

**Sierra Club Wolf Service Trip,  
May 15 - 16, 2004**  
by Kent Duryée

On a moonless night in May we set out from Phoenix, pointed east, up and over the Mogollon Rim to the White Mountains. Making one blind turn after another in the dark, we found our way to Alpine near the New Mexico border, and finally slept. We woke to a crisp morning in the shadow of Mount Escudilla, site of the recent re-introduction of the Mexican Gray Wolf.

Our group met early Saturday morning. Twelve folks, including Shawna Nelson of AZ F&G and the Sierra Club's Sandy Bahr, gathered at the parking lot at the Forest Service office. Shawna had five signs detailing the responsibilities of people should they come in contact with any of the newly re-introduced wolves. We had a fine time marking the wolves' territory with our signs. To wrap up, we ate lunch at Mexican Hay Overlook with a fine view of the Springerville Volcanic Field.

In the end though, it was the history of the place that struck us. It was near Mount Escudilla that Aldo Leopold shot and killed a wolf long ago; an episode that directly inspired his now famous land ethic:

“We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes – something known only to her and to the mountain...”

There was something new in those mountains that struck us all; a wild sort of thing that we hope will never die – something ancient as wilderness itself, and as natural as the dark of night or the rising moon. We were glad to welcome the wolves back home.