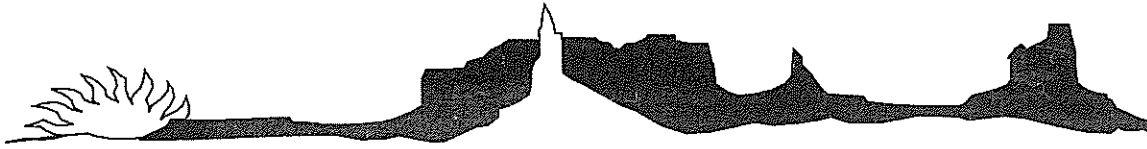


Rio Grande Sierran



May/June 2001

News of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

Group Campaigns Will Be Needing You

By Jennifer Johnson

Last September, at the "Rio Grande Chapter Retreat," Chapter activists decided to address five issues in the state as "Group Campaigns." These issues are Sprawl, Water, Wilderness, and Sand and Gravel Mining.

The National Sierra Club has prepared a guide for developing campaigns and the Chapter used this guide to determine which, among numerous issues proposed, the Chapter would pursue. The following checklist was used for selecting an issue as a campaign:

- The issue relates directly to the Sierra Club's national conservation priorities and impacts your local community.
- The campaign will result in a concrete and quantifiable improvement in the environment.
- The issue is something a broad range of people will understand and care deeply about.
- The issue is widely and deeply felt in the community and state.
- The organization has the resources (money, people, and connections) necessary to win this campaign.
- The issue will bring people together. It will not be internally divisive and will not alienate outside individuals and/or organizations that may be needed as allies down the road.
- The issue will strengthen the chapter or group by recruiting new members, energizing current members to a greater level of activism, developing leadership skills, and building coalitions with other like-minded organizations.
- The campaign is winnable—having clear targets, a realistic time frame, and achievable goals.

The issues that were chosen met enough of the above criteria to make them viable campaigns. Of course picking the campaigns is the easy part. It

See *Campaigns* on Page 7

Of Land and Culture Justice and Public Lands

Ranching in Northern New Mexico
By Ernest Atencio

"History will judge greens by whether they stand with the world's poor." —Tom Athanasiou, social ecologist

This report was commissioned by The Quivira Coalition ("sharing common sense solutions to the rangeland conflict") and the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club to determine and explain the potential consequences of ending public lands ranching in northern New Mexico. It was funded by both organizations with support from the McCune Charitable Foundation. All opinions and conclusions are the author's, unless otherwise indicated.

This report is not intended as an apology or excuse for those who abuse public lands. There is no argument that irresponsible livestock grazing can have a negative impact, especially in this arid region, on important ecological processes, on erosion, on natural vegetational succession, on watershed health and productivity. There is no argument that some ranchers have not demonstrated

"New approaches to holistic range management, in the right places at the right times, can be genuinely sustainable"

much success with sustainable management in the past. Serious problems exist and they have to be dealt with. On the other hand, it's important to recognize the fact that ranchers clearly have a vested interest in conservation and sustainability.

It's also important to recognize the growing evidence that conscientious grazing practices and new approaches to holistic range management, in the right place at the right times, can be genuinely sustainable and even enhance natural habitat and biodiversity.

Background

In the mountains and mesas of northern New

New Mexico's Vanishing Wildlife

By Jim Bailey

The decline of New Mexico's wildlife has been a gradual process. Few of us have noticed. Twenty-two species of native fish, amphibians, birds and mammals no longer occur in our state. Can you name half of them?

The grizzly bear, northern gray wolf and black-footed ferret come to mind fairly easily; but five other mammals are also gone: mink, otter, lynx, hot springs cotton rat and Merriam's subspecies of elk. In addition, wolverine may have been native to our state, but no longer occur here. Also, a few wild bison persist in the Valle Vidal, but none are on native New Mexico range. As for birds, we have lost sharp-tailed grouse and sage grouse. The boreal toad and lowland leopard frog are also gone.

Our native fishes have been most decimated. New Mexico no longer has sturgeon, gar, Colorado River cutthroat trout, cee, bonytail chub, beautiful shiner, phantom shiner, Rio Grande bluntnose shiner, Palomas pupfish or freshwater drum. In total, almost 3 percent of the 837 native wild vertebrates of New Mexico are gone. This includes 14 percent of the 69 native fishes.

Loss of wildlife continues in modern New Mexico. We have 95 wild vertebrates listed as threatened or endangered. Two more, the Chiricahua leopard frog and lesser prairie-chicken are candidates for listing. Endangered species include the Rio Grande silvery minnow, Gila trout, Gila monster, ridgenose rattlesnake, aplomado falcon, ptarmigan, southwestern willow flycatcher, pine marten and desert bighorn sheep. Another 27 species of invertebrates—snails, freshwater clams and crustaceans—are also listed as threatened or endangered.

New Mexico's endangered species program in the Game and Fish Department is small and underfunded. It cannot adequately document the decline of our wildlife, let alone develop recommendations for recovery. Of 118 state-listed threatened and endangered species, at least 27 need reviews of their status, distribution, life histories or taxonomy. Some, including the buff-collared nightjar and wrinkled marshsnail, may be gone from New Mexico. Others, such as the Mexican and southern long-nosed bats, meadow jumping mouse and gray vireo, may be increasing and may deserve removal from the threatened and endangered list. Many species need taxonomic review, using modern methods of genetics.

Worse yet, a 1998 Game and Fish Department memo indicated that at least 54 native species are of concern and need study for possible listing as threatened or endangered in New Mexico. These include 23 invertebrates, 12 fishes, 2 frogs, 7 birds and 10 mammals. Among these are the Rio Grande sucker, blue catfish, Chiricahua leopard frog, black swift, burrowing owl, black-tailed and Gunnison's prairie dogs and hooded and hog-nosed skunks.

Species are not lost without impacts upon other members of New Mexico's flora and fauna. Loss of prairie dogs has impacted black-footed ferrets, burrowing owls, ferruginous hawks, golden eagles,

See *Vanishing* on Page 8

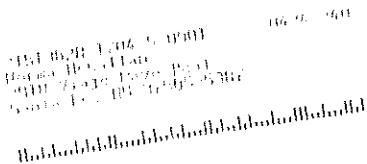


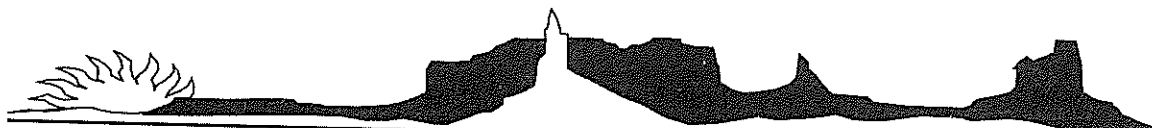
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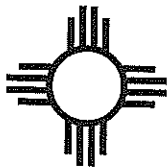
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Sierra Club Structure

The Club has three structural levels. The National Board of Directors determines the overall direction of the Club. The National Organization is subdivided into Chapters, and each Chapter is further divided into Groups. One representative from each Chapter reports to the National Board through the Council of Club Leaders.

The largest part of the Chapter's budget goes to the the salary and expenses for Jennifer and a part-time lobbyist, followed by the printing and mailing of this Newsletter.



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Make address changes by contacting Membership Services at 415 977-5649 or send member name and number to address.changes@sierraclub.org

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Contributions are welcome from members. Email contributions preferred. Send to jbuchser@earthlink.net or mail to John Buchser, 223 N. Guadalupe #419, Santa Fe, NM 87501. All submissions MUST be received by the 10th of the month prior to publication. (The Rio Grande Sierran is published in early January, March, May, July, September, and November.) Photos, artwork and poems are also welcome. Letters and articles are subject to abridgement.

Editorial practices as developed by the Grand Canyon Chapter and adopted by the Rio Grande Chapter will be used in production of the Rio Grande Sierran. Letters to the editor over 500 words will be edited for length or returned to the author for editing. Submissions of Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence over other submissions.

Content of Group pages are the responsibility of the editor for that group and any policies that are in place from the applicable Group. Contact editor for advertising policy and rates.

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Power, Zoning, and Bikes

The "Clean Power Act of 2001"

By Dirk Manskopf, Sierra Club's Environmental Quality Program

We all use electricity in our daily lives, almost without thinking about it — turning on the lights, listening to the radio, and using computers. If we stopped and learned about the energy we use, we would encounter some shocking realities about the impacts of the energy production process on the environment and our health.

With all the amazing technological advances over the last century, one thing that has not changed very much is our reliance on fossil fuels, in particular, coal to generate electricity. In the US today, coal is the number one source of electricity produced (54%), followed by nuclear sources (21%), hydropower (16%), natural gas (9%), oil (2%), and other non-renewables (3%). As the producer of the largest share of our nation's energy, coal-fired plants are also some of the dirtiest.

Many older coal fired power plants have enjoyed a loophole in the Clean Air Act, allowing them to avoid modernizing with pollution controls. As a result, as many as 600 existing power plants are between 30-50 years old and are up to 10 times dirtier than new power plants built today. When the Clean Air Act was proposed, this loophole was included to get it passed because of the strong opposition from the coal-fired power plant industry. Congress assumed that newer plants would come into compliance with the Clean Air Act standards and soon replace the older more polluting plants. For a variety of reasons, including efforts to heavily subsidize coal, this has not happened. Therefore today we are now faced with a disproportionate amount of pollution coming from these old, dirty, under-controlled plants.

No other single source of industrial pollution causes as many adverse public health and environmental impacts as old, dirty coal-fired power plants. Pollution from these dirty plants cuts short the lives of more than 30,000 Americans each year and, according to recent studies, in some instances may shave several years off a person's life.

Smog: Power plants are responsible for more than one quarter of all smog-forming nitrogen oxide emissions. More than 100 million Americans live in regions that fail to meet health-based smog standards.

Soot: Fine soot particles are both directly emitted by power plants and are formed in complex reactions involving sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide. Scientists increasingly believe soot to be the most dangerous air pollutant, causing 64,000 deaths per year in the US. In addition, studies have found that soot may cause heart attacks and arrhythmia and that the incidence of strokes and heart failure is greater in areas with high levels of soot.

Toxics: Power plants released more than one billion pounds of toxic pollutants in 1998, more than any other industry except metal mining. One of the most dangerous toxins is mercury. Power plants are responsible for thirty-four percent of all mercury emissions. Just one drop of mercury can contaminate a 25-acre lake to the point where fish are unsafe to eat, making mercury contamination the most common reason for fish advisories.

Global Warming Pollution: Power plants emit

40% of US carbon dioxide pollution. Carbon dioxide pollution building up in the atmosphere is the single biggest contributor to global warming. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that global warming threatens human populations and the world's ecosystems with worsening heat waves, floods, drought, extreme weather and by spreading infectious diseases.

On Thursday, March 15th, Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) announced the introduction of the "Clean Smokestacks Act of 2001," while Senators Jim Jeffords (R-VT), Joe Lieberman (D-CT), Susan Collins (R-ME) and Charles Schumer (D-NY) announced the introduction of the Senate companion bill, the "Clean Power Act of 2001."

Congress is currently considering the Clean Power Act and Clean Smokestacks Act of 2001. These companion bills would dramatically cut power plant emissions for four major pollutants by 2007. Smog-forming nitrogen oxide emissions would be cut by 75%, acid rain forming sulfur dioxide would also be cut by 75%, toxic mercury emissions would be cut by 90%, and carbon dioxide emissions would return to 1990 levels. In addition, these companion bills would require every power plant to meet the most recent pollution controls required for new sources by the plants 30th birthday or five years after enactment of the Act, whichever is later.

What you can do:

♦ Call, email, or write your Representative and two Senators asking them to cosponsor the "Clean Power Act of 2001." For more information contact: dirk.manskopf@sierraclub.org.

- ♦ Conserve in your home and office by:
 - Replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs;
 - Caulking and weather-strip doorways and windows;
 - Installing low-flow showerheads and faucets;
 - Keeping the furnace and air conditioner working properly;
 - Buying energy-efficient electronics and appliances and making sure to turn them off when they're not in use;
 - Raising awareness in your community by speaking with friends and neighbors and by;
 - Writing, faxing, calling or e-mailing your Senators, Representative, and the President.

Edited by Jennifer Johnson, Chapter Conservation Committee Chair



Zoning Ordinance Unveiled

By Jennifer Johnson

For the past several years, Sandoval County has been in the process of re-zoning lands within the county. They have finally completed the Draft Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. If you live in or near Sandoval County this document should interest you. It can be purchased at the County building in Bernalillo. The cost is \$5.00 for the Ordinance (46 pages) and \$3.50 for the colored maps (8.5 x 11 size). Maps include: Algodones, Budaghers, Canon, Counselor, La Cueva, La Jara, La Madera, Pena Blanca, Placitas, Regina, Rio Rancho and Corrales, and San Ysidro. The maps show streets and subdivisions. You can view them upstairs in the map department.

