Climate shift

Southwest utilities abandon coal and make major wind and solar investments even while political progress on the environment stalls

Kit Carson aims for 100% solar on sunny days

Kit Carson Rural Electric Cooperative announced plans for dozens of 1-megawatt solar installations around its Northern New Mexico service territory over the next six years. The co-op hopes to provide 100% of its energy from the sun during sunny days by 2022. Page 5.

New Mexico, Texas slated for 1.2 GW of wind

Southwest Public Service’s parent company will invest $1.6 billion in Roosevelt County, N.M., and Hale County, Texas, for wind farms that it estimates will save customers billions over the next 30 years. Page 3.

Opposing sides face off outside the New Mexico capitol at a rally calling for protection of Mexican wolves. To find out which environmental bills succeeded and which stalled at the 2017 legislative session, see Pages 8 and 9.

New Mexico utility PNM announced in March that closing coal-fired San Juan Generating Station, above, in 2022 would likely benefit customers, though the company has not made a final decision yet. In February, utilities announced plans to close Navajo Generating Station, the West’s largest coal plant, by 2019, also because it is becoming too expensive. See Page 3.

Photo: Evalyn Bemis, www.evalynbemisphotography.com

Photo courtesy San Juan Citizens Alliance and Eco Flight

© Jennifer Esperanza

© Gamesa

More inside:

Drilling, legislation for Chaco
BLM goes ahead with auctioning land in greater Chaco Canyon for oil and gas drilling, but legislators have asked for the agency to consult with tribes before moving forward. Page 13

Hope for defending climate-saving methane rules
The U.S. House has voted to kill money-saving BLM rules that reduce methane waste from the oil and gas industry, but the Senate may not have the votes to revoke the safeguards, thanks to your activism. Page 6

Sierra Club intervenes in PNM rate case
The utility is asking for a 14% rate hike in New Mexico. Page 7


Hikes: Pages 15 and 16
Sierran publication information

The Rio Grande Sierran is published four times a year, in January, April, July, and October, by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club as a benefit for members living in New Mexico and West Texas.

Rio Grande Chapter offices are at 2215 Lead Ave SE, Albuquerque, 87106, 505-243-7767.

For extra copies, e-mail riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org.

The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Rio Grande Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club.

Articles may be reprinted for nonprofit purposes.

Robert Tohe, Our Wild America se- riest承担责任，(928) 774-6103, robert.tohe@sierracub.org

Sierra Club National

2101 Webster St Suite 1300

Oakland, CA 94612

(415) 977-5808

Roger Singer, senior field organiza-

tion manager, (NM, CO, UT), mobile:

303-884-0014, office: 303-449-5359

x103, roger.singer@sierrclub.org

Rio Grande Sierran publication information

 accomplished in production of the

contents of the Group

and email address will be

used in production of the

The contributor’s name

and email address will be

printed as a source of more

information, unless the

contributor specifies other-

wise. Submissions must be received by the 10th of the month prior to publication.

Editorial practices as developed and adopted by the Rio Grande Chapter will be used in production of the Rio Grande Sierran.

Contents of the Group pages are the responsibility of the editor for that Group and any policies that are in place from that Group.

If you wish to opt out of the mailed copy of this newsletter and read it online: Contact Mona Blaber at monablaber@gmail.com.

Donate— it's easy!

When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas to protect our air, land, water and wildlife. You can use the Q-code app on your smartphone to scan a code, or send your check to: Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter 1807 Second Street, Unit 45 Santa Fe, NM 87505.

505-740-2977, daniel.lorimer@sierracub.org

Public Lands Team: Tom Gorman, Teresa Seamster, Mary Katherine Ray, Ken Newtson

Water: Chair: John Buchser, 505-820-0201, jbuchser@comcast.net; All Lyons, sillyonsviwk@gmail.com, Eric Patterson, Paul Parisky; Ray Shortridge, Kurt Anderson, kurt@nmusu.com

Finance: Chair: Robert Tohe, 928-774-6103, robert.tohe@sierracub.org

Four Corners: Robert Tohe, 928-774-6103, robert.tohe@sierracub.org

Channels: Camilla Feibelman, camilla.feibelman@sierracub.org

Mining, Sand & Gravel: Open Zero Waste: Joe Egigner, 505-570-0583, joseignerr@gmail.com, and Karen Sweeney, 575-977-4997, ksweeney99@comcast.net.

Activism Teams

Communications Teams: Chair: Open. Members: Jim Klukkert, Lauren Gibson, David Cox, Benton Howell, John Buchanan

Rio Grande Sierran Editorial Board: Lauren Gibson, Ken Hughes, Mary Katherine Ray, Jody Benson, David Cox

Sierran Editor: Mona Blaber, 505-660-5905, monablaber@gmail.com

Web Editor: Ellen Loehman, loehman@msmn.com, (505) 328-2954

Elections: Chair: John Buchser

Finance: Ray Shortridge, chair

505-604-3908; Members: Britha

van year. If you're not a member yet but like what you see, you can subscribe to the Chapter e-mail list. If you're not a member yet but like what you see, you can subscribe to the Chapter e-mail list.

Nationals Representatives

Council of Club Leaders Delegate: Susan Mahoney, 505-880-5206, smahoney31@comcast.net

Sierra Club Board of Directors Member: Liz Walsh, 915-342-7630

Buying HealthCare Communities Team Facilitator: Ken Hughes BLM Subcommittee of the Wild

lands Committee: Tom Gorman

Rio Grande Water Fund: Theresa Seasmeyer

Sierra Student Coalition: Neysa Hardin, nrhardin@yahoo.com

Coalitions/Working Groups

America Votes: Susan Martin Chaco Coalition: Miya King-Flaherty, Robert Tohe, Teresa Seamster

Coalitions: Camilla Feibelman, Mary Katherine Ray, Jim Klukkert

Environmental Alliance of New Mexico: Dan Lorimer, Patricia Caro

Friends of the Rio Grande del Norte: Eric Patterson, Valleymaers

Rio Puerco Management Committee: Tom Gorman

Turquoise Trail Regional Alliance: Denise Fort

National Representatives

Sierra Club National Coordinator: Margaret de Long, mardel18@aol.com.

We are looking for volunteers to help with our "Action Training.

If we organize we win" on April 23. Please see our volunteer form online to sign up. We're also looking for new outings lead-
ners. We'll hold a first-aid training on May 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please email Margaret Delong at mardel1@gmail.com.

Volunteer opportunities

We are looking for volunteers to help with our "Action Training.

If we organize we win" on April 23. Please see our volunteer form online to sign up. We're also looking for new outings lead-
ners. We'll hold a first-aid training on May 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please email Margaret Delong at mardel1@gmail.com.

Sierra Club National Coordinator: Margaret de Long, mardel18@aol.com.

We are looking for volunteers to help with our "Action Training.

If we organize we win" on April 23. Please see our volunteer form online to sign up. We're also looking for new outings lead-
ners. We'll hold a first-aid training on May 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please email Margaret Delong at mardel1@gmail.com.

Volunteer opportunities

We are looking for volunteers to help with our "Action Training.

If we organize we win" on April 23. Please see our volunteer form online to sign up. We're also looking for new outings lead-
ners. We'll hold a first-aid training on May 6 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please email Margaret Delong at mardel1@gmail.com.
Coal reels as wind and solar rise

By Mona Blaber
Chapter communications coordinator

A seismic shift for energy and the climate has hit the Southwest, and New Mexico in particular. On March 16, Public Service Company of New Mexico announced that it would likely benefit customer bills to retire New Mexico’s San Juan Generating Station in 2022, when coal and ownership contracts expire. PNM said it had not made a final decision on the plant’s future.

That announcement came less than a month after owners of Arizona’s Navajo Generating Station, the largest coal plant in the West, announced the plant will cease operations in 2019, 25 years ahead of schedule. The coal plants join others around the country on the ropes as natural gas and renewable energy have become cheaper than coal. Xcel Energy says it will save customers billions by investing in 1.2 gigawatts of wind in eastern New Mexico and west Texas (see story at right). And Taos-based electric cooperative Kit Carson plans to invest in 30 MW of solar in 30 locations in northern New Mexico (see Page 5).

Studies have found that even before coal was overtaken as the lowest-price source of electricity, its environmental impacts were far outweighed by its costs, including pollution cleanup and health damages. Some community members living near the plant, which neighbors the Navajo Nation, have expressed that concern. “Coal is a dying industry and has had significant impacts on the Navajo Nation for over 50 years. Enough is enough!” said Colleen Cook, Diné citizen and advocate for sustainable solutions. “It is imperative for our Nation to transition to a healthier, sustainable economy now.”

Scientists estimate that we must reduce greenhouse emissions by 50% by 2030 to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, which could include devastating economic and human losses. Closing San Juan by 2023 would mean cleaner air, saved lives and significant progress in protecting future generations, but it would also mean ending the 286 jobs at the plant and around 355 at San Juan Mine.

Coal, the Navajo Nation and the plant’s future, will be the families who carry the burden.”

“PNM’s analysis is part of a required public planning process called Integrated Resource Planning, which lays out the utility’s plans for the next 20 years. Details of public meetings on the plan, which is in process, are at www.pnm.com/irp.

“PNM’s announcement is a clear sign that coal is too costly. Now is the time to focus on an economic transition for the hard-working families in Northwest New Mexico. The Four Corners holds vast solar potential and a massive transmission network that can create clean-energy jobs providing affordable, reliable energy to the region. This will require immediate and thought-ful action from PNM, the state, local government, and other local stakeholders,” said Camilla Frehelman, Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter director. PNM had already planned to shut two of San Juan’s four coal-burning units by December 2017. PNM’s replacement power for those units is mostly existing nuclear energy, natural gas and an increased share of San Juan’s remaining units, plus 40 MW of solar, but the company said closing the remaining units would be an opportunity to add renewable energy.

These events demonstrate that even while President Donald Trump caters to coal executives while ignoring the catastrophic human and economic risks of climate change, coal’s days may be impossible to reverse.

In an analysis on the Navajo Generating Station closure, the Las Vegas Times said: “The environmental rules that Trump denounces as the culprit for the rapid decline of coal are not the problem in Arizona — even at this plant that releases more greenhouse gases than almost any other in the country. The problem is old-fashioned competition.”

