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YEAR IN REVIEW 2014

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COVER Mesa de Guadalupe in the Jemez Mountains © *J.N. Stuart/Flickr Creative Commons*; INSET LEFT TO RIGHT Sandhill cranes at sunrise, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge © *Howard Ignatius/Flickr Creative Commons*; Gila River © *Avelino Maestas/Flickr Creative Commons*; LEAF students celebrate © *Kevin Horan*; **THIS PAGE** Terry Sullivan © *Patrick McCarthy/TNC*

Dear friend of The Nature Conservancy,



Protect. Transform. Inspire. For all of you who know the Conservancy and our work, you understand how difficult it is to describe our vision and goals in just three words. But these three terms take us a long way toward conveying the essence of our holistic approach to conservation. The Conservancy is well aware that we live in an era of extraordinary threats to our natural world. Yet we believe that we have the power, and the responsibility, to respond. We envision a world where nature and people flourish together. As you will see in the following pages, we are working in New Mexico and around the world to champion the projects that will accomplish that result.

We protect and restore important landscapes and waterways at a scale that has impact. For more than 40 years, the Conservancy has worked across New Mexico to protect more than 1.4 million acres of land in our state. Our ongoing work on the Gila and San Juan rivers, as well as our contributions to the greater Colorado River Basin, are shining examples of the effectiveness of this approach.

We transform the way we use our natural resources through innovative science and partnerships. To achieve true sustainability,

we must augment our protection work with strategies that change the way humans view and use our environment. Our work on the Rio Grande Water Fund is a manifestation of this approach. Using innovative science tools and products as our foundation, we have created an alliance of dozens of organizations, businesses and agencies. This alliance advocates for the restoration and management of our forested headwaters to ensure improved wildlife habitats and secure water supplies for people and their communities.

We inspire new leaders and ambassadors for conservation. Our high school internship program and local volunteer activities have been highly successful at providing the building blocks for the next generation of conservation leaders to learn and grow.

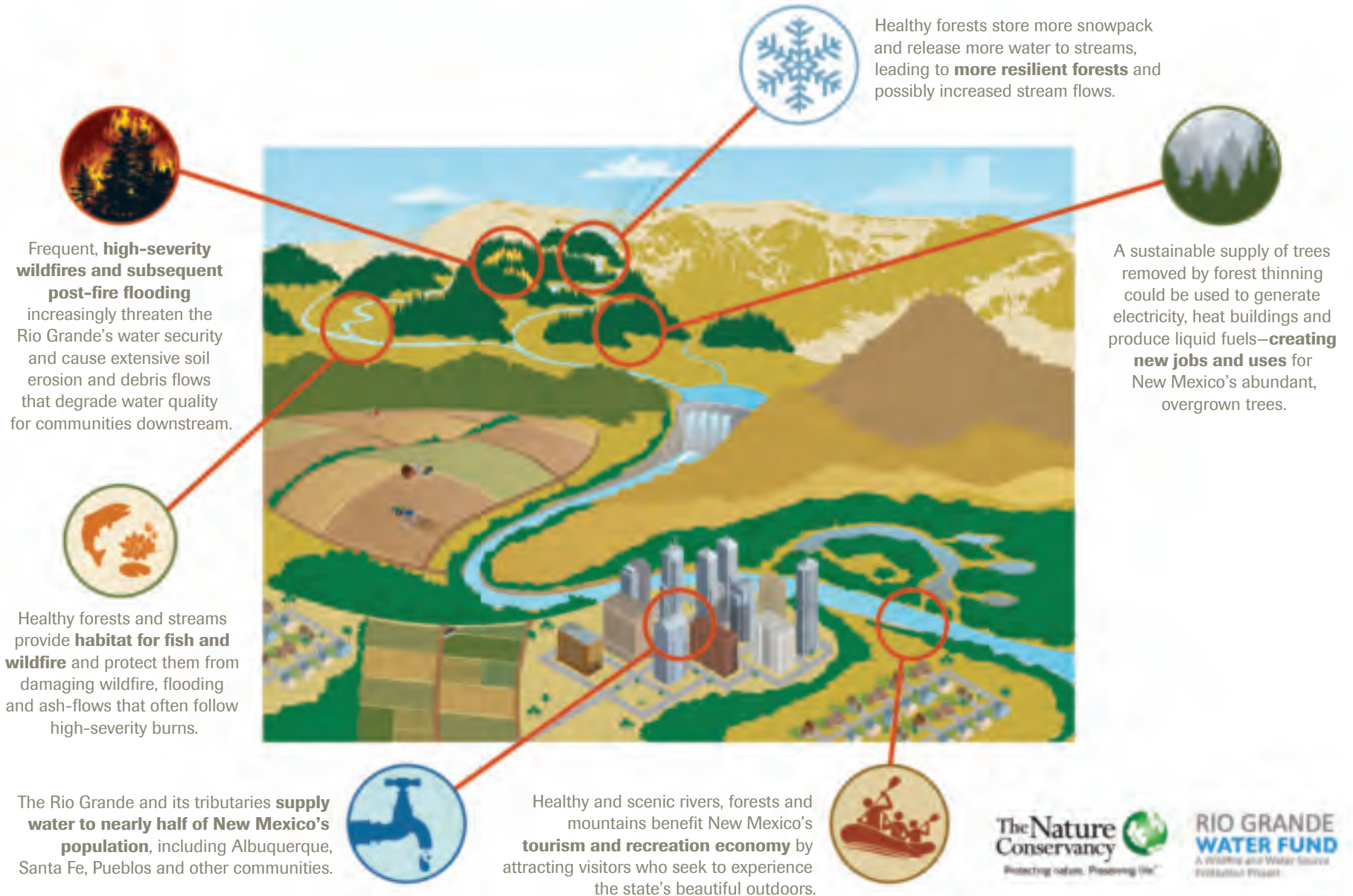
Thanks again to you—our members and supporters—for all of the advice, resources and help you continue to provide. Our mission and goals are ambitious, and we could not accomplish any of it without your support!