This is an important document outlining how land in Sandoval County will be used in the future. The Board of County Commissioners will be considering the Ordinance at their meeting on May 3, 2001.

What you can do:

- Get a copy of the Draft Ordinance by calling 867-7500. Ask for Shonna in Planning and Zoning. She can also tell you when and where the Boards meet.
- Read the document and look over the maps.
- Write a letter to the Planning and Zoning Department and the Board of County Commissioners detailing your views of the proposed County zoning. PO Box 40, Bernalillo, NM 87004
- Attend the Board of Commissioners' meeting on May 3, 2001.

Bike-to-Work Day, May 18

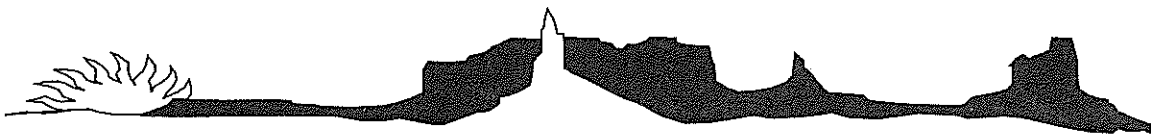
By Gail Ryba, Energy Chair

The year 2001 marks the 45th consecutive year that the League of American Bicyclists has declared May to be National Bike Month. The League is also promoting Bike-to-Work Week from May 13 - 19th and Bike-to-Work Day on Friday, May 18th.

Bicycle advocacy organizations around New Mexico are encouraging local businesses and organizations to promote bicycling for transportation. On May 18th the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque will host a lunch event in front of the UNM Bookstore, and Intel in Rio Rancho will provide morning bike commuters with treats.

New Mexico Alternative Transit in Santa Fe is expected to hold a Bike-to-Work Day event on the Plaza on May 18th, and Santa Fe will also be the site of the Second Annual Santa Fe Bike Festival at the Railyards on Saturday June 2, 2001. Groups in Las Cruces hosted a celebratory bicycle ride for Earth Day on Saturday April 21st. Look for a Bike-to-Work Day event in Grants, as well.

The latest information on New Mexico Bike-to-Work Day events can be found at <http://www.abqspokes.org>



Legislative Report

Final Report:

The Sierra Club at the 2001 Session of the New Mexico

By Doug Fraser and Paul Paryski, Sierra Club Lobbyists

The 2001 Session of the New Mexico State Legislature ended at noon on March 17 with an exhausted sigh of relief from some, sadness for those whose legislation was tabled or not passed and elation for those who met with some success. We think that the Sierra Club belongs to the latter category since we succeeded in blocking the most harmful bills (with one notable exception, the notorious Senate Bill 1 discussed below) and facilitated the passage of bills that protect the environment and public participation.

The priorities establish by the Sierra Club for this legislative session were issues related to water, sprawl, wildlife, and mining (sand and gravel). The session was marked by a plethora of introduced bills, memorials and resolutions, over 2000 of which some 200 were related to the environment.

The session was also marked by sharp battles between factions of the Democratic Party over its leadership. The loss of the former speaker of the House of Representatives, Representative Raymond Sanchez, who lost his seat during the election, and the removal by a coalition of rebel Democrats and Republicans of the former President of the Senate, Manny Aragon, created ripples of conflict throughout the entire session.

In fact, many Democrats voted as would a Republican and vice versa. This added confusion to the normally confusing and circus-like atmosphere of the Roundhouse (aptly named).

It was difficult and, at times, impossible to follow all the legislation we hoped to. By working closely with other environmental groups, however, we managed to cover almost everything of importance.

Our work was made even more difficult by the feeling among certain legislators, particularly from the rural counties and some other groups, that environmentalists are elitists responsible for many of the problems, including wildfires, facing New Mexico, developers and its agricultural communities.

The debates over the silvery minnow and other endangered species, and the animosity felt towards the federal government's environmental regulations are cases in point.

And lengthy debates about pardoning Billy the Kid, adopting a state history textbook and other very low priority issues did not help.

Among the major achievements were:

- The passage of a memorial, House Joint Memorial (HJM59) creating an interim task force under the leadership of Land Commissioner Raymond Powell to write legislation controlling sand and gravel pits and their environmental restoration, sponsored by Rep. Roger Madelena (D-Jemez); Cliff Larsen, the Sierra Club Mining co-Chair, will be a member of the task force;
- Passage of a law (Chapter 66) protecting reptiles and amphibians sponsored by Rep. Ray Begaye (D-Shiprock);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 143) giving the State Engineer's office more powers to en-

force correct usage of water resources sponsored by Pauline Gubbels (R-Albuquerque);

- Passage of a law (Chapter 101) which permits New Mexico to cooperate with neighboring states in persecuting violators of wildlife laws sponsored by Rep. Mimi Stewart (D-Albuquerque);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 218) which protects the right to petition government sponsored by Reps. Patsy Trujillo Knauer (D-Santa Fe) and Pauline Gubbels (R-Albuquerque); please see discussion below;
- Passage of a law (Chapter 151) which creates measures to protect the night sky against light pollution sponsored by Rep. Pauline Gubbels (R-Albuquerque);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 5) delaying the deregulation of the electricity industry sponsored by Senator Michael Sanchez (D-Belen);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 323) adding used oil to the list of hazardous wastes sponsored by Rep. Brattan (R-Hobbs);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 207) which restricts drilling of new domestic water wells sponsored by Senator Carlos Cisneros (D-Taos);
- Passage of SJM83 which establishes an interim committee to restructure the State's agencies responsible for the management of water resources sponsored by Senator Diane Snyder (R-Albuquerque). The Sierra Club has been asked to join the interim committee;
- Defeat of HB618, a takings bill sponsored by Rep. Rob Burpo (R-Albuquerque);
- Defeat of SB538 which attacked the endangered species act sponsored by Senator Steve Komadina (R-Corralles);
- Defeat of HB77 which adversely amended the State's Subdivision Act sponsored by Rep. James Taylor (D-Albuquerque);
- Modification of bills concerning the use of pesticides and herbicides.

A successful effort was made to pass an anti-SLAPP law. This bill protects people from being sued for millions of dollars by unscrupulous developers whose only purpose is to silence public opinion opposing their projects. Such suits have ruined many citizens' lives.

At first the trial lawyers association and the BCI opposed the bill, but after careful mediation and negotiation their support was obtained. Guiding this bill through committee after committee was not easy. Anti-SALPP legislation has been a major priority for the national Sierra Club since the early 1990's.

Another major effort was made to defeat the Fire Damaged Tree Removal in National Forests Law now incorporated in Chapter 7 of the session laws, otherwise known as Senate Bill 1. This law addresses a very serious problem, the risks of more wildfires in New Mexico and the less than adequate and yet sometimes excessive measures taken in the past by the Federal Government to prevent and combat wildfires.

The law allows county authorities to unilaterally enter National Forests, using contracted lumber companies, for the purpose of thinning undergrowth and removing fire damaged trees.

The bill is clearly unconstitutional. In addition the Federal Government has already made funding available to address the problem. What is needed is not conflict, but more funding and cooperation. The bill became an issue of state's rights and of land grant access to Federal lands. The media widely reported our opposition.

Throughout the session we maintained a bill watchlist and informed the executive committee of the latest developments. We held a number of coordination meetings with other environmental lobbyists.

We would like to thank those who responded to our alerts and contacted their representatives and senators.

All Creatures Great and Small



Photo by Gary Braasch

"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense." —John Muir

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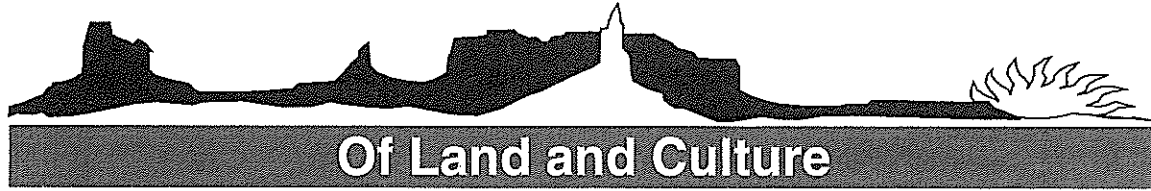
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Of Land and Culture

Land from Page 1

Mexico and southern Colorado, a land-based Indo-Hispanic village culture persists against all odds. For over four centuries, these isolated ranching and farming communities survived the rigors of frontier life in the farthest corner of the Spanish kingdom, generations of raiding by nomadic tribes, rebellions, wars and conquest, the vagaries of weather, dispossession of community lands, and desperate poverty. But they have done more than simply survive. A distinctive culture developed in the region that remains a dynamic and defining presence today. And after centuries of continuity and adaptation, rural villagers have acquired a powerful sense of belonging, a rooted knowledge and reverence for their "homeland," that has become rare in the modern world. "Their families have lived here for centuries; their roots are in the land; their hearts and souls are there. The tie is really mystical," explained Father Benedict Cuesta in the 1970s.

Though rich in culture and history, local Hispanics have not shared in national economic prosperity throughout most of the twentieth century. Even today, while the United States enjoys one of the strongest economic booms in history, New Mexico remains the poorest state with the highest rate of "food insecurity" in the nation. And the north-central counties of Mora, Rio Arriba, and Taos are among the poorest in the state.

Impoverished rural families have come to depend on the meager economic buffer provided by grazing a few cattle or sheep on what are now US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands. Another important dimension that makes the northern New Mexico situation unique, is the fact that many of these "public" lands were community land grants that were dismantled and lost over the last hundred and fifty years through the machinations of the US legal system.

It is clear from all the research, and ominously obvious to local ranchers, that ending public lands grazing here would have a devastating impact on an already strained local economy, on the social fabric of rural communities, and on the continuity of a centuries-old cultural tradition. Though not an issue that is normally considered within the realm of environmental justice, a zero-grazing policy would have an impact on a largely poor, Hispanic population as negative as any discriminatory environmental policy that threatens the health and welfare of disenfranchised populations of people of color in any other context.

Law professor Eileen Gauna frames environmental justice as "a challenge that all should be concerned about in a society that is committed to the ethical precept of basic fairness." Providing support and economic and social safety nets for those less privileged has long been part of our national culture. In this context, access to public lands for grazing is the safety net that keeps some families from destitute poverty or displacement to some poor inner-city barrio.

Environmental Justice

During the last decade of the twentieth century, the environmental movement was forced to recognize the fact that people of color and the poor have been left out of the dialogue about environmental issues and often fall through the cracks of environmental regulations.⁷ While we were busy worrying about the pressing problems of dwindling wildlands, dammed, overappropriated and

polluted rivers, and biodiversity, poor people got poorer and continued to bear the brunt of toxic industry. Certain environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, responded commendably by broadening their approach to at least consider environmental justice issues. But some people and some issues continue to fall through the cracks.

Discrimination in the implementation and enforcement of environmental policies and public health impacts from environmental conditions or hazardous waste are unquestionably critical problems, but environmental justice is about more than that. It is also about widening the discourse on environmental issues to include the perspectives, values, and concerns of the traditionally ignored populations of people of color and the poor.

In 1992, then Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Fisher called for "a friendly takeover of the Sierra Club by people of color," and optimistically declared that "the struggle for environmental justice in this country and around the globe must be a primary goal of the Sierra Club during its second century."

An anthropologist at a recent conference I attended suggested that there will soon be no nature to protect unless we address social justice issues to share the world's resources more equitably. Protecting natural ecosystems will become a moot point, in other words, if the poor of the world continue to be left farther and farther behind, struggling for their slice of a shrinking pie of natural resources. As one person put it, "In the metaphor of a rapidly sinking ship, we are all in the same boat, and the people of color are closest to the hole."

Environmental justice is not whole, then, unless it recognizes the inescapable global forces of political economy that perpetuate cycles of poverty and environmental abuses, and unless it addresses social and economic justice as integral components.

Despite many ongoing efforts in northern New Mexico, bridging those persistent gaps between environmental, social, and economic concerns is still a challenge. It straddles and obscures comfortable categories and tests the limits of the more strident and dogmatic on both sides of the proverbial fence. For lack of a handy category, this perplexing hybrid activism is even occasionally, and inaccurately, lumped together with the stridently anti-environmental "wise use" movement.

Rancher and professional range manager Virgil Trujillo says it well. "The environmental movement has been excellent in the sense that it makes us aware of our environment. But we've got to stop the nonsense of wasting all those resources, attacking each other, yelling at each other. Turn the situation around and let's start yelling for each other, for each other's health, so to speak."

Findings

While the abject poverty and economic crisis that spawned the New Deal era of the 1930s may be ancient history to most Americans, northern New Mexico still carries that legacy. Any way you spin the statistics, New Mexico ranks as the poorest state, the three northern counties of Mora, Rio Arriba, and Taos are even poorer, and the local Hispanic population is among the poorest of the poor. All socioeconomic indicators paint a consistent picture of chronic poverty and limited ac-

cess to education and other opportunities. In this context, most local ranchers are just scraping by, supplementing meager incomes from other jobs with the little economic buffer provided by grazing a few cattle on public land.