Weigh in on San Juan Mine

The federal Office of Surface Mining is conducting public open houses as it develops an Environmental Impact Statement for San Juan Mine. The hearings are a result of a failure by the federal government to provide a meaningful opportunity for public input on a plan approving below-ground mining at the San Juan Mine. The government failed to meaningfully analyze environmental-justice impacts on frontline communities as well as impacts on water quality, air quality, climate, and wildlife. This is the public’s opportunity to ensure the government hears from us, analyzes the impacts of the mine, and addresses the new economic picture environmental-legalists for the troubled plant that burns the coal from this mine. The plant is not economic for customers after 2022, and we need to ensure that the already mined lands are properly reclaimed if the plant were to retire in 2022. The mine has struggled for many years and the quality of the coal has declined, adding to the economic pressures on the mine and the plant.

Public sessions on San Juan Mine Environmental Impact Statement:
1. 5-8 p.m. Monday, April 10; Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th St. NW, Albuquerque.
2. 5-8 p.m. Wednesday, April 12; Shiprock High School, Shiprock, N.M.
3. 5-8 p.m. Thursday, April 13, Farmington Civic Center, 280 W. Arrington St., Farmington.

Energy and climate change

$1.6B for wind in NM, Texas

By Mona Blaber

Xcel Energy, the parent company of New Mexico utility Southwestern Public Service, announced on March 21 that it plans to spend $1.6 billion on 1.2 gigawatts of wind energy in New Mexico and West Texas.

Xcel said it wants to make wind 35% of its total energy mix by 2025. On the downside, Southwestern Public Service is proposing to charge its New Mexico solar customers a monthly backup fee, making it harder for these customers to pay off their investment and discouraging rooftop solar, which utilities often see as competition. The coalition Sierra Club belongs to is fighting against these lame-duck efforts to make customers pay off their investment.

“The Sagamore Wind Project will be the largest wind farm in the state, resulting in hundreds of clean-energy jobs in rural New Mexico and more affordable electric bills for consumers,” said Sen. Martin Heinrich. “This project and the jobs it will create in rural New Mexico are precisely why I worked so hard to pass the wind production tax credit.”

“We must take this economic shift seriously and think about how we can support workers who have dedicated their lives to keeping our lights on and the communities that have lived in the shadow of pollution,” Bill Corcoran, regional director for Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign, said. “If we don’t prepare for the future, it will be their families who carry the burden.”

Avangrid Renewables said the project is expected to create 400 jobs at its peak this year.

Above: Workers pour a foundation at El Cabo Wind Farm, a 298-megawatt facility under construction in Torrance County. Avangrid Renewables said the project is expected to create 400 jobs at its peak this year.

Major coal plants likely to retire

San Juan Generating Station
Waterford, N.M. (near Farmington), 1,683 megawatts
Possible closure in 2022; plant operator and part-owner PNM is conducting a 25-year planning process.

Navajo Generating Station
Page, Ariz., 2,250 megawatts
Slated for closure in 2019, its owners announced in February that buying gas off the spot market is cheaper than operating the plant.

$1.6B for wind in NM, Texas

By Mona Blaber

Xcel Energy, the parent company of New Mexico utility Southwestern Public Service, announced on March 21 that it plans to spend $1.6 billion on 1.2 gigawatts of wind energy in New Mexico and West Texas.

Xcel said it wants to make wind 35% of its total energy mix by 2025. On the downside, Southwestern Public Service is proposing to charge its New Mexico solar customers a monthly backup fee, making it harder for these customers to pay off their investment and discouraging rooftop solar, which utilities often see as competition. The coalition Sierra Club belongs to is fighting against these lame-duck efforts to make customers pay off their investment.

“The Sagamore Wind Project will be the largest wind farm in the state, resulting in hundreds of clean-energy jobs in rural New Mexico and more affordable electric bills for consumers,” said Sen. Martin Heinrich. “This project and the jobs it will create in rural New Mexico are precisely why I worked so hard to pass the wind production tax credit.”

“We must take this economic shift seriously and think about how we can support workers who have dedicated their lives to keeping our lights on and the communities that have lived in the shadow of pollution,” Bill Corcoran, regional director for Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign, said. “If we don’t prepare for the future, it will be their families who carry the burden.”

Avangrid Renewables said the project is expected to create 400 jobs at its peak this year.

Above: Workers pour a foundation at El Cabo Wind Farm, a 298-megawatt facility under construction in Torrance County. Avangrid Renewables said the project is expected to create 400 jobs at its peak this year.
Lots to do, and we’re up to the task

Your work is helping New Mexico shape a better future.

You have not stopped, especially after your work helped to ensure that New Mexico did not vote for Donald Trump and we ended the control of the New Mexico House by right-wing allies of Gov. Susana Martinez.

I am always grateful as I write this piece for our newsletter for the amazing work of our Club members and staff. Thank you all.

New Mexico and our country are worth fighting for. New Mexicans stood up to Gov. Martinez and her anti-environment policies. It has strengthened us to continue the work as we fight the disastrous policies of President Trump.

The Legislature has presented a budget that attempts to reverse the severe austerity our governor’s policies have imposed on New Mexicans. I welcome their efforts to raise needed revenue, including the gas tax; I support the efforts to stand up for our public schools and our public-school teachers; the raise in the minimum wage is long overdue. The Sierra Club urges Gov. Martinez to sign the budget, which was passed in a bipartisan fashion.

But we were disappointed in the lack of new environmental legislation. While our allies in the Legislature blocked a lot of bad legislation, we know we have more work to do for a Legislature that is accountable to New Mexico’s environmental quality and future generations’ ability to thrive. Just stopping bad legislation is no longer enough.

Our fight for public lands, for clean renewable energy, for humane, scientific wildlife policies, for clean water and air for all are fights for environmental justice.

Our fight has joined us with new allies in labor, immigrant rights, faith and local communities. We stand with them for safe working conditions and equal rights, including the right to a clean and healthy environment.

Sierra Club members and our allies have taken on the anti-environment and anti-health policies of Gov. Martinez. She is not reacting well, but we won’t stop. Now we must confront the federal gutting of the Environmental Protection Agency, the boondoggle wall on the border (just as bad as the boondoggle assault on the Endangered Species Act) and so many more Trumpian threats to New Mexico and the Rio Grande.

We are working with our allies and broadly integrating our work into the struggle for environmental and social justice in New Mexico and the Rio Grande Valley (both sides of the border). Thank you so much for the work you do.

Volunteerism, membership skyrocket

By Mona Blaber

Chapter communications coordinator

The election of President Donald Trump, his anti-environment Cabinet appointees and a Congress insistent on unraveling climate, water, wildlife and lands protections have been frightening, but they have unleashed a powerful citizen determination.

Membership in the Rio Grande Chapter (New Mexico and El Paso) has increased from 8,000 people to more than 9,000 just since the elections.

More importantly, member engagement has surged, as have inquiries from those who want to know how to get active to protect the environment.

Chapter Director Camilla Feibelman led post-election workshops on how to make a difference under a Trump presidency, and the chapter continues to provide a wide array of opportunities to participate.

Before the recent New Mexico legislative session, the chapter held workshops around the state to educate citizens on how to lobby at the Roundhouse. More than 300 people attended.

A core group of more than 700 signed up to take daily actions, calling or emailing key legislators and attending committee hearings during the legislative session, which ran from Jan. 17 to March 18.

Lynne Fischer, one of the most active Sierra Club volunteers during the session, said she wanted to get involved two years ago but didn’t know how.

“I didn’t know my way around the Roundhouse (I didn’t even know where to park!), I didn’t believe that I had enough ‘expertise’ to address a legislator, and I didn’t know the legislative process, so didn’t know where to begin,” Fischer said.

“This year I was looking for some information on bills that Sierra Club would be supporting (or for another organization) and reached out to Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter lobbyist Dan Lorimier. Dan Lorimier and Legislative co-chair Melinda Smith. At right: Former Republican U.S. Rep. Pete McCloskey and Charles Fox wait to advocate for SB 208, a bill prohibiting coyote-killing contests.

Above: Desiree Allen took the Rail Runner around with volunteers and some volunteer lobbyists broke for lunch near the end of the session. Seated in back are Legislative Team co-chair Patricia Cordona, chapter lobbyist Dan Lorimier and Legislative co-chair Melinda Smith.

Above right: Sister Joan Brown of Interfaith Power and Light promotes methane reductions.

I SUPPORT EXISTING SOURCE
METHANE RULES

Below: Sister Joan Brown of Interfaith Power and Light promotes methane reductions.

I SUPPORT EXISTING SOURCE
METHANE RULES

Lorimier and volunteer Legislative Team co-chairs Patricia Cordona and Melinda Smith made themselves available at the Roundhouse to walk around with volunteers and provide tips on the best time to catch your legislator, proper protocol when giving a public comment at a committee hearing and any other questions.

Whether it’s doing office work on Office Wednesdays or meeting with your legislators or offering a special skill, you can join the hundreds of others who have volunteered. Contact camilla.feibelman@sierraclub.org to join the fun!

April/May/June 2017
Taos co-op aims high with solar

**Kit Carson Co-op sets precedent**

By Bob Bresnahan  
Reneable Taos Co-op board member

I**mportant things are happening in north-central New Mexico. Kit Carson Electric Cooperative successfully withdrew from its 40-year contract with Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association last summer. A little back-ground explains why this is such a momentous event.**

The vast majority of the nation’s approximate 900 rural electric cooperatives receive their electricity from transmission and generation organizations like Tri-State. The co-ops are tied to these organizations by long-term contracts that provide security for billion-dollar loans used to construct central power plants. Until recently, these plants were coal-fired and among the worst emitters of carbon dioxide and other toxic materials. This business model has become harmful, not just to the environment and public health, but to the economic well-being of the co-ops and the rural areas they serve. The transmission and generation companies set grid-into-grid rates, as well as interconnection and other transmission charges, that may be considerably higher for local people throughout the six-year duration of the plan.

