

Volume 3 Issue 6

Winter

2020



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Whitfield Education Programs

Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District

East Valencia Urban Gardens Program

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Ted Hodoba, *Whitfield Manager*

Allison Martin, *Education Manager*

**Lindsey Diaz, *East Valencia Urban
Gardens Program Coordinator***

Johnny Chavez, *Lead Field Technician*

Victor Chavez, *Field Technician*



Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District

Dr. Gail Goodman is the newest incumbent occupying seat 5 as a Board Supervisor for the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District. In addition to her academic work in the field of language development, multi-cultural education and research, teaching at all levels in the USA, Mexico, Israel, and the Navajo Nation, eventually earning an Ed.D. degree, Gail Goodman is an internationally recognized authority on one of the world's oldest purebred dogs, the Saluki. She is the editor/publisher of the reference volume *The Saluqi: Coursing Hound of the East* as well as contributing articles to magazines world wide about these lovely dogs. The terrain and climate of our Middle Rio Grande Valley is perfect for walking with Salukis....an ancient hound in an ancient landscape.



Our Mission: To provide education, technical assistance, and recognition to current and future stewards of the land in natural resource conservation.

Connecting Students to the Land: Education Programs

Education Manager, Allison Martin

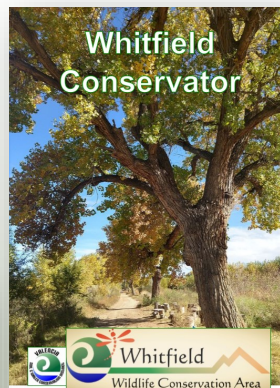
Throughout the year, Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area has been an area where students of all ages have visited during the school year. In 2019, Whitfield has seen 1,488 students from preschool-seventh grade from 18 schools. Every visit has a different focus from native plants and animals, to making important connections to the landscape over time. Students are introduced to new ways of not only observation of the local environment around them, but how to think critically about current and future trends in this area. These important connections help students feel comfortable with using outdoor spaces such as backyards and schools yards for learning.

“Every student I visit with has a desire to understand what is happening around them.”

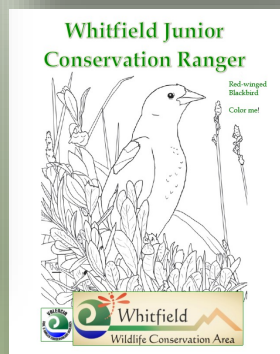
By understanding the changes in our land over time, we can better understand and make predictions of future trends to find new ways to restore the land for plant and animal habitats, healthy soils and better land restoration, conservation and preservation techniques. Whitfield education programs start up again in January of 2020.



New Programs coming soon for 2020



- ◆ FREE Adult Ranger Program available at Whitfield
- ◆ Complete activities while visiting Whitfield and earn an award!



- ◆ FREE Junior Ranger Program for all ages available at Whitfield
- ◆ Complete activities while visiting Whitfield and earn an award!

NM Envirothon

In New Mexico, the Soil & Water Conservation Districts sponsor a statewide environmental competition for high school age youth. This is often an exceptional experience for these young adults engaging with professionals in field team competitions from across the state; many keep their friendships with participants into their adult endeavors.

Valencia SWCD is eager to see two teams (limit) from our District go to the state competition to be held in April 2020 at the Glorieta Retreat Center this year—the winning team goes to the international competition in August.

If you are interested in forming a team or have already formed a team, please let us know how we can assist with your efforts!

This is a great opportunity for young stewards as they embark on their journey to become life stewards of the land!



32nd Annual Dan Goodman Soil Water and Environmental Improvement Award 2020:

Annually the District Board honors local youth for their contributions toward natural resources conservation. We thank former Board Supervisor Dan Goodman for his trust established in 1987 for this award including a certificate of recognition and monetary award for selected finalists.

High School age youth are eligible to apply. For current application and more information please call our office at 864-8914.

Applications will be submitted April 1st of 2020.



