



SPRING 2018

President's Letter

You may have noticed that it is a little bit difficult to actually get to Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge these days! There is construction on Rio Bravo (to build an interchange with the freeway), and 2nd Street is down to one lane in each direction as you approach the Refuge. And if you manage to get past all those orange barrels, you will also find construction on the entrance road into the Refuge. Wildlife habitat restoration has also begun at the Refuge-- construction has started on the first of 5 planned wetlands and planting efforts are underway.

We hope all the resulting traffic and machinery will not dissuade your interest or involvement in the Refuge or the Friends of Valle do Oro NWR. Instead, we hope your interest will actually diversify to include all the activities the Friends do *off*-Refuge. This includes events with our partner organizations, like our fundraisers at local breweries.



During these months of construction, the Friends' attention will shift a bit to focus on events and efforts away from the Refuge, such as fundraising, networking, and outreach. If you cannot bear to lose any of your Refuge connections during these times of change, we always welcome your help in these efforts. Do you like writing letters, making phone calls, or even just doing

computer research? We can find volunteer tasks for you so you can get that Valle de Oro “fix” you need to continue feeling invested in your refuge. And even if the Refuge itself gets harder to access over the next few months, the Friends will always be here—or in cyberspace!—accessible to our members and friends. And remember you can keep abreast of construction and habitat restoration efforts by visiting the Refuge’s Facebook page or by signing up to receive email updates.

After the dust clears, the Refuge will emerge even more welcoming than ever—with a cleaner, safer 2nd Street gateway with sidewalks, a streetlight at 2nd and Desert, and also a high-flying Rio Bravo. These improvements will allow for even easier access to our favorite Urban Refuge.

Until then, let’s stay in touch in any way we can!

Sincerely,

Teri Jillson
Friends of Valle de Oro NWR President

Another Successful Art Along the Rio Grande!



On April 28th the Friends of Valle de Oro NWR and our good partner the Hubbell House Alliance hosted the 2nd Annual Art Along the Rio Grande event at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House. With more vendors than last year, bus tours to Valle de Oro NWR, and walking tours of the Gutierrez Hubbell House museum and gallery it was a day to remember! Over 30 local artists sold art work focusing on the cultural

heritage and ecological significance of the Rio Grande Valley. Thank you to everyone who came out to support the art fair – it was a great day to celebrate local artists, the Friends and the Hubbell House Alliance!

Summer Art Program

This summer the Friends are excited to welcome students aged 12 - 17 to Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge from June 11th - 15th for a free engaging art program where attendees will learn about nature through the eyes of an artist. The course is currently full, but you can email Cinnamon Weaver at moussewomannm@gmail.com to be added to the wait list.

learning about
NATURE
through the eyes of an artist

June 11th - 15th from 10am - 2pm
Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge
7851 2nd St. SW - Albuquerque, NM 87105
FREE: engaging camp for youth aged 12 to 17
Space is limited. Application deadline: May 11th
Contact Cinnamon Weaver for more information:
moussewomannm@gmail.com - (505) 321-7945

Refuge Welcome Center

The Valle de Oro NWR Welcome Center is now open to visitors 6 days a week! The Welcome Center is currently open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30am - 4:00pm and Thursday and Saturday 8:30am - 12:00pm. The Valle de Oro NWR staff have been working to convert the old farm house into an information center, and while there are still many updates to come, we are excited to open it up to the public as a resource. The Welcome Center is staffed by some amazing volunteers to answer questions, share maps, document wildlife sightings and more. We also have a bathroom and water dispensers to help you prepare for your time on the refuge or refill after a visit.

The refuge is actively seeking volunteers to help pick up certain weekly shifts. Do you want to volunteer some time to introduce visitors to the refuge and answer questions? For more information contact Antonio "Toby" Valdes at (505) 401-0789 or antonio_valdes-dapena@fws.gov.

Plus

New Refuge Hours!

Starting in the month of June, the refuge gate will now be open from an hour before sunrise to an hour after sunset! These will be the new permanent hours of the refuge, throughout restoration and beyond.

Annual Meeting Re-Cap

This year's annual meeting brought our members together at Mountain View Elementary school on Saturday, January 20th. Unfortunately, our event coincided with a government shut down so our pals at the Refuge couldn't join us. But that didn't stop us from having a great event! Over snacks, our members joined us for a presentation by Project Coyote, updates on 2017 activities, the need to build up local support for the Refuge, presentation of the 2017 Photo Contest winners, and our volunteers of the year!



