

It is time for our elected leaders to get honest and serious about the challenges we face in achieving energy independence, and in understanding our moral obligation to preserve our wildest public lands.

supply, drilling in Otero Mesa will not lower prices at the pump or assist in

weaning our country off foreign sources of oil and gas.





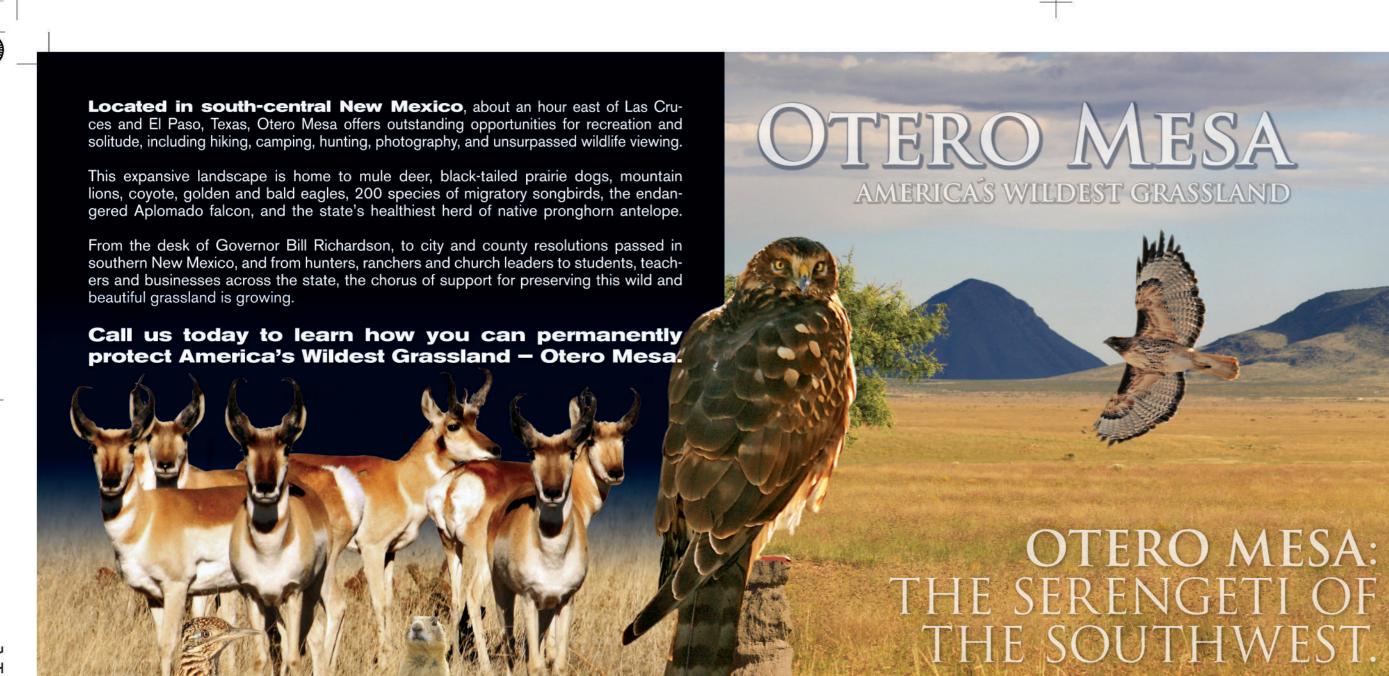
NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE

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The campaign to preserve Otero Mesa has been ongoing since 2001, and the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance has led the way in preserving this Serengeti of the Southwest. At 1.2 million acres in size and with over 1,000 native wildlife species, Otero Mesa is the largest and wildest grassland left in America. Over 500,000 acres of Otero Mesa qualify for Wilderness designation, making it the largest potential wilderness area left in New Mexico. Thousands of ancient archeological sites can be found in Otero Mesa, including on Alamo Mountain, where petroglyphs date back 1500 years. Furthermore, the Salt Basin aquifer, which underlies Otero Mesa, is considered to be the state's largest, untapped freshwater resource.

Approximately 30% of the entire Chihuahuan Desert eco-region lies north of the U.S./Mexico Border in southern New Mexico and west-ern Texas. Only 2.5% of the entire Desert, comprising 390,600 square miles in Mexico and the United States is under formal protection. The majority of publicly held lands within this region are in New Mexico.

The Otero Mesa Grasslands within the Chihuahuan Desert (of southern New Mexico) has long been recognized as "special" by the State of New Mexico, Governor Bill Richardson, numerous state legislators and scientists, tribal and religious leaders, sportsmen, ranchers, and conservationists.

It is the objective of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance to gain permanent protection for Otero Mesa – America's Wildest Grassland





