

OUTDOOR REPORTER

New Mexico Wildlife Federation

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Spring, 2020



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A Word from our Executive Director

Difficult Times Underscore the Importance of Public Lands, Wildlife

ALBUQUERQUE – As I write this, our state, our nation and indeed the entire world are facing the rising threat of coronavirus. It's clear we have a long way to go before our lives will get back to normal.

This situation makes all of us at the NMWF appreciate even more our medical and emergency workers who serve our communities as well as the unsung workers who toil often behind the scenes to make our usually comfortable lives possible. For example, we should all pause to appreciate the grocery store clerks who stock our shelves, the truck drivers who deliver our food and the farmers and ranchers and agricultural workers -- many of them immigrants -- who produce it.

And personally, this situation makes me reflect on the value of hunting as a means to feed my family. It's a longstanding New Mexico tradition that remains, if anything, even more important in these uncertain times.

In this issue, I describe a full year's hunting season that I undertook using non-toxic ammunition. I not only harvested game, but also kept toxic lead off the landscape and out of the food chain for raptors and other wildlife.

For us at the NMWF, this ongoing public health crisis also helps to bring the importance of our public lands and our wildlife resources into even clearer focus. The increasingly dire warnings to stay away from crowds give all of us basically two options: hide out indoors or get outside into the majesty of our public lands. To the greatest extent possible, we choose to get outside.

As New Mexico's oldest and most successful organization representing the interests of hunters and anglers, we've been fighting to preserve public lands access ever since this group was created more than a century ago by pioneering conservationist Aldo Leopold.

The fight continues. In March, the NMWF -- together with the Adobe Whitewater Club and the New Mexico Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers -- filed a petition asking the New Mexico Supreme Court to invalidate a state game commission rule that purports to allow landowners to block the public from accessing rivers and streams that flow across private property.

We're asking the court to invalidate the New Mexico State Game Commission's "non-navigable waters rule." We're represented by Santa Fe lawyer Gene Gallegos, himself a boater and trout fisherman.

The game commission enacted the rule in 2018. It allows landowners to petition the commission to certify that rivers and streams crossing their property are non-navigable and accordingly closed to public access without the owner's written permission. The commission enacted the rule following passage of a state law in 2015 that purportedly enabled landowners to post "non-navigable" streams and their streambeds against trespass.



The game commission so far has granted five applications from out-of-state landowners certifying waters as "non-navigable" on New Mexico waterways including the Rio Chama and Pecos River. At least two other applications are pending on the Rio Chama and one on the Pecos.

In our petition, we're hammering on the fact the New Mexico Constitution specifies the unappropriated water of every stream in the state belongs to the public. Whether a river is navigable makes no difference. The New Mexico Supreme Court ruled in 1945 that the public has a right to access rivers and streams provided they don't trespass on private land to reach them.

We strongly believe we have the law on our side and that we will prevail. While our opponents assert that this is an attack on private property rights, the reality is that some private landowners have deprived the public of its right to use public waters for decades.

So, as we join together to face the deadly threat of coronavirus, we at the NMWF believe all of us should take time to reflect on what's truly important: family, friends, community. And for those of us lucky enough to call New Mexico home, let's take time to appreciate the great treasure of public land, wildlife and natural resources as well as the hunting, angling and trapping traditions that previous generations have handed down to us. Let's preserve it all for the better days ahead.

-- Jesse Deubel

NMWF Executive Director

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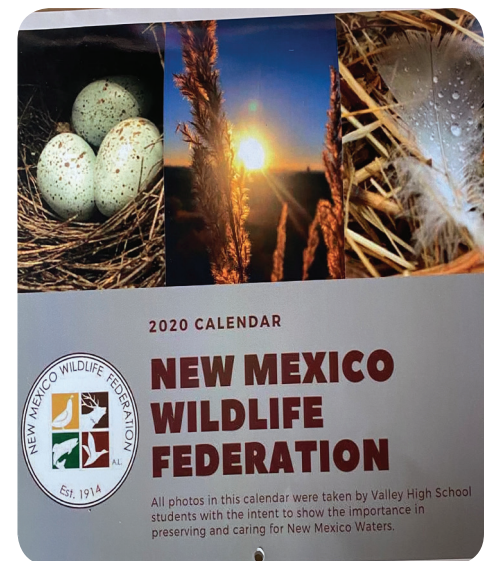
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A FULL HUNTING SEASON WITH NON-TOXIC AMMO