Northern New Mexico cattle ranching is a small-scale enterprise. The average size of a grazing permit on the Santa Fe National Forest, for instance, is 41 cattle. Only eight percent of all permits on the forest are for herds anywhere near a commercial scale of 100 or more. With the characteristic small operations in this struggling economy, profit margins from ranching are slim to none. Instead, local Hispanic ranchers often view their livestock as "banks-on-the-hoof" that can be tapped in hard times, used as a backup for emergencies, used to cover unpredictable periods of unemployment, or to pay college tuition for their kids. Basic subsistence by way of meat and milk are an important part of that bank account for most families.

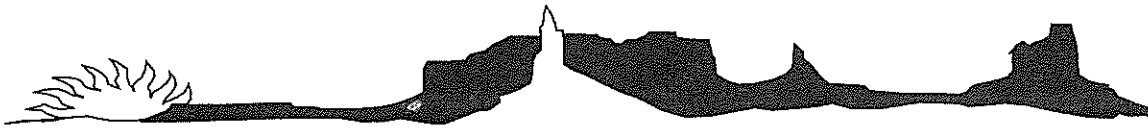
"That's kaput," says Aparicio Gurulé about the impact to his family ranching operation of ending public lands grazing. A 1994 study found that if public lands ranching were shut down, 56 percent of those surveyed in New Mexico would continue to operate, but on a smaller scale, and 44 percent would not. In a strapped economy, realistic alternatives are few and far between.

Cattle ranching in northern New Mexico may in fact not be economically viable in a purist economic analysis. But the danger of straight and narrow economic thinking is that it fails to take into account the less quantifiable, though no less important, issues of social well-being and cultural vitality. A conventional economic view also usually fails to take into account other tangible but indirect consequences of straight economic decisions. Local small-scale ranching may not seem a worthy pursuit in our modern, technology-based, runaway economy, but exchanging a rural economic struggle for an urban one, or pushing rural villagers closer to poverty and welfare, clearly makes no sense economically or socially.

Responsibility and respect toward the environment is expressed in numerous and well-documented traditional land-use practices, cultural values and customs, sayings or dichos, and oral history comprising parables of the ethics and morality of caring for the land. No culture on the planet can claim a history of perfect, sustainable natural resource stewardship. Nonetheless, an ethos of restraint is and has been the general guiding principle of resource use, or cultural ecology, in northern New Mexico for centuries.

A history of astonishing injustice surrounding the loss of communal land grants is a prevalent theme among local villagers, and particularly relevant to questions about public lands. In a nutshell, "The establishment of national forests in New Mexico also resulted in the abrogation of Spanish-American property rights. Much of the land now included in the National Forest System in northern New Mexico was once part of the many Spanish and Mexican land grants in the region. The inhabitants of the numerous Spanish-American mountain villages located their settlements in valleys and along streams wherever valley floors were large enough for village sites and irrigated farm plots. The forested mountains, usually part of the village communal lands or ejidos, were used for grazing, hunting, fishing, and ob-

See Land on Page 6



Land and Campaigns

Land from Page 5

taining firewood. . . . When the Forest Service acquired these lands, these use rights were not acknowledged. The loss of grazing lands and the resources of the mountain forests brought poverty to a large number of Spanish-American village people."

Beyond the extensive literature about the long history and the social, cultural, and economic importance of ranching in this area, it's also important to hear directly from the people who still do it and who would be most directly affected by shutting down public lands ranching. Along with the other research, I interviewed six northern New Mexico ranchers who rely on federal public lands grazing for some portion of their livelihood, and their voices are found throughout the report. They include Ricardo Fresquez of Mora; Aparcio Gurulé, a full-time ranchero from Cuba; George Maestas and Andie Sanchez of the Santa Barbara Grazing Association; rancher and economist Joe Torres of the Valle Vidal Grazing Association; and Virgil Trujillo, ranch manager at Ghost Ranch and board member of The Quivira Coalition.

"These are not people with a narrow anti-environmental, pro-industry agenda. The world is not that black and white in northern New Mexico."

These are not people with a narrow anti-environmental, pro-industry agenda. The world is not that black and white in northern New Mexico. They are just reasonable men who care about the land, their communities, and their culture, who are simply trying to make a living like everyone else. Here is some of what they have to say:

In a common lament, George Maestas says that there is a "presumption that traditional users have ruined or will ruin these public lands. In general, our riparian areas and forests are relatively healthy." Policy and management decisions that affect ecological health are out of local ranchers' hands, he says. "To the extent that our forests' health has deteriorated, it can largely be attributed to management policies that have been mandated and imposed on us. Policies like indiscriminate fire suppression, and prohibitions on timber and firewood removal have left our forests overgrown with little forage for our cattle or wildlife and susceptible to catastrophic fire."

Another common lament, and something that mystifies local villagers, is the way the national environmental agenda often lumps together local, small-scale, potentially sustainable resource use with multinational, profit-driven, industrial-scale exploitation. As Aparcio Gurulé says, "Don't compare them with Ted Turner and those big kids, you know?"

About policy issues that deal with bio-diversity, Virgil Trujillo says, "Well, I think the endangered species protection is critical, but while we get narrow-minded and focused down on an individual species, again—and keep forgetting about how the whole picture ticks to the other—that then causes a big concern for me. If we're losing our watersheds also to this tree encroachment, and so on and so forth. If it's affecting the way our rivers run and so on and so forth, it concerns me when we focus and narrow-mind ourselves down to one

little issue and spend millions of dollars on it, instead of standing back and looking at the big picture.... It's a complicated issue. I share my environment with all creatures. All have equal rights."

Conclusion

With threats to the natural resource-based rural economy, dark visions of wholesale resort development or subdivisions are not far-fetched in this area, which is fast being discovered, and gentrified, by well-heeled immigrants from the cities. But this is more than a "cows versus condos" argument. And it is more than an argument of cows versus the loss of mere lifestyle or profession choice. It is an argument of cows versus the loss of a unique culture and society that have endured in this region for 400 years.

Without access to public lands, it's clear that an age-old tradition, and an essential local economic pursuit, would probably be over. Losing legal title to community land grants is one thing, but losing all access to centuries-old traditional grazing lands would be the final blow. Not only would the rich fabric of social, cultural, and economic continuity begin to fray, but local ranchers who are barely staying afloat as it is in a floundering local economy would find themselves in worse condition, struggling to provide even the basic comforts, food, and education for their families. It would be yet another in the long legacy of injustices to impoverished Hispanic villagers.

Note: If you would like a copy of Atencio's full report, contact the Santa Fe Group at 983-2703.

Selection Process for 2002-2004 Executive Committee Underway

Each year, three dedicated members are selected by the Rio Grande Chapter. These members each serve a three-year term.

We are fortunate to have a hard-working executive committee with a wide diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

This group consists of nine elected members and a representative from each group. They determine the priorities for the chapter and determine which politicians are worthy of the Club's endorsement. As the leading membership-driven group in the area, we can make a difference for the environment.

The following folks have volunteered to help find a suitable slate of candidates. If you know of anyone (you?) who has an interest in being involved in a leadership role with the local Chapter, please have them contact one of the following folks:

Cecily Vix (Central)
Cheryll Blevins (Southern)
Ann Falknor (El Paso)
Abe Jacobson (Pajarito)
Doug Fraser (Santa Fe)

The candidates who are selected by the nominating committee will be announced in a future issue of the *Rio Grande Sierran*. At that time there will be an opportunity to become a candidate by petition.

Campaigns from Page 1

is only then that the real work begins.

Next comes the establishment of conservation and organizational goals for the campaigns. The conservation goals need to be things that can happen in a particular region and political climate, given the time frame and available resources. A campaign should leave a group larger and stronger than before it was undertaken, and the organizational goals should specify exactly how this will be achieved and give a way of quantifying and measuring success.

Right now individual groups are in the process of planning the campaigns. Nearly every campaign, in order to be successful, has the recruitment of new activists as one of its first goals. It is hoped they will prove interesting and relevant to our members and will encourage you to get involved.

"A campaign should leave a group larger and stronger than before it was undertaken"

Last year we hired a Staff Person, Jennifer de Garmo, to help the Chapter increase activism and member participation and to help us launch and carry out successful campaigns. Jennifer has been working hard with the groups to plan their campaigns. Her presence has been worthwhile by helping several of our groups reorganize and increase member participation.

The Santa Fe Group Sprawl Campaign is working to prevent development around the new bypass and on Santa Fe County open space purchases.

The El Paso Group Water Campaign is acting as Watchdog of the water utility board (PSB), has a Conservation education project in progress, and is looking at the mayoral campaign as an opportunity for change.

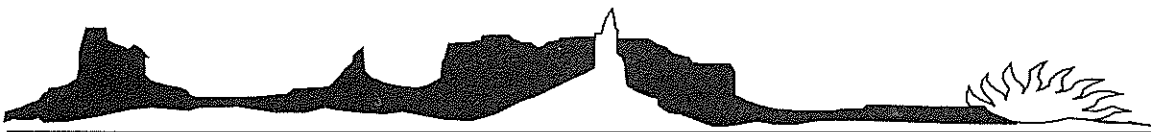
The Albuquerque Group Water Campaign has enlisted an eleven member committee of new activists, and is working to see that Conservation efforts slow and reduce West Mesa sprawl.

Cliff Larsen enlisted the aid of people from several communities which have been impacted by Sand and Gravel mining. Though their efforts to pass a bill in the legislature failed this year the effort will continue next year and prospects appear good that legislation will be passed that will regulate this overlooked environmental issue.

The individual Groups should be keeping their members informed about the progress of their campaign. So watch the pages of the upcoming issues of the *Sierran* and be prepared to help out when the campaign calls for volunteers.



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Valles Caldera

Managing the Valles Caldera National Preserve

By Jennifer Johnson

The remarkable and historic legislation, drafted by New Mexico Congressional delegates, and the final Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton, authorizing acquisition of the Valles Caldera, makes plain the vision and intent of its drafters. First, that because the Valles Caldera constitutes a unique land mass, its scientific, scenic, historic, and natural values, including rivers and ecosystems and archaeological, geological and cultural resources, should be protected and preserved for future generations. Second, that it could provide public recreation opportunities for hiking, fishing, camping, cross-country skiing, and hunting. Third, that certain features that have historical and religious significance to Native Americans should be preserved and protected. Fourth, that through operation of the Preserve as a working ranch under a management regime that would protect the land and resource values of the property and surrounding ecosystem, it can serve as a model for sustainable land development.

The Rio Grande Chapter (RGC) of the Sierra Club advocates careful stewardship of the Preserve and believes the best management scenario should be based on the principle that the best return to the public comes from emphasizing aspects of the Preserve not commonly found elsewhere in the Southwest or the nation.

We feel that many of the Preserve's attributes are either rare or of unusually high quality. These attributes merit special care and management because they account for the more important values the property has to offer. These attributes include the Preserve's pristine appearance, which makes it seem to be a place dominated by nature and where one could enjoy solitude with little risk of being bothered by others; scenic quality, with an exceptional mix of broad valleys, forested mountains, expansive views, and changing seasonal diversity of flora and fauna; volcanic features, which are famous among the world's calderas and of great scientific value; and wildlife diversity, which ranges from the secretive Jemez Mountain salamander, to the ubiquitous herds of elk.

At the numerous public meetings of the Board of Trustees, a very vocal and inspired contingency of activists have been advocating against road closures and for trails in the Preserve being opened to off-road vehicle use.

Forest Service data show that forest roads cause landscape fragmentation, soil erosion resulting in sedimentation and pollution of streams and springs, destruction of wildlife habitat and disruption of elk herds, and air, noise, and visual pollution. The RGC therefore recommends adoption of a very limited public road network that excludes motorized use in the far reaches of the Preserve, within quality viewsheds, and between dusk and dawn.

Much of the adjacent Santa Fe National Forest is open to off-road vehicle use and such use is incompatible with the Preserve's more important values. We also recommend that noise-producing off-road vehicle traffic (including ATVs, motorbikes, motorcycles and snowmobiles) not be allowed within the boundaries of the Preserve. Low flying aircraft should also be excluded within the

boundaries of the Valles Caldera.

What You Can Do:

- Write or call the Board of Trustees, or attend a public meeting and voice your desire for a limited road network and exclusion of off-road vehicle use in the Preserve.

For More Information:

- Visit the Valles Caldera Preserve and the Board of Trustees' web page on the Santa Fe National Forest web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/3/sfe/>

San Juan Power Plant Polluting Four Corners Area

By Jennifer Johnson

Constructed in the 1970's and located 15 miles northwest of Farmington, New Mexico, the San Juan power plant has a cumulative electric generating capacity of 1,600 megawatts. It essentially operates all the time at the highest rate sustainable, burning approximately six million tons of coal per year. The coal that fuels the plant comes from two nearby strip mines. The coal from these mines is high in sulfur by western standards, containing an average of 1.6 lbs. sulfur dioxide per million BTU.