Soil Testing through VSWCD



We offer soil testing assistance year round for producers and home gardeners within the District area. Just call our office at 864-8914 or visit our website at valenciaswcd.org

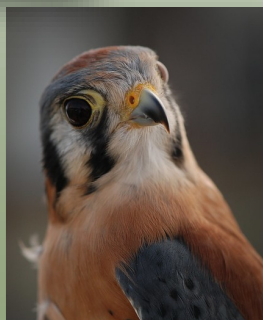


Injured Wildlife

Ted Hodoba, Whitfield Manager

We often get calls from people who have found an injured bird or other animal. They want to know if they can bring it here to Whitfield or where they can take it. I have to explain to them that we are not licensed to do so, which is required by the state.

Recently, I found a hawk, a Northern Harrier with an injured wing that someone left at our front gate. I picked her up off the cold ground and she was barely alive, put her on the floor of my truck, and went back to the visitors' center to find a box to put her in. As it was the end of the work day and I live in Albuquerque, I took her home with me. The reason I did that is because the organization that is licensed and can treat injured or abandoned baby wildlife is located at the Rio Grande Nature Center.



That organization is Wildlife Rescue Inc. of New Mexico. They are a fantastic non-profit volunteer organization, which provides care for displaced wildlife prior to release (if possible). I called them and left a message after listening to their instructions on how to care for an injured bird until it can be taken care of. They return your call to discuss further options. In this case, I called another organization in the meantime, Hawks Aloft, who picked up the bird from my house and then took it to Wildlife Rescue. Both are wonderful, volunteer organizations dedicated to helping wildlife.

Unfortunately, the Harrier didn't survive and died the next day from her injuries. It appears she died from flying into a wire or other obstacle and suffered from blunt trauma to her wing/body area.

If you find an injured animal, call Wildlife Rescue at (505) 344-2500 and follow their instructions as to what to do with it. If you find a baby bird, don't pick it up. Leave it alone and its parents will take care of it. If you are sure it fell out of the nest, see if you can put it back or create another nest for it that the parents can find (check out the instructions on the Wildlife Rescue recording).



East Valencia Urban Gardens Program

Lindsey Diaz, Coordinator

- Volunteers completed over 200 hours throughout the season and grew over 2,500 lbs of produce at two community gardens at El Cerro Lake and Meadow Lake Community Centers.
- EVUGP led 10 workshops, classes and events with partners including NMSU Cooperative Extension Service (NMSU CES), Valencia Community Gardens and Valencia Community Action Network.
- 10 families completed the Seed To Supper 5-week beginner gardener series
- 15 youth interns ages 13-18 completed EVUGP 6-month long Youth Farming Internship Program learning everything about growing produce using regenerative farming. The interns also started the first East Mesa Grower's market selling produce at a reduced rate to local community members.
- In June 2019, East Valencia Urban Gardens received a grant through the New Mexico Community Foundation to fund 5 new Youth Farming Interns, 2 part-time Garden Keeper positions and for supplies to start seedlings, plant more fruit trees and build hoop houses at the gardens.
- Looking at 2020 EVUGP is really excited about some developments! We are working with NMSU CES to start a weekly Kids Gardening Program for East Mesa kids.
- Youth Development, Inc. has committed to funding another 15 youth in 2020 which will include two Youth Farming Leaders to support promoting.
- EVUGP is working District-wide too. We are working with teachers throughout the District to develop a network of support and technical assistance to start school gardens. We are also developing partnerships with many organizations to make a plan for how to support new farmers through training and resource development.
- Seed to Supper: This garden series supports first-time gardeners starting their own backyard fruit and vegetable garden. Learn everything from planning your garden, amending your soils, starting seedlings, maintaining your garden, pest management, harvesting and using your crop.



Food Fiesta, 2019



Hoop house building
-Donated by NRCS



El Cerro Mission Garden community event and harvesting produce

2020 Financial Assistance Program

Madeline Miller, District Manager

The Financial Assistance Program application period has closed for this year. We are currently in the process of reviewing 15 applications, an amount doubled since last year's requests. Stay tuned: we may have a stand-alone practices application that we hope to launch this year if funds available for mill levy taxpayers in the District.

