow geese. Last season I (the volunteer chauffeur!) and Ashley Inslee (the Refuge Biologist!) combed the wetlands, prison fields, dairy feedlots and everything in between to try to reach a realistic estimate of the numbers of birds in residence and where they were spending their time.

We'd meet in San Antonio. I'd hop in the driver's seat of her truck and we'd head north along the ditch roads. Ashley always had her tools close at hand: a clipboard and pen to record her numbers and the locations, binoculars, the window ledge of the truck (it makes a great viewing deck), warm clothes, and a clicker. You know the kind—the person at the gate clicks it every time someone walks through. Ashley, however, was more inclined to count by the hundreds to avoid repetitive motion injury. Occasionally she counted by tens,

especially at the dairy where the cranes tend to hang out in smaller groups.

Sometimes she'd count from the viewing decks at a refuge, sometimes she'd get out of the truck and count from the ditch bank, sometimes I'd park and she'd sit in the window, click click click. Counting these birds was tricky business: they didn't stay still, and if they flew, Ashley had to pay attention to where they went so she didn't count them twice.

The route we took was originally mapped in the 1990s by three graduate students who looked at historic roosting sites in the valley and the birds' (then) current foraging habits. The route wanders either side of the river, through several state game areas, along prison roads and through a muddy, crowded dairy. The count takes all day, and there are always detours, road construction, mud holes. When the weather is warm driving with the windows down is... refreshing. Other days it can be downright freezing, but counting through smudged glass makes a difficult job even harder.

I felt like a little kid during “take your daughter to work” day, except

in Ashley's case it was more like “take your mother to work.” While I drove places I never would have visited otherwise, Ashley shared her knowledge of avian habits. I learned new things, she added to the body of knowledge.

Those trips were time well spent.

Thanks, Bosque (and Ashley!), for the opportunity to be a part of this important work!

--Robyn Harrison, Volunteer

(Editor's note: This October we say good-bye to one of the refuge family, biologist Ashley Inslee. We wish her well in her new life in Colorado with soon-to-be husband Ryan Mertz. Her enthusiasm, her expertise, her participation in Friends programs and projects and perhaps most of all, her smile will be missed.)



Courtesy Marvin DeJong



Library Time with ServCat

Late this summer the new refuge research library received a visit from the ServCat team. According to the ServCat web site, The Natural Resource Program Center (NRPC) is collaborating with the National Park Service's (NPS) Inventory and Monitoring Program to create a centralized place to compile and organize information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This repository, called the Service Catalog or ServCat, is a Web application available to Fish and Wildlife Service employees that compiles documents and organizes data, such as reports, surveys, databases, geospatial data and images. Information about the Service or used by the Service is now being stored within ServCat and centrally archived on a secure system.

So, armed with computers and scanners, the ServCat team, composed of mother and son Jenny and Oliver Davis, set up in the new refuge library and within a few days scanned thousands of pages of reports, surveys, publications, maps and other historic documents. Many of these pieces of refuge history, some dating to the period just before the refuge was created, were one of a kind documents, that is, the refuge had the only copy....anywhere. Although the originals remain at the refuge, these documents are now digitized and part of the ServCat repository to be used by future generations of service historians, scientists and researchers.



The recently organized and archived materials in the new research library created by the Friends, were, according to Jenny, the best she had ever seen in any refuge and this work greatly enhanced the team's ability to capture and ultimately preserve this unique information.

If you are interested, stop by the Expo tent during Festival to see a display that will feature selected maps, pictures, letters and publications from the library, celebrating 75 years of refuge history.



Festival Update –

Registration for the Festival of the Cranes got off to a good start this year with record numbers of sign-ups in the first few days. The Festival brochure has received many positive comments and there have been very few problems with the online registration system. The Expo tent is full and the Friends have an expanded area to display information about Friends projects plus an exhibit of materials from the new research library documenting 75 years of refuge history. Speaking of which, don't forget to come to the 75th Birthday party Friday night of Festival at the Bodega Restaurant in Socorro starting at 6pm for an evening of live music, appetizers and birthday cake.

Annual Meeting and Board Elections –

On Saturday, October 25, the Friends will hold its annual meeting at the refuge Visitor Center beginning at 10 am. There will be presentations on the current status of the refuge, Friends activities and an election of new officers. This year, President Lise Spargo will be leaving the Board as required by term limitations set out in the by laws. Member-at-large Paul White has been nominated to move over into the President's position. Four new officers have been nominated to fill member-at-large positions while the rest of the Board has agreed to extend to another two-year term or are currently serving in a two-year

term. Biographic information for the four new officers follows. The morning session will be followed by lunch and several afternoon activities to include work out on the refuge preparing observation decks for Festival or a birding tour. Members can sign up for afternoon activities the morning of the meeting.