2017 Volunteers of the Year

The Friends were so lucky to have great volunteers throughout 2017. At the Annual Meeting and at our Volunteer Banquet we were so excited to honor Deb Martin, Jeremy Sena, and Hannah Redwood for their tireless commitment to the Friends all year long!

Interested in Volunteering??

Have you set up an account in our volunteer database yet? It's an easy way to sign up for event support, keep track of your hours, and stay up to date on all things Refuge related! Some opportunities available right now are assisting the marketing and outreach committee, joining the Golden Gala committee, leading refuge tours, and more! We're so appreciative of our volunteers, we even hold a volunteer banquet every year. Sign up for an opportunity and help take part in your Refuge today!



Go to <http://bttr.im/pv8a4> to Sign Up

- Click on the Link Above
- Create a Username and Password
- Fill out Application Indicating your Interests & Qualifications

After Filling out the Application:

- Access the Volunteer Portal
- Review and Sign-Up for Volunteer Activities
 - View your Personal Volunteer Schedule
 - Track your Volunteers Hours
- Update your Interests and Qualifications

Access Your Volunteer Portal Using:

WEB: <http://MyVolunteerPage.com>

With questions or for application or hour tracking support contact:
Antonio Valdes at antonio_valdes-dapena@fws.gov or 505-401-0789 or
Aryn LaBrake at aryn@friendsofvalledeoro.org or 505-750-3383

Volunteer to Represent the Friends at an Event

We have several upcoming partner events in June and we could use some support with tabling at these events to spread the word about Valle de Oro NWR and the work of the Friends. If you are new to representing the Friends at an event, we will provide you with training and team you up with an experience representative. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please join our Volunteer Database and sign-up for a shift, or you can contact Aryn LaBrake at 505-750-3383 or aryn@friendsofvalledeoro.org

Butterfly Education and Awareness Day (BEAD)

Saturday, June 2nd, 2018, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Plant World on El Pueblo

Shifts: 8:00am - 11:30am (includes set-up) & 11:30am - 3:00pm (includes break-down)

More Information: <https://alibi.com/events/267277/Butterfly-Education-and-Awareness-Day.html>

Pollinator Celebration

Saturday, June 16th, 2018, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Open Space Visitor's Center

Shifts: 8:00am - 11:30am (includes set-up) & 11:30am - 3:00pm (includes break-down)

More Information: <http://www.cabq.gov/parksandrecreation/open-space/events/pollination-celebration>

New Mexico Fermentation Festival

Saturday, June 23rd, 2018, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Gutiérrez-Hubbell House

Shifts: 9:00am - 12:00pm (includes set-up), 12:00pm - 3:00pm, & 3:00pm - 6:00pm (includes break-down)

More Information: <http://nmfermentationfest.com/>

Valle de Oro Transformation Thursdays

Discover Valle de Oro NWR Transformation Thursdays!

The Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge is keeping supporters updated with its Transformation Thursdays emails and social media postings. In case you did not know, construction and restoration work is ongoing at and near the Refuge, and the Refuge has decided to send out information about construction progress via weekly emails and social media postings.



The construction projects include 2nd street near the Refuge (which is currently down to one lane in each direction), an entrance road into the Refuge, a water piping project on 2nd street, an intersection improvement at 2nd and Desert and work on our first wetland at Valle de Oro NWR! Whew! That's a lot to keep track of, so if you want weekly construction updates, please send an email to VdOlistens@fws.gov.

You can view all past updates on the Refuge's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/ValleDeOroNationalWildlifeRefuge/>.

Gala Date and Location Announcement

Save the date! The 4th Annual Golden Gala will take place on **Friday, October 19th** at **Isleta Resort and Casino**. It will be a night you won't want to miss complete with auction, dinner, music, mingling on the outdoor patio, and more! The best part is this fun, casual evening supports our Refuge and keeps our work going. Mark your calendar!

Gala Planning Committee

Making the Golden Gala a success means teamwork. If you're interested in having a say in the theme of the Gala and help with recruiting sponsors, silent auction items, decorations, and more of the planning details for our biggest fundraiser of the year join the planning committee. We'll be meeting monthly throughout the summer, then bi-monthly and eventually weekly as the event gets closer. Join the committee on our new [volunteer login page](#) or by contacting Aryn LaBrake at aryn@friendsofvalledeoro.org or 505-750-3383.

Friends of Valle de Oro NWR Junior Board

We're Searching for the Next Generation of Board Members!