October 2020- December 31st 2020

Call us to find out more, or go to our website at www.vswcd.org

New this year: assistance rates based on

Conservation priorities at 75%, 50%, and 25% of your costs.

Other program notices:

[USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

[Program Updates:](#)

Signup Opens for the Conservation Reserve Program

Signup has opened for the Conservation Reserve Program, or CRP. The deadline for agricultural producers to sign up for the competitive general CRP is February 28, 2020, while signup for continuous CRP is ongoing. Farmers and ranchers who enroll in CRP receive a yearly rental payment for voluntarily establishing long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands.

VSWCD Partners with Private Landowners:

Valencia Soil & Water Conservation District is one of many coming together as the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance for landscape wide funding to address invasive woody species such as salt cedar and Siberian elm that have created fire hazard conditions and habitat degradation in our District. If you are a landowner with riparian habitat within the floodplains of the Rio Grande or along tributaries into the Rio Grande that would like support for managing your land including removal of invasive species, restoring native habitat, creating defensible space while enjoying Bosque in your back yard, please call our office for more information.



Funding Opportunities

Grants we've been awarded

- In June 2019, EVUGP received a grant through the New Mexico Community Foundation for \$18,059 to fund 5 new Youth Farming Interns, 2 part-time Garden Keeper positions and for supplies to start seedlings, plant more fruit trees and build hoop houses at the gardens. Natural Resource Conservation Service also donated a 20'x14' hoop house to the Meadow Lake Garden.

Some of the Grants we are working to pursue

- VSWCD has submitted a grant proposal for \$12,000 through the NMDA Healthy Soils Education and Outreach grant to support a planting of native shrubs, grasses and forbs in an upland area just south of Whitfield called The Rio Abajo Conservation Area. Youth involvement is huge and will be the driving force behind the planting.
- VSWCD recently submitted a grant proposal through the local Facebook Community Action Grant for an informational outdoor kiosk that will have the capabilities to use a touch screen for all visitors to access all information about the entire District.
- EVUGP has submitted a grant proposal for \$50,000 to the National Association of Conservation Districts Urban Agriculture Conservation Initiative. This funding would not only support all this programming but also fund expanding the El Cerro Mission to create an orchard, private garden plots and a kids' growing area.
- EVUGP recently applied for a Healthy Soils Education Grant in the amount of \$12,430 to fund training 10 local growers and 15 East Mesa youth interns on the benefits and use of healthy soils practices and the Johnson-Su Bioreactor compost on-site. The project would culminate in the trainees demonstrating practices to kids and community members through a workshop and garden tour at the end of the season.
- EVUGP recently partnered with Valencia Community Gardens to apply for a \$4,000 grant through 'The Fruit Guys' to fund water harvesting, drip irrigation, wind breaks and pollinator plants for the three community gardens in Tomé, Meadow Lake and El Cerro Mission. This funding would help to expand the El Cerro Mission Garden.



Partnerships Move Mountains!

Some key partnerships have been the backbone to tackle large projects, programs and events important to our mission. Here are just some of the many partners who created great work with us !

Sandia Mountain Natural History Center lead the fifth grade ecology program for local schools at Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area.

Youth Development Inc provide internship opportunities at Whitfield and East Valencia Urban Gardens Program. (EVUGP)

NMSU Extension Office helps lead EVUGP workshops, classes, events and fund the Seed to Supper program materials.

Valencia Community Gardens donate materials for events , programs and workshops, and act as a fiscal sponsor for grants for EVUGP.

Valencia Community Action Network co leads events, and acts as fiscal sponsor for grants for EVUGP.

B.E.M.P (Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program) The District uses BEMP data collections for restoration efforts in the Bosque in our area. This critical data provides us information about the riparian area so we can identify priorities in improving the watershed. BEMP provides outreach opportunities to over 200 students in local schools annually.