By Jesse Deubel

NMWF Executive Director

In November of 2018, I listened to an episode number 87 of Hunt Talk Radio, a podcast hosted by Randy Newberg. In that episode, Randy visited with representatives from the Peregrine Fund about the lethal effects that lead bullets can have on raptors who feed on the gut-piles from animals left in the field by hunters. It was an intriguing conversation.

In June 2019, I was in St. Louis, Missouri, at the National Wildlife Federation's annual meeting. In researching the NWF's "Lead-Free Landscapes" campaign, I came face-to-face with a bald eagle, just the sort of bird that could be harmed by leaving lead in gut piles on the landscape. And I learned that more than 500 scientific studies published since 1898 have documented that 134 species of wildlife are negatively affected by lead ammunition worldwide.

And wildlife aren't the only ones affected by lead. Hunters and their families can unknowingly consume lead from animals taken with conventional ammunition. X-ray images portraying the distribution of lead throughout the meat of animals shot with lead-containing bullets are plentiful.

I decided to switch voluntarily to lead-free ammunition for the 2019 hunting season and to document the results. Because I had not drawn an archery elk tag in New Mexico, my first hunt of the year was for doves. The season opener was September 1st.

My pup Estella and I had received an invitation to hunt doves on a dairy



farm south of Albuquerque. Just after first light, the birds started flying and the Winchester Super X Steel Shot did not disappoint.

Most of the birds I was shooting were Eurasian collared doves. Because this species is invasive in New Mexico, there is no limit on the number of birds that can be harvested. The birds stopped flying midday so we took a break for lunch.

As I sat in the shade of a hay barn, I gazed out at the cows on the dairy farm and wondered how many shot pellets had landed in their feeding troughs. Is there an effect on the milk produced by these dairy cows if they ingest lead deposited inadvertently into their feed?

As the sun lowered in the sky, the birds again began to fly. It was a beautiful New Mexico evening that provided a bounty of birds. I was proud of the decision I made not to introduce lead into this agricultural operation.

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A FULL HUNTING SEASON WITH NON-TOXIC AMMO

Continued from page 5

I prefer to pluck the birds I kill. Picking feathers is a lot more work than simply breasting them out or even skinning them. But I made the choice to shoot them and I accept the responsibility of caring for their meat in the best way possible after the shot. A perfectly cleaned pile of skin-on birds provides me with an exceptional reward after the hunt. Knowing that my voluntary decision to use steel shot ensures these birds are not contaminated with toxic lead remnants adds to my satisfaction.

Although I was not successful in drawing an elk tag, I came up with a ranch-only, cow-elk authorization for a property in Northern New Mexico. I rarely hunt with a rifle, but because this was an “any legal weapon” hunt, I decided to use a .30-06 rifle I had inherited from my dad. I had never shot the rifle before.

I was pleased to find that there was a huge selection of all-copper ammunition available at local sporting goods stores in Albuquerque. After some experimentation and a bit of practice, I decided to hunt with Barnes VOR-TX bullets. While all of the bullets I tried seemed to shoot very well out of my rifle, this particular round was recommended by a few folks whose opinion I trust. I got the scope dialed in and was very confident with the tight groups I was able to consistently produce.

After four days of hard hunting immersed in spectacular habitat and surrounded by magnificent views, I finally located some elk. With the “antlerless” tag burning a hole in my pocket, I stalked within range of a small herd of cow elk.



The bullet performed flawlessly. Like all hunters, I strive to inflict the fastest and most humane manner of death upon my prey. This beautiful, old cow never knew I was there. She gracefully grazed on the lush grasses adorning the hillside until I squeezed the trigger. The act took fractions of a second and was quite anticlimactic. I found great comfort in the fact that her death was as painless as it ever could have been. From its heart to its hams, this cow elk was carried back to camp. Every ounce of this meat, including the front quarters and ribcage is free of lead.