The Friends are looking for a few good young men and women—young people who can serve on a Junior Board, a Student Board, a Board of the Future. Okay, we do not quite know what we will call this new Board yet, but we know the people we want to serve on it: students aged 16 - 25 interested in learning about environmental stewardship, leadership, non-profit organizations, and serving on non-profit boards. We at the Friends believe the next generation is crucial to carrying on all the good work happening at the Refuge, and we want young people to start shaping their future now.

Do you know a young adult with great potential who may want to be a Board member of the future? Are you willing to help organize? Contact Aryn LaBrake at aryn@friendsofvalledeoro.org or 505-750-3383.



Beer Fundraiser

The Friends Fill Rio Bravo Brewing!

Rio Bravo brewery was absolutely hopping (pun intended!) on February 16th for our latest beer fundraiser. Friends of Valle de Oro merchandise was flowing out the door almost as fast as the beer was flowing. This year we featured a Valle de Oro lager poured into a pint glass with our new logo. Did you know that each year, the Friends debut a new pint glass design? You can still get the 2018 glass at events throughout the year.

If you missed the February beer fundraiser, don't worry! We will have another one coming up on July 13th – stay tuned

for the location! Plan ahead for a wonderful summer night with the Friends of Valle de Oro NWR!

Opening Doors to Nature Education Scholarship

Spread the word! Do you know a high school or college student interesting in a career in conservation? Send them information about our scholarship! The Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge announces the Friends of Valle de Oro NWR Scholarship Award Program for the 2018-2019 school year. Under the Program, one *Opening Doors to Nature*

Scholarship in the amount of \$750 will be awarded to a college student who is planning to pursue an environmentally focused career or is currently enrolled in a conservation/environmental degree or certificate program.

Program Guidelines and Priorities:

Applicants must meet at least one of the following criteria in order to apply:

- Attended a New Mexico High School or College and are currently enrolled in a (2)-year or (4)-year college or university in any location.
- Enrolled in or planning to attend a two (2)-year community college or four (4)-year college or university within the state of New Mexico.

Some preference will be given to applicants who have participated in a Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge or Friends of Valle de Oro NWR project, internship, or program, but is not required.

Completed applications must be received by the Friends of Valle de Oro NWR no later than August 1st, 2018. Late applications, or portions of applications, will not be accepted.

The scholarship award can be awarded to an individual only one time and should be applied to either tuition or education related materials (books, field or lab equipment, etc.) in the 2018-2019 school year. Applicants will be required to provide reports on progress and use of funds.

The applications will be reviewed and the recipient will be selected by the Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge Scholarship Committee. The scholarship will be awarded and announced on August 15th, 2018 and the winner will attend the Friends of Valle de Oro Gala (Friday, October 19th 5:30pm) to be publicly presented with the award.

Download the [pdf version](#) of the scholarship application, or [fill out the application online](#).

If you are interested in getting involved or supporting our *Opening Doors to Nature* scholarship, please contact: Aryn LaBrake at aryn@friendsofvalledeoro.org or 505-750-3383. Or you can join our education committee on our [Volunteer Database](#).



Environmental Justice Community Day & Updated Environmental & Economic Justice Strategic Plans

Abrazos: Environmental Justice Community

Day, a day focused on “embracing the health of our bodies, community, and lands,” was another huge success. Taking place over Earth Day weekend, 350 community members joined us at the Refuge for free food provided by Mayahuel’s Catering, performances by Innastate, the Atrisco Heritage Mariachi Group, Ballet Folklorica Santa Fe, poetry by Sheldon “MC Rhetorik” Tenorio. The Friends were also honored to present the recently updated Environmental & Economic Justice Strategic Plan summary document for Valle de Oro NWR. The updated plan is now available on our website – read the groundbreaking environmental justice work going on at the Refuge. Also, we now have a Spanish language version of our summary publication of the strategic plan to help spread the word about the work happening in our local community and at the Refuge.

Becoming a Member

We at the Friends of Valle de Oro NWR appreciate every bit of enthusiasm from our neighbors, visitors, and friends, but we especially appreciate those who have made the commitment of becoming a Member. If you love what the Friends do, and if you want to support the Friends, one of the best ways to show your support is to become a Member.

All it takes to become a member is a yearly donation of \$25—or \$40 for a family membership, and \$15 annually for students and seniors. Your membership dues are tax-deductible.

Why become a Member? First, it is a completely easy way to give, and we will even send you yearly reminders, so you never have to worry about remembering to give. Second, Members will begin receiving special Friends privileges, including early sign-ups for events including exclusive access to special planting events, member/volunteer appreciation events, and a chance to have your name become a permanent part of the Refuge Visitor Center.

