

Fall/Winter 2009

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CROSSING BORDERS

Dear Friends,

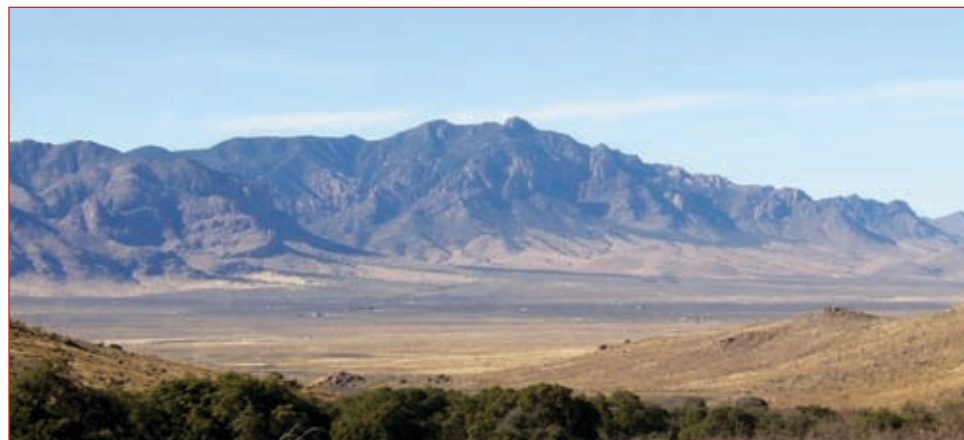
**A**s I write, I am sitting on the porch of a guest cottage at Cave Creek Ranch in the Chiricahua Mountains south of Portal, Arizona. The first

magnificent country lying to the south. Often referred to as the “Bootheel” of New Mexico, this region holds an incredible wealth of natural and cultural history. As you turn off the freeway at Roads Fork and head south on Highway 80 toward

the Sierra Madres to the south in Mexico. Running parallel with the Peloncillos to the east are the Chiricahua Mountains of southeastern Arizona, which represent one of the many “sky islands” in the region—isolated mountain ranges that rise up several thousand feet above the surrounding desert floors. Because of their geographic position, elevation gradients and isolation, the mountainous areas of southwest New Mexico and southeast Arizona contain some of the highest biological diversity found in these two states and, in fact, within the entire country.

In addition to the unique natural features of the region, this is land steeped in cultural history and western lore. It is here that Geronimo surrendered to General Crook in 1886. Pancho Villa staged raids across the border during the Mexican Revolution prior to the outbreak of World War I. And for a long time it has been ranching and farming country, where Anglos and Mexicans have traditionally worked side by side to sustain a living off of the land.

As you drop down into the valley, you seem to be entering another world—and I am not just referring to the change in time zones as you head east just north of Rodeo, toward Portal, and cross the state line from New Mexico into  
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rays of the morning sun light up the tops of the spectacular rhyolite cliffs of Cave Creek Canyon which tower overhead.

It is early October and for the past two days I have been attending an event hosted by the Wildlands Network in Rodeo, New Mexico. Rodeo is a small community located in the extreme southwest corner of New Mexico about halfway between Lordsburg and Douglas, Arizona, and just 15 miles east of where I am writing this now.

I would venture to guess that many who travel through the Lordsburg area across I-10 may be scarcely aware of the

Douglas, within about ten miles, you crest out over the low-lying, but rugged, Peloncillo Mountains and are afforded your first view of the sprawling San Simon Valley, magnificently framed by the Peloncillo Mountains to the east and the Chiricahua Mountains to the southwest.

The southern half of the Peloncillos, which arc from southeastern Arizona down to the Mexican border, bisect a region locally known as the Malpai Borderlands. This long, narrow mountain range provides an important bridge for flora and a corridor for wildlife moving between the Gila Range to the north and

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## CROSSING BORDERS *(continued from page 1)*

Arizona. Suddenly an ultralight flashes overheard, a sports car whizzes by you on the highway, and as you look around the valley you will see telltale signs of change and modernization—the “land for sale” signs, new residential subdivisions and development.

