

## The “Few Bad Apples” Keep Breaking the Rules

A recent off-road vehicle event in the Gila National Forest drew the attention of conservation groups from New Mexico, leading the Center for Biological Diversity to monitor the event. While monitoring the event in the Gila, fresh tracks were discovered going past a clearly closed area. The off-road vehicle enthusiasts who are breaking the rules do a wonderful job of proving our point – the rules are being broken, fragile areas are being damaged, and nothing is being done about it. Why then is the Forest Service considering rewarding those who are breaking the rules by driving off-road and creating illegal trails and roads? The Forest Service in New Mexico may authorize miles of user-created routes in an attempt to appease the off-roaders. This will do nothing more than encourage the renegades to continue violating the rules, especially after many of their trails and areas are closed to motorized travel following implementation of the Travel Management Rule. Although off-road vehicle advocates keep saying it is just a “few bad apples” who are breaking the rules, recent reports ([www.wildlandscpr.org/biblio-notes/just-few-bad-apples-research-shows-many-off-readers-break-law](http://www.wildlandscpr.org/biblio-notes/just-few-bad-apples-research-shows-many-off-readers-break-law)) and surveys ([www.commondreams.org/news2007/1211-04.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/news2007/1211-04.htm)) are proving it is more than just a few who are rotten.

Travel management continues to be a controversial topic in New Mexico, but the conservation community is making progress. The New Mexico Department of Tourism website has recently undergone a makeover and now focuses less on off-road vehicles than it has in the past. Conservation groups in New Mexico, including the Center for Biological Diversity, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, WildEarth Guardians, Sierra Club, Amigos Bravos, Great Old Broads, and [glorietamesa.org](http://glorietamesa.org), have partnered to share information with each other and the public and to work together to protect wild places and quiet recreation opportunities. We expect to see proposed plans from the Santa Fe, the Cibola and the Lincoln in the next few months. Please continue to engage

the Forest Service, go to public meetings, and fight for clean air, clean water, and fragile wildlife habitat.

### Cibola National Forest, Mt. Taylor Ranger District

In April, the Forest held workshops in Grants and Gallup to gather public input on where motorized recreation needed to be reined in. New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and other conservation groups worked hard to get members to these meetings and speak out to protect our wild places.

Expect to see a proposed action from the Cibola in May, with additional public meetings to follow. Contact Nancy Brunswick (505/281-3304, [nbrunswick@fs.fed.us](mailto:nbrunswick@fs.fed.us)) for more information from the Forest Service.

### Lincoln National Forest

The proposed action from the Lincoln is expected in May, with public meetings to follow. The draft proposed action from the Lincoln indicated new motorized routes would be created and some routes see increased motorized use. Areas around Bluff Springs are especially sensitive to motorized recreation because of the large number of springs and streams in the area. Please contact Connie Zipperer (505/434-7297, [czipperer@fs.fed.us](mailto:czipperer@fs.fed.us)) for more information from the Forest Service.

### Santa Fe National Forest

The proposed action for the Santa Fe will be



Off-road vehicle damage is evident at the Sandia Rock Riparian Restoration Area in the Cibola National Forest. The sign in the photo states: “The area behind this sign has been closed to motorized use.” (Photo by Craig Chapman, NMWA)

released sometime in late April or early May. We expect to see highly attended public meetings that are sure to attract a large number of off-road vehicle supporters. The Santa Fe newspapers have been closely watching travel management and it is key that those who care about quiet recreation and the environment attend the upcoming meetings and speak out against unrestrained motorized use of our forests. Contact Julie Bain (505/757-6121, [sftravelmgt@fs.fed.us](mailto:sftravelmgt@fs.fed.us)) for more information from the Forest Service.

Visit the Center for Biological Diversity’s newly updated website ([www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/travel-management\\_planning/index.html](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/travel-management_planning/index.html)) for updates and more information on the Travel Management Rule, or contact Cyndi Tuell (520/623-5262 ext. 308, [ctuell@biologicaldiversity.com](mailto:ctuell@biologicaldiversity.com)).

—Cyndi Tuell

## New Exhibition Highlights NM’s Natural Beauty

The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum is pleased to present “Georgia O’Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities” from May 23 to September 7, 2008. This exhibition brings together for the first time 97 works by two of America’s best-known artists. The two first met in Taos in 1929 and a lifelong friendship ensued. They shared a deep, profound appreciation of the natural world and traveled together with other friends to explore the Southwest. During their lifetimes O’Keeffe and Adams became two of America’s most celebrated icons. Adams was a lifelong environmentalist as well, and served on the national board of the Sierra Club for many years.

The museum is offering Sierra Club Members free



admission by showing their membership card the weekend of June 13-15. Jackie M., Director of Education, will present a talk on the exhibition on May 20 at the Northern Group’s general meeting (see Northern Group pages). The museum’s hours are 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (closed Wednesday until June 1). Admission is \$8.00, seniors \$7.00, full-time New Mexico residents \$4.00, studentss 18 and over \$4.00, youth free.

Friday night admission is free from 5:00-8:00 p.m. For more information, call 505/946-1000.

“Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico” by Ansel Adams, 1941.

## Book Offers Fresh Look at Grazing

There have been some very fine and important books written from a scientific perspective about the ecological impacts from livestock grazing on public lands and the failure of federal agencies to live up to their stewardship responsibilities. Mike Hudak’s *Western Turf Wars* (Biome Books, [www.biomebooks.com](http://www.biomebooks.com)) takes a refreshingly different approach.

*Western Turf Wars* honors people whose stories and experiences have been ignored by the media in our culture. Hudak’s compilation is the first of which I am aware that tells several stories of former and current public agency employees and ordinary citizens who have struggled to reduce the impacts of grazing on land owned by all Americans.

There are some very powerful stories, to be sure. The decisions by agency people to quit in the face of illegal intimidation, corruption, or both, knowing that nothing can be done, are telling. So are the stories of political pressure, harassment, or death threats against those exercising their constitutional rights.

Of the many contributions of *Western Turf Wars*, perhaps the most important is its personal, emotional wallop. This book effectively counters the media demonization of environmentalists, conservationists, and agency people and shows them to be real people and citizens concerned about the fate of our public lands and our country. For that alone, it is worth reading.

—Gary Macfarlane