Dwayne Longenbaugh

I have been visiting Bosque del Apache for about 40 years and have participated in the Volunteer program since my wife Marj and I moved to Albuquerque in 1999, both as a full-time NWR volunteer, and as an intermittent guide, store clerk and construction inspector on the south water diversion system. I have been fortunate to have had many wonderful experiences with the refuge, the wildlife, the employees, the volunteers and the visiting public. I greatly value the refuge and those experiences. I have education and experience in engineering, business, management and state and local government fields and hope that my experiences there might be useful to the Board and to the Friends organization.

Ed MacKerrow

Ed retired in April 2014 after 23 years at Los Alamos National Labs. He is now a professional wildlife photographer and is applying his expertise in modeling complex adaptive systems to study boreal owl and Mexican spotted owl populations in the Southwestern US. The focus of this research is to predict where local populations of these owls are most likely to move in reaction to climate impacts (fire and beetle kill). Ed

has conducted population surveys of boreal owls and peregrine falcons in New Mexico for the NMDGF and USFWS. As a wildlife photographer Ed has been published in magazines and calendars in the US and Europe. His focus is on photographing raptors in flight. He has given six invited photography shows in the past two years by the Audubon Society of California. Ed has won awards for his photographs, including very competitive contests for The Peregrine Fund's annual calendar. Ed and his wife Melinda have been proactive in developing a barn owl nest box program for the Nambe and Pojoaque agricultural area for gopher control. He has been photographing wildlife at Bosque del Apache for the past fifteen years and is an active supporter of the Friends of Bosque del Apache NWR.

Steven Rudnick

I am an environmental educator who is now mostly focused on climate change. My degree is in Marine Chemistry. I was the former Director of the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston and a member of the Environment, Earth and Ocean Sciences Department faculty. In New Mexico, I have lectured extensively in Adult Education programs in Santa Fe (Renesan) and Albuquerque (Oasis) on climate change, water issues in New Mexico and environmental history. I currently serve on the Board of Directors of the Santa Fe Children's Museum (treasurer) and as a member of the Santa Fe County Commissioners' Water Policy Advisory Committee. I am also a

birder of very moderate talents who has done his best photography at the Bosque del Apache.

Mary Ruff

Mary has lived in New Mexico for 28 years. Prior to that she lived in Chicago where she worked as an engineering supervisor. In New Mexico she has worked as a Math Lecturer and Lab Supervisor at New Mexico Tech. Mary says she has good organizational skills and would like to work with the other board members to keep the Friends a strong and active organization. To quote Mary, “Jim and I have always loved the Bosque —our daughter’s first trip was when she was 5 days old.”

Donations are for the Birds.....

As a supporter of the Friends of Bosque del Apache NWR, you have already made the decision to be part of the refuge team, and the Friends and refuge staff have worked together to ensure that every dollar you provide is used in the most cost effective way possible to support research, education and refuge development programs. The refuge is currently faced with critical environmental and funding challenges and it is imperative that the Friends organization, your organization, be here with an expanded program of support to ensure the stewardship and survival of a true national treasure. Are you willing to help us meet these challenges? Are you willing to take the next step and become a ‘Sustaining’ member of the refuge team with a monthly donation to the Friends? Your time is important and as a sustaining member you can preauthorize an annual or monthly donation through an automatic credit card charge or electronic bank account transfer. This saves staff time and overhead so even more of your donation will go directly to support the refuge. With your help, your donations will truly continue to be for the birds.



BOOK REVIEWS

LIFE OF A SOLDIER ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER,

by Jeremy Agnew. Mountain Press Publishing Company, 266 pages, \$18.

After force-marching through my share of desert-dry books on the history of the west, I was delighted to find *Life of a Soldier on the Western Frontier* by Jeremy Agnew. This paperback book from the Bosque’s wide-ranging and well-chosen gift-shop library is a quick read, literate and rich with information I’d never encountered in a single reference.

- What did soldiers wear on the front line of western expansion? Wool, whatever the season.
- Eat? Tooth-breaking hardtack, salt pork and mush.
- Do? Drill, march, drill, drink, hope to find a woman, drill, march, fight.
- Sicken with? Venereal diseases, wound infections, tainted food and water. And lice! A weekly bath was the regulation, but in cold weather or dry locations, ablutions monthly – or less often – weren’t uncommon. And “graybacks” prospered, tormenting the soldiers and spreading typhus.
- What kept the rain off? Communal – generally smelly – barracks and half-tents shared with other soldiers equipped with a half-tent.
- Who were these men who joined up for the starting pay of \$13 a month, a private’s wages?
- Why did so many desert?

Movies and television have romanticized the life of foot and horse soldiers of the 19th century. *Life of a Soldier* doesn’t aim to be revisionist and quash those heroic images. Rather, its unblinking facts are far more interesting than manufactured drama. That said, the life was rock hard, and many of those who lived it may deserve some of the media-inspired swooning.

--Mary Ellen Botter Jackson

(Editors note: Mary Ellen is a frequent visitor to the refuge and we thank her for taking the time to contribute to *Bosque Watch*.)