The co-ops are vital to the nation’s electric grid, and the co-ops and the rural areas they serve. The transmission and generation companies set grid-into-grid rates, as well as interconnection and other transmission charges, that may be considerably higher for local people throughout the six-year duration of the plan.

**kit Carson aims to make north-central New Mexico service area 100% solar on sunny days**

**By Bob Bresnahan  
Reneable Taos**

Taos-based Kit Carson Electric Cooperative and Guzman Renewable Energy Partners will build 30 one-megawatt solar arrays around Kit Carson’s service area over the next six years. Kit Carson CEO Luis Reyes and Guzman CEO Chris Riley say that on a sunny day all electricity provided by Kit Carson will come from the sun by the fall of 2022.

Reaching the 100% day-time milestone is an impressive goal, especially since Kit Carson and Guzman’s plan is to accomplish it exclusively with locally produced energy.

Guzman has been Kit Carson’s wholesale electricity provider since July 2016. When solar proposals began rolling in to Kit Carson headquarters for under 5 cents a kilowatt-hour last fall, Guzman signed on as partner in the solar project. Added to Kit Carson’s existing arrays, the locally generated solar share of Kit Carson’s annual electricity load will be around 25%.

Guzman will provide financing for the project and manage construction of the arrays. Kit Carson will execute power-purchase agreements for the electricity produced. Kit Carson will also help site the arrays and assist with permitting, interconnection to the Kit Carson grid and coordination with transmission companies and balancing authorities, as well as provide maintenance. Solar installers from the Kit Carson service area will participate in construction and future expansion.

A notable feature of the plan is battery storage sited at the arrays in the later stages of the project. While hitting the summer daytime peak demand from Kit Carson, there will be periods when the arrays produce more energy than required. Excess energy will be stored in batteries and dispatched after sunset.

There will be design, permitting, construction, maintenance, management and other jobs targeted for local people throughout the six-year duration of the plan.

The Kit Carson solar project does raise questions about other New Mexico utilities. The New Mexico Renewable Portfolio Standard calls for investor-owned utilities to provide 20% of their power from renewable sources by 2020. Electric cooperatives are excused from the 20% goal even though the regions they serve are the most to gain from local production of energy.

It’s clear that the New Mexico Legislature needs to revise the Renewable Portfolio Standard with tougher requirements, support for rural cooperatives, and stricter compliance and enforcement measures.

Bob Bresnahan is a founder of Renewable Taos, Inc. He was elected to the board of Kit Carson Electric Cooperative in May 2016. You can reach him at bresnahan.bob@gmail.com or 575-776-5007.

30 projects planned over six years to save money, use storage

**Kit Carson aims for 100% solar on sunny days**

**Photos by William Brown**

Kit Carson Electric Co-op’s community-solar canopy at Taos Charter School came online in 2012 and has an output of 98.7 kilowatts. The co-op last year withdrew from its contract with Tri-Star Generation, which limited local generation to 5%, and is now pursuing more local solar projects.
EPA protects us; let’s protect it

By Denise Fort

Chapter Energy chair

President Trump’s budget represents an unprecedented attack on the agencies that protect our environment, and, perhaps more ominously, on science. We need to communicate to everyone — the media, elected officials, civic groups, friends in other states — the reasons a strong EPA is important to our health and the planet.

The facts: the proposed budget would slash spending at EPA by more than 30%. It would also slash spending at science-based organizations that provide critically important information about health risks, the effects of climate change, etc.

There are two great new groups founded by former EPA staff. Check out saveepa.wordpress.com for up-to-date information on what the cuts could mean. One example: “The Trump administration has proposed to cut EPA’s budget by 31%. Right now, the average taxpayer pays about $26 per year to fund EPA. For comparison, the average taxpayer pays about $2,243 per year for our military (including veterans benefits).”

An attack on the EPA is also an attack on our state’s capacity to protect the environment. The New Mexico Environment Department receives about 30% of its funding from EPA. In addition, EPA funding goes to schools, state universities, nonprofits, contractors and others who are part of the environmental-health mission.

The proposed budget is far from the only attack on EPA. More than 120 House members have signed onto legislation that would strip the EPA’s authority over carbon dioxide and methane, exacerbating climate regulation and regulation of methane from oil and gas. Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt have committed to withdrawing regulations that would require more fuel-efficient cars and trucks and the Clean Power Plan, which was the cornerstone of Obama’s Paris commitments for our CO2 reductions. Our national monuments may be delisted (no comment on whether that is legally possible).

Where do we go from here?

We need to keep in mind what we want to see in our country: a safe, healthy environment that protects us and future generations from health risks, public lands that are open for wildlife and recreation, environmental justice, so that no group bears environmental risks disproportionately, and a decarbonization of the economy so climate change doesn’t overtake a livable planet. To achieve this we need trustworthy federal agencies, where good science is valued and not mocked; we need guarantees of scientific integrity and openness in agency publications, and we need environmental laws that respond to the threats of the 21st century, such as climate change, loss of wildlife and of biodiversity, the use of harmful pesticides, and the health threats created by air and water pollution.

Much of the public takes for granted the protections that EPA provides. Pictures are circulating of New York City’s skyline in the 1960s, before the Clean Air Act. smog made it hard to see most of the city. When I was a kid in DC, canoing on the Potomac, the water smelled, and a few drops on your arm would sting. Our charge is to educate about what our environmental agencies do among a broad range of communities, enlisting new voices in the fight for environmental protection.

By Camilla Feibelman

Chapter director

Common-sense, climate-protecting methane rules have been targeted as the new victims of an obscure tool that President Trump and congressional Republicans have used to revoke stream protections and other air and water safeguards.

But the Sierra Club and our allies are building bipartisan opposition to this effort to appease the oil and gas industry at tragic cost.

You may already know that methane is a colorless, odorless substance that is also the main component of natural gas. It is also a potent global-warming gas that oil and gas drilling sites accidentally leak and intentionally vent and flare. The Obama administration proposed a comprehensive set of good-neighbor, job-creating, royalty- increasing rules, some of which have already taken effect.

Last year the Environmental Protection Agency finalized rules to capture methane on new and modified facilities. Later in the year, the Bureau of Land Management finalized rules for both existing and new sources on all public lands. To meet our Paris commitments, we’d hoped to see a third rule from the EPA finalized for existing sources that would not be limited to public lands. These three rules would have worked in concert not just to protect the climate but to prevent the outright waste of a publicly held natural resource.

The following is an update from Lenna Moffitt, native New Mexico and the Sierra Club’s national Dirty Fuels Campaign director.

“Unfortunately, our goal of securing EPA standards to curb methane pollution from existing sources in the oil and gas industry is now off the table. Instead, we’ll now have to spend significant time and resources defending the rules we did secure from attacks in Congress and the courts.

The Congressional Review Act allows Congress to vote to revoke major regulations if the vote occurs within 60 days from when the rule was published in the federal register. That means the BLM rule could be voted on under the Congressional Review Act (as the rule was finalized in December). The BLM methane rule CRA was filed on Jan. 30, with a vote expected in the Senate any time before late May. If it is revoked by Congressional Review Act, agencies are permanently banned from creating “substantially similar” regulations.

We have been preparing for these battles for the past two years, with our lobbyists and state-based organizers activating the champions we have cultivated to stand strong and defend these rules. One testament to this organizing is a letter our senators, Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, along with Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, sent to their Senate colleagues in early January urging them to defend the BLM methane rule and vote no on any CRA attack.

The vote, if it happens, will be close, but if we are able to encourage Democrats to stand together and convince at least three Republicans to vote with us, we can win, and so far it seems that the votes aren’t there, so the CRA hasn’t been brought to a vote. But keeping the vote from happening requires strong grassroots pressure, direct inside-the-beltway advocacy, and robust coordination with the full environmental community. Even if we are not successful in defending these rules, we must make these kinds of rollbacks as painful as possible for those seeking to undermine our country’s public health and environment. We must highlight the widespread support for these safeguards that we have built up over the past two years, and overwhelming support for clean air and clean water. Simply put, we can’t take this backswash movement of our country lying down.

We also will defend the rules in court — we have already filed in defense of both the EPA and BLM rules against attacks from several states and industry groups. We just received a positive ruling denying the preliminary injunction that industry sought against the BLM rule, so that rule has been allowed to enter into force.

We will continue working with states, including New Mexico, to move forward with strong state-based existing-source standards.

Hope for slashing methane waste

By Camilla Feibelman


Photo by Camilla Feibelman

EPA protects us; let’s protect it

Training for Action: If we organize, we win

Strategy, Tactics, Issues, Solidarity

12-5 p.m. Sunday, April 23, South Valley Academy

The Training for Action is an afternoon event that will give everyone, whether newly activated or more seasoned activists — some tools we need to make real, tangible differences together on the urgent issues. This is a community-generated, volunteer-organized event, and we are seeking community help to make it powerful and worthwhile.

We’ll have four learning areas:

1. Building Winning Strategies
2. Developing Tactical Skills
3. Effective Solidarity Organizing
4. Learning to Talk about the Issues

We’ll close the event with an opportunity to meet with participating groups and learn how to get more involved in specific areas of interest.

We’ll offer food, childcare, and Spanish-language interpretation.

Participating groups include Sierra Club, ACLU, Result.org, SURJ, NM Story Power, Nonviolent New Mexico, Albuquerque Indivisible, Young Women United, Storytellers of New Mexico, Encuentro NM, N.M. Progressive Coalition, WildEarth Guardians, and Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico.

To sign up, please visit riograndesierralab.org.

Earth Month events

See riograndesierralab.org/events for links to details of each event:

April 1: Cesar Chavez March and Festival

April 20: UNM 9th Annual Sustainability Expo

April 22: March for Science Albuquerque and Civic Earth Day Fair

April 22: March for Science Santa Fe

April 22: April 22: March for Science (Las Cruces)

April 22: Environmental Justice at Valle de Oro

April 23: La Montanita Co-op Earth Day Celebration

April 29: People’s Climate March (Las Cruces)

April 29: People’s Climate March (Las Cruces)

People’s Climate March

April 23 – May 20, 2017
Sierra Club intervenes in rate case

By Mona Blaber
Chapter communications coordinator

Late last year, PNM filed a case seeking to increase electricity rates by an average of about 14% — right on the heels of another rate increase approved by the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission in August.

