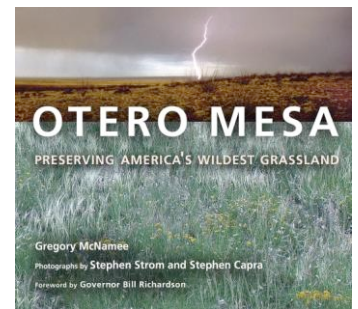


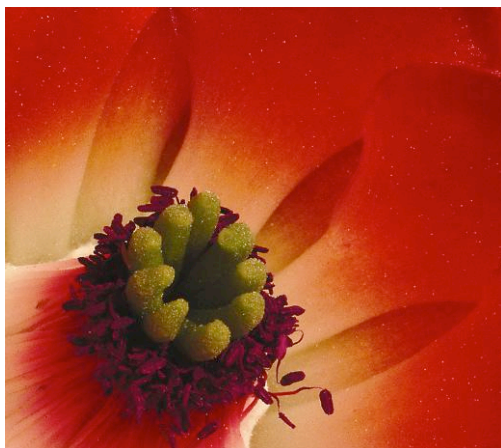
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Unique Southwest Grassland Preserved in New Book

ALBUQUERQUE—In January of 2005, the Bureau of Land Management approved a plan to drill more than one hundred new wells on Otero Mesa, a pristine grassland in southern New Mexico. What followed was an extensive international activist effort that exposed the public to the environmental threats, including wildlife decimation and groundwater contamination, posed by oil drilling on this unique natural wonder. Otero Mesa’s fate is yet undecided, the case resting in federal courts.



Flower of a claret cup cactus. Photo: Stephen Strom, from *Otero Mesa*

“Preserving places like Otero Mesa will require the engagement of citizens who recognize the value of clean water, open spaces, and the beauty of nature to our own sustenance and that of our descendants,” writes New Mexico governor, Bill Richardson in the foreword to *Otero Mesa*.

Otero Mesa (\$24.95 paperback, Univ. of New Mexico Press) takes readers on a narrative and photographic journey of the half-million acres of unfettered grassland in southern New Mexico’s

Chihuahuan Desert. Home to migratory songbirds, rare native pronghorns, prairie dogs, and stunning visual scenery, Otero Mesa is captured in the sonorous narrative of nature writer Gregory McNamee and the exquisite landscape and wildlife photography of Stephen Strom and Stephen Capra. Readers will come to realize the detailed contours, the vast horizons, and the unique wildlife of Otero Mesa. The cast of characters—agaves, ocotillos, yuccas, golden grasslands, yellow-headed blackbirds, kestrels, pepperweed, and storm-covered mountains—embody the wild views of Otero Mesa, just as McNamee’s four chapters—“The View from an Aplomado,” “The View from a Missile,” “Oil,” and “Otero Mesa and the Fate of the Land”—represent the diverse human views.

MORE

Gregory McNamee is a widely published author, editor, and photographer who lives in Tucson, Arizona. Among his many books are *The Desert Reader: A Literary Companion*, also published by UNM Press, and *Moveable Feasts: The History, Science, and Lore of Food*. **Stephen Strom** has spent nearly forty years as a research astronomer, most recently serving on the staff of the National Optical Astronomy Observatory in Tucson. His photography has been widely exhibited, and he has collaborated on several books, including Navajo



Grass, with the Cornudas Mountains in the background. Photo: Stephen Capra, from *Otero Mesa*

poet Laura Tohe's *Tseyi (Deep in the Rock): Reflections on Canyon de Chelly*. **Stephen Capra** is the executive director of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and has worked for wilderness conservation since 1988, following a career in private industry and journalism. Capra lives in Albuquerque. *Otero Mesa* is available at bookstores or directly from the University of New Mexico Press. To order, please call 800-249-7737 or visit www.unmpress.com, where a list of author events also appears.

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EXCERPT

"And there is more water to come, for it is winter, a time of rain and snow, and now thunderheads are forming far down south in Mexico, looming up in the distance a hundred and more miles away, easily visible from the heights of this broad plateau. Soon enough the thunderheads will arrive, and more water will fall, gathering in the great rocky, grass-covered bowl that is Otero Mesa.

This is a land of sky, a sky so vast and blue that it dwarfs the tallest mountains and broadest valleys. Here it is hard to see not the forest for the trees, but the horizon for the firmament: other places have sky, but here the land seems but a thin strip of dirt under the hugeness of the heavens, that great endless openness punctuated only by clouds. And contrails, of course, for we are in the twenty-first century, so that planes and satellites scream distantly overhead, reminding us of modern realities and appetites that have everything to do with this quiet, distant place."

MEDIA NOTE: For more information about *Otero Mesa* or to schedule an interview with Mr. McNamee, Mr. Strom, or Mr. Capra, please contact Amanda Sutton, UNM Press, at 505-272-7190 or via email at asutton@unm.edu.