



Great Old Broads For Wilderness

Get Into The Wild

Aldo's Silver City Broadband Newsletter Winter 2021 Vol 4 Issue 1

- **OUR MISSION:** GREAT OLD BROADS FOR WILDERNESS IS A NATIONAL GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION, LED BY WOMEN, THAT ENGAGES AND INSPIRES ACTIVISM TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT WILDERNESS AND WILD LANDS. Conceived by older women who love wilderness, Broads gives voice to the millions of Americans who want to protect their public lands as Wilderness for this and future generations. We bring knowledge, commitment, and humor to the movement to protect our last wild places on earth.
 - **OUR VISION:** Wild public lands are treasured for their intrinsic values and protected for current and future generations.
 - **VALUES STATEMENT:** Wilderness and public lands are for everyone; they are the heritage of all and a gift to future generations. Wild places, once destroyed, may be gone forever.
 - **FOCUS POINTS:**
 - Keep wild lands "wild" and the Wilderness Act intact*
 - Keep public lands in public hands*
 - Make public lands part of the solution to climate change*
-



Here's to 2021! There are already some good things to celebrate this year, and our recent snow-filled landscape adds another. 2020 was a most challenging year indeed (not to mention the past four years), yet some of us were perhaps fortunate enough to spend even more time out and about in our nearby public lands. We noticed more folks than usual exploring their National Forests and Parks. Hopefully this will create even more appreciation and support for preservation of our public lands and wilderness as we move forward. We can help.

What's up with Aldo's Silver City Great Old Broads for Wilderness Broadband?

- Our **Grazing Team** is out and about monitoring even through these winter months ([see more below](#)).

- Our **monthly meetings** (second Monday of the month at 1:30 pm) moved to Zoom due to Covid-19. We look forward to the time when most of our meetings can be in-person over coffee or tea and we'll keep you posted. (Thank you Sally Sharp, GOB Grassroots Regional Coordinator, for helping with our Zoom meetings and for all of your support.)
- We're looking forward in hopes of resuming our annual gatherings and seeing many of you later this year ([see more below](#)).

2020 Updates (or What We Did While We Were Social Distancing at Home)

Recent Victories!

Our Broadband co-leaders and steering committee, along with others, submitted substantive comments regarding the flawed draft EIS Gila River Diversion Project. In June the Interstate Stream Commission took action to end (!) the environmental analysis process for the diversion, effectively ending this 15 – year battle to divert our treasured river. Thanks to our members who commented on this pressing issue and the Holloman F-16 training proposal and provided us with input.

Joanie Connors, Dianne Maughan and members of the steering committee wrote substantive comments to the Air Force regarding their draft Environmental Impact Statement targeting potential F-16 training over the Gila or Aldo Leopold Wilderness and other public lands. *Good news* for New Mexico wilderness and public lands, residents, and visitors as of late Jan. 2021: The expansion of the existing Talon military operations area near Holloman Air Force Base was chosen as the Preferred Alternative. Peaceful Gila Skies has a link for reporting overflights - low-flying military aircraft flyovers - at <http://peacefulgilaskies.com/report/>. For more information, visit Peaceful Gila Skies at PeacefulGilaSkies.com

During this out-of-the-ordinary year, we were also busy advocating for these issues:

Gila Wild and Scenic River Designation – Several of our Broadband leaders attended a public meeting and reception with Senator Heinrich, staffers for Senator Udall, NM Governor Lujan Grisham, NM Commissioner of Public Lands Garcia Richard, and others. We continue to follow and support this proposed legislation.

Gila Forest Plan Revision: Our steering committee provided substantive comments on the draft Gila National Forest Plan revision. We focused on conservation of riparian areas within the forest, given climate change and the importance of riparian habitat to biodiversity and resilience within the arid Southwest, and proposed pesticide use. (As of Jan. 2021, the final plan, EIS, and draft Record of Decision is expected to be released during Aug. 2021. We plan on reviewing these documents when released.)

Wildlife Corridors: Great Old Broads is interested in promoting wildlife corridors and the effort to connect wildlife land and water areas, particularly here in the border lands and Sky Islands. In addition to some progress at the federal level, The New Mexico Wildlife Corridors Act was signed into law during 2019 and directs several departments to develop a plan for NMDOT roads statewide. Our wildlife corridors group met to plan individual and Aldo's Broadband comments in preparation for a public input meeting in March, but the meeting was cancelled that same day due to Covid-19. (Want to help us track this relevant issue, even more important given accelerated climate change? If so, see contact info below on page 5.)

New Mexico Environmental Rights Constitutional Amendment SJR3 (aka NM Green Amendment): In the fall of 2020 we joined the Rio Grande Broads, who are very active with this timely issue, and signed onto the New Mexico Green Amendment. Go to <https://nmgreenamendment.org/> for more information. Follow the status in the current NM legislation via <https://www.nmlegis.gov/>

Wildlife Service methods: Co-leader Joanie Connors wrote a letter to the Grant County Commissioners advocating for non-lethal methods to manage coyotes and other animals. (Following public input and

commissioner discussion, Grant County Commissioners voted unanimously to prioritize non-lethal Wildlife Service methods, banning M-44s and the cyanide compound 1080.) Thank you, Joanie, for all of your advocacy!

