

Gila Wild and Scenic: Rivers of Opportunity Conference
October 7 - 9, 2021
Silver City, New Mexico
Western New Mexico University – Terrace Gardens

Sponsored by: American Rivers, American Whitewater, Conservation Lands Foundation, Gila – Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited, New Mexico Trout Unlimited Council, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, PEW Charitable Trusts, Southwest New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce, Town of Silver City, Turner Foundation

Purpose: To re-engage the communities of Grant County around reintroduction of the Gila Wild and Scenic Rivers legislation, while showcasing and inspiring the area's remarkable values through panel discussions, field trips and potential economic development around designation and future stewardship. Focused on galvanizing local support to push for final passage of the legislation in the U.S. Senate, and to uplift local community voices in the protection and management of our Wild Rivers in the Gila Watershed.

AGENDA

Thursday, October 7

Wild Rivers Film Tour

Western New Mexico University – Location TBD

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

American Rivers & NM Wild

Friday, October 8

8:00 AM

Gather at Western New Mexico University Terrace Gardens for Registration

9:00 AM

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Master of Ceremonies – Dr. Magdaleno Manzanarez, *Vice President for External Affairs, Western New Mexico University*

9:30 AM

Panel - Our Gila Wild and Scenic Rivers

Abstract: Why are we here? Community efforts, coupled with an overview of the legislation and the river's outstandingly remarkable values, with a focus on select river segments and a discussion centered around the work that our community has worked on collectively, in addition to the rivers themselves.

Moderator: Dr. Magdaleno Manzanarez, *Vice President for External Affairs, Western New Mexico University*

Panelists: David Moryc, *Wild and Scenic Rivers and Public Lands Policy, American Rivers*

Nathan Newcomer, *Gila Grassroots Coordinator, NM Wild*

Ray Trejo, *Southern Outreach Coordinator, New Mexico Wildlife Federation*

10:45 AM

Break

11:00 AM

Panel - Economics of Gila Wild and Scenic Rivers Opportunities

Abstract: A focus on the Southwick Associates Report, and opportunities for broader outdoor recreation in the region, but also linking together the Office of Outdoor Recreation, State investment and how to harness these opportunities moving forward once the legislation is passed.

Moderator: Patrick Lane, *The Pew Charitable Trusts*

Panelists: Thomas Allen, *Co-Author "Economic Significance of Outdoor Recreation in the Gila and San Francisco River Watersheds," Southwick Associates (Retired)*

Alicia Edwards, *Grant County Commissioner, District 3*

Dr. Kathy Whiteman, *Assistant Professor / Director, Outdoor Program, Western New Mexico University*

Axie Navas, *Director, New Mexico Office of Outdoor Recreation*

12:15 PM

Lunch provided

1:45 PM

Panel - Cultural Heritage & Importance of the Gila Watershed

Abstract: Tracing the paths of the distinct cultures that once thrived in the Gila region, their legacies, and connections to our present-day communities and values.

Moderator: Simon Sotelo III, *Community Organizer, NM Wild*

Panelists: Cynthia Ann Bettison, *Silver City Town Councilor District 1 & WNMU Museum Director*

Teresa Martinez, *Executive Director, Continental Divide Trail Coalition*

Brent Buckner *Tribal Cultural Coordinator, Fort Sill Apache Tribe*

Michael Darrow, *Tribal Historian, Fort Sill Apache Tribe*

3:00 PM

Break

3:15 PM

Panel – Our Community & Connection to Our Rivers

Abstract: Discovering community leaders' personal connections to our wild rivers and why this legislation is important to ensuring that future generations will be afforded the same opportunities and experiences, while also diving deeper into how we can harness protection of our wild rivers for socio-economic development and resiliency.

Moderator: TBD

Panelists: Guadalupe Cano, *Silver City Town Councilor, District 4*

Chon Fierro, *Mayor of Bayard*

Howie Morales, *Lieutenant Governor of the State of New Mexico (invited)*

4:30 PM

Closing Remarks

6:00 PM

Event at Main Street Plaza with Elected Officials and the public. Cocktails and Hors Devours.

Saturday, October 9

8:30 AM

Gather at Silver City Visitor Center for Field Trips.

Sack Lunches provided

9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Assorted Field Trips - Hiking, Fishing, Kayaking (water dependent), Birding, Geology, Cultural, etc.

1. Mogollon Box – Dr. Kathy Whiteman, Allyson Siwik
2. Gila Middle Box – NM Wild
3. Lower San Francisco River Canyon – NM Wild
4. Mineral Creek – Trout Unlimited
5. Whitewater Creek – Trout Unlimited
6. Gila Cliff Dwellings – Heart of the Gila
7. West Fork Gila River – NM Wildlife Federation
8. Middle Fork Gila River – Turkey Feather Hot Springs
9. Gila Main Stem / Grapevine
10. Boating / Kayaking / Fishing

6:00 PM

Outdoor Catered Event in San Vicente Creek Open Space

7:30 PM

Closing Remarks