PNM’s application included requests for spending on large capital projects at the San Juan and Four Corners coal plants. These coal plants are becoming increasingly uncompetitive compared to other available sources of generation, such as wind and solar. Indeed, in March, PNM announced that its latest planning studies show that the San Juan plant will be uneconomic to run past 2022 (see article on Page 3).

Despite these clear economic signals, not to mention the harmful public health and environmental consequences caused by these two coal plants, PNM continues to spend tens — and sometimes hundreds — of millions of dollars on its aging coal plants.

In January, Sierra Club intervened in the rate case. The club’s attorneys intend to review PNM’s continued spending on San Juan and Four Corners, and, where appropriate, they will request that the Public Regulation Commission make sure that customers do not have to pay for costly coal-plant expenditures that could have been avoided.

PNM is also requesting changes to the way it charges and collects money from residential customers. Following a nationwide trend of utilities trying to limit the amount that customers can control their own bills, PNM is requesting an increase in its monthly “fixed charge” from $7 to $13.77. This request follows quickly behind last year’s increase from $5 to $7.

These changes penalize energy-efficient ratepayers and customers who invest money and effort in conservation because they push a larger portion of their bills into a “fixed” and unavoidable monthly charge. The charge structure also rewards high-use energy hogs by lowering the per-kwh cost of energy.

These are the wrong incentives, and Sierra Club plans to support our allies who are challenging these changes. Sierra Club will submit expert testimony to the PRC in May, and evidentiary hearings will likely occur this summer.

El Paso solar customers targeted for higher rates

By Robert Moss, Eco El Paso board member

In February 2017, El Paso Electric (EPE)yet again filed to increase rates in its Texas service region.

It was only in August that the company completely withdrew its proposed fees on solar in Texas. But following a couple of highly profitable quarters, it is again seeking a rate increase.

Their residential customers and the citizens’ advocates for living sustainably, Eco El Paso, are weary of fighting but believe we must in order to assure fairness in Texas.

EPE continues to assert that the solar residential customers receiving service under net-metering laws in both Texas and New Mexico are not paying their fair share for the use of the grid. EPE again seeks to seek ruling against the residential leg of the consumer, a rate class it is entitled to treat its customers through rate design and the utility in part because they provide energy to the grid when demands are at their highest and electricity prices are too.

Consider for a moment the gorilla in the room when we speak of subsidies. The great subsidy is the allowance by utilities and water companies completely withdrew its proposed fees on solar in Texas.

But given all the self-righteousness of its captive customers.

It is a natural gorilla in the room when we speak of subsidies. The greatest of all subsidies is the allowance by utilities and water companies to their customers who invest money and effort in conservation because they push a larger portion of their bills into a “fixed” and unavoidable monthly charge. The charge structure also rewards high-use energy hogs by lowering the per-kwh cost of energy.

These are the wrong incentives, and Sierra Club plans to support our allies who are challenging these changes. Sierra Club will submit expert testimony to the PRC in May, and evidentiary hearings will likely occur this summer.

NATURAL BURIAL NEW MEXICO

La Puerta Natural Burial Ground—
and La Puerta Pet Cemetery

40 acre private, serene, conservation natural burial sites at the base of the Manzano Mountains

An environmentally sound burial option and a natural return to earth. Simple, low cost, and respectful. A kinder, gentler burial.

NATURAL BURIAL IS BURIAL WITHOUT EMBALMING CHEMICALS USING A PINE CASKET, NATURAL FIBER BLANKET OR BURIAL SHROUD.

For complete information visit www.naturalburialnewmexico.com or email naturalburialnewmexico@gmail.com

La Puerta Natural Burial Ground

April/May/June 2017

Rio Grande Sierran 7
2017 New Mexico Legislative Session

Activism, deadlock at Roundhouse

By Mona Blaber

ow that New Mexico’s legislative session has come to a close, how did climate, clean water, wildlife and public lands do?

1. Some of the most significant proactive environmental bills died disappointing deaths. But none was likely to make it past Gov. Martinez’s veto pen. They’ll all be back in 2019.

2. Some progressive renewable-energy and wildlife bills did pass and are now on the governor’s desk, and several positive memorial resolutions that don’t require action by the governor were also successful.

3. We worked with conservation allies to defeat — again — all significantly damaging legislation.

4. Easily the biggest takeaway: You, Sierra Club volunteers were an immense presence. No group or constituency had more active citizens at the Roundhouse than the Rio Grande Chapter, and your emails, calls and attendance at committee meetings changed the outcome of several bills for the better.

This was the first stab at some bold, important legislation, telling us where we need to concentrate before the next long session in 2019, when New Mexico will have a new governor. Let’s start working on 2019 now. Can you meet with your representative and senator on these issues? We’ll go over issues together with legislators who either didn’t vote or voted “no” can be persuaded and others who can’t install solar on their homes. This is the fairest legislation has ever gotten, and some of those legislators who either didn’t vote or voted “no” can be persuaded — that’s you — in the two years before the next long session.

Passed: SB81, Sen. Mimi Stewart’s bill to allow other utilities to pay 50% renewable energy by 2030 and 80% by 2040. It passed the Senate Conservation Committee but died in House. We knew this would be a several-year effort, and SB312’s support this year was promising.

Passed: SB312, sponsored by Sen. Mimi Stewart, would have restored the authority of the state Oil Conservation Division to levy fines on oil and gas operations that violate safety rules. Despite thousands of violations, a flaw in state law means oil and gas facilities haven’t paid a cent in fines since 2010. This bill passed the Senate Conservation Committee but was never heard in the Senate Finance Committee, chaired by Sen. John Arthur Smith.

SB268, prohibiting coyote-killing contests, got so close — see Page 9 for more details.

SB284 would have banned trapping on public lands. Read more on Page 9.

Passed: House Memorial 70, sponsored by newly elected Rep. Derrick Lente, requests that the BLM not lease any land in the greater Chaco Canyon region without prior consultation with tribes until it finishes amending its management plan for the region.

Passed: SM302, sponsored by Sen. Benny Shendo, asks the state to make it collecting about venting and flaring of methane and operators’ gas-capture plans available to the public. It also asks for the top 25 oil and gas companies that vent and top 25 flaring operations to be identified. This gives us the tools for future rulemaking (memorials don’t require the governor’s signature).

HB61, SB41: These bills would have restored job-creating tax credits for businesses and residents who installed solar on their homes. HB61 passed the House, but neither bill was heard by the Senate & Conservation Committee.

How you can make a difference

Contact your state legislators, arrange to meet with them, and tell them what you care about. Sierra Club can connect you with others to meet as a group with your legislators. Contact us at riogrande@sierraclub.org to sign up and get pointers.

Join our legislative update and action list: Write to riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org to receive alerts.

Thank you our environmental all-stars

Sen. Mimi Stewart, sponsored SB312 to boost New Mexico’s renewable-energy requirement to 80% by 2040. Her bill banning wildlife trafficking passed both chambers.

Sen. Jeff Steinborn, sponsored SB338, “Solar for All.” The bill would have made solar energy more accessible and affordable for everyone.

Rep. Derrick Lente, the freshman legislator worked with constituents to pass a memorial asking the BLM for proper tribal consultation before it issues its amended management plan for greater Chaco Canyon.

Rep. Patricia Royal Caballero, Royal Caballero sponsored HB338, “Solar for All.” The bill would have made solar energy more accessible and affordable for everyone.


Sen. Patricia Royal Caballero, Royal Caballero sponsored HB338, “Solar for All.”

New Mexicans rallied to protect public lands at New Mexico’s Roundhouse in February, during the 60-day legislative session that started Jan. 17.

Photo by Alyson Seck

chained by Sen. Clemente Sanchez.

Passed: Senate Joint Memorial 4 expresses the Legislature’s support for a statewide pollinator-friendly plant-labeling project and requests that the Department of Agriculture provide technical support in implementing the project.

Passed: SB120, sponsored by Sen. Mary Kay Papen, would have allowed the state Land Office to seize federal mineral rights under New Mexico private property and lease them to oil and gas companies. Papen withdrew the bill, citing public opposition — that’s you — as a major reason for pulling it.

Senate Joint Resolution 15, an unnecessary constitutional amendment to make hunting, fishing and the harvesting of wildlife a constitutional right, failed.

SB364, a bill to involve the environmental all-stars, governor and attorney general in limiting the size of National Monument Designations, also died, after many calls and emails from citizen activists.

SB120/HB199: These companion bills emerged from legislation pushed by PNMs last year that failed but left behind a long list of onerous disclosure requirements. PNMs purred down the 2017 bill and lobbied legislators all year, but the bills still had trouble-some aspects. Hundreds of you contacting your senators and representatives poured the way for removal of the most objectionable requirements in the bill that passed.

This is just a short list of the dozens of bills we advocated for or against this year. The Rio Grande Chapter is committed to passing bold, effective legislation to protect our climate, water, land and wildlife. You can help by meeting with your representatives at riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org and we’ll guide you through the process. Thanks to the hundreds of you who stepped up this year. Keep it up, and together, we can become the most powerful force at the Legislature.

April/May/June 2017

N 2017 New Mexico Legislative Session
Trapping, killing contests still legal

By Mary Katherine Ray
Rio Grande Chapter
Wildlife Chair

ills to prohibit trapping on public land, end killing contests, reform the Game Commission and more did not pass the New Mexico Legislature in a session distracted by other issues and still dominated by political divides.

Here is the rundown for the successes, the incremental progress, the feedback and the disappointments.

Senate Bill 268 to end coyote-killing contests, sponsored by Sens. Jeff Steinborn (D) and Mark Moores (R), got further than it ever has before. It passed all of its committee hearings and the full Senate and was awaiting a vote on the House floor when time ran out.

Citizen advocates filled the committee hearing rooms. When the committee chairs asked to see a show of hands in support of the bill, the number of hands that flew up was heartening and powerful.

This phenomenon was gratifyingly repeated over and over at hearings for other wildlife bills. The bill’s opponents included the New Mexico Cattlegrowers, the New Mexico Wool-Growers and the New Mexico Council of Outfitters and Guides.

