



A Great Year for Hunting

Much has been written over the years how hunting, fishing and other forms of outdoor recreation contribute to wildlife conservation and the positive economic benefits derived from these activities. It is a mantra often repeated by wildlife agencies working to convince a growing urban population that it's time to unplug, tune-out and spend a few days outdoors reconnecting with nature, family and friends.

It doesn't really matter if your thing is hunting, fishing, camping, boating, wildlife viewing or some other form of recreation — they all contribute to a greater appreciation of our natural surroundings.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges facing the wildlife resource today stems from the notion that one particular group — whether that's hunters, anglers or outdoor recreationalists — are the true conservationists. Of course, that is a far stretch from reality. Everyone contributes in their own way to the benefit of our wildlife and natural resources.

Over the last century, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has learned it is best to listen and engage in conversations with our partners including; landowners, land managers, industry, naturalists and the public. We are, after all, pursuing common goals.

Therefore, I want to encourage everyone to get outside and experience first-hand New Mexico's vast and stunning landscape — especially those who have never had this opportunity before.

As we head into a new year, our department resolves to reach out to our state's diverse interests, from deer and elk hunters to wildlife watchers, private landowners and those who have interest in our endangered species. I will always invite new ideas, encourage dialogue and welcome help from all sources. We may not always see eye-to-eye, but we will listen to one another, respecting alternative viewpoints. After all, we all have a stake in this game.

Theodore Roosevelt always encouraged every American to participate in the conservation of our natural resources — whether they do so as a sportsman, bird watcher or naturalist. As he once told a group of conservationists: "We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune."

Here's wishing everyone a wild and wonderful 2017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra Sandoval". The script is fluid and cursive.

Alexandra Sandoval, Director — New Mexico Department of Game and Fish