Because the San Juan plant is so old, it has sub-standard technology for controlling sulfur dioxide, particulate matter and nitrogen oxide emissions. Between 1991 and 1997, the plant's consumption of coal increased 58% yielding a 55% increase in nitrogen oxide emissions, and a 63% increase in sulfur dioxide emissions. It is probable that a similar increase in particulate matter emissions occurred because there was no change in particulate matter control technology or operation.

"A yellow-brown haze hangs over the Four Corners area. Many area residents are concerned about the air pollution."

San Juan's 1998 operating permit states the facility emits into the atmosphere: 35,815 tons of sulfur dioxide- roughly equal to the entire sulfur dioxide release from all sources in Los Angeles, 5,046 tons of particulate matter- equivalent to the cumulative annual tailpipe emissions from 3,750,000 late model cars, 38,816 tons of nitrogen oxides per year—equivalent to the cumulative annual tailpipe emissions from 2 million late model cars, and 14 million tons of CO2 every year—equivalent to cutting down approximately 378 million trees every year.

Each unit at San Juan has a different set of owners but overall the plant is owned by PNM, Tucson Electric, So. Calif. Public Power Authority (SCPPA), Tri-State G&T, M-S-R Public Power Agency, City of Farmington, Los Alamos County, City of Anaheim, and Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS).

A yellow-brown haze hangs over the Four Corners area. Many area residents are concerned about the air pollution resulting from the plant's

emissions and alarmed by the increase in respiratory illnesses. Some residents suspect the plant was situated where it is so that emissions would escape to Utah or Colorado thereby making enforcement difficult.

What You Can Do:

- Write a letter to the Editor of your local newspaper.
- Talk to friends and neighbors about local illnesses they suspect are related to plant discharges. Then, confront your local politicians about the problem and urge them to seek a solution.

Trail Maintenance in the Pecos, July 14-15

By Linda Buchser

See ancient bristlecone pines in New Mexico! Look a peregrine in the eye from twelve feet away! View shepherders' tree carvings from the early 20th century!

Climb over 1,400 feet in less than two miles.

And, clear out the Dominguez Trail, which was constructed by local and national Sierra Club members and which was a significant factor in the Club receiving a "Take Pride in New Mexico" award.

The Dominguez Trail begins about 5.5 miles up the West Fork of Santa Barbara Creek, and proceeds over an 11,200 foot ridge to drop down to the Trampas Trail.

Parts of the trail coincide with a former shepherders' route where the aspens display names and dates from the early 1900's. This connection expands the hiking possibilities in the popular north Pecos Wilderness area, providing a spectacular view of the Truchas Peaks basin and north into Colorado.

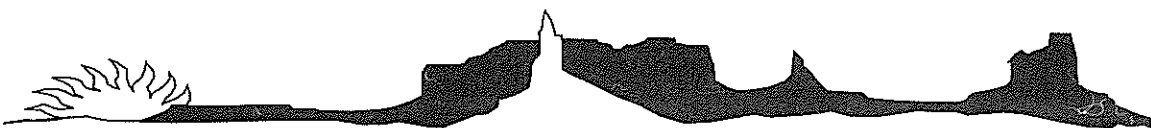
The ridge between the high point of the Dominguez and the North Truchas Peak, off trail but fairly easy walking, will lead you to a scattering of bristlecone pines. The last time we visited, a peregrine landed on a snag to give us a careful inspection.

Our work will focus on clearing out trees downed by an avalanche several winters ago. Two-person crosscut saws ("misery whips"), Pulaskis, and hard hats will be provided.

In addition to the usual backpacking gear and food, you will need to bring long pants, leather boots, leather work gloves, rain gear, and enthusiasm. If you're full of enthusiasm but doubt your ability with the tools, never fear! Those chopping and sawing will need others to haul the trees and brush off-trail.

We will leave from the Santa Fe Sierra Club Office at 7:00 a.m. Saturday July 14, and return to town approximately 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 15. Reserve a place on this work trip by calling John or Linda Buchser at 820-0201 by noon Thursday July 12, we need this information in order to coordinate with the Forest Service.

Additional trips are planned for the weekends of August 4/5 and 25/26 to continue the work.



Water and the Legislature

Legislature Awash In Water Bills

By John Buchser, Water Issues Chair

The legislature this year continued with the trend we have observed the last several years: about 25% of the bills have something to do with water. The painful reality is that we cannot possibly analyze this many bills.

As a result, the Club works with other organizations that recognize the importance of improving our ability to deal with the complex issue of water law in New Mexico.

Our strategy this session was to focus only on bills that were particularly important, that were not otherwise being covered by other organizations' lobbyists, and that had a chance of being signed by the Governor.

The New Mexico Acquicia Association was successful in getting a memorial passed that is quite important to the traditional farmers in Northern New Mexico, but is also important to those of us in the cities. This memorial restricts surface water-rights transfers across Otowi Gauge, a measuring point on the Rio Grande between Santa Fe and Los Alamos. Although this memorial does not have the force of law, it strengthens the hand of the State Engineer, who has not approved any surface water transfers from north of this gauge at this time.

It is important in helping growing communities like Santa Fe County realize that there is only a finite amount of water available, and we must recognize these limits as our human population grows. [Debbie Rodella, HJM6]

One version of a water-rights notification bill was signed by the governor. Although this bill was not as strong as other notification bills that were presented to the governor, it does take a step in the right direction.

This bill helps to insure that the affected public is notified in a local newspaper of applications for sub-surface water rights. [Joe Stell, H833]

Additional monies were approved for completion of regional water planning. Thousand Friends of New Mexico was the principal organization helping to insure that this \$1.5 million appropriation survived a second opportunity to the Governor's desk. The Governor should be thanked for not taking this appropriation hostage. [Max Coll, H997]

The City of Santa Fe was successful in getting legal recognition of a policy it established several years ago. The City Council recognized that City residents putting in private wells to avoid drought period water restrictions was detrimental to the water table, as well as unfair to those taking short showers! However, the City's policy of restricting new wells within 300 feet of existing water lines was not backed by State law. Now it is. [Carlos Cisneros, S602]

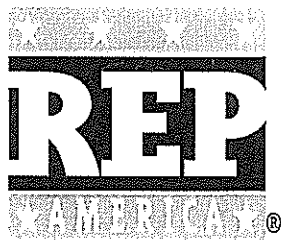
The Club's major success was the survival of State Engineer Enforcement Authority. Up to now, if water-wasters were using far more than their rightful quantity of water, the only thing the State Engineer could do is take them to court. The actual court proceeding could be years later. In the meantime the waste could continue, with no real downside for the irreverent water users. Now, a procedure is in place for the State Engineer to have a public administrative hearing, and to charge up to \$100 a day for the wasteful use. [Pauline Gubbels, H445]

Vanishing from Page 1

mountain plovers, rattlesnakes and salamanders that frequent prairie dog towns. The gradual loss of species results in a slow unraveling of native biotic communities.

As these communities become degraded and simplified, their abilities to withstand perturbations such as drought, forest fires or insect outbreaks are impaired. The ability of the native community of plants and animals to grow products and to provide services and recreation for mankind is reduced. Moreover, the esthetic landscape of New Mexico, the backdrop for our lives, is diminished.

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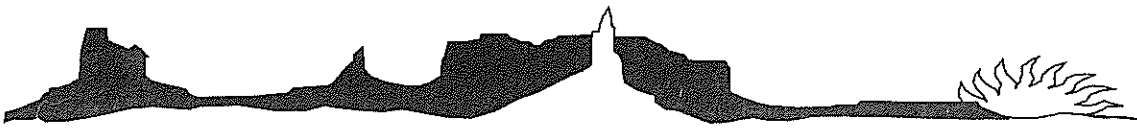
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SANTA FE GROUP MEETINGS

DOUBLE FEATURE !! Tuesday, May 15, 7 PM

Public Lands Ranching in Northern New Mexico

Ernest Atencio, local anthropologist, writer, activist, and author of a Joint Report by the Quivira Coalition and the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club entitled *Of Land and Culture: Environmental Justice and Public Lands Ranching in Northern New Mexico*, will discuss that report and its conclusions about the social, cultural, and economic consequences of ending the 400-year-old tradition of public lands ranching in Northern New Mexico.



This free report has been flying off our shelves and has generated discussion on KUNM, in High Country News and the Santa Fe Reporter. It influenced adoption of the current Sierra Club Grazing Policy, opening a dialogue on environmental justice and public lands issues.

We hope you will join us for an interesting discussion.

PAUL CAMPOS - Santa Fe County Commissioner

Newly elected in November 2000, County Commissioner for District 4, Paul Campos, has land use experience and previously served as Santa Fe County Attorney. Based on his responses to our questionnaire and a personal interview in which he expressed his views on sprawl, open space and water, the Sierra Club endorsed →

Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club
621 Old Santa Fe Trail · Suite 10 · Plaza Desira · Santa Fe · New Mexico · 87501
505 · 983-2703

ANNUAL SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC

SUNDAY, JULY 1, 5:30 - 9:00 PM

The Commons

Mark your calendars now for our annual summer picnic, and plan to bring your family and friends for this convivial gathering, which is a perfect opportunity to get to know Sierra members and see old friends. The Commons is at 2300 West Alameda, on the southwest corner of Camino Carlos Real, two miles west of St. Francis Drive.

Please bring at least eight servings' worth of one of the following items: casseroles, salads, vegetable dishes, meat entrées, appetizers, breads, desserts, wine, beer, juices. Dishes, silverware, a refrigerator, and stove/oven are all available.

The after-dinner program will feature a slide show by one of our members, Norbert Sperlich, longtime outing co-chair, showing slides from the many outings he has led over the years.

*All meetings, outings, and activities
are FREE and open to the public.*

*Membership meetings are held at the Unitarian Church
107 W. Barcelona St (between Galisteo and Don Gaspar).*

Mr. Campos in the primary, where he won in a field of four candidates. He was unopposed in the general election. Since joining the commission, Mr. Campos has been a forceful voice for his district and the whole region and proposed a moratorium on cell towers in the county until a comprehensive ordinance governing wireless telecommunications facilities could be considered.

Santa Fe Group News

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Doug Frazer

On April 23rd, I had the honor to speak to Ms. Rebecca Wollé's fifth grade class at the Rio Grande School on Camino Cabra, near St. John's College. On its own initiative, the class developed a community service learning project to help an organization of their own choosing – and they chose the Sierra Club for their project. Following a small presentation on John Muir and his love of the nature surrounding us, they presented to me, on behalf of the Club, a check for just under \$300. The class had raised the money through the sale of handmade pillows and many other items.

This wonderful occasion caused me to ponder for a moment on the reasons why I – and all of us – have kept on doing this type of work – to protect and enjoy the natural environment. Looking into the eyes of those nine-year-olds, with their wonder and love of nature and its "critters" – I felt renewed.

Following a very tiring, but successful, legislative session (see the Legislative Report on front page), I needed that reminder. Additionally, I want to personally thank our newest Group ExCom member, Paul Paryski, for all of his comradeship and endurance during this 2001 Session.

After some time for reflection, I would like to give you some of my thoughts on why we, as a community, took so much "heat" during the legislative session on two issues: First, last summer's forest fires, i.e. we allowed the accumulation and build-up of forest fuels; and second, endangered species, i.e. we care more about animals than people. But the talk to the fifth graders reminded me that the Club is concerned about both – about humans and nature as an integral whole. We must protect our young people's wonder in what God created.

CERRILLOS HILLS PARK TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Join the Cerrillos Hills Coalition on Saturday May 19, Sunday June 10, and Sunday July 22 to help construct a trail for this new county park. Meet at 8:30 at the Park's parking lot on Gravel Pit Road. Call Paul Cusumano (988-6093-wk) or Glen Wickle (466-8692) or visit the CHC website at www.cerrilloshills.org for further information and updates.

This is not a Sierra sponsored event, but is being published as a service to the Coalition and for interested members.

SKI-BASIN EXPANSION PROPOSAL

**Hearing Before the Santa Fe County Commission
Tuesday, May 8, 5 PM**

The Santa Fe County Commission will hold a public hearing to consider the request of the Santa Fe ski company for variances associated with their proposed construction of a 5600' triple chairlift and associated new ski runs, as well as increased snowmaking capabilities. The proposed lift is to be constructed at tree line on Deception Peak, about 200' below the top, and will require the clear cutting of about 25 acres of thick, old growth spruce/fir forest. Although the community "saved" The Big Tesuque Basin several years ago after a contentious battle over the ski company's expansion plans, these and a number of other developments remained in the final plan approved by the Forest Service.

