



1-1-2015

In Memoriam Ella Jaz Kirk 1999–2014

Maxine Paul

x

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/utton_watermatters

Recommended Citation

Paul, Maxine. "In Memoriam Ella Jaz Kirk 1999–2014." *Water Matters!* 2015, 1 (2015): 1-vii.
https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/utton_watermatters/vol2015/iss1/4

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the The Utton Transboundary Resources Center at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Water Matters!* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sarahrk@unm.edu.

In Memoriam

Ella Jaz Kirk

1999–2014

In 2014 the New Mexico Legislature issued a proclamation extending its condolences to the friends and family of Ella Jaz Kirk. Miss Kirk died unexpectedly in a plane crash on August 15, 2014 with Michael Mahl, Ella Myers, and Dr. Peter Hochla as they returned from viewing the Signal Fire damage in the Gila National Forest.

Although she was only fourteen years old, Ella was highly engaged in the political process, environmental education, and river stewardship. Ella lived most of her life in Silver City and Gila Hot Springs, where she was a member of the local Fiddle Club. Ella also participated in a local goat cooperative and raised money for Heifer International.

Ella was an honor roll student at Aldo Leopold Charter School. She served as a teacher's aide, educating elementary students about ecology, watershed health, and conservation. Ella was to be the next Editor-in-Chief of the Aldo Leopold Charter School Newsletter. She was a remarkable writer and contributed writings to a local river restoration blog. Prior to school camping trips, she taught staff and students about orienteering. Ella and her fellow classmates on that tragic flight were expert members of the Youth Conservation Corps Ecological Monitoring Crew that won first place at the 2014 New Mexico EnviroThon.

When she learned about proposed Gila River Diversion projects, Ella became engaged in the politics of Southwest New Mexico and the Roundhouse. Having grown up on the Gila River, she felt passionately about protecting its unique ecological diversity and beauty. She spoke at Grant County Commission meetings and gave eloquent testimony to the Senate Conservation Committee on the Senate Floor. She gathered over 6,400 signatures on a petition that she delivered to the Interstate Stream Commission and Governor Martinez. The Audubon Society honored Ella's efforts by naming her its 2014 Southwest Women in Conservation Honoree.

By Maxine Paul



Water, that vital substance that bubbles up from hidden springs in oak nurseries where moss grows thick and slips down Douglas Fir hillsides into mirrored lakes, will keep humans alive if we treat it with careful thought and reverence. Water has always been the difference between life and death, boom and bust, and it will be the difference once again between a sustainable future or no future at all.

—Ella Jaz Kirk