(Elk Wellington is a superb dish that appears more difficult to make than it actually is. Turn to page 14 to find the recipe used for this preparation.)

I often use the phrase “field to table.” I take great pleasure in being in control of my protein from the time it is alive in the field until such a time that it’s upon my dinner plate.

With my elk all processed and put away it was time to chase some quail with my now eight-month-old pup. As it did with the doves, the Winchester Super X Steel Shot shells exceeded expectations.

Using steel shot was voluntary when I hunted doves and quail. While hunting waterfowl, however, non-toxic [lead-free] ammunition has been required by federal law since 1991. The purpose of requiring waterfowl hunters to use steel shot was to reduce the incidence of lead poisoning in waterfowl. In 1979 it was estimated that about 2 million waterfowl were dying of lead poisoning annually in the United States after eating spent lead shot, which the birds mistake for seeds or grit. Steel shot is not toxic to waterfowl.

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LANDMARK LEGISLATION TO PROTECT GILA HONORS NM CONSERVATIONIST DUTCH SALMON

By U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich

If any place deserves Wild and Scenic River designation, it's New Mexico's Gila River. There are very few places left like the headwaters of the Gila—a place near and dear to my heart and special to so many New Mexicans. That's why Senator Tom Udall and I are introducing the M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act.

Nearly 100 years ago, a young forester named Aldo Leopold called for permanent protection of the spectacular landscapes and ecosystems shaped by these waters. Leopold saw that we needed to set aside wilderness areas to protect what he called the last big stretches of wild country. Thanks to his foresight, the area around the headwaters of the Gila River became the America's first wilderness area.

It's a true testament to the power of wilderness protection that today's visitors to the Gila—including myself—see much of the same glorious landscapes that Aldo Leopold saw 100 years ago. As long as I have lived in New Mexico, I have always been drawn to the Gila. Backcountry trips into places like McKenna Park and Turkey Feather Pass, and the Jerky Mountains have given me the time and space to grow closer to my family and friends and to reflect on what is truly important.

In the years since Leopold first called for protecting for wild lands, Americans have also grown to appreciate the need to conserve our wild waters. Soon after passing the Wilderness Act, which laid the foundation for protecting wild landscapes like the Gila and the Pecos, Congress also passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to protect outstanding, undammed, and free-flowing stretches of America's rivers.

For treasured rivers across the nation, wild and scenic designation has helped bring about protection and enhancement of water quality as well as economic development and increased recreation opportunities. In New Mexico, that includes the Rio Chama, the East Fork of the Jemez, and sections of the Rio Grande and the Pecos.

It's long past time that we recognize that the greater Gila and San Francisco watershed and other rivers in the Gila National Forest deserve this same recognition and treatment. Our legislation will protect the wild and free-flowing segments of rivers that form the living heartbeat of the Gila and Aldo Leopold Wildernesses.

Wild and scenic designation will permanently protect the extraordinary scenic values found along these river segments. It will permanently protect the fish and wildlife habitat for unique native species like the Gila Trout. The new designation will still allow for continued traditional uses and preserve existing water rights, private land rights, and current public access points to these segments. Our bill will also grow the region's outdoor recreation economy by enhancing opportunities like hunting, fishing, hiking, and rafting and providing new marketing opportunities for guides, outfitters, and nearby communities.

"Salmon, a longtime supporter of the NMWF, worked for decades to protect the Gila, New Mexico's last free-flowing river."



M.H. "Dutch" Salmon

I am proud that we are naming our bill after M.H. "Dutch" Salmon. I first met Dutch Salmon when I was an outfitter guide in the 1990s. A longtime nature writer and avid fly fisherman in Silver City, Dutch was such a consistent voice for the Gila River. He was kind and respectful to all points of view, but he staunchly defended the wild Gila River. In the wake of efforts to divert and dam the Gila in the 1980s, Dutch helped found the Gila Conservation Coalition, which successfully stood firmly against multiple attempts to de-water the Gila.