These groups did not concern themselves with the abusive nature of contest killing specifically but instead relayed their scorn for coyotes and insistence that coyotes must be “controlled” (by which they mean killed) by any and all means possible.

This is contrary to scientific evidence that shows that coyote populations often increase after being significantly reduced because females produce more pups to compensate. Their populations reach equilibrium with stable availability of prey and do not need to be “controlled.” Even so, the bill was not about coyote-hunting. It only addresses killing coyotes in conjunction with a contest.

These kill fests reward participants with cash or guns for killing dozens of animals that are then often just dumped.

SB 286 would have prohibited the use of traps and poisons on public land. It had many exceptions, including allowing traps for scientific research, protection of endangered species, ecosystem management and of course to protect human health and safety. This year, for the first time, it started on the Senate side with Senator Pete Campos (D) as its sponsor.

The first (and as it turned out, only) committee hearing it had was before Senate Conservation. The room again overflowed with supporters and many stories of encounters with traps. Those in opposition included the same groups, the Cattlegrowers, the Woolgrowers and the Council of Outfitters and Guides, that supported keeping killing contests legal.

The dislike of coyotes was again their focus as they expressed their desire to kill as many as possible. Bill supporters told stories of their dogs being trapped, the struggle to remove the device, the pain the trap caused and injuries requiring veterinary treatment and expenses.

Committee members provided good feedback that focused mainly on technical aspects of the bill — principally the penalties and enforcement. Sen. Bill Soules (D), who is himself a hunter, did express dismay that trappers can kill an unlimited number of animals not for personal use but to sell to the market. He also questioned whether any gross

receipts taxes were being paid on these sales of the public’s wildlife.

Because of the technical questions, the committee chair, Sen. Joseph Cervantes (D), said he wanted the committee to craft a substitute bill to address those issues before moving on a vote. However, no substitute bill emerged, and the time slipped by so that the bill simply faded into dormancy.

However, the sponsor, Sen. Campos, is not letting the issue fade. He is scheduled to appear before the state Game Commission to discuss the future of trapping in New Mexico at the May 11 commission meeting in Clayton, N.M. For updates on the time and place, please visit the state Game and Fish website, www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission.

HB 254, a bill to reform the Game Commission sponsored by Rep. Matt McQueen (D), passed its first House committee but failed in the House Energy, Environment and Natural Resources committee. Both votes were along party lines. (This bill again had the same opponents, the Cattlegrowers, the Woolgrowers and the Council of Outfitters and Guides.)

The Game Commission statute was written in the 1920s and is sorely in need of update to reflect modern values about wildlife and be more fair in the representation of stakeholders. This bill would have divided the seven Game Commission appointments between the governor and the Legislature. In addition to defining the seats for specific user groups such as hunters, non-hunters and ranchers, it would have included a dedicated seat for a wildlife biologist not affiliated with New Mexico Game and Fish.

The only wildlife bill to pass both chambers and make it to the governor’s desk was SB 81, the Wildlife Trafficking Act sponsored by Sen. Mimi Stewart (D), which will help make it more difficult for traffickers of endangered species’ body parts, such as elephant ivory and rhino horn, to slip into the country through our southern border with Mexico. As of this writing, the governor has not yet signed it.

Had any of the other wildlife bills progressed to the governor’s desk, we acknowledge they may have faced a steep hurdle to get her signature. The next time these bills are introduced, in the 2019 long session, we will have a new governor; hopefully one who is more wildlife-friendly.

The entire House is also facing election before then, and we could use more wildlife-friendly legislators to make passage of bills like these through committees more certain as well. Wildilfe advocates have a lot for which to be proud this past session. Thank you to everyone who got up early, traveled to Santa Fe, endured long hours waiting for the wildlife bills to come up, and who called their representatives and senators.

Your actions were felt and your presence noticed! Your commitment and determination are just what we will need to bring these bills into law in coming years.

Photo: Art Rescues
At left: Supporters and opponents pack the hallway outside a committee room as they wait for the Senate Conservation Committee hearing on a bill prohibiting traps and poisons on public lands.

Below: A trap sculpture was placed outside the Roundhouse the day Senate Bill 268 was heard in February. The bill to ban trapping on public lands was delayed and ultimately died, but sponsors got positive feedback in preparation for the next 60-day legislative session.

Photo: www.evahnemisphtography.com

Environmental all-star
Rep. Matthew McQueen
McQueen sponsored legislation that would have made the state Game Commission more reflective of the concerns of all New Mexicans, not just a few special interests. Thank him at matthew.mcqueen@nmlegis.gov.

Environmental all-star
Sen. Pete Campos
Although his bill to ban trapping and poison on public lands didn’t pass, Campos plans to continue working on making our public lands safer for recreational use during the interim between legislative sessions. Thank him at pete.campos@nmlegis.gov.
Volunteer profile: Laurence Gibson

Laurence Gibson has been the Rio Grande Chapter secretary since 1999, El Paso Group chair, and beloved member of the Executive Committee. He’s a Renaissance Man who was concertmaster and first violinist with the El Paso Orchestra and a music professor at University of Texas-El Paso.

3. Why do you volunteer for the Rio Grande Chapter?
The work is important, but it is really about the people. Catching up with friends every few months, comparing notes, trading ideas to use at home in our groups, these are the fun things about meetings. The tough part is losing folks after years together. Norma McCallan was a wonderful friend we lost recently. Others like Blair Brown, Ilse Bleck and Mark Jones have moved on to other places and interests. So it is important to make new friends as well.

3. What inspires you to work for the environment?
Well, nature is my church. So I want to do what I can to preserve it. There is also the “use it or lose it” axiom. There are not nearly as many folks on the trail in the Gila as there were 20 or 30 years ago. That worries me. So we pretty much have it to ourselves now. There are those who would sell it out from under us. We need to be out there.

4. What would you tell others who are interested in doing more to help?
Follow your passion.

5. What’s your favorite thing about the Sierra Club?
I like that the Sierra Club is the name brand for conservation in America. We are powerful. It is also unusual that we are basically a volunteer organization aided by national and chapter staff, when so many non-profits function with just paid staffers and perhaps a few volunteers.

Volunteer profile: Rick LoBello

Rick LoBello has been a valued member of the El Paso Group executive committee since 2013.

LoBello is also director of education at El Paso Zoo, striving for the facility to serve education, preservation and scientific needs to conserve endangered and threatened animals. El Paso Zoo is one of the facilities that helps to house the captive Mexican-wolf population before the wolves are released in the wild.

“The animals that live here are conservation ambassadors for their species and habitats around the world. Their wild relatives live in the mountains and deserts around El Paso and in faraway lands in South America, Africa and Asia,” LoBello said.

“As you walk through the zoo and learn more about them, it soon becomes clear that many are endangered. Habitat loss and other factors, most often related to the activities of humans, are having a devastating toll on wildlife everywhere.”

LoBello said the zoo is encouraging visitors to round up their purchases at the gift shop, zoo restaurants and food stands to the next dollar to support wildlife field-conservation efforts.

The round-up funds — more than $18,000 so far — go to conservation efforts to help endangered boson tortoises in New Mexico, African lions in Kenya and Sumatran orangutans in Indonesia.

The effort also supports the critically endangered Mexican wolf that used to roam across the Southwest U.S. and northern Mexico, including El Paso. The round-up funds helped the zoo send three teams of employees to help with Mexican-wolf conservation efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico. Two teams helped repair burro-wire fences that corral cattle and keep them from wandering into wolf hunting ranges. A third team helped transport a pack of 11 wolves from Washington state to a rendezvous point in Mexico and Mexico. Two teams helped with wolf conservation efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico. Two teams helped with wolf conservation efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico. Two teams helped with wolf conservation efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico.

So far, the zoo has helped Mexican officials who took the wolves to a reintroduction site in Mexico.

El Paso Group
Executive Committee
elpasosierraclub.org
Laurence Gibson, Chair 305-5419 laurenneaughborn@gmail Ann Falknor, Secretary, 833-9162 aflaknorn@leglobal.net Kathy Sunday, Treasurer 589-2401 sundays@janet.com Rick LoBello, 474-1456 ricklobello@gmail.com Liz Walsh, 342-7630 ewalsh@utep.edu John Walton, 539-5797 walton@utep.edu Nyesa Hardin 227-5154 nhardin@yahoo.com

El Paso Group Newsletter
Make a difference
Interests in starting a Sierra Student Coalition at your school? Contact Camilla Feibleman at camilla.feibleman@sierranet.org.
Help return the wolf to Texas: For the sake of wilderness and our ecosystem, the Mexican wolf should be given the chance to reclaim its role in the Chihuahuan Desert of West Texas. Visit facebook.com/returnthewolftotexas and click the Take Action link. Sign up to help students in Texas get involved: Contact Rick LoBello at ricklobello@gmail.com.

HELP US FUND RAISE
The round-up funds — more than $18,000 so far — go to conservation efforts to help endangered boson tortoises in New Mexico, African lions in Kenya and Sumatran orangutans in Indonesia.

The effort also supports the critically endangered Mexican wolf that used to roam across the Southwest U.S. and northern Mexico, including El Paso. The round-up funds helped the zoo send three teams of employees to help with Mexican-wolf conservation efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico. Two teams helped repair burro-wire fences that corral cattle and keep them from wandering into wolf hunting ranges. A third team helped transport a pack of 11 wolves from Washington state to a rendezvous point in Mexico and Mexico. Two teams helped with wolf conservation efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico.

So far, the zoo has helped Mexican officials who took the wolves to a reintroduction site in Mexico.

El Paso Group Newsletter
Make a difference
Interests in starting a Sierra Student Coalition at your school? Contact Camilla Feibleman at camilla.feibleman@sierranet.org.
Help return the wolf to Texas: For the sake of wilderness and our ecosystem, the Mexican wolf should be given the chance to reclaim its role in the Chihuahuan Desert of West Texas. Visit facebook.com/returnthewolftotexas and click the Take Action link. Sign up to help students in Texas get involved: Contact Rick LoBello at ricklobello@gmail.com.

HELP US FUND RAISE
The round-up funds — more than $18,000 so far — go to conservation efforts to help endangered boson tortoises in New Mexico, African lions in Kenya and Sumatran orangutans in Indonesia.