I was invited by the Wildlands Network to speak about conservation easements at Chiricahua-Peloncillo Heritage Days, a gathering of members of regional academic and research groups, conservation organizations, public agencies and the local farming and ranching communities. Over the course of the weekend, local and regional experts shared an impressive amount of information about the natural and cultural history of the area, and a strong, collective interest evolved among the participants to understand, protect and preserve the tremendous heritage of this remarkable region.

In the face of increasing growth and development, there is recognition of the need for more private land conservation. Much good work has already been done down here by The Nature Conservancy and the Malpai Borderlands Group, but much of this has been concentrated around the former Gray Ranch in the Animas Valley east of the Peloncillos in southwest New Mexico and in the San Bernadino Valley in southeast Arizona. Still, large areas in both states remain

underserved and this is a niche that NMLC is well-positioned to fill.

My two days in the Bootheel were informative, helping me better understand the threats to this region and the



needs of the local community, and inspiring, in terms of seeing how diverse groups of people have come together, historically and today, to find solutions. With the weekend behind me, it is time to head back north to Santa Fe. I realize that this is just one

special area in need of attention. At times it can be daunting to think about how much still needs to be done, but to paraphrase what Margaret Meade once wrote—never underestimate what a small group of concerned citizens can accomplish.

With that said, as friends and fellow concerned citizens, I encourage you to continue supporting the important work that we and others do to help conserve special places like the Chiricahua-Peloncillo region of southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico. As conservationists we need to be thinking and acting on community, watershed, landscape and ecoregional scales, and therefore we need to continue extending our reach around the state and region, even if that means occasionally crossing borders.

Scott Wilber  
*Executive Director*



# PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

**N**MMLC understands the value of partnering with other organizations and government entities to help create and expand opportunities for the conservation of high-priority, high-conservation value lands across the state. NMLC is currently working to complete a conservation easement on the Shortes XX Ranch, just south of the community of Pie Town in Catron County.

The conservation easement will cover 2,880 acres of a larger 6,760 acre ranch that has been in the same family for four generations. The ranch encompasses the eastern flanks of Alegres Mountain (10,229 ft.) and lower grassland areas with elevations ranging from approximately 6,200 to 7,800 feet. The ranch consists of high quality native grasslands and piñon juniper savannas at the lower elevations with piñon pine, alligator juniper, Gambel oak, Rocky Mountain juniper, and Ponderosa pine at the higher elevations.

NMLC assisted the landowners in applying for and acquiring a \$600,000 grant toward the purchase of the conservation easement through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP), administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). In addition to the FRPP funds, NMLC also secured \$192,773 from the New Mexico Energy, Mineral's and Natural

Resources Department's Land, Water and Conservation Easement program, which will be used to meet the matching requirements for the FRPP funds. These funding sources will help pay for a portion of the conservation easement's value; the landowners will donate the remainder of the easement



value. NMLC will co-hold the conservation easement with the New Mexico State Forestry Division.

The Shortes XX Ranch conservation easement will help protect a myriad of conservation values that contribute to the quality of the unique landscape and way of life in northern Catron County including significant wildlife habitat around Alegres Mountain; productive, agricultural land that supports the local, rural economy of northern Catron County; and scenic open space along the eastern flanks of Alegres Mountain which contributes to the viewshed and surrounding area for the Continental Divide.

NMLC is pleased to be working with excellent landowners and partners on this important land conservation effort.

Stay tuned for more information about this exciting project!

## SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

The conservation and protection of small, irrigated agricultural properties in New Mexico is crucial for the protection and enhancement of our local economies, food security, significant wildlife habitat, scenic amenities, and the cultural heritage of our smaller, rural communities. NMLC is currently involved with the Small Agriculture Land Conservation Initiative (SALCI) which promotes the protection of small agricultural lands through the use of conservation easements. SALCI was formed by a coalition of New Mexico land trusts and the Santa Fe Farmer's Market Institute. The initiative is currently exploring opportunities to help fund the transactional and stewardship costs associated with placing conservation easements on small agricultural properties. SALCI is also advocating for local and regional legislation, such as county or city resolutions and ordinances that would support the protection of small agricultural properties. This effort is still in its infancy, but we see it evolving quickly and becoming effective in helping solve some of the complexities and limitations inherent to the protection of small agricultural properties.

