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## REVITALIZING THE REGENERATIVE CAPACITY OF DAMAGED ECOSYSTEMS

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### NEW MEXICO BEAVER COALITION

**Meeting Date/Time: March 20, 2025, 9:30-11:00am, MDT**

The purpose of the New Mexico Beaver Coalition is to bring together a diverse group of state, federal, tribal, non-profit, for-profit organizations, and individuals to share information, coordinate activities, and identify common interests and opportunities to work collaboratively to expand the distribution of beaver across New Mexico.

- I. Introductions (post in the chat)
- II. Operating Principles (from The World Café, <https://theworldcafe.com/>):
  - Create hospitable space;
  - Explore questions that matter;
  - Encourage each person's contribution;
  - Connect diverse people and ideas;
  - Listen together for patterns, insights and deeper questions;
  - Make collective knowledge visible.
- III. Round-robin with updates from each organization
- IV. Wrap-up and next meeting  
Beaver Restoration Assessment Tool workshop and field trip, May 27-28, 2025

## Meeting Notes

### Summary

The New Mexico Beaver Coalition held its 6th meeting, discussing various topics related to beaver relocation, habitat restoration, and ongoing projects across different organizations and regions. Participants shared updates on their work, including riparian restoration efforts, wetland mapping, educational initiatives, and policy developments. The meeting also covered upcoming events, workshops, and collaborative opportunities, emphasizing the importance of engagement and cooperation among stakeholders in beaver conservation and management.

### Next steps

- Chris Smith (WEG) is seeking items for a public calendar for beaver-related events and volunteer opportunities. Will host a Beaver corps training in late-summer.
- Tracy Stevens (NWF) will have an in-person Ribbons of Life meeting in mid-May.

- Steven Fry (Amigos Bravos) has two volunteer opportunities: installing pond levelers in Taos Canyon next weekend and a willow planting event on April 12<sup>th</sup> at La Jara. Also have a wetlands subgroup with NMED in Taos area.
- Karen to reach out to Connie Maxwell from New Mexico WRRRI about potential involvement in the New Mexico Beaver Coalition.
- Cecil Rich to compile a list of interested participants for the upcoming BRAT model workshop and field trip in May.
- Leslie Hay to set up a call for those with experience in backcountry beaver relocation to assist Ryan Kooiker and Eileen Henry from the Gila National Forest. Contact Leslie if you have input.
- Ryan Kooiker to contact Sarah Milligan at Bandelier National Monument for information on using mules for beaver relocation.
- Joe Acord to provide Captain Van Landingham's contact information to Ryan Kooiker for insights on backcountry relocation logistics.
- Karen/Cecil to add Haley Sutton and Talavi Cook to the New Mexico Beaver Coalition email list.
- New Mexico Beaver Coalition members to engage with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish on guiding the use of newly allocated beaver-related funds.
- Cecil to follow up with Utah State University regarding hosting and accessibility of the BRAT model data.
- Karen (Rio Grande Return) to coordinate on scheduling volunteers for willow planting on the Rio Cebolla in April.

### **New Mexico Beaver Coalition Meeting Summary**

The New Mexico Beaver Coalition held its 6th meeting, with 31 participants joining. Karen Menetrey from Rio Grande Return welcomed everyone and announced that a web page for the coalition will go live next month on their website. Cecil Rich then led a round-robin update session, starting with federal organizations. Larry Cordova from the Lincoln National Forest reported ongoing riparian restoration work in several drainages, including the installation of BDAs (Beaver Dam Analogs). He mentioned plans for potential cutthroat trout reintroduction and aspen restoration efforts, with the hope that these activities will benefit beavers in the long term. Larry also announced his upcoming retirement in January 2026 after 45 years of service.

### **Beaver Relocation and Habitat Restoration**

In the meeting, various topics were discussed related to beaver relocation and habitat restoration. Larry expressed concerns about the potential impact of beavers on the Bonita Ck drainage and the need for habitat improvement. Reid and Kevin shared updates on ongoing projects and plans for beaver relocation in different areas. Mark from the National Park Service mentioned ongoing wetland restoration and willow plantings, and Sage from BLM discussed their 5-year agreement with Rio Grande Return for in-stream and riparian habitat work. Stephanie Siemek from the US Fish and Wildlife Service reported on their continued work with the USFWS refuges on beaver coexistence. Jennifer from New Mexico Highlands University and

the Upper Pecos Watershed Association expressed interest in using beavers for restoration projects and mentioned their recent hiring of an intern to develop educational materials.