Dutch died in March last year after decades of standing up for his "favorite fishing hole." I can't think of any better way to honor his memory, and all of the New Mexicans who have fought so hard and so long for the Gila, than to finally, permanently protect this wild and scenic river.



Nature Ninos

By SARAH CANDELARIA
NMWF Youth Program Director-ECHO

Nature Ninos, an initiative of the New Mexico Wildlife Federation, offers a wide variety of opportunities for youth to get connected with nature.

Nature Ninos' main focus this spring was getting our **Nature Ninos Forest School** up and running.

Children who spend regular time outdoors in nature have increased immunity, a strong sense of emotional well-being and school-readiness skills that are ahead of their peers who don't get a consistent nature fix.

Our goal is that children in the Nature Niños Forest School program become comfortable learning and playing outdoors and that, as a result, families end up spending more time in the great outdoors, as well.

When a school participates in NNFS, teachers will be receiving high-quality, hands-on training to ensure they understand the theories and practices behind a forest school program. Children in the program will visit a nature immersion site with their classroom teacher(s) and an NNFS instructor once a week for six weeks in a row.

As this is written, our programs are on hold as a result of the threat of coronavirus, but we look forward to starting up again once schools reopen.

Allowing children to become comfortable at a nature site, meanwhile broadening their adventurous play, elicits more meaningful connections with nature throughout all developmental domains.


Little Corral Day School has been chosen as the pilot program for Nature Ninos Forest School. Director April Vargas is excited to have 20 kids and two staff members participate in this program and find ways to continue getting the kids outdoors after being trained and encouraged by the Nature Ninos staff.




The **God's Explorers of the Outdoors** program is another opportunity that Nature Ninos is leading within the community to encourage children to be outdoors while learning about our land, watershed, ecosystems and wildlife. G.E.O reaches homeschooled students ages 3- 16 in the Albuquerque area. Students and parents meet in the bosque with leader Kristina Roybal to explore and experience nature together. Students are provided with nature guide books explaining a variety of wildlife and plant life found in the bosque and are then encouraged to explore with their groups, participating in sit-and-see's, nature journaling and wildlife identification.

Wild Harvest Initiative is our high school outreach where Nature Ninos is collaborating with teachers across the state. The program supports bringing freshly killed New Mexico game animals into classrooms to provide students with the experience of skinning, quartering, processing and learning to cook wild game.

Aside from a variety of child-led opportunities, Nature Ninos is also focusing on providing teacher training opportunities for school teachers and staff across the state, pre-K through high school, on the importance of including nature in our everyday lessons in the classroom as well as ideas on how to revitalize outdoor learning areas, or playgrounds, to include more nature-based opportunities for kids.

Teachers or school administrators interested in learning more about our programs should contact the New Mexico Wildlife Federation. 



WILD HARVEST INITIATIVE®

CALLING ALL TEACHERS & SCHOOL STAFF/ADMIN:

NMWF is working to secure 4 classrooms throughout the state to work on a Wild Harvest: Sustainable Eating project that would entail bringing the experiential learning opportunity of skinning, quartering, processing and learning to cook large game wild meat in the classroom.

If you are interested in partnering in this project please email:
sarah@nmwildlife.org



NEW MEXICO FALCONER SEES ARTISTRY IN COOPERATION BETWEEN GOSHAWK AND HUNTING DOGS

By Ben Neary

NMWF Conservation Director

The dogs streaked across the sagebrush flats on the western outskirts of Rio Rancho. Their tails were wagging and their noses relentlessly tested each stand of brush for the scent of quail.

Finally, one froze at a bush. The other soon arrived there and froze too. The dogs held their tails erect, their bodies motionless.

Tyler Sladen moved toward his dogs. He held his left arm aloft. His brown-and-cream colored goshawk, named Hashbrown, rode on the leather gauntlet he wore on his left hand.

When Sladen got in position, he gave the command for the dogs to move forward and flush the quail.

Hashbrown took off. His wings pumped and cleaved the air to gain speed and altitude. For a moment, he hovered above the bush.

The quail broke cover and flew. The beating of its wings thrummed through the air as it went fast and low. Hashbrown followed closely, his longer wings pounding the air, each stroke cutting away at the quail's lead.

