

— 2023 YEAR-END REPORT —
NEW MEXICO

The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico

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COVER Conservation for the Gila River includes protecting the river corridor in the valley.

© FaunaCreative INSET TOP Terry Sullivan
 © Jenna Schoenfeldt; BOTTOM TNC New Mexico Trustee Kelly Huddleston © Robin Huddleston

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Making Progress in Conservation



Over my career of 31 years with The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico, I've had the incredible opportunity to explore many of the mountains, canyons and rivers of our state. I have realized over the past year an even deeper sense of wonder and awe at the natural beauty, cultural richness and ecological complexity of our Land of Enchantment. At the same time, I embrace a profound sense of gratitude for this extraordinary organization.

I am so proud to work with a group of peers and colleagues who have a powerful commitment to build on our outstanding conservation legacy while looking for ways to expand the scope and scale of our impact. This delicate balance of continuity of purpose and commitment to innovation is truly the secret sauce of our success.

We have established a tangible and lasting conservation legacy at a huge scale in New Mexico. Our conservation projects span every corner of the state — from the “Boot Heel” in the southwest to the San Juan River in the northwest, and from the grasslands of the southeast to the “Hi-Lo Country” in the northeast. As you will see in the following pages, we continue to build on our conservation legacy and launch new initiatives to expand our impact.

I am keenly aware that none of this would have been possible without the support of people like you who share our passion for the natural wonders of this incredible place that we call home. Thank you for everything that you do to help us sustain and protect our Land of Enchantment.

Yours in conservation,

Terry Sullivan
 State Director, New Mexico

Meet Trustee Kelly Huddleston



Kelly Huddleston, JD is TNC's newest trustee in New Mexico. Kelly serves as business counsel for her tribe, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua in southern Oregon. She has practiced law since 2009, working primarily in consumer protection, real estate and Indian law. Prior to law school, Kelly worked for the Trust for Public Land as a project manager. With a background in grant writing and fundraising, Kelly has served on several boards, including: the Institute for

American Arts, Neighborhood Law Center, City of Santa Fe Public Banking Task Force (appointment), First Judicial Pro Bono Group and Vallecitos Mountain Refuge. She also served in the U.S. Peace Corps in Mali, West Africa.



VISION + ACTION = HOPE

All of us sharing this moment together on Earth bear a grave responsibility. Human knowledge and power have never been greater. The effects of our dominance have never been more dangerous. And the stakes for our choices have never been higher. On our collective shoulders rests the promise or the loss of tomorrow. Yet we will not be overwhelmed or paralyzed. In this state, we are inspired. We are meeting this defining era with science and innovation, with partnerships that bridge our divides, and with people, from every corner of New Mexico, who are strong and brave enough to act.

In New Mexico, by 2030 TNC will...

In New Mexico and around the world, climate change and biodiversity loss are spiraling. These interconnected crises demand an urgent and unprecedented response. As a global conservation leader, TNC has set forth a bold vision for 2030. Our goals, and the path to reach them, represent our best hope for the planet. TNC's conservation work in New Mexico is vital to meeting our global targets. With your help, we can achieve a future that is abundant and resilient—a world where both nature and people thrive.

Fresh Water

Advance science and policy, pilot innovative water-sharing tools and unite diverse partners to improve management on more than 200 miles of our most vulnerable rivers to benefit people and nature.

Land

Use cutting-edge science and protection strategies to preserve more than 500,000 acres of large, intact habitats and wildlife corridors as New Mexico's climate shifts. We'll also expand outreach at our preserves to reach 30,000 people annually.

Forests

Increase water security for 1 million people and improve the condition of 600,000 acres of high value forests by uniting with Indigenous leaders, bolstering management resources, implementing safe, controlled burns and leading climate-adapted reforestation efforts.

Climate Change

Help New Mexico build climate resilience, embrace climate-forward legislation and pursue natural climate solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decrease wildfire impacts and protect biodiversity.

Indigenous-Led Conservation

Foster lasting trust and respectfully co-create new conservation projects with Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities that deliver mutual benefit for people, lands and waters.

 **VISIT:** nature.org/newmexico



GROWING HOPE: REVERSING THE DECLINE OF OUR FORESTS

Seed collection is the first step in the reforestation process.

High severity fires decimate the seed source, preventing normal forest succession.

Wildfires are growing larger and more severe.

NM has capacity to grow 300 thousand seedlings per year. We need to grow up to 390 million!

Drought hardened seedlings grow more water-carrying cells and are more resilient to drought and climate change.

