



## **A Message from the Director**

Here at the Department of Game and Fish, we constantly are reminded of the many ways our license-buyers contribute to wildlife conservation through the purchase of licenses, habitat fees and federal taxes paid on sporting equipment. And we like to brag about the programs and projects that we couldn't have accomplished without the support of hunters and anglers.

Each year, more than 87,000 hunters and 160,000 anglers spend approximately \$613 million pursuing their activities in New Mexico. Their license fees helped pay for ongoing projects such as the desert bighorn sheep restoration program, which saw sheep populations grow from 69 in 1980 to approximately 1,150 today. It also paid for the restoration of nearly 132 miles of streams, 10 lakes and one reservoir for our state fish, the Rio Grande cutthroat trout. With your support, the department modernized its radio communications for game wardens across the state to provide enhanced connectivity for those that protect your wildlife.

New Mexico's diverse landscape has also benefited through large, landscape-scaled wildlife habitat and watershed improvement efforts throughout the state. By matching hunter and angler contributions with federal Pittman-Robertson funds, thousands of acres of forests and countless miles of rivers have been restored to prime fish and wildlife habitat, reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfire and protecting our valuable riparian areas.

Big-game hunting in New Mexico is regarded as some of the best in the nation. Our elk herds are robust, our bighorns are plentiful and huge, and our deer populations are on the rebound.

Here at the Department of Game and Fish, we plan to keep it that way – with your continuing and deeply appreciated support.

*Alexandra Sandoval*

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