The chase lasted a couple of hundred yards before Hashbrown brought the quail to the ground. Sladen ran to reach the site of the kill.

At the scene, Sladen watched as Hashbrown plucked the downy feathers from the quail's breast and prepared to feed.

Then Sladen did a quick exchange. He covered the quail to prevent damage to the dark pink breast meat and slipped Hashbrown a morsel of meat from the leg of a quail he had taken

earlier. The hunting bird seemed satisfied and proceeded to feed, not showing any frustration that its kill had been snatched away.

Sladen slipped the newly taken quail into his vest while Hashbrown finished eating. Fresh blood painted the rim of his beak. His eyes had a blazing intensity.

To someone accustomed to hunting with a gun, the exquisite drama of falconry is striking for being so quiet and yet so intense.

This hunting occurs with real artistry of motion that's made all the more poignant by the speed of the pursuit and intimacy of the kill. The thrilling actions and reactions of the hunted and hunter play out in the freedom and unconfined space of thin air. It all happens with hardly a sound that rises above the ambient wind.

"I like it because the goal of falconry is obviously to take wild game with a bird of prey," Sladen said. "But the goal of good falconry is to do it in a way that's enjoyable to watch, and enjoyable to watch for me is a good flight off good dog work."

Sladen, who lives in Albuquerque, says about half of falconers use pointing dogs to find birds. He says watching his dogs work is critically important to his own enjoyment of the sport.

"Without the dog work, I don't think I'd enjoy falconry that much," Sladen said. "A lot of people do enjoy that kind of falconry. However, I like the harmonious relationship of the bird flying to the dog on point, hovering, and then letting the dog flush and then the quail come up. And it can be pretty artistic in a way, when it goes right. It doesn't always go right."

The decision whether to add pointing and flushing dogs to the hunt is more than a question of aesthetics to the falconer, Sladen said. It depends on many factors, including the scale of the available landscape.

"It really depends on terrain and what you're hunting," Sladen said. "Some people hunt really tight fields in urban areas. They only have 10 acres here and 10 acres there, where it's not really safe to run a dog but it's somewhat safe to run a bird. Those guys mainly hunt Harris hawks and redtails on rabbits and squirrels.

"Now you start getting into western states where there's a little bit more room to breathe, you start to see people using dogs more and more," Sladen said. "Especially anyone who hunts upland is going to use dogs."



Tyler Sladen and Hashbrown

The training for the dogs used in falconry for upland game is nearly identical to that of a dog trained for an upland hunter who uses a gun, Sladen said. In falconry, the dogs get robbed of the retrieve.

“Some dogs tend to lay down next to the bird on kills and protect them from coyotes, other birds of prey and people,” Sladen said. “Other dogs are kind of indifferent to all of it and they just go look for more game to hunt. I have some dogs that do both, Dogs have their own personality and the way that they approach falconry is different.

“My Vizslas tend to stick closer to the bird and work closer with the bird,” Sladen said. “My setters, once they see the bird make a catch, they will run off and look for more things to hunt. So as soon as my bird is done getting his reward for one kill, my dogs are already setting us up for the second. Which I kind of like too, so there’s kind of a benefit to running multiple dogs.”

Some dogs need more instruction than others not to try to attack the hawk once it’s on the ground with its prey, Sladen said.

“It’s just like how you don’t allow your dogs to pursue non-target species, you just treat the hawk the same way,” Sladen said. “I don’t let my dogs chase sparrows or little birds, so why would I let my dogs chase hawks, or ravens or crows? As long as your dog has a good no-bird command, it should be pretty good.”

New Mexico offers a handful of permits each year allowing falconers to take young goshawks out of the nest in the wild. Falconers then raise the birds and introduce them to the hunt.

Sladen has been practicing falconry since 2012. He was captivated by the sport while serving in the U.S. Army. He was stationed in Ft. Hood, in Texas, when he went to a falconry meet as a photographer. The falconers he met at the meet



were welcoming and accommodating, he said. And it was there that he met Michael Beran.

