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# FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR	Stewart	ORIGINAL DATE LAST UPDATED	2/18/2007 <b>HB</b>	1215
CHADT TITL		ty Of New Mexico Wild Friend		
SHORT TITL	E <u>Program</u>		SB	
			ANALYST	Moser

## **APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Approp	riation	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$75.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

#### **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

LFC Files

Responses Received From
NM Department of Higher Education (HED)
Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Public Education Department (PED)

#### **SUMMARY**

## Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 1215 appropriates \$75,000 from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico (UNM) for expenditure in FY08 for the Wild Friends Program at the Institute of Public Law's Center for Wildlife Law to help students from 4th through 12th grades understand the democratic process, develop good citizenship skills, and contribute to wildlife conservation by involving them in public policy projects.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$75,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY08 shall revert to the general fund.

This specific subprogram request was not submitted by UNM to HED for review and is not included in the department's funding recommendation for FY08. However, HED did recommend base recurring funding of \$74,400 in FY08 for the overall Center for Wildlife Law program.

# **House Bill 1215 – Page 2**

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

HED indicates that the Center for Wildlife Law is the only national center dedicated to education, research, and analysis of state, national, and international wildlife laws. Established at the Institute of Public Law, University of New Mexico School of Law in 1990, the Center's mission is to raise the level of understanding and discussion about wildlife issues through interdisciplinary education, training, analysis, and publication on wildlife law and policy issues.

The Center for Wildlife Law began the Wild Friends Program with funds provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the New Mexico State Legislature. Wild Friends is a wildlife education program for rural and semi-rural youth. At-risk and other middle school students and senior citizens are brought together for hands-on learning about wildlife issues and the legislative process. A network of dozens of local and national organizations has collaborated to make this program a success since 1991. Wild Friends began receiving state appropriations in 1994.

Currently there are 700 students from 18 schools in six counties participating in Wild Friends. Wild Friends youth are recognized and respected for bringing people together on wildlife issues and for facilitating the public conversation necessary to healthy communities and a democratic society. Students learn how law and government work and how citizens can make their concerns known to elected officials. They are taught about wildlife, habitat, and related issues. Students are encouraged to express their views orally, in writing, and through performing arts. Mentors are teamed up with the students to expose children to various careers relating to public policy, public service, and wildlife.

Wild Friends partake in a variety of activities such as meeting with their legislators; conduct imaginary legislative debates; draft legislation; take camping trips; write letters to legislators; interview wildlife professionals and newspaper reporters; compose theater plays and puppet shows; and testify at legislative committee hearings on legislation they authored.

GM/nt