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PAJARITO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

### Los Alamos Celebrates Designation as First Community Wildlife Habitat in New Mexico

By Laura Loy

For two years PEEC volunteers and board members have been working to secure an important designation from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) for the county of Los Alamos. Earlier this year the good news came from the national organization that Los Alamos would be the first community in New Mexico and only the 85th in the nation to receive this prestigious title. To acknowledge this award for Los Alamos, the NWF will send representative Luisa Grant to PEEC's Earth Day event on April 23, where a short ceremony at 10:15 a.m. will celebrate the achievement.

The NWF Community Wildlife Habitat program was started in 1997, as a framework in which citizen leaders are able to protect wildlife habitats in their communities. Human development encroaches upon the habitats that once belonged exclusively to the local wildlife. With just a little thought and action, we can maintain those habitats so as to coexist with local wildlife.

Certified habitats can be homes, schools, businesses, public areas, or other community buildings. To become certified, they must provide the four basic elements that all wildlife need: food, water, cover, and places to

raise young.

To date, Los Alamos has 152 certified habitats. These include a number of private residences and business or residential complexes, as well as the Los Alamos Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden, the Los Alamos Nature Center, Los Alamos Cooperative Market, Los Alamos County parks, the Mary Deal Building, Reel Deal Theater, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church. Several public schools have also been certified, including Mountain and Barranca Elementary Schools as well as the Middle School.

*To date, Los Alamos has 152 certified habitats.*



*Mountain Elementary School Certified Schoolyard Habitat Site, 2014. During the certification process, the team of students planted several wildlife habitat gardens, went into classrooms to teach other students about habitat, participated in a plastic bag awareness campaign and collection competition (they won!), and held a trash fashion show.*



A bobcat visits a certified yard on Barranca Mesa. Photo by Hari Viswanathan.

In order to become certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat, Los Alamos had to meet a number of criteria, including reaching the minimum number of certified habitats in various categories, as well as providing community education and outreach on the topic. Los Alamos was able to receive the designation in a record two years. It typically takes a community five to seven years to become certified.

“It is a true honor for us that Luisa Grant from NWF, with whom our committee has worked closely over the last two years, will be able to personally attend the ceremony on April 23,” said Certified Wildlife Habitat committee member Selvi Viswanathan. “We encourage the public to attend as well, to celebrate the successful awarding of Community Wildlife Habitat to Los Alamos, which was made possible by our own citizens.”

Viswanathan added that receiving the designation does not mean that the committee’s efforts are finished. It will continue encouraging community residents, businesses and organizations to certify their properties, and the committee will continue to bring educational and outreach opportunities to Los Alamos.



*Thank you for being  
a nature steward.*

## I Found an Animal out of Place! Now What?

By Sandra West

Spring is here, and the Los Alamos Nature Center phones will soon be ringing because concerned citizens want help caring for nature. Thank you for thinking of us! We appreciate being known as the place to call with questions about our natural environment and its inhabitants (the non-bipedal ones). Aside from help with identification and navigation, we often find ourselves referring callers to people and organizations that can provide rehabilitation care for animals in need.

This article is designed to be a guide to help you navigate the “animal out of place” experiences you may have this year. It will hopefully answer the questions: “Does this animal need help?” and “Who to call?” Other than a few exceptions, PEEC cannot accept animals and does not have the facilities to provide care for special-needs wildlife. Luckily, there are local people and organizations that can! This article assumes that you find the animal outside. If it is inside, please refer to the contacts list below.


### Does the animal need help?

We hope the guide on the next page will help you determine whether to give aid or to trust nature. If a baby bird needs help, call the number below and put the bird in a box to keep it dark, quiet, and warm until help arrives.