Habitat loss is already underway. If we want our forests back, we need to act fast.

Reforestation is a job creator. Trees = Jobs

Forest dependent communities and wildlife need our forests back. We all benefit from healthy, resilient forests.

Big Wins

Partnerships & Problem Solving on the San Juan

This year, a powerful, historic partnership will deliver critical flows to the San Juan River. The Jicarilla Apache Nation (the Nation), New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), and TNC have entered a new phase in a Water Supply Agreement reached in 2022. Starting this year, the Nation allowed NMISC to release up to 20,000-acre feet of water per year (for 10 years) from the Navajo Reservoir to the San Juan River. The partners planned this year's release to deliver the most benefits to at-risk native fish like the Colorado pikeminnow and the razorback sucker. As the Colorado River Basin faces unprecedented water security threats, this first-of-its-kind agreement shows how trust, creativity and collaboration can offer real solutions—and hope.

Another Gain for Grasslands

We are running out of time to save the planet's large, connected grasslands. That's why the Southern High Plains present such an exceptional opportunity. Sprawling across New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, this region boasts 30 million acres of intact prairie grasslands, forests and riparian corridors teeming with wildlife. Last year, we purchased the Bartlett Ranch, spanning 2,224 acres of valuable habitat near Raton. And by the end of 2023, we are poised to build on that win by acquiring an adjacent ranch. Our vision is to eventually connect these properties to Sugarite Canyon State Park and, one day, to Colorado's Fishers Peak State Park. Piece by piece, with strategic conservation, TNC is helping to build a network of grasslands that will boost climate resilience, preserve biodiversity and support sustainable agriculture.

New Wetlands Along the Gila River

TNC is celebrating the protection of new habitat at our Gila River Preserve, on the southern edge of the Gila National Forest. This summer we added another 140-acre property to the preserve—one with important conservation potential. Located upstream of the Highway 180 bridge, the new tract of land contains 88 acres of irrigated fields, which TNC plans to convert to wetlands and water-saving crops, such as millet and perennial wheat. The new wetlands will provide valuable wildlife habitat for birds like the Southwestern willow flycatcher, and they will help to clean and filter water before it enters the river. TNC's long-standing commitment to the Gila—the last free-flowing river in the Southwest—is vital to many birds and other wildlife that rely on this region's increasingly fragile waters and riparian areas.

Hand in Hand with the Original Stewards

TNC is deepening its commitment to partner with and honor the knowledge and rights of Indigenous people. Our Indigenous partnerships program director in New Mexico, John Waconda, is leading a suite of exciting initiatives, from developing a cultural fire plan with the Taos Pueblo to designing a virtual fencing project with the Jemez Pueblo to partnering with the Jemez and Santa Clara Pueblos to restore a fire-scarred area in the Jemez Mountains. We are also working with the Santa Clara Pueblo to implement a Santa Clara Creek watershed restoration plan and supporting traditional fire use with the Indigenous Peoples Burning Network through the Rio Grande Water Fund. Most recently, we collaborated with the InterTribal Buffalo Council to

CLOCKWISE The Jicarilla Apache Nation, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and TNC have an agreement to lease up to 20,000 acre-feet of water per year. © Roberto E. Rosales; Virtual fencing pilots for cattle in New Mexico and Kansas. © Roberto E. Rosales; TNC staff visit and discuss the future of our Mimbres River Preserve near Silver City. © Melissa Molenda/TNC; The San Juan River supports a variety of fish, including rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout. © Jason Houston



SAVE THE DATE MAY 18, 2024

Join us for a special celebration to re-open our Santa Fe Canyon Preserve! We're proud and excited to show off the many improvements we've made to make this preserve more accessible to everyone. Come see the new stone wall, walk down wider paths and experience the preserve through a new audio tour and interpretive trail signs (coming soon!). Stay tuned and get the latest updates on this and more by subscribing to our monthly e-newsletter, Nature News, at nature.org/naturenews.

restore buffalo to the Nambe Pueblo, at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. We build each one of these projects on trust and a shared vision, underscoring TNC's desire to be an authentic, ethical and effective conservation partner.

Our Last Stand: Creating Resilient Forests

Across the Southwest, our forests are failing. A history of timber production, fire suppression and climate change have left our forests—from the southern Rocky Mountains to the ponderosa pine in the western part of the state, to the oak and juniper savannahs along our Mexico border—overcrowded with aging trees, vulnerable to invasive pests and disease, and increasingly dry and dangerous. Each summer, these unhealthy forests contribute to catastrophic wildfires burning with greater frequency and higher intensity. To tackle the gravity and urgency of the situation, TNC is catalyzing a new management vision, establishing goals for forest health and increasing the pace of restoration. Healthy forests provide clean water and air, as well as essential wood products and invaluable recreation and health benefits.