The effort also supports the critically endangered Mexican wolf that used to roam across the Southwest U.S. and northern Mexico, including El Paso. The round-up funds helped the zoo send three teams of employees to help with Mexican-wolf conservation efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico. Two teams helped repair burro-wire fences that corral cattle and keep them from wandering into wolf hunting ranges. A third team helped transport a pack of 11 wolves from Washington state to a rendezvous point in Mexico and Mexico. Two teams helped with wolf conservation efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico.

So far, the zoo has helped Mexican officials who took the wolves to a reintroduction site in Mexico.

El Paso Group Newsletter
Make a difference
Interests in starting a Sierra Student Coalition at your school? Contact Camilla Feibleman at camilla.feibleman@sierranet.org.
Help return the wolf to Texas: For the sake of wilderness and our ecosystem, the Mexican wolf should be given the chance to reclaim its role in the Chihuahuan Desert of West Texas. Visit facebook.com/returnthewolftotexas and click the Take Action link. Sign up to help students in Texas get involved: Contact Rick LoBello at ricklobello@gmail.com.
Central New Mexico Group

Volunteer profile: Heather Kline

Heather Kline has a passion for both the environment and art. So, naturally, she created our popular First Friday Art events.

Hikes by vets, for vets

By Terry Owen

Military Outings Program coordinator

The Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program wants you!

We’re seeking active-duty military, veterans and their families, friends and supporters to join us for outdoor adventures. The mission objectives are to offer participants new experiences, learning opportunities and challenges in a safe environment.

Program leaders Terry Owen and John Link are Navy and Air Force veterans, respectively. We recently led an introductory snowshoe hike in the Sandia Mountains on a sparkling winter day in February. For several participants it was the first time they’d ever been in the mountains, and for many it was the first time they’d donned a pair of snowshoes. Safety comes first, so we spent time with the group going over safely traversing through the forest, conserving energy, and staying warm and dry. I always try to share a couple of new skills with participants and I’m always paid back with learning new skills from someone in the group — and it helps me grow also.

The participants got an early start on the 10K Trail, which undulates along the 10,000-foot contour of the mountain. After a two-hour trek, the group was rewarded with stunning views from the top of Sandia Crest all the way to continental divide.

Countless studies have shown that time spent outdoors fosters mental and physical health and aids in emotional resiliency. For many vets it has eased the transition to civilian life. Many veterans and their families miss the bonds they felt in the military, and few civilian occupations offer the same sense of mission. It’s the most natural and effective form of healing that many vets have found.

“It’s amazing to watch the camaraderie that naturally develops with a group in the mountains,” Link noted. The Military Outdoors Program offers participants a chance to meet others who might be dealing with similar issues in a safe environment, while engaging in healthful activities.

The Military Outdoors Program has several outings coming up, including an Earth Day hike on April 22, and for those looking for a major challenge, a June 24 climb of one of Colorado’s 14,000-foot peaks, where participants will have the opportunity to camp the night before. There are plans for handicap-accessible outings as well as some service opportunities such as trail maintenance and other ways to give back to the country that we proudly served.

Learn more at: sierrachclub.org/outings/military. For outings in the Central Rio Grande area, which are free, contact at towens@sierrachclub.org or 505-301-4340.

Central New Mexico Group events

The Central New Mexico Group’s most recent Sierra Club and Beers have attracted so many people that our Albuquerque office can’t fit them all, so we’re now hosting “Sierra Club and Root Beer” at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice, 202 Harvard Drive SE, Albuquerque. The next Sierra Club and Root Beer will be from 6:30 to 8 p.m. May 5.

RSVP: Fred Houdeke at fhouteke@gmail.com or 505-809-4234.

We also hold First Friday Art events every other month at our Albuquerque office, 2215 Lead Ave. SE. The next First Friday Art events will be from 6 to 8 p.m. April 7 and June 2.

Volunteer Wednesday

We have volunteers in our Albuquerque office on Wednesdays to do data input, make calls and help with other projects. If you can join us, contact miya.king-flaherty@sierrachclub.org. We are also looking for volunteers to keep the office open when staffers aren’t present. Contact camilla.feibelman@sierrachclub.org.

Group Executive Committee

Chair: Fred Houdeke, fhouteke@gmail.com, 505-809-4234.

Treasurer: David Thor, treasurer, Greg@sierrachclub.org, 505-867-6283.

Secretary: Heather Kline, heather9387@yahoo.com, 505-577-2798.

Outings: Odille de La Beaujardiere, odille@pitot.org, 505-433-4692.

Political chair: Richard Barish, richard.barish@gmail.com

Volunteer opportunities include maintenance work, entry, phone calls, etc., and keeping the office open when staffers are out.

What’s your favorite thing about the Sierra Club?

There is a real sense of inspiration and solidarity, which I think is so important during a time when many progressives feel defeated. It’s a real community of like-minded people, and we do a lot of fun things.

Volunteer Wednesday

We have volunteers in our Albuquerque office on Wednesdays to do data input, make calls and help with other projects. If you can join us, contact miya.king-flaherty@sierrachclub.org. We are also looking for volunteers to keep the office open when staffers aren’t present. Contact camilla.feibelman@sierrachclub.org.

What inspires you to work for the environment?

Without clean air and water, everything else ceases to matter. Without wilderness, we lose our connection to our basic humanity. These are the most essential things, and unfortunately they require protection from selfish private interests.

What would you tell others who are interested in getting involved?

There are so many different ways to get involved with the Club, and it is truly a grassroots organization that relies on your efforts. Depending on your interests, skills, and availability, there is something rewarding you can do to help.

What’s your favorite thing about the Sierra Club?

Heather Kline has a passion for both the environment and art. So, naturally, she created our popular First Friday Art events.
Senators celebrate monuments

By Tom Gorman, Northern Group Conservation Chair

On Feb. 21, at the Taos Mesa Brewery, U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich joined tribal leaders, local business owners, community members, and representatives of numerous organizations to stand in support of and celebrate the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and our public lands.

After many years of work by the Rio Grande del Norte Coalition to gain support of the stakeholders, President Obama designated it a national monument in 2013. This was a successful example of meeting the needs of the diverse local communities affected.

The speakers at the February event confirmed how beneficial this designation has been in terms of increases in economic and tourist activity. It was also evident that those gathered are ready to defend the monument against any attacks.

Sen. Heinrich emphasized that our public lands are under increased threat at the state and federal levels and that we must continue our efforts to keep public lands in public hands.

Heinrich said each of us has an obligation to fight for the protection of our shared public lands, our water, our air and our wildlife. One of the best defenses is to support strong environmental candidates whenever possible.

Sen. Tom Udall joined public-land supporters at Taos Mesa Brewing. He spoke on the fourth anniversary of the monument on March 25.

President Donald Trump’s administration has threatened to revoke monument status for some of President Obama’s designations, but Rio Grande del Norte has strong public support in Northern New Mexico.

Join the relaunched Zero Waste Team

By Teresa Seamster, Northern New Mexico Group chair

After several years of hibernation, the Northern New Mexico Group’s Zero Waste Committee is back in business.

At its February meeting, the Northern Group Executive Committee selected two veterans of the Santa Fe recycling scene to co-chair the Zero Waste Team.

In 2012 Joe Eigner and Karen Sweeney created Eldorado/285 Recycles, the leading group of citizen activists working to improve reuse, recycling and composting in the Santa Fe area. They now hope to work with like-minded Sierrans throughout Northern New Mexico in promoting these goals.

Nationally, the Sierra Club has been a powerful advocate for zero waste, with teams in San Francisco, New York and Washington leading the way. Karen and Joe were inspired by what these teams accomplished.

Initially, the pair will arrange tours of local public and private solid-waste, recycling, and composting facilities so that new Zero Waste Team members can learn first-hand how the current system works.

Included will be attendance at meetings of the government bodies with responsibilities in waste management. They will also take a hard look at what we throw away and what altered consumption habits will be needed to make a difference.

Why is the Zero Waste Team important? We have woefully poor recycling rates and composting in Northern New Mexico.

You can make a difference

Join the Rio Grande Chapter’s Zero Waste Team to promote reducing, reusing, recycling and composting. To join or learn more, contact Joe Eigner at joseigner@gmail.com.

In Northern New Mexico, we rely way too much on single-use, throw-away items. We are filling up our limited landfill space with materials that consume precious energy, water, and minerals in their manufacture. The organics we discard to landfills produce climate-changing methane gas. We can and must do much better!

But for the new Zero Waste Team to be effective, it needs the active participation of both old and new members! Please contact Joe Eigner at joseigner@gmail.com if you can help!
BLM Chaco leasing goes forward, with conditions

By Mya King-Flaherty
Public Lands fellow

On Jan. 24, the Sierra Club, San Juan Citizens Alliance, WildEarth Guardians, Navajo chapter presidents and impacted residents and other participants in the Greater Chaco Coalition rallied at the Bureau of Land Management office in Santa Fe to oppose the Jan. 25 lease sale of 843 acres for oil and gas drilling in the greater Chaco area.

These parcels are only 20 miles outside Chaco Culture National Historical Park and, in some cases, right on the doorstep of communities in the area.

Rally participants delivered more than 17,000 signatures opposing the lease sale and a letter signed by 102 organizations and resolutions passed by 15 Navajo chapter governments supporting a moratorium on leasing until the BLM finishes updating its Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement to address the impacts of fracking.

Four Navajo chapter presidents, community leaders and impacted residents met with BLM State Director Amy Luders for two hours, but the following day, the lease proceeded in the first-ever online auction, apparently meant to reduce in-person protests.

The four parcels sold for a total of nearly $3 million. However, until the BLM resolves several protesters’ comments, development of these parcels cannot begin.

And in an unprecedented response to public outcry, the BLM has applied specific conditions of approval regarding noise, light pollution and traffic safety, as well as unspecified potential mitigation conditions, to the parcels up for lease. The conditions are a result of efforts and input by impacted community members and groups.

The public “scoping” period (part of a required process under the BLM’s management plan) ended Feb. 20. The BLM will next work on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the region.

Meetings

Northern New Mexico Group
Executive Committee meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m., at our office at 1807 Second St., Suite 45, in Santa Fe.