### Who to call?

Here are a list of the people who offer wildlife care and their area of expertise:

Baby birds: Sally Fitzgibbon (505) 920-8957  
Injured birds: Carol Taschek (505) 929-9011  
Santa Fe Raptor Center (505) 699-0455  
Snakes: Tom Wyant (505) 672-1981 or (505) 412-1984  
Wildlife Center, Espanola (505) 753-9505  
Cottonwood Animal Clinic, Espanola (505) 753-3790  
NM Department of Game and Fish (505) 248-6866  
Los Alamos Animal Control (505) 662-8222

Thank you for being a nature steward. 



Los Alamos Nature Center's Certified Wildlife Habitat sign from the National Wildlife Federation.



# Does the Animal Need Help?



Flowchart adapted from "Healers of the Wild: Rehabilitating Injured and Orphaned Wildlife" by Shannon K. Jacobs.

# INSECT Investigations

by Jove Hallmark

INSECTS ARE AMAZING! They've been <sup>living</sup> around on Earth for 2 million years!  
 out of all insects (scientists have named a million or so, but think there are  
 a million MORE!)...less than 1% are harmful to humans and our crops.

## BUG BOOK



**Don't bug the bugs!**  
 Avoid the bugs who bite or sting or...  
 ...give you the shivers!

INSECTS, SPIDERS AND SIMILAR  
 CREATURES ARE VERY TINY COMPARED  
 TO YOU AND ME please handle them  
 gently..... You can watch busy bees & wasps  
 a few feet away.  
 If you don't bother  
 them...they won't  
 bother you!

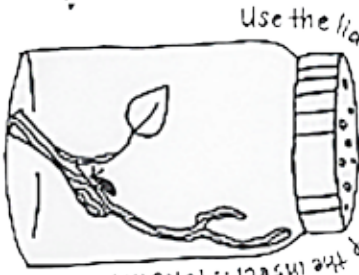
sneak up on a BUTTERFLY...  
 you get close enough  
 to see the eyes  
 and proboscis;  
 who do you see?  
 What color are they?  
 What are they doing in there?  
 peek inside some flowers...

draw pictures of the insects  
 you see, and write down  
 some of your observations  
 • if you don't know the  
 name of a bug...make one up  
 based on how it looks or what  
 it is doing.

staple or  
 clip  
 all of your pages  
 together.....



Look under a rock...are there any clues to who lives there?  
 please...put their foot  
 back on  
 c-a-r-e-f-u-l-l-y  
 find them...unless they're sharing your house.



SMALL, CLEAR  
 JARS ARE GOOD  
 FOR  
 EXAMINING bugs  
 Use the lid to gently scoop  
 up the insect...poke holes in

Plant a pot of  
 flowers or  
 put mushy banana  
 on a plate in the  
 garden  
 see who comes to visit...  
 some butterflies like to drink nectar from flowers  
 others are attracted to  
 really smelly things  
 the lid so the bug can have air.  
 Insects breathe through holes  
 in their body called "SPIRACLES"

SPECIAL THANKS TO  
 OUR FRIENDS  
 AT THE  
 Randall Davesy  
 Audubon Center

# Tiny Mammals, Huge Impacts

By Holly Smith and Justin Stevenson  
from RD Wildlife Management and FightWNS

Bats are valuable members of the global ecosystem – ecologically, economically, and culturally. They provide ecosystem services (e.g., insect suppression, pollination, seed dispersal), products and provisions (e.g., tequila, durian, sisal, cactus fruits), and contribute considerably to mammalian diversity. With at least 1,200 species worldwide, bats constitute one of every five mammalian species.

Bats compose the taxonomic order Chiroptera (from the Greek *cheir*, “hand,” and *pteron*, “wing”) and are the only mammals capable of true flight. More than 40 microchiropterans (i.e., echolocating microbats) are endemic to the United States, with 29 species inhabiting New Mexico. Despite being taxonomically successful, more than half of

American bat species are endangered, threatened, or of special concern.

Bat populations are imperiled by habitat loss and modification; climate change; pesticides and pollution; human development (e.g., wind turbine facilities and urbanization); and the catastrophic disease white-nose syndrome (WNS).