LEFT TO RIGHT A bobcat peeks around the new stone wall at our Santa Fe Canyon Preserve. © Bob Findling/TNC; Partners in the Rio Grande Water Fund work together on prescribed fire, forest management and long-term reforestation solutions. © Maxwell Cook/TNC; Buffalo, aka American bison, were transferred from TNC preserves to Indigenous communities in New Mexico this year. © Fauna Creative

WHERE WE WORK



1 San Juan River

Our historic partnership with the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission will release 20,000-acre feet of water per year for the next 10 years.



2 Santa Fe Canyon Preserve

Years of restoration and conservation work have turned what was once the center of the city's hydroelectric industry into an oasis with wildflowers, willows and more than 200 bird species.



3 Gila Riparian Preserve

Free-flowing rivers in the southwestern US and their forested corridors provide habitat for fish, birds and endangered wildlife, such as the Chihuahua chub and Chiricahua leopard frog.



4 Diamond A Ranch (formerly Gray Ranch)

One of the most significant natural sites in the nation, the landscape hosts more than 700 species of plants, 75 mammals, 50 reptiles and amphibians and 170+ types of breeding birds.



5 Rio Grande Water Fund

More tree nurseries, seed storage and growing capacity will increase resilience in the reforestation system, creating jobs and economic opportunity.



6 Bartlett Mesa

The protection of grasslands here will help TNC reach its ambitious goal to protect 30% of the Earth's land, freshwater and oceans by 2030.



7 Milnesand Prairie Preserve

Long recognized as the center of the state's prairie chicken population, the 28,000-acre Milnesand Prairie Preserve has more than 50 leks, or display grounds—an extraordinary density of birds.



VISIT: nature.org/newmexico



Give to these places and more. Donate today!

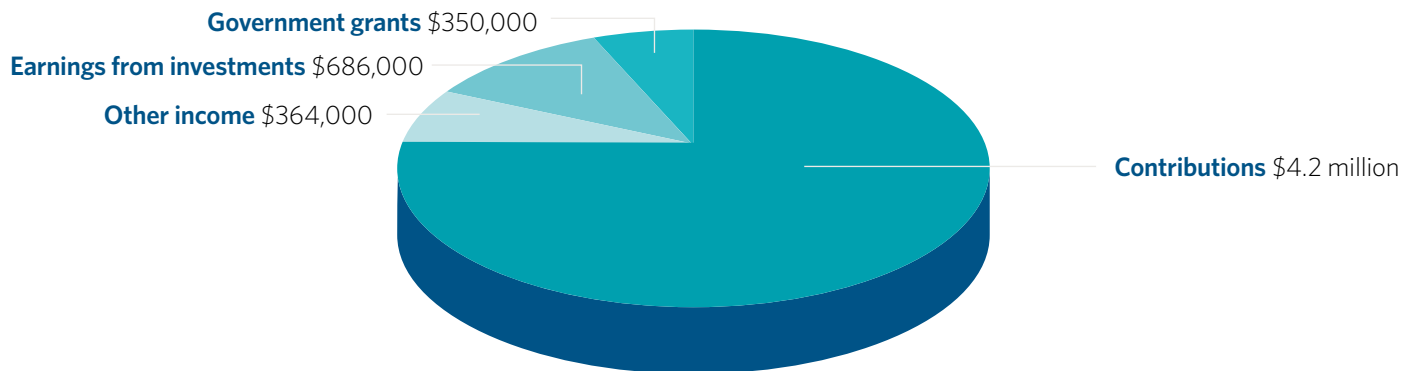


Unusual rock formations in the Bisti Wilderness Area, New Mexico © Craig Bill/TNC Photo Contest 2019

FINANCIAL REPORT

Conservation in New Mexico starts and ends with you. Thank you for your contribution to helping nature thrive. Together, we find a way to overcome barriers to progress so we can achieve our biggest, most ambitious goals yet.

SOURCES OF REVENUE \$5.6 million



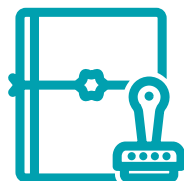
Expenses \$4.5 million Staff 15

IN NEW MEXICO, WE HAVE:



7,314

current donors/supporters



603

Legacy Club* members



1,904

new donors/supporters in 2023

*Those who have included TNC in their estate plans or established a life income gift to TNC.