Best regards,

Terry Sullivan
New Mexico State Director

Healthy Forests, Healthy Water

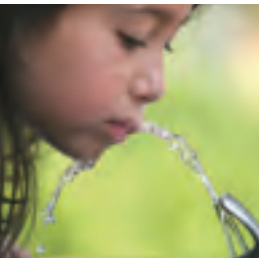
RESTORING ESSENTIAL FORESTED LANDS UPSTREAM WILL ENSURE A CONTINUOUS SUPPLY OF CLEAN WATER DOWNSTREAM



Rio Grande Water Fund

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Under low-hanging clouds, a half-dozen workers spread across 100 acres of the Cibola National Forest, using chainsaws to thin overcrowded trees. It was part of the Rio Grande Water Fund's first thinning project and the official launch of an ambitious effort designed to secure water for nearly 1 million people from Albuquerque to Taos.



THE Rio Grande Water Fund—which has already brought together more than 40 partner organizations—will leverage public funds and private donations to support a 20-year plan to restore 600,000 acres of overgrown forests around the Rio Grande River and its tributaries.

Forested mountains store and filter our water. Frequent, severe wildfires and subsequent post-fire flooding increasingly threaten water supplies.

“We know healthier forests are safer, but we cannot make a difference by only thinning our current average of 3,000 acres a year,” says Laura McCarthy, director of conservation programs for The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico. “Our goal is to increase that to 30,000 acres a year.”

It will take more than just one organization to accomplish this goal. Recognizing this need for collaboration, water users, agencies, foundations and businesses are coming together to be part of the solution.

“The project highlights the importance of businesses investing in our state’s natural capital to create a brighter future,” says Diane Harrison Ogawa, director of community relations for PNM.

Arturo Archuleta sees the Water Fund as a catalyst for change. He works for the New Mexico Land Grant Council, which advocates for land use for Spanish-Mexican communities. “Our communities rely on a healthy forest to sustain cultural, religious and medicinal traditions,” says Archuleta.

Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority is a big player in the Water Fund. Katherine Yuhas, the Authority’s water conservation officer, focuses on education outreach with field trips for children. “You cannot love and care about the river unless you know about it,” says Yuhas.