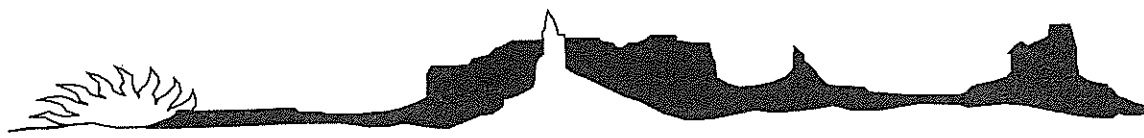
Deception Peak (often called the False Peak of Lake Peak) has been a popular hiking and snow shoeing destination for many years and has remained surprisingly pristine, considering that it is adjacent to all the existing construction and hubbub of the Ski Basin. In summer it is decked in a carpet of alpine flowers, including the tiny blue alpine forget-me-not. Once construction and the clear cutting start, the peak will become a visual nightmare and bear a large permanent scar. The steep slopes below the peak will likely suffer severe erosion once cut. The ski company maintains it needs new facilities to ease current crowding and congestion, but in the face of likely extremes of weather due to global warming and cyclical climate change, how many Santa Fe winters will even have significant snow?

If you are concerned about the increasing sprawl and degradation on our mountain, please come to the hearing at the Santa Fe County Office Building at the corner of Grant and Sandoval Streets, and/or send comments to the County Land Use Administrator, PO Box 276, SF 87504. For more information on this issue, call Page Pennell (988-2733) or Scott Carson (982-4010), SF Ski Basin Containment Coalition.

Green The Earth And Prosper

**Third Annual Peace Day Presented by Cranes for Peace
August 6 - in Santa Fe**

Peacemakers who love children and would like to help with education and other peacemaking activities please call NetWorks Productions (989-4482) www.networkearth.org



SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

Sat Sun May

- 5 **Strenuous Hike** on La Luz Trail as far as trail conditions permit. Call leader for details and reservation. Stephen Markowitz (983-2829)
- 6 **Easy Hike** on Chamisa Trail. 5 miles RT, 1240' elevation gain. Leave 8:30 AM. Jeff Jones (466-2389)
- Saturday, May 12, thru Sunday, May 20
A Week in Escalante Country Two moderate, exploratory 3-day backpacks in the little visited north end of the Escalante drainage, off the Burr Trail: Horse/Wolverine Canyons and Upper Gulch. Also several day hikes, depending on time available. Dogs okay. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
- 12 **Strenuous Hike** to Sierra Pelada. Leave 8 AM. Call leader for reservation. Ned Sudborough (474-4055)
- 13 **Moderate Hike** in high country. Call leader for details and reservation. John Jasper (986-4613, 263-5466-cell)
- 19 **Moderate Hike** Call leader. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 20 **Moderate Hike** on Dockwiller Trail. 8 miles RT, 1700' elevation gain. Carpool from Santa Fe at 9 AM, or meet leader at north end of Glorieta overpass on I-25 at 9:30 AM. Call for reservation. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)
- 26 **Easy Birding Walk** in or near Santa Fe. Beginners, non-birders, and experienced birders all welcome. Bring binoculars. Leave 8:30 AM. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 27 **Strenuous Hike** to Cerro Pedernal. 9 miles RT, 1900' elevation gain. Some rock scrambling, some off-trail hiking. Call leader for details. Michael DiRosa (663-0648)

change in hike

PLEASE ALWAYS CALL THE OUTINGS LEADER PRIOR TO A HIKE FOR CONFIRMATION AND DETAILS.

For additional outings in northern New Mexico, please check the Pajarito Group page(s) in this newsletter.

Sat Sun July

- 1 **Strenuous Hike** to Puerto Nambé on Winsor trail, about 11 miles, 2000' gain. Leave 8 AM. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 7 **Easy Hike** to Glorieta's ghost hotel, 6.5 miles, 850' gain, people and dogs by reservation. Tobin Oruch (820-2844)
- 8 **Very Strenuous Hike** to Lake Katherine and beyond, 15-20 miles, 3300-4400' gain, leave 7:30 AM. Jeff Jones (66-2389)
- Saturday, July 14 and Sunday, July 15
Strenuous Trail Maintenance Backpack on Dominguez Trail near Santa Barbara Canyon. Leaves 7 AM Saturday. Call by noon Thursday 7-12 to confirm attendance. See separate article for details. John & Linda Buchser (820-0201)
- 14 **Strenuous Hike** on Aspen Vista trail to Tesuque Peak, 12 miles, 2000' gain. Leave 8 AM, call for reservations. Ned Sudborough (474-4055)
- 15 **Moderate Hike** in high country, 7-10 miles, leave 8 AM. Art Judd (982-3212)
- 21 **Easy Bird-watching Walk** in or near town, leave 8 AM. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 22 **Strenuous Hike** in the Jemez. Leave 7 AM. Norbert Sperlich (983-1962)
- 28 **Moderate Hike** to Grass Mountain in Pecos, dogs okay. Leave at 8 AM. John Jasper (1-505-263-5466)
- 29 **Moderate Hike** to Nambé Lake off Winsor Trail, 7 miles, 2100' gain. Call for reservations. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)



♦ SANTA FE GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ♦

Chair — Doug Fraser *
Vice-Chair — Barbara Johnson *
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Soracco

Political Committee — Susan Martin *
Membership — Norma McCallan *
Newsletter/Publicity — Kay Carlson
Phone Tree — Dee Sands
Chapter Rep — Doug Fraser *
Outings — Norbert Sperlich
— Tobin Oruch

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455-3005
474-7615
983-1962
820-2844 oruch@lanl.gov

Sat Sun June

- 2 **Moderate Hike** Rail Trail south of town to support SF Conservation Trust's annual Rail/Trails event to celebrate Trails Day. 8-10 mi, 200' gain. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)
- 3 **Very Strenuous Hike** to Thompson Peak (exploratory) or the Winsor trail crossover, depending on trail conditions and wishes of group. 15 to 20 miles, 2000'+ gain, early start. Dogs okay. *Pls call before 8 PM 6-2.* Stephen Markowitz (983-2829)
- 9 **Moderate Hike** La Vega meadow off Winsor Trail. 7 mi, 1500' gain. Dogs okay. Leave at 8 AM. John Jasper (505-263-5466)
- 10 **Easy Hike** on Bear Wallow/Borrogo loop near Hyde Memorial State Park. 4 miles, 900' gain. Leave 9:30. Jeff Jones (466-2389)
- 10 **Moderate Hike** hi ctry, 7-10 mi, lve 8 AM. Art Judd (982-3212)
- 16 **Moderate Hike** Hermit Peak near Las Vegas. Great views! 8 miles, 2700' gain. Call for time. Michael Di Rosa (663-0648)
- 17 **Moderate-Strenuous Hike** East Fork box canyon and waterfalls in Jemez. Requires walking in the river at the end (cliff diving optional!). 8 miles and 800' gain. Norbert Sperlich (983-1962)
- Saturday, June 23 thru Tuesday, June 26
Moderately-paced Backpack in the Pecos Wilderness. 32-mile loop starting at the ski basin. Might possibly be extended to a 40-mile loop depending on conditions. Dogs allowed. Call leader for details and reservations. Bob McKee (672-3426)
- 23 **Strenuous Hike** to Trampas lakes and beyond, 14+ miles, 2500-3000' gain, part exploratory. Very early start. Dogs okay. *Call before 8 PM June 22.* Stephen Markowitz (983-2829)
- 24 **Strenuous Hike** to Tesuque Peak. About 7 miles, 2000' gain. Call for reservations. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)
- 30 **Easy Bird-watching Walk** Leave 8 AM. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 30 **Moderate Hike** Deception Peak, site of proposed triple chair lift and associated ski runs. Magnificent alpine flowers, and (hopefully) not a huge swath of clearcut spruce/fur forest. Close to 2000' elevation gain, about 7 miles RT. Dogs okay. Leave 8 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)

HEADS-UP FOR AUGUST

Saturday and Sunday, August 4-5 and August 25-26
Strenuous Maintenance Work Days, mostly cutting downed trees on Dominguez Trail near Trampas or Santa Barbara. John Buchser (820-0201)

INTERESTED IN LEARNING TO BACKPACK????

Gail Bryant has said that she would be happy to repeat her workshop on the basics of backpacking if there is enough interest. The workshop might involve three evenings of discussion, possibly followed by a beginner's backpack.

If you would like to participate, call Gail (1-505-757-6654)

Outings Notes - Unless otherwise noted, all outings leave from the Sierra office, 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, "Plaza Desira," just south of Kauno's Grocery at the corner of Old SF Trail and Paseo de Peralta. Carpooling will be arranged. Each hiker should come prepared to pay \$5 a mile to the driver of the car in which s/he rides. Bring a lunch, water, sturdy hiking boots or shoes, and clothing suitable for the weather - leader reserves the right to alter destination of hike or cancel trip due to weather, unfavorable conditions, or insufficient numbers of participants. Unaccompanied minors must have written permission from parents or guardians to participate; permission forms are available at the Sierra Club office. Dogs not permitted on hikes unless noted otherwise. Telephone leader for details of the individual hike.

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Executive Committee:	Group Conservation Committee:
Tuesday, June 4, 6:30 PM	Tuesday, May 22, 7 PM
Tuesday, July 2, 6:30 PM	Tuesday, June 26, 7 PM
Water Pot-Luck (John Buchser's house):	
Monday, May 14, 6:30 PM	
No June Water Pot-Luck	

Conservation — Cliff Larsen *	466-2128 clarsen1@ix.netcom.com
Mining — Cliff Larsen *	466-2128
Water-John Buchser *	820-0201 jbuchser@earthlink.net
National Parks-Courtney White *	982-5502 widwst@rt66.com
Rangelands-Roger Peterson	983-7559 roggp@earthlink.net
Carson Nat'l Forest-George Grossman	982-1024
Activist Outings-Norma McCallan *	471-0005 nmccallan@mindspring.com
Growth-Eleanor Eisenmenger *	820-6401

Paul Paryski * 982-5502 pparyski@aol.com

* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

CENTRAL NM GROUP NEWS

National Monuments, America's Legacy

By Kellie Goudreau

If you listen closely, you'll find the names of our newest National Monuments reflect the diversity and beauty that is America - The Carrizo Plain, Ironwood, Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Buck Island Reef, the Upper Missouri River-Breaks, Canyons of the Ancients. These National Monuments, part of our system of protected public lands and the more than 100 that came before them, are a legacy of our democracy, the pride of our nation. Since the days of Theodore Roosevelt nearly every President has protected National Monuments to reflect snapshots of our conservation and cultural heritage.

In 1908, President Roosevelt set aside the Grand Canyon as a National Monument, (it did not become a National Park until 1919) many found the concept a bit eccentric and questioned the need for such protection. Today millions enjoy its magic. The Grand Canyon and many other National Monuments have become an integral part of a system of protected public lands enjoyed by millions. Yet as the new Administration begins governing, these lands are being treated not as a treasure, but as a commodity.

How is it that something so special, so important to wildlife, so much a part of American culture can be degraded or destroyed, with little or no return for the American people? The answer lies in the financing of political campaigns. In this last election cycle, the new administration received over \$10 million dollars from oil, gas, timber, mining and metals industries. Such investment, demands prompt returns.

Within hours of taking the oath of office the President was paying dividends, moving to dismantle the National Forest Roadless Protection Policy (overwhelmingly supported by the comments of 1.6 million Americans and some 600 public hearings), and removing clean air standards for power plants that contribute to global warming and asthma in children. He announced that the cornerstone of his energy policy was drilling for oil in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, despite the fact that doing so would forever destroy the greatest diversity and concentration of wildlife in our nation, tarnishing the integrity of this unique piece of America.

While the President has said he won't undo the new National Monuments, the plan clearly appears set to quietly shrink their size and manage them for oil, gas and coal

exploration. Rather than manage them for their natural and historical values.

The root of this clearly is the access gained by large contributors who stand to profit mightily from their investment.

Such access by multi-national corporations to these national treasures is a blight not only on our public lands, but on the land management agencies charged with their protection. Pressure on agencies effect all elements of public land protection and open the floodgates to exploitation of resources. Examples include below cost timber sales, off-road vehicle proliferation in critical habitats and sagging agency morale.

The Administration seems poised to push this destructive agenda in its first six to nine months, figuring that by the 2002 elections such actions will be a distant memory. In the mean time parts of our country's cultural and conservation heritage are on the auction block, only the American public has been removed from the bidding.

What if the original boundaries of the Grand Canyon had been cut in half and oil derricks had filled the canyon? Would we revere this place as one of the crown jewels of our country? Would people come from the world over, spending millions to experience it? The answer is simple, No!

The calls of protest to the White House grow each day. The message is clear. Yet the Administration remains focused on their mission, strategic exploitation of some of our countries crown jewels, the Rocky Mountain Front, the Red Desert of Wyoming, Otero Mesa, Valle Vidal here in New Mexico, our public lands, the new monuments-tomorrow's Grand Canyons, places far removed from Washington, D.C. They are parts of America that are rich in wildlife and wonder, part of the fabric that binds our country. They are the remnants, the history of our Nation, the beauty that speaks to all of us. They are being sacrificed to repay campaign debt and fund raise for future campaigns, and as a nation we are all the losers.