Bats are fascinating and endearing animals synonymous with diversity, which characterizes every facet of bat ecology from geographical range to morphology to foraging and roosting behavior. Bats are cosmopolitan, inhabiting every continent except Antarctica, for flight provides the opportunity to access locales unavailable to terrestrial mammals.

North American bats are predominantly insectivorous, and studies indicate these populations are of



Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendi*).  
Photo courtesy of rdwildlife.com.



Yuma myotis bats (*Myotis yumanensis*). Photo courtesy of rdwildlife.com.

## *Bats are fascinating and endearing animals...*

considerable economic importance to the agricultural industry – worth between \$3.7 and \$53 billion annually. Bats exploit populations of nocturnally active insects employing two foraging strategies – aerial hawking and gleaning. Aerial insectivores identify and capture prey via echolocation, by emitting a series of brief frequency-modulated, mostly ultrasonic sounds and

detecting the fine changes in the returning echoes that result from the reflection of the sound off a target.

Alternatively, gleaning species locate prey by olfactory, visual, and auditory cues, which helps them glean prey from surfaces (e.g., foliage, tree bark, leaf litter). Many species, including the little brown myotis and northern long-eared myotis, exhibit foraging flexibility, using both aerial hawking and gleaning techniques. Diversity even exists between species and their choice of prey; smaller species consume mosquitoes and moths, whereas larger species, such as pallid bats, prey on scorpions and crickets.

To circumvent seasonal temperature extremes and insect shortages, bats either migrate or hibernate. However, some species exhibit flexibility in their winter activity patterns, which vary from sustained hibernation to intermittent dormancy. Hibernation is the most common overwintering strategy for temperate zone species. Unfortunately, since the winter of 2005/2006, white-nose syndrome (WNS) has decimated hibernating bat populations throughout the northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. Labeled the most devastating disease ever reported for wildlife in North America, WNS is responsible for approximately 7 million deaths, impacting several hundred hibernation sites (hibernacula) within 27 states and five Canadian provinces.



Although most North American species are 4 to 16 grams, bats exhibit life history characteristics (e.g., life span, gestation length, litter size, size at birth, age at sexual maturity) typical of large megafauna such as elephants and pandas. Bats possess surprisingly low reproductive rates, and consequently, relatively slow population growth and poor ability to recover from population crashes such as WNS.

To learn more about white-nose syndrome and help fund critical research, please visit [FightWNS.org](http://FightWNS.org). If you have questions or concerns about bats, please visit [rdwildlife.com](http://rdwildlife.com) or contact [justin@rdwildlife.com](mailto:justin@rdwildlife.com). 🦇



*Our first solar panels being lifted onto the planetarium roof. Photo by Bob Walker.*

## Los Alamos Nature Center Earns LEED Gold Certification

By Katherine Watson, Executive Director

Thanks to the quick action of a group of dedicated donors, the Los Alamos Nature Center earned a LEED gold certification instead of the required silver. But the work is not quite over yet! There is room on the nature center roof for a few more solar panels, and we are trying to raise \$11,000 to complete the array. Interested donors can make a contribution of any size on our webpage ([peechnature.org/finish-the-solar-panels](http://peechnature.org/finish-the-solar-panels)) or at the Earth Day Festival on April 23. Or help by getting solar on your own house through Positive Energy Solar and they'll give PEEC \$1,000! More info is at [peechnature.org/finish-the-solar-panels](http://peechnature.org/finish-the-solar-panels).

LEED certification is an official recognition that a project complies with energy-efficient building recommendations set by the national Green Building Council. LEED requirements are designed to promote design and construction practices that increase profitability while reducing the negative environmental impacts of buildings and improving occupant health and well-being.