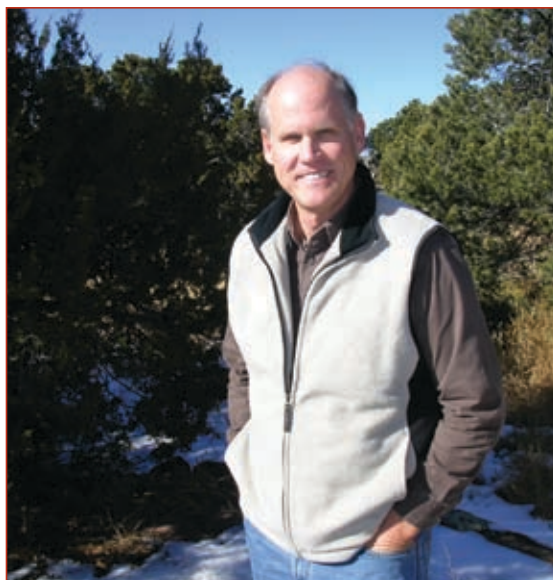
# NMLC BOARD PROFILE: DR. JACK WRIGHT

As a geographer, NMLC's Board Chair has traveled the world, but it's the Rocky Mountain region from New Mexico to Montana that always draws him back. During the school year, Dr. Wright—or Jack, as he's more commonly known—calls the Village of Mesilla home, and teaches and chairs the Geography Department at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. In the summer, he heads up to his home north of Missoula for some time in the woods.

Jack is the author of several books on land conservation, including "Saving the Ranch: Conservation Easements in the American West" which he co-authored with Tony Anella, another NMLC Board member. He has helped complete over 100 conservation easements, and consulted with private and governmental organizations on land planning. Last year, he received a teaching award that was based on a student vote, which he considers an especially great honor.

It was his childhood in the East that inspired his three decades of conservation in the West. "As a kid I had a favorite place I'd sit beside a creek," he recalls. "I'd go there almost every day to play and enjoy the quiet. I think everybody had a place like that, whether it's the woods, the desert, or a ranch. I grew up in a small town in

rural Maine on the Penobscot River with lots of room to roam across farms and for-



ests. When I was 10 our family moved to a suburb of Boston and it was a real jolt. There wasn't much Nature around and no farms at all—just endless tracts of houses. It made me realize the world can change and precious places can be lost."

As a young adult, just beginning his career out West, he continued to develop his views on planning and development issues. "In that remote setting, I wrestled with land development in traditional ranch country and became very disaffected with subdivision regulations as a way to conserve working landscapes. Government regulations didn't work and didn't seem fair."

His involvement with land trusts

started three years later when "I became acquainted with this thing called a conservation easement, which respected private property rights and provided financial compensation to landowners. It was a revelation that I could apply my knowledge of land use and ecology to help protect places. Just like that I became committed to this movement."

"I came to New Mexico in 1989 and I found I was spoiled in Montana. There was so much land conservation going on up there and, at least in southern New Mexico, hardly anyone had yet heard of land trusts and conservation easements. I eventually found NMLC and figured there were a few ways I could help out. Today, our name is pretty well known across the state."

He's optimistic about NMLC's prospects, even in a difficult economic time. "A few years ago, we set an audacious-sounding goal—250,000 acres under conservation easements by 2016. We've been making progress at achieving that only because landowners realize we can be trusted. That's the essence of this work—building trust and mutual respect."

"NMLC started as a group of people with an idea, and in 20 years I think we'll surpass the goals we have currently set

*(continued on page 8)*



# A GIFT OF A LIFETIME...AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

June 13, 2009 was a very special evening for the New Mexico Land Conservancy. That night we celebrated the opening of our new offices at the Petchesky Conservation Center with some 120 guests

and honored our very good friend and benefactress, Jane Petchesky.

Earlier this year, Jane Petchesky, made an incredible gift to NMLC of her beloved ranch, consisting of 262 acres of land and the house where she and her husband, Gene, had lived for 40 years. Coincidentally, when we informed Jane of the date of the event we learned that it was Gene's birthday. We all took that as a sign that this night was meant to be.