Northern New Mexico Group Conservation Committee resumes its monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. Conservation Committee meetings are also held at the Sierra Club Santa Fe office, 1807 Second St., Suite 45.

Chaco astronomy: The power of predicting climate

By Teresa Seamster, Northern Group Chair

The power of predicting climate

By Miya King-Flaherty

Public Lands fellow

On Jan. 24, the Sierra Club, San Juan Citizens Alliance, WildEarth Guardians, Navajo chapter presidents and impacted residents and other participants in the Greater Chaco Coalition rallied at the Bureau of Land Management office in Santa Fe to oppose the Jan. 25 lease sale of 843 acres for oil and gas drilling in the greater Chaco area.

These parcels are only 20 miles outside Chaco Culture National Historical Park and, in some cases, right on the doorstep of communities in the area.

Rally participants delivered more than 17,000 signatures opposing the lease sale and a letter signed by 102 organizations and resolutions passed by 15 Navajo chapter governments supporting a moratorium on leasing until the BLM finishes updating its Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement to address the impacts of fracking.

Four Navajo chapter presidents, community leaders and impacted residents met with BLM State Director Amy Luders for two hours, but the following day, the lease proceeded in the first-ever online auction, apparently meant to reduce in-person protests.

The four parcels sold for a total of nearly $3 million. However, until the BLM resolves several protesters’ comments, development of these parcels cannot begin.

And in an unprecedented response to public outcry, the BLM has applied specific conditions of approval regarding noise, light pollution and traffic safety, as well as unspecified potential mitigation conditions, to the parcels up for lease. The conditions are a result of efforts and input by impacted community members and groups.

The public “scoping” period (part of a required process under the BLM’s management plan) ended Feb. 20. The BLM will next work on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the region.

Meetings

Northern New Mexico Group
Executive Committee meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m., at our office at 1807 Second St., Suite 45, in Santa Fe.

Northern New Mexico Group Conservation Committee resumes its monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. Conservation Committee meetings are also held at the Sierra Club Santa Fe office, 1807 Second St., Suite 45.
Bandelier volunteer trail work resumes

By Jody Benson

A s the weather warms, Bandelier Trail Boss Kevin Stillman is resuming volunteer trail work.

The many trails requiring repair/rebuild/国资委 include: Frijoles Rim Trail, Frijoles Canyon Trail, Stone Lions Trail, Turkey Springs Trail (Turkey Springs requires camp- ing as the work deploys from a far-away base camp). Stillman will be leading a youth corps in the coming weeks, but he says, “I hope to be able to get some volunteers out and get some work done, too. Feel free to hike out and visit and see what we are up to.” Check out the almost-completed Frijoles Canyon Trail that went from an impassably washed-out log jam to a well-engineered hiking trail.

The strenuousness of tasks ranges from raking trail and pruning brush to sawing logs and building big-rock-based walls. You work at your own level. Stillman will school you in the proper engineering of a wilder- ness trail. The work is appropriate for any age that can hike a few miles, work several hours, and focus on the task. Trail work is ongoing, and will continue through the year as weather permits. Please contact Kevin to get the volunteer alerts at kevin_stillman@nps. gov.

International Women’s Day

By Los Alamos County Councilor Chris Chandler

On March 8, more than 200 women and men of all generations gathered at Ashley Pond in Los Alamos for the International Women’s Day!A Day Without a Woman to celebrate the special role of women in society and to commemorate the struggle for women’s rights, as International Women’s Day has done every March 8.

Since International Women’s Day was created in 1911 by the women of Switzerland, it has become a Lunch Buddy. Sombrillo Nursing Home or Visit an older acquaintance at the White Rock Village Center and the Los Alamos downtown.

Community climate effort

By Pete Sheehy, Los Alamos County Councilor

In America’s Science City, the Los Alamos County government understands the impact of anthropogenic global climate change and is working toward mitigating its causes in the county. After much community input, the Los Alamos bipartisan Environmental Sustainability Committee unanimously accepted the proposal at its Feb. 14 meeting. The Green Bin is just one more indisputable stride toward decreased emissions and landfill waste, while saving both the money and the organisms that could be better reused for mulch and soil development.

Los Alamos County Councilor Chris Chandler speaks at International Women’s Day on March 8 at Ashley Pond in Los Alamos. ‘Let’s celebrate International Women’s Day by committing to constructive action and working together as friends and neighbors,’ Chandler advises.

Pajarito Group — Los Alamos and surrounding areas

How can you make a difference

Join the volunteers helping to restore Bandelier trails destroyed in the Cerro Grande Fire and subsequent flooding. The work is appropriate for any age. Contact Kevin Stillman at kevin_stillman@nps.gov to get the volunteer alerts, or Jody Benson at echidnaejb@gmail.com.

Pajarito Group Directory

Web page: nogovandesieracclub.org/pajarito

Executive Committee
Chair: Secretary: Jody Benson, echidnaejb@gmail.com, 505-662-4782.
Howard Barnum, hbnburnum@aol.com
Iris Chung, jichung@comcast.net
Michael DiRosa, mddbbn@gmail.com
Nona Girardti, nonang@aol.com

Committee Chairs
Bag Ban, Cool Cities, Treasurer: Mark Jones, Jonesmm1@comcast.net, 505-662-9443.
Conservation chair: Michael DiRosa
Global Warming chair: Charles Keller, alfanan@cybermena.com, 505-662-7915.

Mining: David Torney, drorney@valernet.com, 575-420-9009.
Newsletter Editor, Transportation, Endangered Species/Wildlife: Jody Benson, echidnaejb@gmail.com.

Caldera Issues chair: Howard Barnum, hbnburnum@aol.com.
Water Issues chair: Barbara Calef, mcalf6@yahoo.com, 505-662-3825.
Membership: Mark Jones, Jonesmm1@comcast.net, 505-662-9443.

Join the Pajarito Group:
Our executive committee is looking for members to help us strategize, plan events and campaign, and enjoy the camaraderie that comes from saving the world together. Contact Pajarito Group Chair Jody Benson at echidnaejb@gmail.com or 505-662-4782.

Encouragement No. 3: Think about what would happen if the Sierra Club was not around to look out for our environment, the ALCU to safeguard our civil liberties, or Planned Parenthood to protect women’s health. It is our voice, skills, talents, and dedication that make these organizations effective.

Donate, donate, donate whenever you can to good cause!

Let’s celebrate International Women’s Day by committing to constructive action, and working together as friends and neighbors.

Chris Chandler is a Los Alamos County councilor and a Sierra Club member. In addition to supporting a sustainable Los Alamos, he is interested in initiatives that help revitalize Los Alamos’ older neighborhoods, the White Rock Village Center and the Los Alamos downtown.

Annual highway cleanup

Saturday, May 21: Spring Highway Cleanup. Meeting time and place as car-pooling will be arranged with responders. The council unanimously accepted the proposal at its Feb. 14 meeting.

The Green Bin is just one more indisputable stride toward decreasing emissions and landfill waste, while saving both the money and the organisms that could be better reused for mulch and soil development. The county is also looking into upgrading its composting facility to accept food waste as well as brush. That means about 1,200 tons per year of food waste will be routed from the landfill and into compost.

The rollout of the planned weekly pickup will be within the next 18-24 months.

When green bins are distributed, there will be no more scheduled quarterly brush/bulk-item pickup, but residents can schedule bulk-item pickups for $25 each. The initial investment for bins and a truck will be paid off in 6 years.

How will you get a bin after the rollout? Simply request a Green Bin and place it on the curb on scheduled weekly pickup day. It will be so little effort for such a big impact toward a cleaner, more environmentally sustainable community.

April/May/June 2017
April/May/June 2017

You can make a difference

We are seeking up to 10 volunteers to join Santa Fe National Forest in full work sessions on the Rio Medio trail, near Camidy. Clearing downed trees in a series of day-long work sessions is the plan, so please contact Mark Dunham at medunham2@msn.com.

For weekly updates on our outings, send an email to listserv@list.siapraclub.org with any subject and a message that says SUBSCRIBE RIO-NORTH-OUTINGS.

And if you're interested in training to be a Sierra Club hike leader, contact odile@pitot.org.

Hikes and Events, continued from Page 16

Saturday, April 22 (Earth Day):) Pintos Peak near Las Vegas (see Day Hikes 2016, Page 163). Moderate hike, 8 miles and 2,760 foot. A chance to see the east side of the Sangre. Meet at Christ Lutheran Church at 7:30 a.m. Mark Dunham: medunham2@msn.com, (505) 795-0199.

Saturday, April 22: Celebrate Earth Day in the Sandias, sponsored by the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program; everyone is welcome. Moderate hike of the Tree Spring Trail in the Sandia Mountains. We will proceed to the crest, where we can admire views of the city and enjoy the serenity of the Cibola Wilderness Area. Four miles round trip, 1,000-foot elevation gain. Dogs on leash OK. To register, contact Terry Owen at: teowen@q.com, 505-301-4349 by April 20.

Saturday, April 22 at 10:30 a.m.: Attend the Children's Seed Festival at the Botanic Gardens. Learn about how seeds work, make seed balls, and more. Festival is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Albuquerque. This is a Bosqitos event geared toward elementary kids, but all are welcome. The Bosqitos mission is to learn about Albuquerque’s Bosque, the animals and plants that live there, and ways to take care of the Bosque. Meet at the entrance to the BioPark. There is an entrance fee to the BioPark. Call Santa Strieg 505-288-8713 for more information.

Sunday, April 23: Easy to moderate hike above Tent Rocks, about 4 miles round trip, little elevation gain. Meet 10:30 a.m. at the Veterans Memorial Overlook, which is on the dirt road past the parking lots for Tent Rocks. Two dogs on leash OK. Contact Dale Pitcher (dale@pitot.org, 505-433 4692) by April 21 to register and obtain information for where to meet. End with optional potluck at Odile’s house.

Saturday, April 25: Sternus loop hike to Frijoles Canyon, about 13 miles and 1,500 feet of elevation gain. Scenic loop along Frijoles Canyon Rim and then down to the Upper Crossing, followed by a return to the visitor center on the newly-remowned Frijoles Canyon trail. Aku: (505) 577-2594.