Remember their names, Agua Fria, Cascade Siskiyou, Pompey's Pillar, Sonoran Desert, Minidoka Internment, Hanford Reach, Grand Canyon Parashant.

Go and visit them. Then demand they be protected, as they are your children's heritage.

Drink the Rio Grande...? What's Next ?

By Susan Gorman

On April 20, 2001, over 150 people participated in a Town Hall, "Our Water, Our Future, Our Next Challenge: Using Our San Juan-Chama Water." This day long meeting, the next installment in the City of Albuquerque's ongoing public involvement program, provided an opportunity for participants to hear details about the Drinking Water Project and to discuss the issues that are raised by this project.

As we have reported (January/February, 2001 Sierran), in just 4 years we will all be drinking treated river water and it will come right from our faucets. This project is the centerpiece of the City's Water Resources Management Strategy (Strategy) which outlines the steps that we will take to decrease Albuquerque's reliance on the aquifer, establish a drought reserve, and use renewable surface water from the San Juan-Chama Project.

The Town Hall program included presentations by John Stomp, Water Resources Manager, City of Albuquerque and Michael Biner, Project Manager, CH2M Hill, followed by a panel discussion with questions from the participants.

During lunch, Water Managers from Tucson and El Paso spoke about the experiences of their communities as they made the conversion from ground water to surface water sources.

Then everyone broke into small groups to discuss the preferred method for diverting water from the Rio Grande, a moveable dam that can be raised and lowered as necessary. Water quality, the need for much more conservation and the links between water supply and growth management were discussed.

A report will be issued by Shared Vision, the sponsoring organization so that folks who could not attend can read about the results and conclusions.

The next step in the process is the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The DEIS will consider three possible diversion alternatives:

Angostura Diversion - water would be diverted at the Angostura Dam, located 5 miles north of Bernalillo, and conveyed to the water purification facility via the existing Albuquerque Main Canal and Albuquerque Riverside Drain and a new pipeline to be built in the North Diversion Channel right-of-way.

New Surface Diversion - a dam would be built across the river just north of Paseo del Norte that could be raised or lowered depending on river flow. When the dam is raised, water is diverted into a diversion channel and pumped to the water purification facility.

Subsurface Collectors - perforated pipes would be placed below the river bed just north and south of Paseo del Norte. Water would seep through the perforations, into the pipes and then to a collecting structure to be pumped to the purification facility. In order to collect enough water, 3 sets of collector structures and pumps, each with 11 collector pipes would be needed.

So, let's make a promise to participate in the DEIS process, to build the drinking water purification facility and divert the San Juan-Chama water from the river with careful management.

Let's increase conservation and get serious about growth management.

And most important, let's be an Involved and Caring Community and do this right!

General Meeting Programs

Monday, May 21st at 7:30PM

SLIDE SHOW ON THE ALASKA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Join Sierra Club member Stephen Capra for a slide presentation on Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The show includes images by Nature Photographer Art Wolf and contrasts the beauty of the Refuge with the tragic oil spill by the Exxon Valdez some ten years ago. With President Bush calling the Refuge the "focal point of our oil independence", this show is an important reminder of what is at stake in the months ahead for our remaining wildlands.

Where: The Unitarian Church at 3701 Carlisle NE, at the corner of Commanche

Monday, June 18th at 7:30PM

ENERGY FORUM

Join us for a presentation and discussion on the some of the issues that face New Mexico and the nation as we experience the major changes in the energy market.

Where: The Unitarian Church at 3701 Carlisle NE, at the corner of Commanche

Meeting on the Environmental Costs of the War on Drugs

New Mexico will host the largest gathering of people who are working towards a drug policy based on public health, science, and human rights.

WHEN: Wednesday - Saturday, May 30 - June 2, 2001.

WHERE: Hyatt Regency, 330 Tijeras NW, Albuquerque, NM

Register Now! Call (505) 266-1414 or visit www.drugpolicy.org/conference

Sponsored by The Lindsmith Center-Drug Policy Foundation

Central New Mexico Group

PO Box 25342

Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87125-5342

Phone: 505-260-9857

Executive Committee (area code 505)

Blnir Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
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Kellie Goudreau	232-3721	kellie@unm.edu
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Jay Morrow	345-3693	jmorrow@mercury.bermco.gov
Edward Sullivan	259-5966	sully@nmwild.org
Cecily Vix	855-9140	cecvix@aol.com

The Executive Committee normally meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM at the Club Office at 202 Central SE in Albuquerque. The meetings are free and open to all members.

The Central New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club depends on the efforts of volunteers. To join us, give any of us a call.

Central New Mexico Group News



Electric Deregulation, PNM and our Need to Stay Vigilant

By Steve Capra

This past winter we have all been witness to the pitfalls of electric deregulation. Not a night can go by that the evening news does not speak of California's electrical woes. Slipped into every report is the analysis that says we need more power, more plants, more transmission lines and less regulation to speed the building of this new generation of electricity. What remains unclear is at what price to the environment? At what price for consumers? And what ever happened to conservation and alternative energy?

To begin to understand the mess we seem to be heading towards, one may turn to our own Public Service Company of New Mexico or PNM. Back in 1992, Congress ruled that owners of transmission lines must lease them to all power companies, including their competitors that want to deposit power into the grid in one part of the country so that it can be purchased and resold by a utility in another. The idea was competition. This bargaining power was not passed on to consumers or private businesses, but some took notice that nothing prohibited the states from doing so. By 1996, New Hampshire had taken the lead and was deregulated. Now some twenty-two states are deregulated and the need for power just seems to grow. Although recent events in California have made many legislators nervous and some states are slowing or reversing course. Much of the information for this article comes from a more in-depth piece printed in Harpers October 2000 issue, authored by Alan Weisman. Mr. Weisman lays out in great detail PNM, deregulation and some of the grievous environmental consequences that may lie ahead.

In the new world of deregulation, there is a language that reflects the new world of power generation. Generating companies are now referred to as *genercos*, the companies that own transmission lines are *transcos* and as you might imagine the distributing companies are referred to as *discos*.

PNM as it turns out has its sights on being, at least in Arizona, a *transcos*. For it is here that PNM wants to connect power transmission lines from the Palo Verde Nuclear Plant (our nations largest nuclear plant) down to Nogales and into Mexico. As PNM spokes woman Julie Gray tells it, Nogales has currently only one line and should, by industry standards, have a back up. In addition the company seems eager to create a connection of power between both countries, much as Canada and the U.S. currently enjoy. Thus linking the countries in power, not just trade. This concept seems in keeping with NAFTA and the opening of free trade between nations. In reality, this connection appears to be profit driven, with the potential for power plants to be built south of the border with less environmental regulation and at considerable savings, with power being shipped north for the voracious California appetite. Though it is currently against the Mexican constitution to export power, President Bush and his aides on his first official visit as President pushed hard on behalf of the electric industry to change Mexican laws and allow plants to be built in Baja and Sonora to power California. Getting a sufficient power line that connects the two countries is seen as a crucial first step. Recently, billionaire Bill Gates bought 8% of PNM's stock, perhaps sensing the connection and potential profits PNM could derive from this transmission line.

As part of this plan a line must run from the Palo Verde Nuclear Plant west of Phoenix to the south. The Palo Verde plant is the largest Nuclear plant in the nation, with nine cooling towers each evaporating 15,000 gallons of water per minute to cool it's three uranium fission reactors. Running lines from this plant southward has proven difficult for PNM; local groups such as SOS (Save Our Scenery) have rallied citizens at each of the public hearings. The Tohono O'odham nation, a Native American tribe that has for generations lived on the borderlands of Arizona and Mexico and currently maintains a large reservation on the border has refused to allow lines to cross their reservation.

'Déjà vu' All Over Again

The Lorax - El Paso GroupBy Jay Morrow, Waste Reduction Issues Chair

The first time Recycling and Waste Reduction became a national issue was in the early 70's (excluding the Great Depression and World War II). Do you remember the long lines at the gas pumps in 1973? Perhaps not. There was an energy crisis due to high cost of crude oil and its effects were wide spread, from the gas pumps to heating fuel to electricity. Sounds familiar? Recycling was part of a National Energy Strategy because making things from old things consumes up to 70% less energy than producing from virgin material.

Here is a case in point. I speak to up to 2,000 school kids a year on recycling and waste reduction. My energy point is the classic "Spitball". I ask, "how many have ever made one of those good spit balls, the kind that can stick to the ceiling?" Some are eager, some are reluctant, but all will raise their hands, even the girls. It is one of those universal common bonds. But spitballs are the essence of making paper. Ever been to a paper mill? When making recycled content paper they take old paper and dump it into a huge vat with a circulating "beater" that breaks the paper down with water and some other fiber additives. It makes a slurry called pulp, which is sprayed onto a heated felt conveyor and becomes paper. It is a miracle of sorts, as old as dirt. But the energy point is when I ask the kids to try to imagine making a spitball from wood chips! Oh yeah! We'll be chewing that stuff for days. The same is true for plastics. Virgin materials like Lexan® melts and flows at temperatures above 600 degrees. Processing material with a "heat history", recycled lexan, requires heats of 400 degrees or less. A considerable reduction. Plastic production is our second most environmentally degrading industry next to the chemical industry. The less heat, the less air emissions. Same is true for metals.

We have some of the highest waste generation rates in the country. Our desert landfills are cheap and state and local legislators turn their heads on diversion issues because it's cheaper to bury it than to recycle it, but is it? And what do we do? Most of us that recycle and do what we can to reduce pay the same disposal cost as our wasteful neighbors who don't try at all. Ask your local Solid Waste Department why that is.

We are going to push New Mexico to treat Solid waste like other utilities. Pay for what you use. Reward those who use less. If we begin to think about how much we throw away, we will begin to think about how much we consume.

The New Mexico Recycling Coalition is starting to shake things up in the state in respect to waste diversion. Give them a call 505-983-4470.

As a result, PNM has focused its efforts on a route that crosses within sight of Saguro National Monument West and just by the newly created Ironwood National Monument, passing within a few miles of the Sonoran Desert Museum just outside of Tucson. It appears that PNM once the monopoly supplier to cities like Albuquerque, has been effected by start-up *genercos* coming online and utilities across the nation launching *generco* subsidiaries to steal one another's formerly guaranteed customers.

PNM's plan comes with grave environmental consequences for Arizona and for bird and mammal species common to both Arizona and New Mexico. Putting power lines of this magnitude in southern Arizona creates a line of razor wire for birds in the heart of some of our nations most important bird habitat. Having power lines of such size within eyesight of some of our nations most precious monuments degrades their value and the recreational and emotional experience they were created for. The public hearings continue in March. PNM, while aware of the fierce opposition, continues to respond by telling community leaders and citizens that this is a boon for international relations and that perhaps later people will see the value in this decision. In the short term what many people are seeing is a company driven by profit, empowered by lobbyists and very difficult to stop.

Back in New Mexico, Duke Power, based in North Carolina has its sights on Deming, NM for a new natural gas plant, which according to spokesman Richard Fernandez is crucial for New Mexico's continued growth. Fernandez went on to say that the plant could also service El Paso, but would not be used for California. The plant construction is estimated at between \$250-\$300 million dollars. PNM has perhaps three more plants planned for the state in the coming year, which leads one to wonder what will New Mexico, even with a 20% growth rate in the past 20 years do with four new power plants when currently there remains excess electrical power. The answer seems to be that New Mexico is seen as an easier place politically for a power plant to be built. With its proximity to the western grid, Palo Verde and Mexico, such location could create handsome profits for North Carolina based Duke Power or perhaps even more profit for PNM, while degrading the environment, poisoning the air and perhaps permanently altering the quality of life that makes life in New Mexico so special.

What continues to be lost in this debate is renewable energy and conservation. Deregulation has set the stage for companies to seek profit and generate more power, clean or not. Gone are the days when companies came and caulked your windows or offered you insulation to conserve resources. Cheap power and lots of it is the current mantra, though prices to consumers have more than tripled in some areas. Perhaps what makes more sense than building more and more power plants for a largely unregulated industry are to give consumers conservation incentives. If PNM were to offer \$500 rebates to consumers who placed solar panels on their roof and reduced consumption and if the federal and state governments matched this with tax credits, many more people would make solar energy a part of their personal power grid. Once done, the need for new plants and transmission lines would be dramatically reduced, at less cost than the construction of even one new plant. In much of New Mexico we are blessed with 300+ clear days a year, not making solar part of the equation and allowing more plants and power lines to criss-cross our state, creating serious problems for raptors and degrading the wildness of our landscape makes little sense for New Mexicans.