“I still work for Michael Beran to this day,” Sladen said. “He also was my falconry sponsor. Once I got out of the Army, I moved to Missouri to work for him and become a falconer. I’ve been doing it ever since.”

Sladen moved to Albuquerque in 2017 to manage the Albuquerque office of “Wildlife Command Center,” a business that Beran owns that specializes in removing nuisance animals including pigeons, racoons, squirrels and others.

“The first time I went to see birds fly, I approached it from a photography aspect because I’m a photographer,” Sladen said. “I wanted to see more of that, the dog/bird relationship really caught my eye. Originally, I was just there to take pictures. I hunt, but I wasn’t a falconer at the time.

“Seeing people hunt squirrels in Texas over squirrel dogs, and the hawks kind of working harmoniously, I was enthralled with that,” Sladen said. “So, through getting to learn falconry, I met people that flew hawks over bird dogs and hunted upland game that way.

“And once I learned that, I kind of made that my life’s mission,” Sladen said. “That’s what I kind of wanted to do, and now I’ve got six bird dogs and a terrier that I hunt upland game over. “

In addition to his pleasure in watching his dogs work, Sladen said he also enjoys watching how prey reacts when a predator is moving.

“The way they act when a goshawk is out and the way they act when a falcon is out is night and day,” Sladen said. “Whereas they got up and flew for a goshawk, for a falcon, they will not. They will not get in the air with a falcon, they know better. Falcons kind of rule the sky.”



A FULL HUNTING SEASON WITH NON-TOXIC AMMO

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Whether shooting a small duck like a teal or shooting a very large bird like a Greater Canada Goose, selecting the proper shot size will ensure superior performance. Throughout the waterfowl season, I was entirely satisfied with the performance of steel shot.

The season for upland birds in New Mexico is a bit longer for those who choose to hunt using birds of prey compared to those who choose shotguns. I was honored to extend my season by accompanying a local falconer into the field.

While high winds helped numerous quail to evade the falconer's goshawk, a cottontail was not as lucky. As I observed this majestic bird, I remembered the bald eagle I met in Missouri and the podcast conversation that motivated me to choose to support a lead-free landscape.



TWO OLD GUNS

By Ray Trejo

NMWF Southern NM Outreach Coordinator



Carlos Charlie Zuniga



Ray Trejo



It's the small things in life that often bring us back full circle. For example, hunting cottontail rabbits the way that we were taught as young boys growing up by our fathers and grandfathers.

I learned how to hunt rabbits by following my grandfather Basilio Rito Trejo around hundreds and hundreds of mesquite bushes every Saturday for many years. He would often look back at me and snarl as I accidentally stepped on a dry stick. To a rabbit's ears it must have sounded like a firecracker because they scurried off to another mesquite or hid in a hole.

He rarely missed a shot and I was more than happy to mend my way through those thorn-infested mesquite bushes to grab up another rabbit. I remember him using his pocketknife to slit a slot in each rabbit's hind leg to be placed on my belt to carry.

Because most rabbits were shot in the head, you can imagine how my boots and pant leg would be covered in blood when I got back to grandma's house. That blood was a badge of honor, or so I thought, until I would hear my Grandma Julia's voice ring out in Spanish at my grandfather over my bloody pair of pants. He would just giggle and say something like "ya parale, te traje seis conejo's". (Oh stop it, I just brought you six rabbits!)

I never heard of anybody calling it a sport because it was more out of a necessity. Now I understand why my grandmother would be upset if a rabbit was shot on the back and not the head.

My grandmother would always make me wash up before I sat down to eat. Grandma would then make us red chile and rabbit, fried potatoes and homemade tortillas. After lunch she would send me to confession at the nearby St Anne's church.

Well, I don't do church much these days, but I do pray for family, friends and my dogs while outdoors enjoying open spaces.

My grandfather gave me the Marlin Model 39 lever-action that he used exclusively to hunt rabbits while he was in the hospital and on his deathbed.

I remember that day vividly, he was pretty sick, and he said to me, "mijo (son) you know that gun I have in the back bedroom closet, you go get it, it is yours now." I was 17 years old and I rushed to the house and took it from the closet in the back bedroom. I never told anybody for fear that someone else in the family might want it.