New Mexico Audubon/B.E.M.P./Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge partnership work together with us to create learning opportunities centered around environmental education for local teachers.

Central New Mexico Audubon Society helps support Whitfield Education Programs by providing funding for an intern stipend for 2020.

Rocky Mountain Youth Corporation helps with restoration projects at Whitfield.



Friends of Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

Membership Application



The Friends of Whitfield are a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to supporting the Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area by promoting habitat restoration, education and conservation. We encourage the public to visit the Whitfield, see some wildlife, and learn something about the diversity of plants and animals that call this place home.

Example membership application available at Whitfield.

Here are just some things that the Friends of Whitfield supported last year!

Membership Application
(Please print clearly)

Name _____
 Family Members _____
 (if Family Membership)
 Address _____
 City State _____
 Zip _____ Phone _____
 Email _____

Membership Level

<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> New
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15	
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$10	
<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20	
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Friend \$60	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5	
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Sponsor \$200	

Please check the **Volunteer** opportunities that interest you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Ambassador	<input type="checkbox"/> Citizen Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Member	
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Stewardship	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Events
<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Education	
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Events	

Please fill out mail or bring in to Visitor's Center, with your check or money order to:
 Friends of Whitfield
 Wildlife Conservation Area
 PO Box 170
 Belen, NM 87002
 friendsofwhitfield@gmail.com
 www.friendsofwhitfield.org
 And on FaceBook

Thank you!

Friends of Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area is a registered 501 (c)3 non-profit organization incorporated in 2008 to support the purposes for which the WWCA was created.



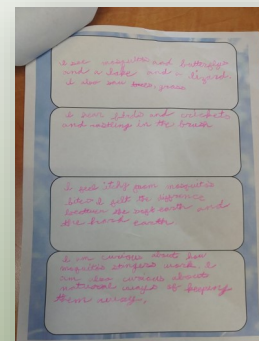
Bus Funding for 17 schools



Binoculars and Bird Guide to two local fifth grade students from Gil Sanchez Elementary



The Earth Day Science Fiesta with 25 participants with hands on activities for all ages!



Whitfield's first Junior Ranger Program

There is now a place to donate directly on the website:

<http://www.friendsofwhitfield.org/>

EVENTS COMING UP!

Feb. 22nd @10am-12pm

Composting Basics Workshop Presentation

Location: Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

Learn the basics of home composting presented by the Bernallilo Master Composters. **Registration:** call 505-864-8914.

March 8th @ 1pm-4pm

Birdhouse Making Workshop

Location: Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

Make your own birdhouse! **Registration required.** \$10 fee per kit. Please call 864-8914 to register.

March 13th @ 8:00am-4:30pm

Launch of Junior and Adult Ranger Program

Location: Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

Come learn about our two new free programs and earn your badges and lapel pins today!

April 25th @ 10am– 2pm

Earth Day Science Fiesta

Location: Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

Join us and other organization for hands on activities , food, live animals and much more!

Board meetings are the third Saturday of every month starting at 9:00 am and the Friends of Whitfield meetings are the second Saturday of every month at 10:00 am. Call for location and more information.

East Valencia Urban Gardens Program Events:

Feb 15 @ 8:30am – 1pm

Johnson-Su Bioreactor Demonstration Event

Location: Valencia Community Gardens (Silva Rd, Tome between Tome Gallery and Immaculate Conception Catholic Church)

Help fill the bioreactor and learn all about the healthy soil benefits and how to do it at your own home!

February 29 – April 4 (Saturdays) @ 10am – 12:30pm

Seed to Supper – Six-week Backyard Garden Series

Location: El Cerro Mission Community Center, 309 El Cerro Mission Rd

This garden series supports first-time gardeners starting your own backyard fruit and vegetable garden.



Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District:

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PO Box 170 Belen, NM 87002 valenciaswcd.org

Email: valenciaswcd@live.com, eemanagervswcd@gmail.com

505-864-8914