The evening's presentations included our guest speaker—local, award-winning author and conservationist Bill de Buys—and brief speeches by our board chair, Dr. Jack Wright, and our Executive Director, Scott Wilber. We also premiered a short film about NMLC and the Petchesky gift, enthusiastically produced by Teri Thomson

*(continued on page 8)*







# A FARMER'S FAITH

*I believe in farming as a way to make a living.*

*I believe in the dignity of my work.*

*I want no man's patronage, preaching or pity.*

*I believe in my soil. It will reward me in proportion to the thought, labor and love I give it.*

*I believe in myself. My success depends on me more than on the weather, luck, or laws.*

*I believe in my neighbors. My community, like my soil, returns to me as I give to it.*

*I believe in cooperation, in thinking for myself and acting with my fellows.*

*I believe that only a united agriculture can ensure justice and prevent inequality.*

*I believe in education.*

*The more I know the greater my ability to seize opportunities and be happy.*

*I insist that my children be enabled to learn to be useful, intelligent men and women.*

*I believe in conservation.*

*I will leave a better farm than I took.*

*I believe that living is the most important job in the world and I mean to plan my work so that my family and myself will have the time and means to enjoy life.*

*I face the years ahead with confidence, hope and cheer. I believe in myself, my fellow man and a Supreme Being.*

*I believe in farming.*

—Andrew S. Wing

*Farm & Fireside, September 1915*











## A GIFT OF A LIFETIME *(continued from page 5)*

Randall, which left nary a dry eye in the house.

At the end of the evening, we were honored to present Jane with a lifetime certificate to continue collecting and drinking the “sweet well water” that we very much enjoy here in the offices. We also presented Jane with a framed copy of “A Farmer’s Faith,” a touching poem that Jane’s father had composed years ago in his days as an editor with the *Farm & Fireside* magazine. Scott also surprised Jane with a box of .22 shells that Jane had left behind in the closet, just in case things ever got out of hands at her new residence at El Castillo retirement community.

We were honored when Jane’s family came in, from both coasts, to celebrate such a momentous occasion with us. We would also like to thank our sponsors: Henry Carey of the Forest Trust, Ethan and Susan Epstein, Helenty Homans, John & Sandy Whitney, Alphagraphics, Community Bank, Miguel Castillo & Santa Fe Audio Visual, La Pradera, Oshara Village and The Food Depot (equipment). Thank you Bill, Teri, our Board, our sponsors, all of our guests and, especially, Jane Petchesky, for an evening to remember.

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## DR. WRIGHT *(continued from page 4)*

for ourselves. I’m extremely optimistic. I think the philosophical soundness and fairness of what we do ring like a bell in people who care about the land.”

But even with all his experience and world travels, he gets the most pride thinking of the landowners who choose to conserve a piece of home. “I’m proud of the practical kindness of landowners. All NMLC does is help them express their stewardship ethics through a conservation easement, and help them make certain their land goes on as it is. I think many landowners had the same experience I did as a kid; of caring deeply about a part of this good Earth

and watching the losses mount up. As adults, we fill out the conservation easement paperwork, but it’s the kids inside us who really drive these deals.”

“They don’t have to do this,” he points out. “They do it because they choose it. It gives you hope.”

“Jack’s enthusiasm and optimism have resonated through the entire Board and staff,” notes Scott Wilber, NMLC’s Executive Director. “We are really lucky to have such an experienced and dedicated Board Chair, and we thank him for his six years of leadership.”



# FEDERAL & STATE TAX INCENTIVES UPDATE

**T**he current federal income tax deductions for conservation easement donations, passed under the 2008 Farm Bill, are scheduled to expire at the end of this year if Congress does not take action to renew and, ideally, make them permanent. The following bills affecting these tax deductions—the Conservation Easement Tax Incentive Act (House Bill 1831) and the Rural Heritage Incentives Act (Senate Bill 812)—were introduced in Congress this past spring. These bills are designed to make the current tax deductions permanent so that private landowners can continue to benefit from donations of qualifying conservation easements.