If you sign up as a member by midnight tonight, you will also receive a free Friends tote bag!

Sign up at <http://www.friendsofvalledeoro.org/Join-Us-Become-a-Member>.

Environmental Justice Award

In March, the Refuge was excited to announce that Valle de Oro NWR, our partners at Los Jardines Institute and Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge were awarded the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Environmental Leadership Award for Environmental Justice. Congrats to all the partners, community members and refuge staff who have been working so hard on this project at Valle de Oro NWR!



2nd Street Clean Up Day



We had such a fun time at our Annual Spring Litter Cleanup event at [Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge](#)! We had a bunch of Friends members and a group of students working to clean up Albuquerque with a Keep America Beautiful grant. We cleaned up a dumpster worth of trash on the Refuge and surrounding roads and even had a special garter snake volunteer sneak into the truck! We hope you will join us in the fall for our next cleanup event on Saturday September 22nd!

Build your Refuge Day

Want to help develop the refuge? Now is your chance! This September we're celebrating the refuge sixth anniversary and National Public Lands Day by hosting a large-scale service day. The event will be Saturday, September 29 from 10am to 2pm. The event is free and fun for the whole family. There will be partner tables, music, information and more. Specific projects TBA. Mark your Calendars to get involved in building *your* National Wildlife Refuge.



Photo Contest

Our photo contest is underway again! When you're out at the Refuge make sure to snap pictures of your visit and you could be a winner next year. Check out some of 2017's winners below:

Photo Contest Grand Prize Winner:
Matthew Zmuda - Wildlife Category



Catherine Harris - Wildlife Category



Len Biss - Landscape Category



Wenshu Chen - Landscape Category



Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

2018 Photo Contest



Photographers Wanted!

Valle de Oro NWR invites photographers from all levels of expertise and age groups to enter the 2018 Valle de Oro NWR Photo Contest. The contest is open to all visitors—public, employees, friends and volunteers.

Highlight your local Refuge!

We are looking for striking images of Valle de Oro—on the ground, in the air, or any perspective. Images should capture the beauty of the refuge highlighting its wildlife, landscapes and visitors.

Categories

Photographers should choose the most appropriate category to enter each image in:

Wildlife/Plants

Images of any wildlife or plants on the refuge, including mammals, birds, insects, plants, fungi etc.

Landscapes

Images of landscape, habitat or generalized wildlife, such as a field of geese on the refuge.

People

Images of visitors enjoying the refuge, connecting people and nature, children, staff, volunteers, or farmers.

Restoration

A special category for 2018! Images of construction and restoration work happening at the refuge.

All photos must be taken on Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge property. (See map on back for Refuge boundary) Each participant may submit up to six (6) photographs total.

Images will be judged on originality, technical excellence, composition, overall impact and artistic merit.

Prizes will be awarded by the Friends of Valle de Oro NWR. Winning images will be displayed as part of a travelling exhibit throughout Albuquerque.

Your entries must be an electronic submittal at 300 dpi, images should be no smaller than 5x7 inches and no larger than 9x12 inches.

Email your entries to Hannah Redwood at valledeoro@fws.gov.

Photos that have been digitally altered beyond standard optimization (removal of dust, cropping, adjustments to color and contrast, etc.) will be disqualified. This includes the digital addition or deletion of objects and high dynamic range images.

All images will become the property of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and may be made available as public domain images on the web or other publications. Entrants retain the right to use their photos for any other purpose. Submission of your entries automatically waives any rights to your submittal and provides public domain rights to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Entrants must not infringe on the rights of any other photographer or person, submit images that involve the willful harassment of wildlife, damage to the environment, or trespass on tribal or private property.



Grand Prize Winner of 2017 Contest. / Matthew Zmuda

Winners and their images will be announced January 2019.

Email any questions and inquiries to valledeoro@fws.gov.

Give us your best shot!

Valle de Oro

National Wildlife Refuge

7851 2nd Street, SW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105

Refuge is open from 8:00 am–5:00 pm,
7 days a week

Directions

- From I-25 take exit 220 (Rio Bravo Blvd.);
- Take Rio Bravo Blvd., SE for 1 mile;
- Turn left on 2nd Street SW. Travel for 3 miles;
- Entrance to the refuge is on the right.

Deadline

for submitting entries is
December 31, 2018.

Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

[7851 2nd St. SW | Albuquerque, NM 87105](https://www.valledeoro.org)

[505.750.3383](tel:505.750.3383) | info@friendsofvalledeoro.org