The Rio Grande Water Fund will also invigorate the timber industry and create new jobs. “This project provides a triple-win bottom line: It protects nature, meet people’s needs and provide good returns on investment for businesses and governments,” adds McCarthy.



To watch a video about the Rio Grande Water Fund, visit nature.org/riogrande.



Detective Dog Sniffs for Salamanders

For the third consecutive summer, a Conservation Canine named Sampson helped track the endangered Jemez Mountains salamander, a species unique to New Mexico's Jemez Mountains. Frequent and severe fires threaten not only our water and livelihoods, but also important wildlife habitat. Field biologists are using information collected by Sampson—a rescue dog trained to sniff wildlife and their scat—to improve their forest surveys.

“We know these dogs are quick, efficient and can work at night,” said Anne Bradley, forest conservation program manager for The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico. Data collected by field biologists working with the detective dog will be used to develop land management plans to protect the rare amphibian's home.

Sampson also accepted a special assignment this summer. Working alongside many partners, the super sniffer spent hours tracking Sacramento Mountain salamanders, a species found only in the mountains near Ruidoso. Why? A road-realignment project would put the little creatures in harm's way. Sampson's work allowed scientists to relocate these salamanders to more suitable habitat before the start of construction.

OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE The Rio Grande Water Fund will ensure clean drinking water for future generations. © *istockphoto*; Trees removed by restoration treatments provide raw material for wood flooring and other products. © *David Old*; A fire worker oversees a burn. © *Mary Huffman/TNC*; Scaling up restoration treatments in New Mexico will require substantial infrastructure for wood removal and processing. © *Layne Kennedy*; **THIS PAGE** CLOCKWISE Headwater forests in the Valles Caldera feed the Jemez River, a tributary of the Rio Grande. © *Alan W. Eckert Photography*; Sampson, the super sniffer © *Julianne Ubigau/Conservation Canines*; Sampson receives instruction from his handler © *Mark L. Watson/NM Dept. of Game and Fish*; Jemez Mountain salamander © *Mark L. Watson/NM Dept. of Game and Fish*



Colorado River

A RIVER RECONNECTED

The mighty Colorado River is one of our nation's hardest working rivers. It supports plants, animals and more than 36 million people across seven Western U.S. states. Many of us depend on this iconic river every day to provide drinking water, recreation, energy and irrigation for many crops we eat. In New Mexico, we are partnering with a team of Conservancy scientists from across the Colorado River basin to design and undertake conservation actions that will benefit the river and its key tributaries, including the San Juan River and the Gila River.



UNFORTUNATELY, increasing demands, decreasing supply and ongoing drought have strained the Colorado River. Instead of reaching the Gulf of California, as it did for millions of years, the river fades into the dry and dusty earth of its delta, which was once a lush region of 3,000 square miles teeming with plant, bird and marine life.

See more images from the pulse flow at nature.org/coriver.

That all changed in May, when the river once again briefly connected to the Gulf of California. The event was the result of a water release—known as a “pulse flow”—designed to mimic spring runoff. The action was part of a bi-national agreement that The Nature Conservancy and several other organizations helped craft between the United States and Mexico to restore water to the Colorado River Delta. The agreement also outlines how the two countries will share and store water in times of drought and surplus.

“This is about a sustainable future,” says Taylor Hawes, the Conservancy’s Colorado River program director. “By beginning to restore

the delta, we are demonstrating that there is great promise for healthy rivers throughout the Colorado River basin and around the world.”

That promise is proving true. People in the communities along the Delta rejoiced when water filled the once-parched riverbed. Children splashed and played, while others jumped in their kayaks. Frogs were seen leaping toward the water’s edge, and cottonwood seeds were carried downstream to take root.

The water is doing more than bringing back life to the delta—it’s also bringing back hope for the Colorado River.

It is the first time in 16 years that the Colorado River, which flows 1,450 miles from its headwaters in the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of California, has reached its final, natural destination.