Klinger Constructors, contractors for the nature center building, were required by County regulations to achieve LEED silver status. When they tallied up their LEED points, they were short a few to achieve this, despite the building's innovative water-catchment system, low flow toilets, LED lighting, and other energy-saving features. So Klinger decided to install a few solar panels on the roof. The points from these panels would bump the project up to silver status, fulfilling Klinger's contractual requirements.



*Foxy fascinates high school students during a March field trip. Photo by Beth Cortright.*

However, when some of our friends heard that installers were coming to put up a few solar panels, they jumped in to help fund more panels than the few that Klinger planned. A group of 19 generous donor families gave money to install five times as many panels as were originally planned! Thanks to this group (see sidebar), the nature center is now generating much of its own power, and the building has been LEED gold certified. In this case, a small group of committed individuals really did effect a big change.

We invite you to join them by contributing to the rest of the array at [peechnature.org/finish-the-solar-panels](http://peechnature.org/finish-the-solar-panels). 🌞



*Solar panels installed on the planetarium roof in January 2016. The white mounts not attached to solar panels show where additional panels are needed.  
Photo by Bob Walker.*

## 2015 Solar Panel Donors

Paul & Nancy Arendt  
 Chuck & Barbara Calef  
 J. Arthur Freed  
 Mark & Lynn Jones  
 Chick & Yvonne Keller  
 Don & Judy Machen  
 Siobhan & Anders Niklasson  
 Felicia Orth & Evan Rose  
 Katie & Richard Sayre  
 Ann Shafer  
 Rebecca & Thomas Shankland  
 Natali Steinberg  
 Kathleen & George Taylor  
 James TenCate  
 Bob & Laurie Walker  
 Sandra & Shawn West  
 Richard (Mouser) Williams  
 David & Marilyn Yeamans  
 Hedy & Skip Dunn

**Our Mission: Enriching people's lives by strengthening their connections to our canyons, mesas, mountains, and skies.**

## PEEC Board of Directors

Felicia Orth, President  
 Bob Walker, Vice President  
 Daniel Poretti, Secretary  
 Nancy Arendt, Treasurer  
 Michele Altherr, Jeremy Campbell, Craig Martin,  
 Rebecca Oertel, Karla Sartor, Ann Shafer, and  
 Hari Viswanathan



*Children love our interactive exhibits!  
Photo by Beth Cortright.*

## PEEC Staff

Katherine Watson, Executive Director  
 Jonathan Creel, Director of Interpretation  
 Siobhan Niklasson, Education Programs Director  
 Beth Cortright, Nature Center Manager  
 Kate Barrere, Visitor Services Manager  
 Sandra West, Marketing Manager  
 Denise Matthews, Educator

## Nature Center Hours:

Monday 10-4  
 Tuesday 10-8  
 Wednesday 10-4  
 Closed Thursday  
 Friday 10-4  
 Saturday 10-4  
 Sunday 1-4

## Visit us online, too!

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[flickr.com/photos/peec\\_nature](https://flickr.com/photos/peec_nature)  
 Download the Los Alamos  
 Trails App on the iTunes store or  
 Google Play, and review us on  
 Trip Advisor



**PEEC**

Pajarito Environmental  
Education Center

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PEEC at the Los Alamos Nature Center  
2600 Canyon Road  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544  
505.662.0460  
[www.pecnature.org](http://www.pecnature.org)

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*An Abert's squirrel surveys the wildlife observation area from the fence. Photo by Bob Walker.*

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## INSIDE

- 1 Community Wildlife Habitat Celebration
- 2 I Found an Animal out of Place! Now What?
- 4 Kids' Corner
- 5 Tiny Mammals, Huge Impacts
- 6 LEED Gold Certification
- 7 PEEC Staff

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## FEATURED EVENTS

Hike the La Bajada Trail **APRIL 9**

Earth Day Festival **APRIL 23**

We are Stars Premiere **APRIL 29**

Plants, Caterpillars, and Butterflies **MAY 3**

Rattlesnakes Visit the Nature Center **JUNE 15**

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