As this cold winter comes to a close one thing remains clear, the electric power industry and its allies in state and federal government are tough and well financed opponents. Their lobbying efforts have included the creation of liberal and conservative groups in one state, spending 17 million dollars fighting one another to stall any action on bills designed to rethink deregulation. Here in 2001, we continue to pay the price for the industries failed nuclear program of the 70's. Part of each bill includes "stranded savings" to recoup PNM's 10% share of Palo Verde and its enormous cost overruns. Yet once again we are put in a "crisis" and told that the answer is to build more; and conservation, while well intentioned is not realistic.

The true answer is that we must let our elected officials know that building more is not the solution. We want tax incentives for industries, such as Senate bill 325, introduced by Republican Sue Wilson of District 19, which gives tax breaks for companies using alternative energy sources to power operations. But bills such as this should extend to working families and their homes. And this type of bill should be part of federal tax relief as well; creating tax incentives helps move the conservation of precious resources forward. Such a series of tax breaks will keep on saving money, open space and wildlife for generations to come, while not infringing on utility companies rights to make profits.

Editor's Note: In June, The Central New Mexico Group General Meeting will focus on Energy issues. See the Program notice on the previous page.

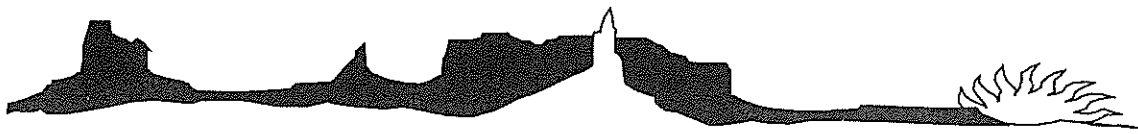
Outings

Wednesday, May 16th - Tecolote Stargazing Hike
Meet at 6:45 PM (note time), Franklin Plaza (Juan Tabo & Central). We'll carpool to Tecolote Trail (a short trail on the east side of the Sandias), hike an easy mile, then stargaze (if weather permits) after the sun goes down (around 8:30 or so). If you have a small telescope, bring it along and I'll help carry it. Return to cars by 10 PM or sooner. Hike: 2.5 miles RT, on trail. Elevation: less than 500'. Drive: 30 miles RT. Dress for weather, bring star charts (if you have them), boots, water, snack, flashlight. Contact: Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com).

Wednesday, June 13th - Sandia Crest Hike
Meet at 5:45 PM, Franklin Plaza (Juan Tabo & Central). We'll drive to the crest, hike along the upper part of the La Luz and the La Luz Spur and return via the rock house. Return 9-10 PM. Possible snack in the middle at the tram house. Hike: 3-4 miles, most on trail. Elevation: ~500'. Drive: 50 miles RT. Dress for weather, bring boots, water, snack, flashlight. Contact: Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com).

Sunday, May 20th - Cerro Blanco-Fourth of July Loop Hike
Manzano Mountain Wilderness. Moderate hike to the crest of the Manzano Mountains for spectacular views. 4.5 miles round trip, 1200 ft. elevation gain. Leisurely pace. Contact: David Ther 260-1553.

Central New Mexico Group News



A Note from the Chair

Resist the Proposed PSB Land Sale

by Laurence Gibson

Now is the time to watch carefully for the next step in the city's sale of 1,326 acres of prime real estate nestled under Franklin Mountains State Park, south of Transmountain Road. When the PSB announced its intent to sell in January of this year, it spoke of building our tax base and using the money to hold down water rates.

The *El Paso Times* recommended caution that the sale of this huge area not become a liability, and asked, "Will the \$12 million to be realized by the PSB be offset or overwhelmed by water demands of new development?"

We feel this sale, which may be a done deal by the time you read this, is a textbook example of the kind of urban sprawl that even cities with plenty of water are beginning to avoid. As for holding the line on water prices, that is absolutely the wrong approach. The earth's most precious resource has been a "throw-away" commodity here for way too long. We tend to value things according to how much we pay for them.

We urge you to watch carefully for imminent action on the PSB's agenda at www.epwu.org. Meetings are usually at 8:00 AM every other Wednesday morning. When this deal does go down, it's going to happen fast!

Get yourself over to the state-of-art meeting room at EPWU across from Cielo Vista Mall and let the board know you care! The sale would then show up on the City Council Agenda for the following Tuesday morning posted at www.ci.el-paso.tx.us/. When it comes up, call or meet with your City Council rep at their weekly breakfast meeting. Then let's fill the council chambers on D-Day!

New Mexico's Vanishing Wildlife

by Jim Bailey

The decline of New Mexico's wildlife has been a gradual process, slowly diminishing the backdrop for our lives. Twenty-two species of native fish, amphibians, birds and mammals no longer occur here. Almost 3% of the 837 native wild vertebrates of New Mexico are gone. This includes 14% of the 69 native fishes.

The grizzly bear, northern gray wolf and black-footed ferret come to mind fairly easily. Others include mink, otter, lynx, hot springs cotton rat and Merriam's subspecies of elk. Wolverine may have been native to our state, but no longer occur here. A few wild bison persist in the Valle Vidal, none are on native New Mexico range. As for birds, we have lost sharp-tailed grouse and sage grouse. The boreal toad and lowland leopard frog are also gone.

Our native fishes have been most decimated: sturgeon, gar, Colorado River cutthroat trout, eel, bonytail chub, beautiful shiner, phantom shiner, Rio Grande bluntnose shiner, Palomas pupfish or freshwater drum.

Loss of wildlife continues in modern New Mexico. We have 95 wild vertebrates listed as threatened or endangered. The Chiricahua leopard frog and lesser prairie chicken are candidates for listing. Endangered species include the Rio Grande silvery minnow, Gila trout, Gila monster, ridgenose rattlesnake, aplomado falcon, ptarmigan, southwestern willow flycatcher, pine marten and desert bighorn sheep. Another 27 species of invertebrates - snails, freshwater clams and crustaceans - are also listed as threatened or endangered.

New Mexico's endangered species program in the Game and Fish Department is small and underfunded. It cannot adequately document the decline of our wildlife, let alone develop recommendations for recovery. Of 118 state-listed threatened and endangered species, at least 27 need reviews of their status, distribution, life histories or taxonomy. Some, including the buff-collared nightjar and wrinkled marssnail, may be gone from New Mexico. Many species need taxonomic review, using modern methods of genetics.

Worse yet, a 1998 Game and Fish Department memo indicated that at least 54 native species are of concern and need study for possible listing as threatened or endangered in New Mexico. These include 23 invertebrates, 12 fishes, 2 frogs, 7 birds and 10 mammals. Among these are the Rio Grande sucker, blue catfish, Chiricahua leopard

frog, black swift, burrowing owl, black-tailed and Gunnison's prairie dogs and hooded and hog-nosed skunks.

The loss of species impacts other members of New Mexico's flora and fauna. Loss of prairie dogs has impacted black-footed ferrets, burrowing owls, ferruginous hawks, golden eagles, mountain plovers, rattlesnakes and salamanders that frequent prairie dog towns. Declining minnows and shiners may seem unimportant, but they are the prey that game fish depend upon. Long-nosed bats are important pollinators of night-blooming plants. In fact, most interactions of our flora and fauna are unknown. The gradual loss of species results in a slow unraveling of native biotic communities. As these communities become degraded and simplified, their abilities to withstand perturbations such as drought, forest fires or insect outbreaks are impaired. The ability of the native community of plants and animals to provide products and services for mankind is reduced.

Gila Trout Ready for Downlisting, Limited Fishing

by Jim Bailey

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering a recommendation to downlist Gila trout from endangered to threatened, and to allow limited fishing of certain populations of the species. The Gila Trout Recovery Team, a committee of biologists, drafted the recommendation. For more than a decade, the Team has overseen cooperative efforts of state and federal agencies to renovate streams and reintroduce Gila trout.

Gila trout was federally listed as endangered in 1967. Historically, it had occurred in the headwaters of the Gila River in southwest New Mexico and southeast Arizona. In the 1970s, only five populations were known, all in the smallest headwater streams. Today, Gila trout exist in 14 streams. Additional fish are maintained in hatchery brood stocks. The 1993 Recovery Plan stated that downlisting to threatened status would require replication of each known genetic lineage of Gila trout in streams sufficiently far apart that one unusual event, such as forest fire in a watershed, could not eliminate a lineage. Each genetically pure indigenous lineage now occurs in at least two streams. Conditions for downlisting have been met. However, the Recovery Team and state and federal agencies continue to restore Gila trout to additional streams. The goal is to reestablish a sufficient number of populations to allow delisting the species and returning it to management by Arizona and New Mexico.

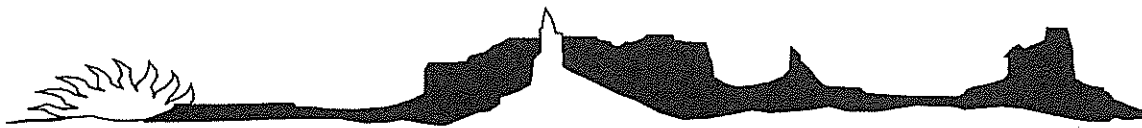
Limited fishing of Gila trout would occur under a special rule, which is permitted for threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Gila trout is also listed as threatened by New Mexico, but the state Wildlife Conservation Act does not restrict harvest of threatened species. Fishing would be regulated by the Game and Fish Department. However, violation of state law for the taking of Gila trout would still constitute a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

At first, fishing would be limited to a few streams with populations large enough to withstand the expected level of angling. Catch-and-release may be required. Most streams, with still-recovering populations, would not be fished. It may also be possible to establish a Gila trout fishery in Snow Lake, using excess production of Gila trout from hatcheries. In order to retain sufficient genetic diversity for transplants to newly renovated streams, hatcheries must spawn at least 25 pairs of Gila trout. These pairs produce about 40,000 fry, with some offspring from each pairing used for transplanting. However, it is not practical to transplant more than about 5,000 fish. The excess fish could be stocked in Snow Lake or other suitable waters.

Most opposition to Gila trout recovery has come from anglers who objected to eliminating rainbow trout fisheries and replacing them with Gila trout in streams that may not be fished so long as Gila trout are listed as endangered. Downlisting Gila trout to threatened and opening some Gila trout streams to fishing would defuse this opposition without jeopardizing recovery of the species. Developing a unique Gila trout fishery would attract anglers, with their wallets, from New Mexico and other states, providing recreation, and economic benefits for Catron and Grant counties.

Jim Bailey taught wildlife biology at the University of Montana and at Colorado State University. More recently, he was head of the endangered species program in the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, retiring in 1999.

The Lorax - El Paso Group



The Lorax - El Paso Group

May 6: Hillsboro Peak Day Hike

Place: Aldo Leopold Wilderness near Kingston, New Mexico
 Class: Moderate
 Length: 10 miles
 Elevation gain: 1,800 feet
 Leader: Carolina Greenfield: 594-7342 (H)

Join Carolina for one of our best hikes. This will be our group's first trip of the season to this 10k-high peak on the crest of the wild Black Range. Snow will still cover a short stretch of the trail. In the old days, the Forest Service maintained a whole string of fire towers along the ridge stretching northward toward Socorro. You can still scramble up the tower here or visit with the friendly staff in the cabin below if they are not too busy spotting smoke.

May 12: Dripping Springs Day Hike

Place: Organ Mountains East of Las Cruces
 Class: Easy
 Length: 3 miles
 Elevation gain: Minimal
 Leader: Ann Falknor: 833-9162 (H)

The Organs hold many treasures. Dripping Springs is one of the rarest of these. Not long ago, this little paradise was "saved" for our enjoyment by The Nature Conservancy. The easy trail leads up Ice Canyon to ruins and the springs themselves. The area is administered by the BLM, so there is a \$3 per vehicle fee.

May 20: Pecos Mountains Day Hike

Place: Northwest of Sante Fe Park, New Mexico
 Class: Easy to Moderate
 Length: 4 miles
 Elevation gain: 200 feet
 Leader: Scott Cutler: 747-6668 (W)

Join UTEP Centennial Museum Curator Scott Cutler for a leisurely wander through the millennia-old sites here. These include bedrock metates, pottery shards, and an occasional arrow point. After we've seen enough, we can walk up the trail between two of the area's volcanic cones: Mount Cox and Mount Riley. Call for meeting place and time. It's a bit tricky to find this one on your own!

May 25-28: Continental Divide-Diamond Creek Memorial Weekend Backpack

Place: Aldo Leopold Wilderness near Winston, New Mexico
 Class: Moderate to Moderately Strenuous
 Length: 22 miles
 Elevation gain: 2,050 feet
 Leader: Rollin Wickenden: rwickgila@aol.com

Come climb one of the highest peaks in the Black Range and enjoy a long weekend in a remote part of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. We will depart El Paso Friday afternoon for our carcamp spot in the Black Range. Saturday we'll drive to the trail head and hike the Continental Divide Trail to the crest of the Northern Black Range, descending Fisherman Canyon to our campsite on Diamond Creek. Sunday morning will offer an optional climb of Diamond Peak, after which we will pack up and move downstream to James Brother's Spring and homestead. We'll spend Sunday night in a beautiful setting. Monday we will walk up the trail past a waterfall to the rim of the canyon, returning to our vehicles.

