

Report to the Native Plant Society of New Mexico

**Name of Project:** New Mexico Wildlife Center Land and Habitat Restoration

**Grant Recipient and Contact Information:**

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The New Mexico Wildlife Center sits on approximately 20 acres in La Puebla, New Mexico, just south of Espanola. In past years the land was used as a county fair and rodeo ground, and much of the natural grassland habitat had been seriously disturbed. Noxious weeds replaced beneficial native vegetation that would normally support native wildlife. Erosion was also a problem. During the monsoon season, rain would wash away the soil instead of soaking into the earth to support plant growth.

Since 2014, Santa Fe Master Gardener volunteers have been involved in land restoration projects on the property. Their mission is to “provide a sustaining habitat for visiting wildlife and to show the public the beauty and importance of native plants in the environment.”

This developed into a collaborative project involving members of the Wildlife Center, Santa Fe Master Gardeners, members of the Santa Fe Native Plant Society, experts from New Mexico State University Extension offices in Alcade and Santa Fe, NM, the Cactus Rescue Project, and the Santa Fe Watershed Association, among others.

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico funded NMWC a grant to allow funding for continuing land restoration projects. Rocks were purchased from Espanola Transit Mix at a cost of \$336.39 for developing pathways, expanding erosion control, and water catchment construction (i.e. earth berms and Zuni Bowls). A sand/topsoil mix was purchased for \$352.69 for the establishment of a cactus garden and cactus propagation area. The cactus for this garden and for the Santa Fe Cholla Conservation Project started at NMWC were donated by the Cactus Rescue Project in Eldorado, totaling over 180 cacti. Cages built to protect the cactus plants were donated by Cactus Rescue project and Sandy Powell, totaling approximately \$197.00. Drip irrigation equipment and roof-water harvesting equipment costing \$156.45 was donated by Dick Powell. Native seeds, plants, trees, and shrubs totaling \$70.00 were purchased from the New Mexico Forestry Seedling Program. Other plants were donated by Mary Brown (\$138.00), the Santa Fe Master Gardeners (\$286.00), and Chili Line Nursery (\$60.00). Also,

Dick Powell donated \$150 worth of wood chips from Conley's Lumber Mill for establishing paths and mulching plantings.

Seventy volunteers contributed 884 hours towards achieving our goals. As of the end of this working season, we are happy to say that existing gardens, such as the pollinator garden and Monarch Garden, are thriving. New pathways have been laid, most weeds have been brought under control, berms and other erosion methods were constructed, and water catchment controls (including a system to funnel rain run-off from the Center's roof to the riparian area) were engineered. And, last but not least, a native cactus garden was added to the new, improved landscape, along with six other gardens planted to help determine the best growing conditions for the Santa Fe Cholla.

We are thrilled to report an increase in native bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. The riparian area is lush with cottonwoods, willows, Rocky Mountain Bee Plant, and other native flowers. Photos of various projects are included as part of this report.

We have provided the NPSNM a short article about this project for the newsletter.