PHOTO OPS

Photographing the Aerial Gymnastics of Harriers

While the sandhill cranes and snow geese fill the viewfinders of photographers at Bosque del Apache NWR, graceful northern harriers dance low and slow over the fields. Darting back and forth across the refuge roads these graceful raptors taunt wildlife photographers.

The sleek “super-model” of the raptor world, the northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) occurs in large numbers at the refuge during

the fall and winter. I can easily photograph a dozen or more harriers during this time. Harriers are tricky to photograph in flight as they fly low and erratically close to vegetation – challenging the camera’s autofocus system.

Sometimes I drive the refuge roads with my camera on my lap and the long lens resting out the window. Other times I pursue a “sit and wait” approach in areas where the harriers frequent.

On morning drives between San Antonio and the refuge entrance, harriers show off as they fly alongside me. Unfortunately the speed of traffic and lack of pullouts only result in increased anxiety. Once inside the refuge the situation changes. Driving slowly along refuge loops I pull over when I see a harrier dancing and tilting in slow flight over the tall grasses. I stay in my vehicle and wait for

the harrier to swing back around. Often they fly across the road many times.

I pay close attention to my position relative to fields which harriers frequent, the sun, and the wind. My goal is to photograph harriers front lit by early morning or late afternoon sunlight. This helps narrow down my strategies.

Mornings I drive slowly on the South Loop between the entrance gate and the SE corner of the loop looking for harriers flying over the dry fields to the west. I keep a close eye for harriers perched on the ground alongside the irrigation drain. Afternoons I look for harriers while cruising slowly along the north side of the North Loop.

When I see a harrier perched I gingerly park my car on the side of the road and focus on the perched harrier. If they land in the tall grass I estimate the general area they are in and I aim my camera there. They do not seem to stay long on the ground. Fingers on the shutter release and autofocus back button, I am ready for the moment it starts to take off. I use the wind direction to help predict which way the harrier will fly once airborne.

When following a “sit and wait” approach I park at the NE corner of the North Loop and look for harriers on both sides of the road, or just east of the SW corner of the South Loop looking for harriers to the north.

A “sit and wait” approach requires patience. It always seems to payoff though. I get funny looks from birders cruising the refuge



Male northern harrier soaring in late afternoon light over the North Loop at Bosque del Apache.



A female northern harrier does a double-take on a vole.

loops wondering why I am parked staring off into an empty field. Ironically, they stop and sit and wait by me, thinking there must be something special if this guy with a big lens is waiting here.

Lenses between 300 mm – 600 mm are ideal for photographing harriers. My settings are shutter speeds of at least 1/1250 sec, f/7 – f/10. I set my exposure before hand by using spot exposure metering on a wooden post or tree bark that is light brown (approximately the color of a female or juvenile harrier). Stopping down my aperture as much as possible, while maintaining at least 1/1250 sec shutter speed, helps me minimize blur of the harriers 120 cm wingspan.

Acquiring focus on a harrier in low and slow flight is one of the toughest challenges of bird-in-

flight photography. The challenge is to hold the focus point on the harrier while pumping the autofocus button and avoiding focus acquisition on vegetation in the field of view. I prefer using back-button focusing, in AI servo mode (Canon). I use the center square focusing spot. I try my hardest to maintain the focus point on the harrier – it can be done!

After some practice you might become addicted to photographing northern harriers at Bosque del Apache. I have. Capturing a photo of the “white ghost” male northern harrier with bright yellow eyes at sunset is epic.

--Ed MacKerrow

(Editor's note: Ed MacKerrow has been photographing birds at the Bosque for fifteen years. You can see more of his work at www.mountainhorizonphotography.com. He has been nominated to fill a member-at-large position on the board of the Friends.)

★ To see these stunning photographs in color, go to our online newsletter at friendsofthebosque.org/newsletter.html or at Ed's website at www.mountainhorizonphotography.com



Banding cranes, 1959



Kent Clegg leads cranes to the refuge with his ultralight, 1995

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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CELEBRATING
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**Bosque del Apache
National Wildlife Refuge
1939-2014**



CCC camp, circa 1940



"New" Visitor Center, 1983

Photos from *Bosque del Apache: a Brief History*

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Friends of the Bosque del Apache
Membership Application

Name _____

Family Members (for Family Membership) _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

- I want to hear about volunteer opportunities at the refuge.
- I want to receive emails (<2/month) about current events and issues at the refuge.
- Please contact me about planned giving.

Please mail with your check to:
Friends of the Bosque del Apache
PO Box 340
San Antonio, NM 87832

Membership Level:

- Individual \$20
- Family \$25
- Student \$15
- Senior \$15
- Special Friend \$60 or more
- Best Friend \$100 or more
- Lifetime \$1000 or more
- Business Sponsor \$200

- I want to receive the newsletter electronically.

Shop -- Renew -- Donate ON LINE www.friendsofthebosque.org