May 25-29: Mogollon Range Memorial Weekend Backpack

Place: Gila Wilderness
 Class: Strenuous
 Length: 35 miles
 Elevation range: 7,400-10,700 feet
 Leader: Mike Episcopo: 584-9322 (H)

This backpack starts at 7,920 feet and ends at 9,132 feet. Beginning at Willow Creek and ending at Sandy Point, this is a scenic loop through the very heart of the Gila Wilderness high country. Our route will take us from the canyon bottoms of Iron Creek, Turkeyfeather Creek, White Creek, and the West Fork of the Gila River. It goes up and into the high peaks of the Mogollon Range; Mogollon Baldy at 10,770 ft., Center Baldy at 10,535 ft., and Whitewater Baldy at 10,895 ft. We will spend three nights in the backcountry near water sources. Participants should be experienced backpackers in good physical condition able to adapt to a variety of terrain and possible adverse weather conditions. Call for more details and reservations. NOTE: The route is subject to change, according to snow pack and backcountry spring conditions.

Sierra Club - El Paso Regional Group Directory (Area Code 915)

Executive Committee

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 tmertig@earthlink.net

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Transportation

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Web Master

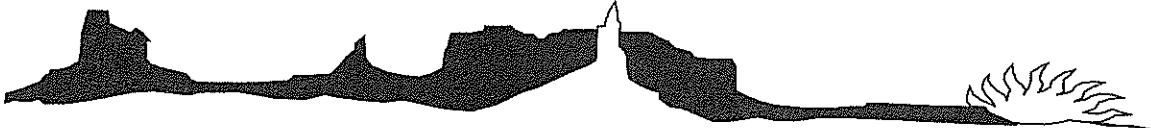
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Group Directory Pajarito Group of the Sierran Club			
Executive Committee		Conservation Committee	
Abe Jacobson, Chair	672-9579	Michael Smith, Chair	662-2380
Bey Hartline, Vice-Chair	661-9031	Janet Gerwin, Co-Chair	662-9568
Carole Jacobson, Secretary/Treasurer	672-9579	Jody Benson, Sprawl	662-4782
Fred Hartline	661-9031	Janet Gerwin, Water	662-9568
Miriam Oudejans	672-0414	Abe Jacobson, Mining	672-9579
Michael Smith	662-2380	Carole Jacobson, Adopt-A-Highway	672-9579
Gordon Spingler	662-9481	Jeniffer Johnson, Jemez Mountains Issues	289-9183
Administration		Chuck Pergler, Grazing	661-6169
David Bouquin, Chapter Rep.	662-3741	Michael Smith/ Gordon Spingler, DOE Land Transfer	662-2380/ 662-9481
Fred Hartline, Publicity Rep.	661-9031	Michael Smith Forests	662-2380
Miriam Oudejans, Newsletter	672-0414	Wildlife OPEN	
Guthrie Miller, Membership	662-5545		
Warren Steckle, Outings	672-0414		

General Meetings
All general meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at Mesa Public Library, at 7 PM and are open to the public.

Other Meetings:
Conservation Committee meetings are on the second Wednesday and Executive Committee meetings are on the third Wednesday of the month.
All meetings are at Mesa Public Library, at 7 PM and are open to the public.

Outings
Sunday, May 6th
Hike Ancho Canyon from S.R.4 to the Rio Grande. Return via the unnamed and trailless canyon between Ancho and Water Canyon. Meet at 8:30 outside the White Rock Tourist Information Center off S.R.4.
Leader: Rainer Bleck, 662-2368.

Saturday May 19th
Hike up Water Canyon from S.R. 501. Meet at 8:30 AM at the parking lot at Sullivan Field (across from Los Alamos Highschool). Bring water and a snack. Moderate, morning hike through cool, forested canyon.
Leaders: Warren Steckle & Miriam Oudejans, 672-0414.

Saturday June 16th
Obsidian Ridge mountain bike ride. Meet at 8:30 AM at the parking lot at Sullivan Field (across from Los Alamos Highschool). Although the ride is less than 10 miles, there are a few very rocky sections to keep it challenging. We will stop at the end of the mesa for a quick snack before heading back uphill to the start of the ride.
Contact Warren Steckle or Miriam Oudejans at 672-0414 for further information.

Pajarito Group News



The Log--So.New Mexico Group News

New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program

by Marianne Thaeler

The New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program allows ANYONE interested in New Mexico's wildlife and natural habitats to purchase for \$6 a Habitat Stamp. Since 1986, licensed anglers, hunters and trappers on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands are required to purchase these stamps to validate their licenses. But one need not be a sportsman to support the habitat program.

Habitat Stamps can be purchased at New Mexico Game and Fish offices in Las Cruces at: 566 N. Telshor Blvd. (Telshor northern extension), in Roswell at: 1913 W. Second St. and from licensed vendors, which include any WalMart or K-Mart Store in New Mexico, usually in their sporting goods departments.

Habitat Stamp funds are specifically dedicated to habitat conservation and rehabilitation projects. Approximately 150 project proposals are submitted annually, originating from agency planning documents and public proposals number of stamps purchased annually.

This is sooo easy, and it does so much good. Join me in getting a Habitat Stamp. I am not a hunter or angler or trapper, but I care very much about wildlife and preserving their habitat. Buy a NEW MEXICO HABITAT STAMP when next you go to the store, put in on your list!!

Group Directory Southern N.M. Group Executive Committee P.O. Box 3705 UPB Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003	
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John Hamilton, Sprawl Issues	525-6671 johnrh54@yahoo.com
Toni Gross Recording Secretary	522-2815 tgross@lcpa.k12.nm.us

General Meetings

Executive Committee Meetings are typically the first Wednesday of the month--all members are welcome to attend. Call Cheryl at 524-4861 for time and place.

Outings

The outings group does not have any scheduled outings until the Fall. Outings questions: Call Barbara Coon at 522-1576 or Ron Gordon at 522-4527.





Outing Outlook

by Norma McCallan

Despite some heavy winds and flurries of snow & hail, spring is definitely here, with fruit trees in full blossom, flowers popping up everywhere, and days getting noticeably longer. It's a great time for trying a Sierra Club hike! Below are listed some of our Group outings. Be sure and check each of the Group's pages for more details on these, and additional hikes. Always call leader to confirm time and meeting place. All phone numbers 505 except as noted.

- ♦ Sat May 5 LA LUZ TRAIL, SANDIAS. Steve Markowitz 983-2829. Will go up this popular trail as far as snow level permits.
- ♦ Sat May 5 ACHENBACK CANYON, near Las Cruces. Ron & Annie Gordon, 522-4527. Moderate hike in a high canyon with beautiful views.
- ♦ Sun May 6 HILLSBORO PEAK, ALDO LEOPOLD WILDERNESS. Carolina Greenfield 915-594-7342. Moderate, 10 miles, 1800' elevation gain hike to the fire tower of this prominent peak on the wild Black Range.
- ♦ Sun May 6 ANCHO CANYON LOOP HIKE, near Bandelier. Rainer Bleck 662-2368. Offtrail loop hike down Ancho from S.R. 4, along the Rio, and up an unnamed canyon between Ancho & Water Canyon
- ♦ Sat May 12 - Sun May 20 ESCALANTE COUNTRY WEEK. Norma McCallan 471-0005. Explore the little visited north side of the Escalante drainage off the Burr trail via 2 three day backpacks (Horse & Wolverine Canyons, then Upper Gulch), and several day hikes. Dogs ok.
- ♦ Fri May 25 - Tues May 29 MOGOLLON RANGE BACKPACK, GILA WILDERNESS. Mike Episcopo 915-584-9322. Strenuous 4 day, 35 mile loop beginning at Willow Creek and ending at Sandy Point in the heart of the Gila high country.
- ♦ Fri May 25 - Mon May 28 CONTINENTAL DIVIDE/DIAMOND CREEK BACKPACK. Rollin Wickenden rwickgila@aol.com. Moderate/strenuous 3 day, 22 mile trip in the remote Aldo Leopold Wilderness, near Winston.
- ♦ Sat June 16 OBSIDIAN RIDGE MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDE. Warren Steckle/Miriam Oudejans 672-0414. Ten mile trek through the ponderosa on this little used route near Bandelier N.P.
- ♦ Sun June 17 EAST FORK OF THE JEMEZ BOX CANYON. Norbert Sperlich 983-1962. Moderate/strenuous 8 mile hike, 800' gain, some walking in the river.
- ♦ Sat June 23 - Tues June 26. PECOS WILDERNESS BACKPACK. Bob McKee 672-3426. Moderately paced 4 day loop on the Western side of the Pecos, starting at the Ski Basin, 32 miles.
- ♦ Sat June 30 DECEPTION PEAK DAYHIKE. Norma McCallan 471-0005. If the Santa Fe Ski Company has its way, this 12,200' peak covered with alpine wildflowers will soon see a ski lift and associated ski runs, requiring the cutting of 25 acres of heavy spruce/fur forest at treeline. Moderate hike, close to 2000-foot elevation gain, dogs ok.
- ♦ Sat/Sun July 14/15 TRAIL MAINTENANCE BACKPACK, DOMINGUEZ TRAIL. John & Linda Buchser 820-0201. Two day work trip, mostly cutting downed trees along this little known trail which crosses the ridge from Santa Barbara to Trampas Canyons. Call by 7/12 for reservations.

Other News:

- ♦ BACKPACKING CLASS - Gail Bryant 757-6654 will repeat last year's backpacking class in Santa Fe (3 evenings of classroom discussion perhaps followed by a short backpack) if enough interest. Call for info & dates.
- ♦ VALLES CALDERA - the Forest Service & the new management team are still working out administrative details of this recently purchased National Preserve. It is likely tours will not be available until fall. Stay tuned.
- ♦ OUTINGS WORKSHOPS - on Saturday April 7 at the Sevilleta, 4 new Albuquerque hike leaders (Richard Riger, Doris Campbell, Laura Corey, Ann Marie Cale) received basic leadership training with Norbert Sperlich, David Ther, and Norma McCallan. On Sunday April 8, representatives from all 5 Groups (Ilse Bleck, Pajarito; Norbert Sperlich, Norma McCallan, Santa Fe; David Ther, Central; Laurence Gibson, El Paso, and Ben Zerbey, Southern) gathered there to review outing policies, and discuss ways of strengthening our outings programs. By the next issue the text of the new standardized waiver for all outing participants should be finalized, and implementation underway.
- ♦ INPUT WANTED - if any of members have suggestions for our outing programs or ideas of outings related items they would like to see in the Sierran, please let me know. nmccallan@mindspring.com

Stay Informed --

Get E-mail on the Latest Happenings

To Get and Post Messages on current happenings of environmental interest in the Rio Grande Chapter: This list is open to anyone interested. Send a message to

listserv@lists.sierraclub.org

With the contents:

SUB RIO-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

If you would like to get alerts only on issues that have been determined by your group or chapter's leadership to be especially important (which is a much lower volume of email):

Send a message to

Listguard@sierraclub.org

With the subject line:

Your 8 digit member number (on any Club mailing label)

With the contents, depending on which group you are in:

SUB RIO-NORTH-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

SUB RIO-CENTRAL-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

SUB RIO-SOUTH-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

SUB RIO-ELPASO-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

SUB RIO-PAJARITO-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

The New Ranch Handbook: A Guide to Restoring Western Rangelands

by Dr. Nathan F. Sayre

Published by The Quivira Coalition

Can livestock ranching and conservation values be compatible? Can ranchers and environmentalists work together to benefit rangelands? The answer is yes, and the proof can be found on the ground, where it counts. On New Ranches in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and elsewhere, livestock have been managed in innovative, progressive ways, and the land has responded: vegetation is more diverse and productive, soils are more stable, streams and springs have come back to life. Wildlife, watersheds, livestock and ranchers have all benefited.

The New Ranch Handbook: A Guide to Restoring Western Rangelands situates the practices of these ranches in relation to recent models and knowledge in range science and ecology. The tremendous diversity and variability of arid and semiarid rangelands defy many assumptions of classical ecology. Basic processes of energy flow, nutrient and water cycling, and plant growth can be described, however, and management tailored to promote them. The New Ranches profiled here demonstrate, further, that this can

Praise for the Quivira Coalition:

"The aim of the Quivira Coalition is to put ranching and conservation, economics and ecology into the same thought. All ranchers and conservationists ought to appreciate this effort, and they ought to support it." --
Wendell Berry

To Order:

Send a check for \$13.50
(\$10 + \$3.50 for shipping & handling)

The Quivira Coalition
551 Cordova Road, #423
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
www.quiviracoalition.org

SM The New Ranch is a service mark of the Quivira Coalition.