Gila Trails and Open Space Coalition: Co-leader Diane Maughan established a relationship with Gila Trails and Open Space Coalition and attended several meetings where they discussed the trails portion of the Gila National Forest Plan.

Thanks to all of you who also advocated for these and other public lands and wilderness issues – you make a difference!

In addition to advocacy we became a sponsor of the Gila River Festival and we participated in the Give Grandly fundraiser. Given the necessary lull in our social gatherings, we used some of that time to reach out to our GOB members with a questionnaire that will help guide us in planning our activities. During 2020, co-leader Diane Maughan made a big move to Maine and “slightly” different scenery and ecosystem. Some of you may have joined us in wishing her well via Zoom. Thank you, Diane, for all of your good work with our projects and gatherings. And, a thank you to Mary Lynne Newell for documenting our projects and events on the GOB website. During 2020 our co-leaders began joining in with other Southwest Broadband leaders via Zoom to share information or collaborate on regional issues such as the Border Wall and the NM Green Amendment.

Aldo’s Silver City Broadband Continuing Projects:



Monitoring along a branch of the Gila River – Autumn 2020

1. Grazing Monitoring Collaboration:

Our Broadband’s intrepid grazing monitoring team has been busy during 2020. This was one activity we could accomplish this year, via social distancing and adorned with face masks while hiking along scenic river canyons and bosques. We focus on monitoring Gila National Forest livestock grazing exclosures, areas that have been fenced to exclude cattle in order to protect fragile stream and riparian habitat. These areas provide key habitat for fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, a number of which are threatened or endangered. Such riparian areas are even more critical for biodiversity and resilience during these times of intense climate change. During 2020 our grazing monitoring team initiated collaboration with the Gila National Forest to monitor some of these areas, using maps of priority streams and a computer-based monitoring program provided by the Forest Service. (A shout out to Carol Morrison for donating an iPad for this purpose!)

The monitoring reports that result from field visits are uploaded into the Forest Service database to assist them in their management efforts. Riparian areas monitored so far include several different stretches along the San Francisco River including the hot springs area, Gila Bird area along the Gila River, a section of the East Fork of the Gila River, and Tularosa River near Walk in the Past petroglyphs. Cattle were observed in two of these areas. The Forest Service contacted the livestock owners and the cattle were removed. Follow-up monitoring will occur in these areas. We also look forward to warmer weather and many river crossings during 2021, perhaps even further afield! (Thanks to Denise Smith and Marty Eberhardt for leading our grazing monitoring and collaboration!)



Monitoring along a dry section of the San Francisco River – Dec. 2020

2. Annual Brunch 2020:

We were fortunate to celebrate over potluck brunch at Carol Morrison's home in downtown Silver City in January 2020 – our last gathering before March hit! It was a wonderful time full of good company, food and warming teas coupled with informative GOB updates and sharing of information. (Not to mention a sampling of mimosas by some of us, to help usher in election year 2020.) We miss seeing you all in person! We had to skip our 5th annual mid-winter brunch this year but are looking forward to gathering this coming winter.



2020 Brunch

Looking Forward – Some of Our Broadband Anticipated Plans for 2021:

As progress in made countering the pandemic and conditions are safe to do so, we are hopeful that we can once again enjoy our annual gatherings. We'll monitor the situation to see if we are able to gather for our summer picnic potluck and hike in July. We are tentatively planning our autumn retreat and looking at targeting two days sometime between Sept. 21 – 28. As those of you know who have joined us in the past, we typically gather near the Gila River and Wilderness not far from the Gila Cliff Dwellings. In this wonderful surrounding we enjoy camping, hiking, sharing stories or special presentations, postcard writing on environmental issues, and often engage in a service project. (Not to mention happy hour and just relaxing by the fire, river, or hot springs!) We'll be adaptive given any changing situation, and if needed may mix things up a bit and offer our picnic, brunch or retreat at different times of the year or with a slightly different twist.

We will continue advocacy for issues ranging from wildlife corridors and other issues noted above, to reviewing the Gila National Forest Revision Final Plan.

Interested in wildlife / habitat connectivity, NM Green Amendment, oil and gas extraction issues on public lands, planning for our gatherings / events, or public lands advocacy in general? If so, contact one of our co-leaders - Joanie Connors (jvcphd@gmail.com phone 575-519-0543) or Marcia Stout (mccstout@gmail.com phone: 575-534-9261). *We would love to hear your ideas or have your help in tracking these issues, and advocacy!*

Broads To-Do's:

- Like our **Facebook page** <https://www.facebook.com/aldosbroadbandGOB/>!
- Join the Broads! www.greatoldbroads.org
- Check out what national Great Old Broads for Wilderness is doing (and find membership applications) at www.greatoldbroads.org. There you will learn about priorities (Keeping public lands in public hands and preserving National public lands; Making public lands part of the solution to climate change; Border wall environmental impacts – the wall that severs the wild, and others), Broadwalks and Broadworks (large-scale service projects in public lands areas across the country) which are open to members and non-members alike.
- Join us when we come together in support of a project or let us know if there is something you think we might look into.