In support of the Land Trust Alliance's efforts at the national level, NMLC and several other members of the land trust community in New Mexico worked at the state level and were ultimately successful in securing sup-

port for these bills from all five members of our congressional delegation. Nationally, these bills now have strong, bi-partisan support from a majority of U.S. representatives and approximately one-third of the U.S. senators. In addition, New Mexico is one of the few states that can boast 100% support from our congressional delegation for these two pieces of legislation.

We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall as well as Representatives Ben Ray Lujan, Martin Heinrich and Harry Teague who have all signed on as co-sponsors for these two respective bills. We would also like to recognize the support of the Taos Land Trust, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust, and the Southern Rockies Agricultural Land Trust in making this happen. We now remain hopeful that these pieces of leg-

islation will be passed sometime within the next few months.

New Mexico is one of four states in the country that has a transferable state income tax credit for donations of land or easements for conservation purposes. As the next legislative session approaches in early 2010, NMLC will work closely with the New Mexico land trust community and the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department to ensure that the New Mexico state tax credit program is not discontinued.

In the absence of adequate public and private funding, the combined federal and state tax incentives are currently driving much of the private land conservation in New Mexico. NMLC is working actively to increase landowner awareness of these tax benefits as they provide powerful tools for protecting our precious land heritage.

## TOO MUCH PAPER IN YOUR MAILBOX?

The New Mexico Land Conservancy is more than happy to send you our latest newsletters by email rather than by regular mail. Simply email our office at [info@nmlandconservancy.org](mailto:info@nmlandconservancy.org) (put the word "subscribe" in the subject line) and we will start sending the newsletter to your email account.

Thank you.



# LAND CONSERVATION BENEFITS EVERYONE—WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Since 2002, the New Mexico Land Conservancy has conserved over 70,000 acres of land with significant agricultural, natural habitat, historic and cultural resource, scenic open spaces and recreational values around the state. We are committed to the goal to conserve, directly or in partnership

*“Nobody made a greater mistake  
than (s)he who did nothing because  
(s)he could do only a little.”*

—Edmund Burke

with others, 250,000 acres of high conservation value lands throughout New Mexico by 2016.

The benefits of land conservation are numerous not only to the private landowner but to local communities and the state as a whole. Protected land and water rights ensure that local communities have secure sources of locally grown food. Natural habitats help protect wildlife and other important ecosystem values. Recreational lands provide trails and public access for hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Scenic open spaces and historic and cultural preservation make it possible for future generations to enjoy the beautiful landscapes and cultural values that define New Mexico as the “Land of Enchantment.”

This is the land that all New Mexicans have inherited, and this is the heritage that we must all work together to steward and protect. Our projects reflect a commitment to protecting significant examples of each of these conservation values. We need your help to accomplish our goals.

You can support the work done by NMLC in the following ways:

➤ **Gifts of Cash or Securities.** Make your tax deductible donation using the enclosed enve-

lope today. This year, make a special gift to honor a friend or loved one with a donation to NMLC.

➤ **Pledges.** Make a long-term, planned gift by pledging to make recurring contributions every quarter, six months or year.

➤ **Planned Giving.** By including NMLC in your will, you will leave a legacy of land conservation for generations to come—as well as receive potential tax benefits.

➤ **Employer Matching Gifts.** Check with your employer to see if it will match your gift or pledge. This can greatly increase your contribution.

➤ **Gifts of Real Estate.** Gifts of land and other kinds of real estate enable NMLC to turn these gifts into much-needed capital for protecting high conservation value lands around the state, while providing the donor significant tax deductions.

*“Over the long haul of life on this planet,  
it is the ecologists, and not the bookkeepers,  
who are the ultimate accountants.”*

—Stewart Udall

➤ **Wish List.** Make a gift of or contribution toward an item on our wish list. Items currently on the list are:

1. Powerpoint projector and screen for presentations
2. All terrain vehicle (ATV) for conducting site visits and easement monitoring
3. Motorcycle (dirt bike) for conducting site visits and easement monitoring
4. Volunteer property and grounds maintenance



# MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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& ABIGAIL ADLER  
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## A GIFT OF A LIFETIME...AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

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