

By email submitted through <https://www.governor.state.nm.us/contact-the-governor/>

April 29, 2021

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Office of the New Mexico Governor  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor Lujan Grisham:

We the undersigned represent conservation organizations actively working to protect wildlife and habitats in New Mexico. We are writing to provide you with our recommendations for candidates to fill the vacant seat on the New Mexico Game Commission formerly held by David Soules.

We view this as a very important appointment. Mr. Soules brought a great deal of integrity to the position during his tenure. His open-mindedness, thoughtfulness, accessibility and respect for science earned him the respect of many of us in the conservation community. He leaves behind large shoes to fill.

As you know, Mr. Soules held the “conservation” seat on the Commission, established in 1991 by the Legislature to provide a voice for the majority of New Mexicans who care about wildlife primarily for reasons other than for consumptive uses (i.e. hunting, fishing and trapping). Currently five of the six positions on the Commission are held by hunters. Although hunting and fishing are valued traditions in New Mexico, and consumptive users certainly deserve to be represented on the Commission, we feel it is essential that an advocate for non-consumptive uses be appointed to fill Mr. Soules’ vacant seat to ensure that the broader public is represented on this body.

We recommend that you select one of the following candidates. All of them are highly qualified by education and experience to serve on the Game Commission. They are:

Madeleine Carey

Madeleine grew up in the South Valley of Albuquerque and holds a B.S in Biology and Urban Studies from Tufts University. She first participated in a Department of Game and Fish program at age twelve as a student-researcher in the Watershed Watch program. Throughout her childhood she volunteered with NMDGF on various conservation projects, including electroshocking invasive trout, monitoring for chytrid fungus, and surveying elk calves in the Valles Caldera. She has led studies on the effectiveness of overpasses and underpasses at reducing wildlife mortality on urban roadways and on chicken wire exclosures at reducing beaver depredation on mature cottonwood trees in the middle Rio Grande bosque. She currently serves on the citizen advisory panel for the City of Santa Fe Streetlight Conversion Project and served on the 2012 NMEPSCoR Fire and Water implementation team.

In her professional capacity, Madeleine works for WildEarth Guardians with ranchers and rural communities to identify policy opportunities that equitably resolve Mexican wolf and livestock

conflict. She is an expert in finding the common ground between rural and urban constituencies and is well respected for her even-handed approach to engaging opposing sides on controversial issues. In her free time, Madeleine enjoys running, horseback riding, baking pie and fixing up the home she recently purchased in Santa Fe.

#### Michael Dax

Michael grew-up in upstate New York. He earned a bachelor's degree from Brandeis University. After college he spent 4 years working at the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone National Parks as a guide, cross-country ski instructor and trail groomer. He then received a masters degree in environmental history from the University of Montana where he began work on his book, Grizzly West, which focuses on the attempt to reintroduce grizzly bears to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in Montana and Idaho.

For 6 years, he served as the New Mexico representative for Defenders of Wildlife. In that role, he worked to recover Mexican gray wolves, restore aquatic and riparian ecosystems, improve landscape connectivity and increase funding for conservation in New Mexico. He is currently the Western Program Director for Wildlands Network. Michael lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. When not working, he can be found hiking, backpacking, fishing, and exploring New Mexico's most remote wildlands.

#### Michelle L. Lute, PhD

Dr. Lute is currently the National Carnivore Conservation Manager for the national environmental non-governmental organization, Project Coyote, and former wildlife biologist at the New Mexico State Land Office where she worked for biodiversity protections across nine million acres of state trust land. She is a conservation scientist and advocate with fifteen years' experience in conservation on public and private lands around the globe. Across her career in academic, government, and non-profit sectors, She dedicates her professional life to promoting human-wildlife coexistence through effective public engagement, equitable participatory processes, and evidence-based decision-making.

Michelle holds a PhD in wildlife management from Michigan State University, an MS in animal behavior and ecology from the University of Notre Dame, and a BS in geography and environmental science from Valparaiso University. She started her environmental career in the National Park Service, worked for large and small NGOs, and held research positions at universities across the US, including Indiana University, University of Nebraska, and Texas State University. Michelle has authored more than 30 publications in ecology and social science disciplines to develop evidence-based approaches to human-wildlife coexistence. Michelle lives in Santa Fe and also dedicates time to roaming wild public lands with her two dogs.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact Kevin Bixby at (575) 649-7260 if you have questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

Kevin Bixby, Executive Director  
Southwest Environmental Center

Mary Katherine Ray, Wildlife Chair  
Rio Grande Chapter Sierra Club

Jessica Johnson, Chief Government Affairs Officer  
Animal Protection Voters New Mexico

Bryan Bird, Southwest Program Director  
Defenders of Wildlife

Chris Smith, Southern Rockies Wildlife Advocate  
WildEarth Guardians

Michael Robinson, Senior Conservation Advocate  
Center for Biological Diversity

David Parsons, Wildlife Biologist (Albuquerque)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Retired

Shannon Romeling, Projects & Foundations Coordinator  
Amigos Bravos

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