May

Saturday, May 6: Easy to moderate hike on the upper Rio En Medio near Santa Fe Ski Basin. Drive up the Pino Trail for 5 miles and 1,300 feet of elevation gain. One to two dogs OK. Marcia Skillman, (505) 699-3068, marciaskillman@hotmail.com. Saturday, May 6, 8:30 a.m.: Easy walk to the South Diversion Channel outfall, a little-visited section of the Bosque, in the South Valley that has been restored by the Army Corps of Engineers. Admire successful wetlands, native plants, birds, and other wildlife. If the river is in flood, see how the overflow system to the restored area works. Meet at the end of Valley High SW, on the east side of the river. Bring kids. Mark Rudd: mark@markrudd.com, 505-270-5449.

Sunday, May 7: Easy out and back Calzada Bonita overlook from the Pajarito Ski area above Los Alamos, 3.5 miles, 650 feet. Alan Shapiro: (505) 424-9242, nm55@yahoo.com.

Saturday, May 13: Sternus hike to Brazos Cabin. About 13 miles, 2,500 feet of elevation gain. Hike up the Rio Medio Canyon through varied forest to a high meadow with the faint remnants of an historic cabin situated between the Dome and the Pecos Baldies. Aku: (505) 577-2594.

Saturday, May 13: Fourth of July trail in the Manzanos. Moderate 6.4-mile loop. Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the trailhead parking lot. Two dogs OK. Contact Odile (odile@pitot.org, 505-433 4692) by May 11 to register and obtain information about where to meet. End with optional potluck at Odile’s house.

Saturday, May 20: TWA crash site. Sponsored by the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program; everyone is welcome. Difficult hike: 7.5 miles round trip and 2,500 foot of elevation gain. Rugged hike starts from the Elena Gallegos Picnic area, goes under the tram’s route back over to Hamilton Mesa and returning to Iron Gate. About 30 miles 3 days. Larry, lorenz.hughes@gmail.com, (505) 983-8296.

June

Saturday, June 3: Hike to Jicarita Peak from FR161 past Tres Ritos (see Day Hikes 2016, Page 170). Strenuous: 11 miles and 2,500-foot gain. The Santa Barbara Divide is a very large area of rundra behind the Truchas Peaks. We will roam it and probably ascend Jicarita Peak (12,835’), unless we decide to go south toward Chimayosos instead. See Sierra Santa Fe Meetup for more details. Meet at DeVargas Mall at 7 a.m., Leader Mark Dunham: medunham2@msn.com, (505) 795-0199.

Saturday, June 10: Moderate/ strenuous hike to Pedernal. About 8 miles and 1,000- foot elevation gain. There is a 15-ft, fourth-class scramble to the top. Larry: lorenz.hughes@gmail.com, (505) 983-8296.

Saturday, June 10: Piso and Crest trails. Difficult hike: elevation gain 4,500 feet, total length 15 miles. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Elena Gallegos Parking lot (the one that is the highest and farthest to the east). Hike up Pino Trail, follow the Crest trail to the top of the Tram, and return by taking the Tram. No dogs. Note: We hope to provide much-reduced tram tickets to those who register by May 20. End with optional potluck at Odile’s house.

Contact Odile: odile@pitot.org, 505-433-4692 by June 8. Sunday, June 11: Moderate hike to lovely La Vega from Santa Fe Ski Basin, 8 miles, 1,500-foot gain. Alan Shapiro: (505) 424-9242, nm55@yahoo.com.

Saturday, June 17: Sternus hike to Trampas Peak (eleva- tion: 12,170) from the Trampas Lakes Trailhead. Extraordinary view of the northern end of the Pecos Wilderness, about 9 miles and 3,600 feet of elevation gain. Aku: (505) 577-2594.

Sunday, June 18: Strenuous hike to Deception and Lake Peaks above Santa Fe Ski Basin, 7 miles and 3,200-foot gain. Limit 8. Meet at the Santa Fe Ski Club office. Day Rysen: drysen@helioswest.com, (505) 466-4063.

Saturday, June 24: Take Your Anatomy up Grays Peak. Sponsored by the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program; everyone is welcome. Always wanted to tackle a Colorado Fourteener” and never had the chance? Tallest mountain on the Continental Divide. Although rated as moderate, participants must be in excellent physical condition and tolerate altitude. 3,000-foot elevation gain and 8 miles roundtrip. Leaders will be camping at the trailhead the day/night before. Contact Terry Owen no later than June 20 to register and obtain directions: 505-301-4349, teowen@q.com.

Saturday, June 24-Sunday June 25: Strenuous backpack up a “fourteener.” Ascend the Elk Range’s highest peak from the Crested Butte side via Cumberland Basin. Castle Peak is the highest, but probably the least risky, of this famous group that includes the Maroon Bells. Your target date is exactly the point in the season when there are still snow fields to kick-step up, instead of unstable scree fields. We will drive up Saturday a.m., hike in 4 miles, set a light overnight camp, and then on Sunday climb the 2,500 feet to the peak, and return to our cars. Some may wish to stay in Crested Butte that night, while others will drive back to Santa Fe. Mark Dunham: medunham2@msn.com, (505) 795-0199.
After descending into White Rock Canyon, Sierra Club outing participants stopped for lunch along the Rio Grande before the ascent up the Red Dot Trail in February.

April-May-June hikes & events

April

Saturday, April 1: Easy hike from spectacular Diablo Canyon to the Rio Grande River and back, 6 miles and 400 feet of elevation gain, walking in sand. One to two dogs OK. Marcia Skillman, (505) 699-3908, marciaskillman@hotmail.com.

Saturday, April 1: Bosque trail hike to look at the recent fire area and discuss vegetation rehabilitation. Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot on the north side of Alameda, just west of the bridge. Easy walk, bring kids. Leashed dogs OK. Brian Hanson; bhanson5@comcast.net, 856-1386.

Sunday, April 2: Easy hike up Sun Mountain from the Old Pecos Trail. About 2 miles, 700-foot elevation gain. Alan Shapiro; (505) 424-9242, nm5@yahoo.com.

Saturday, April 8: Strenuous hike to Yapashi and Stone Lions in Bandelier. Starting at the Visitors Center, we will go to Yapashi and Stone Lions then continue to the Upper Trijoles Crossing, ending at the Ponderosa Campground. This route requires a car shuttle. About 14 miles and 3,000 feet of elevation gain. Lary: lorenz.hughes@gmail.com, (955) 983-8296.

Saturday, April 8: Walk and slideshow to learn about bats, 5:30 p.m. with Justin of the Fight White Nose Bat Syndrome/Help Bats Hang On group. This is a Bosquitos event geared toward elementary kids, but all are welcome. The Bosquitos mission is to learn about Albuquerque’s Bosque, the animals and plants that live there, and ways to take care of the Bosque. Meet at Sarita Strange’s home. Call/text (505) 288-8713 for directions.

Saturday, April 8: Easy hike, about 2.5 miles, “Poetry and Owls in the Bosque,” 5 to 6:30 p.m. Meet owls at their nest. Leader will read nature poems along the way about owls, porcupines, spring, and the wind, but others are welcome to read some of their favorite poems relating to nature. Note that we might have to reschedule if there are strong winds this day. M.J. Zimmermann: mjzim@hotmail.com.

Sunday, April 9: Moderate to strenuous hike to Shaggy Peak near Gila River. About 10 miles, 2,000-foot gain. Limit eight; one to two dogs OK. Meet in Eldorado. Dag Ryen: dryen@heliconwest.com, (505) 460-4063.

Thursday, April 13 and every Thursday thereafter, unless otherwise posted on Sierra Santa Fe Meetup. Weekly Series.

Trekking Alpine Meadows above the Ski Basin. This is intended as a weekly burst of 90 to 110 minutes ascending 2,000 feet, with a variety of scenic rewards at the top. Some weeks we will just go to Deception Peak, sometimes to Lake Peak, and when time permits we may descend Ravens Ridge or to Puerto Nambe and return via the Winsor trail. This is by far the quickest route to alpine tundra in our area, passing by rushing water for almost the entire hike. It looks like the Northern Rockies, but in our back yard. In April we will leave at 9:30 a.m. from De Vargas Mall, but by May we will leave at 8:30. Meet behind Albertsons. Most times we will be back in time for a late lunch. To confirm contact Mark Dunham: medunham2@comcast.com, (505) 795-0199 near event time.

Saturday, April 15: Moderate hike up the lower Rio en Medio near Tesuque past many waterfalls and cascades, about 7 miles and 1,800 feet of elevation gain, a few steep/loose spots and water crossings, two to three dogs OK. Tobin Oruch; (505) 690-6253 or tobin.oruch@yahoo.com.

Saturday, April 15: Easy walk in the Bosque. 1.5 to 2 hours. Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Pueblo Montaño Open Space park parking lot (a block east of Coors on the south side of Montaño, entrance to the Bosque School). Leader will lead selected passages from Aldo Leopold’s “Sand Country Almanac.” Peter Kelling; cloudsandwater@juno.com.

Sunday, April 16: Hyde Park Circle and waterfall. Easy loop hike: 4 miles, 1,200 foot. Alan Shapiro; (505) 424-9242, nm5@yahoo.com.

About our hikes

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter outings are free and open to the public. Level of difficulty is listed in hike descriptions. All hikes are round-trip. Participants must sign a liability waiver. Bring water, lunch, sturdy hiking boots or shoes and clothing suitable for the weather. Leader reserves right to turn away anyone whose experience or equipment appears unsuitable. Leader may alter destination or cancel trip due to weather, conditions, or insufficient number of participants. Unaccompanied minors need written permission from a parent or guardian. Ask leader for form. Dogs permitted only if noted in write-up.

Always contact leader before the outing to confirm participation and details. Please see riograndesierraclub.org/ outtings for up-to-date information and new hikes. Our Northern New Mexico Group’s weekly outings e-mail, Sierra Trail Mix, provides outings updates plus useful outdoor information such as trail conditions. Send an email to Listserver@lists.sierraclub.org with any subject and a message that says SUBSCRIBE RIO-NORTH-OUTINGS.

Continued on Page 15