I was pretty close to my grandfather, I spent most weekends with him, we'd started every Friday night watching the Mexican boxing channel which he loved, and as he sipped his beer, I'd sneak into the kitchen, warm up a homemade tortilla and smother it with butter and looked forward to our Saturday morning rabbit hunt.

These are some of the fondest memories I have. He only lasted a couple of days after giving me his Marlin lever-action.

I had the pleasure of rabbit hunting with that rifle not long ago with my best friend -- a friend that I have had for a long, long time. His name is Carlos Charlie Zuniga and he too grew up hunting rabbits much as I did.

This hunt was not just any hunt, it was a very special hunt since Charlie, what most of us call him, had just had a health scare and had been limited in his time outdoors. Without giving much details, I can tell you that I was relieved and very, very happy when he called and asked to go rabbit hunting. I knew then that everything was going to be all right.

Two old guys, two old guns and eyes that weren't what they used to be managed to kill a few conejos (rabbits) just like the old days. We blamed a lot of our misses on our guns and even took the time to re-sight them in. Although it didn't make much difference, it did make us feel better knowing that those old guns weren't shooting like they used to.



ELK WELLINGTON



Ingredients:

Elk tenderloin
Grapeseed or Canola oil
Coarse salt
Dijon Mustard
Puff pastry
Sliced prosciutto
Eggs x2

Duxelles

Mushrooms 1lb. (any kind will do)
Shallots x 3
Garlic x 4 cloves
Butter ½ stick
Bourbon 1 liter (a couple ounces for cooking, the rest for drinking)

Crepes

All-purpose flour ½ cup
Egg x1
Milk ¼ cup
Water ¼ cup
Salt - pinch
Butter 2 tbsps

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By Michael Cravens

AZ Wildlife Federation, Advocacy & Communication Coordinator

Beef Wellington, or in this case Elk Wellington can appear overly complicated to someone seeing it, or tasting, it for the first time. Admittedly, there are several steps to get to the finished product. Just the same, those steps are not too complicated and the ingredients are readily available. So, if you want to take your wild game cooking up a notch or simply want to produce something special to impress your non-hunting friends, this is a great option and a great way to utilize those hard-earned tenderloins.



ELK WELLINGTON

Continued from Page 14

First, you'll need an elk tenderloin. Hopefully you've got one in the freezer. Otherwise, this first step might take a while. I trim off the ends of the tenderloins to ensure even thickness and even cooking throughout. Salt your tenderloin well on all surfaces and set it out to come to room temperature.

While the meat is coming to room temperature, get started on your duxelles. Don't let the fancy name intimidate you. All a duxelles is, is a finely chopped (minced) mixture of mushrooms and a few other ingredients. Start by finely chopping your mushrooms, stems included, and set aside. Then, melt a half stick of butter in a pan and heat until butter just starts to brown. Add four finely chopped cloves of garlic, three finely chopped shallots, and cook on medium heat until the shallots become translucent. Now, add your minced mushrooms in with the garlic and shallots, salt generously, and cook the mixture down into a paste. At this point, add a healthy dash of bourbon and continue simmering for a few more minutes before removing from the heat.

It's time to sear your tenderloin. Preheat a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add a couple tablespoons of a high heat oil like grapeseed or canola then sear the tenderloin on all sides. The idea here is to get a good fast sear without actually cooking the tenderloin so be sure not to allow the meat to linger in the skillet too long. After searing, and while still hot, give the tenderloin a healthy lathering of dijon mustard on all surfaces and set aside to cool.

To make the crepes. The idea of this intimidated me at first but it turned out to be as easy as making pancakes. In a mixing bowl, add your egg, milk, flour, water, and salt. Mix to combine the ingredients, melt the butter in a non-stick pan, pour just enough batter to swirl around and thinly coat the bottom of the pan, and proceed as you were making large thin pancakes.