THIS PAGE Release of water at Morelos Dam © Peter Warren/TNC; OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE The leading edge of the Colorado River flowing from the United States into Mexico as a result of the pulse flow. © Nick Hall; Local Mexicans from the town of San Luis take time to admire the Colorado River as it flows past their town for the first time in decades. © Taylor Hawes; Conservancy hydrologist Eloise Kendy admires cottonwood seeds that will now have a chance to germinate, thanks to the pulse flow. © Nick Hall; The mighty Colorado River makes its way to the Gulf of California once again. © Sonoran Institute



Gila River

WORKING TO MAINTAIN HEALTHY FLOWS

Picture a place that holds the history of the ages: an oasis in the desert that provides nourishment and shelter for numerous plants and animals, a river unburdened by dams that flows in time with nature's cycles. This picture is reality—this is the Cliff-Gila River Valley.



THIS one-of-a-kind place faces an uncertain future. Scientists from The Nature Conservancy contributed to a recent study that indicates climate change and proposed diversion would place significant stress on the river. Even more troubling, the impacts would trickle down to the

birds, fish and other important species that rely on this river to survive.

The study indicates that variability in the river's natural flows creates and maintains diverse streamside forest and floodplain wetland habitats. These are important areas that provide homes for several federally listed species, including the Southwestern willow flycatcher and the northern Mexican and narrow-headed gartersnakes. In addition, the Gila supports one of the few relatively intact communities of native fish species, including spikedace and loach minnow, remaining in the lower Colorado River basin.

The Gila's natural communities rely most on seasonal small- and medium-sized floods. These flows inundate the floodplain, causing water to travel over the ground surface and into secondary channels. Altering the size

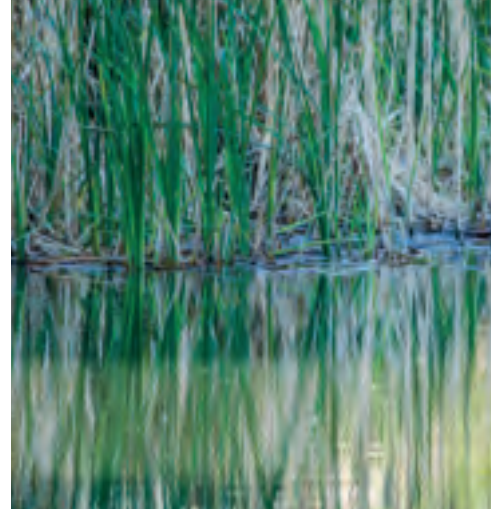
and frequency of these floods would have lasting effects.

The fish species, in particular, would feel the brunt of this change. They would no longer be able to easily move upstream, which would impair population connectivity and reduce genetic diversity in upstream populations. Spikedace, loach minnow and desert sucker would all experience diminished reproductive success due to lower spring flows, and suitable spawning habitat for native fish would be reduced. Food sources would also become scarcer for these fish as aquatic insect populations would decline due to higher water temperatures and degraded habitat.

John Muir once said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." Here, on the Gila River, our science indicates that this may well be true.

John Muir once said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

Download the executive summary of the Gila River flows report at nature.org/gilareport.



Connecting with Nature

REAPING THE BENEFITS OF BEING OUTSIDE

Nature fills our lives with discovery, meaning, amusement and lessons. It also makes us healthier and can have a calming effect on our busy lives. This year, the New Mexico chapter of The Nature Conservancy made a conscious choice to provide innovative ways for more people to connect with nature, starting with a unique internship program.



FOR the first time, teenagers spent a month in New Mexico this summer as part of the Conservancy's LEAF (Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future) program. This program exposes urban youth to green jobs, with the hope of building future environmental leaders.

Armed with work gloves, shovels and pliers, our six interns—all from Tacoma, Washington—cut their conservation teeth by repairing fences around Sabo Preserve. The preserve is home to one of the only known populations of Knowlton's cactus in the world.

"Exciting young people about nature is one of my favorite things to do," says Robert Martin, ecologist and LEAF coordinator for the Conservancy in New Mexico. "This experience opened their eyes to the many opportunities out there in conservation."

The high school students also spent several days at Bandelier National Monument, where they captured, banded and released birds to help park officials understand more about bird populations

and migration patterns. At the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve, the group stayed busy with frog surveys, trail maintenance, forest thinning and guided hikes.