### **Beaver Habitat Improvement, Planning and Restoration Updates**

In the meeting, Jack Marchetti from the Game and Fish department discussed ongoing projects, including in-stream habitat work on the Rio Bonito and Bonito Creek, and the development of beaver guidelines. Shinya Burck from the New Mexico Environment Department mentioned the ongoing mapping of wetlands across the state and exciting fen restoration projects. Randy Bayliss with State Parks Division reported on the hiring of a consultant for BDA planning and work at Fenton Lake State Park. Monica from Santa Fe County shared updates on their work with Defenders of Wildlife and Rio Grande Return at Los Potrerillos Open Space. Reid from Rio Grande Return discussed ongoing planting projects, planning for a project on the Rio de las Vacas on the Santa Fe National Forest and an LTPBR project at the girl scout camp, and potential beaver relocations on the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Peggy from Defenders of Wildlife shared updates on their statewide virtual beaver dam census and upcoming projects. Chris Smith from Wild Earth Guardians discussed statewide policy and funding, a memorial for a statewide beaver plan, and relocation guideline recommendations. Tracy Stevens from the National Wildlife Federation introduced herself as the riparian connectivity senior specialist and mentioned plans for an in-person meeting of the Ribbons of Life Coalition. Toner Mitchell from Trout Unlimited shared updates on their work with Questa and the Rancher Round Table.

### **Beaver Network Updates and Habitat Plans**

Adam Burnett with the Beaver Institute provided updates on the North American Beaver Network and the upcoming BeaverCon 2026 in Minneapolis. Cecil also mentioned the New Mexico Acequias Association's cautious stance on beavers near acequias due to potential safety risks and the need for close collaboration with local acequias when encouraging the expansion of beavers near acequias and providing ample resources to address problems that arise that could threaten acequias. Steven from Amigos Bravos shared their plans to install pond levelers in Taos Canyon and willow planting to improve beaver habitat. Eileen from the Gila National Forest discussed a coexistence issue with a beaver population building dams near a FS road, and they have a plan to mitigate the conflict.

### **Beaver Dams in Black Canyon**

Ryan Kooiker, the district wildlife biologist on the Wilderness Ranger district of the Gila National Forest, discussed the ongoing issue of beaver dams in Black Canyon. The dams have caused concerns about road access and safety for both private landowners and the public. Ryan mentioned that they are considering relocating the beavers to the Black Range, but they lack experience in live trapping and handling beavers. Joe Acord, a game warden in Socorro, suggested contacting Captain Van Landingham for insight on backcountry relocation of beavers. Ryan also mentioned that they have the means to relocate the beavers, thanks to their wilderness stock program.

### **Beaver Sightings and Pond Leveler Project**

In the meeting, Ryan Kooiker expressed gratitude and mentioned that he would keep the group updated. Reid offered additional support from his team if needed. Leslie Hay agreed to set up a call for further input on needs and solutions. Brianna from BCI International shared their plans to scout the Gila and report beaver sightings. Ron from New Mexico Trout discussed their contributions to the pond leveler project and the Rio Cebolla willow planting. Chris Smith announced the creation of a public calendar for beaver events and volunteer opportunities. Abby from Taos Pueblo introduced their interest in relocating problematic beavers found in their area.

### **Carson NF Wildlife Fish Program Updates and Rio Chama Challenges**

Francisco Cortez (Kiko), the wildlife fish rare plants program manager, reported on capacity changes and the potential for some team members to return. He also mentioned the inclusion of Haley Sutton and Alissa Radcliffe in future meetings. Brett Baer, a farmer, discussed the challenges faced by the Lower Rio Chama community due to sedimentation and expressed interest in exploring opportunities for creating beaver habitat. Brett also mentioned the potential for community dialogues to guide these conversations.

### **Beaver Restoration Funding and Planning**

Karen and Brett discussed the possibility of reaching out to Connie Maxwell for potential interest in their context. Cecil encouraged others to share updates and asked Chris about the planning for beaver restoration. Chris clarified that the funding for game and fish could be used for trainings, education, and implementation of coexistence and relocation, not just planning. Cecil mentioned a project to use beaver restoration assessment tool model for New Mexico (BRAT), which will be discussed in the next meeting.

### **Upcoming Workshop and Field Day**

Cecil discussed the upcoming workshop and field day, inviting interested participants to contact him for more details. Brett expressed interest in joining the list. Karen mentioned sending out an invitation to the entire Coalition list. Steven highlighted the importance of engagement with the beaver money and working with Game and Fish. Leslie emphasized the importance of collaboration, especially in challenging times, and expressed difficulty in committing to travel. The conversation ended with Cecil thanking everyone for their updates and work.