Depending on size, you'll need two or three of your crepes laid out and overlapping a bit. The idea here is something like a long tortilla you'll use to wrap your tenderloin. On top of your crepe tortilla, place a layer of prosciutto end to end covering the entire surface. Now scoop all duxelles you prepared onto your crepe/prosciutto tortilla thing and spread it out over a large enough area to evenly surround your tenderloin. Lay your tenderloin on top of all of this and very gently roll it up so it's completely encased and your duxelles is evenly distributed around your tenderloin. Finally, take the whole package and carefully, but tightly, wrap it in clear plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for about an hour.

Roll out a sheet of puff pastry (I used store bought), brush with egg yolk, and once again carefully roll up your tenderloin package. Trim off any excess pastry and pinch closed any openings so you have a tight clean package. Now, if you like, you can get creative with your excess pastry. The classic is a latticework overlay, I chose an elk antler, but you can do anything you like. Or, if you're not the artistic type, nothing at all. Finally, brush the whole thing with egg yolk, salt generously with a coarse salt, and place in a 425-degree preheated oven. Now, I don't have an exact time for you here. I simply kept a close eye on it until it reached a beautiful golden brown and, when I cut into it, it was perfectly medium rare. Remember, less is more with venison and overcooking a hard-earned prime cut like an elk tenderloin is, well should be, a crime.



Meet Michael Cravens

Meet Michael Cravens, the Arizona Wildlife Federation's new Advocacy and Communications Coordinator. Michael came to AWF through a lifelong appreciation of the outdoors and wildlife. Michael, his wife, their two children, and their German short-haired Pointer pup make their home in Tempe, AZ. Living in a state with over 50% public land is not taken for granted and allows them ample opportunity for countless adventures. Michael spends his free time either roaming the mountains and deserts in search of opportunities to bring healthy organic meat home to fill the freezer and feed his family, or he is speaking out against those that threaten the places that allow these opportunities.

Michael also holds a position on the board of Arizona Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, is certified by 2% for Conservation, and is an ambassador for Hunt to Eat. Michael can be found on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/mlcoutdoors>



GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

ALBUQUERQUE — The New Mexico Wildlife Federation strongly supports the Great American Outdoors Act, now pending in Congress.

Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., is among a bipartisan group of senators who introduced the Great American Outdoors Act in March. Heinrich is leading the effort in the U.S. Senate to pass the bill.

The bill would fund the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund permanently and fully. Heinrich also is pushing additional language in the bill to address the maintenance backlog at national parks and other federal land management agencies.

“This is a major step forward in our effort to fully, permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund,” Heinrich said.

The fund collects revenue from offshore energy production and uses it to acquire important lands around the country. The legislation would specify that the \$900 million a year earmarked for the fund not be diverted to other congressional programs as it often has been.

In New Mexico, LWCF has helped preserve the Valles Caldera, Ute Mountain, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge and other areas.

Heinrich said the LWCF also helps to power the state’s thriving outdoor recreation economy and protects drinking water while also providing public land access including neighborhood parks, soccer fields, and baseball diamonds for New Mexico children.

The bill includes a measure championed by Heinrich to address maintenance backlogs at all four public lands agencies and the Bureau of Indian Education.


Heinrich has included language in the bill that would make \$1.9 billion available each year for agency maintenance projects — \$9.5 billion total — with 70 percent allocated for National Park Service projects, 15 percent for Forest Service, 5 percent for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5 percent for Bureau of Land Management, and 5 percent for Bureau of Indian Education schools.

“In addition to the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the American people, and have deferred maintenance needs that deserve to be addressed,” Heinrich said. “This is especially important for sportsmen, since the vast majority of hunting and fishing on public lands happens in places managed by these other three agencies.”

Heinrich said he’s also proud of the effort to provide funding to address safety and maintenance issues at the Bureau of Indian Education. “For too long, many Bureau of Indian Education schools have been in need of construction and repairs,” he said.

Jesse Deubel, executive director of the New Mexico Wildlife Federation, said the bill is critically important legislation for the protection and preservation of a range of important New Mexico places and landscapes for future generations.

“Especially in these times, it’s heartening to see that senators of both political parties are supporting this important legislation,” Deubel said. “The New Mexico Wildlife Federation strongly urges New Mexico sportsmen and women to get behind this effort.”



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