The preserve was also the setting of a volunteer work day for employees from PNM. Volunteers rolled up their sleeves and helped with trail maintenance and tree cutting.

"Many of our PNM volunteers have experience handling chainsaws and conducting hazardous tree pruning work," says Bob Findling, director of land protection and stewardship for the Conservancy in New Mexico. "This is a chance for them to experience this beautiful wetland near downtown Santa Fe, and help the Conservancy at the same time."

Six teenagers from Tacoma, Washington, spent a month in New Mexico this summer as part of the Conservancy's LEAF program.

THIS PAGE Bandelier National Monument © Graeme Churchard/Flickr Creative Commons; OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE Santa Fe Canyon Preserve © Alan W. Eckert Photography; LEAF interns assist with trail maintenance and forest thinning. © Colin Weatherby; PNM volunteers remove debris from the Santa Fe Canyon Preserve. © TNC; LEAF mentor Robert Martin provides an up-close and personal look at nature for visiting interns. © Colin Weatherby



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Nature Conservancy's accomplishments are made possible by the many individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations that made gifts to our vital conservation programs during fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013–June 30, 2014). Every gift plays a crucial role in our work—for people and nature. We thank you for your commitment to our mission. The list below includes gifts of \$500 and above.

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**Please contact Jacquelyn Hall,
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Paying It Forward

DONOR PROFILE: BILL GORNALL

It's hard to find just one way to describe Bill Gornall: birding enthusiast, world traveler, career Air Force officer, backcountry hiker and outdoor lover. As someone who has visited all 50 states and five of the seven continents, Bill has developed a deep appreciation for nature and all it provides.

“Through my travels, I've seen what can happen when people don't pay attention,” says Gornall, a resident of Placitas, New Mexico. “I like how The Nature Conservancy strives to partner with others to find a middle ground and achieve results.”

A member of the Conservancy since 2000, Gornall is also part of our Legacy Club—a group of Conservancy supporters who have made lasting commitments to conservation through life income gifts or by naming the Conservancy as a beneficiary in their estate plans. As he explains, “This was my way to give ‘quietly’ to conservation. There are lots of options when it comes to donating, and this one was the right fit for me.”

Some of Gornall's most memorable travel experiences have happened in far-away places like the Galapagos Islands—“you have to walk around the animals because they don't move off the trail for you!”—Africa and, most recently, Panama. Yet, he feels good knowing that his bequest will be used for projects in his own backyard. “New Mexico is a state at the end of the pipeline most of the time,” he explains, “so I specifically wanted my donation to support projects here at home.”

Interested in leaving your own legacy for nature? Contact Jacquelyn Hall, director of philanthropy, at 505-946-2021 or jacquelyn_hall@tnc.org, or visit nature.org/legacy.



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THIS PAGE Terry Sullivan, New Mexico state director; Jerry Jones, interim president and CEO of the Santa Fe Community Foundation; and Laura McCarthy, director of conservation programs in NM. © InSight Photo

Community Award Makes Waves



This fall, the Santa Fe Community Foundation honored The Nature Conservancy with a Piñon Award for our work on the Rio Grande Water Fund. Especially rewarding was the category—we received The Visionary Award, which honors an organization that can anticipate the unmet needs of future generations and that has the stamina to achieve success.

During our 35-year history in New Mexico, the Conservancy has helped protect 1.4 million acres. As we look ahead, we realize that the scope and scale of our work must increase to meet the needs of both people and nature. The Rio Grande Water Fund invests in the restoration of forested lands upstream in order to secure clean water for communities downstream (see page 4). Our goal? Generate sustainable funding to proactively increase the pace and scale of forest restoration 10-fold over the next 20 years.

The Santa Fe Community Foundation received 22 nominations for four categories. Terry Sullivan, state director for the Conservancy in New Mexico, attended the awards ceremony on October 7. “It is a privilege to be recognized by the Community Foundation,” he says. “The Water Fund is a project that can truly make a difference for the future of New Mexico, and we are proud to know others feel the same way.”