



# Victory in numbers



Photo by Madeleine Carey

**Chaco Coalition members rallied at the Roundhouse in March to oppose fracking and the Piñon oil pipeline. Citizens from around New Mexico turned up in force to stop an onslaught of legislation that placed short-term profit over our air, water, wildlife, climate and health.**

New leadership in the New Mexico Legislature brought an increase in threats to our environment and our health, but your activism defeated them — and even helped pass some proactive legislation. See Pages 6-9.



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**Water:** Bills reducing factory-dairy accountability failed, thankfully. But bills increasing accountability over the Gila River diversion also failed. **Page 9**



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Sierra Club  
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Page 1 banner photo by Lajla Ryen

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artwork, poems, letters to the editor, paid advertisements — are welcome. Send to the editor (see Page 2). Submissions by Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence over others.

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If you're not a member yet but like what you see, **join now for only \$15!** You can either cut out and send the form on Page 3 or go to riograndesierraclub.org/donate on the Web.



# Kinder cancels CO2 pipeline through NM

By Teresa Seamster, Northern N.M. Group/Resistiendo member

A huge sigh of relief was heard from residents from Quemado to Mountainair on the evening of Jan. 21 after Kinder Morgan announced the cancellation of its plans to build the massive Lobos CO2 pipeline through central New Mexico. Some 1,100 landowners in three counties, health organizations and environmental groups including Sierra Club had registered their concerns for over a year about the pipeline’s impact on land values, road safety, water supplies and community health to Bureau of Land Management, Kinder Morgan representatives and elected officials. The town of Mountainair formed a citizens group, Resistiendo — Resist the Pipeline, with over 60 members and



After significant community resistance, Kinder Morgan dropped plans for a carbon-dioxide pipeline through Central New Mexico.

hundreds of supporters. A committee of residents worked with the Partnership for a Healthy Torrance County and Human Impact Partners of Oakland, Calif., to complete dozens of interviews and prepare a history of people’s health, socioeconomic levels and occupations, water resources and cultural back-grounds in a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment. The document was

to have been submitted to BLM once the Environmental Impact Statement draft was completed in 2015. Kinder Morgan’s statement cited problems with delays of the project at a time when oil prices and demand for carbon dioxide, used for enhanced oil recovery, were bottoming out. Many landowners had refused to sign right-of-way easements, and Resistiendo had suggested

a lower-impact route that avoided the majority of private properties in Torrance County as well as the critical Abo Watershed and dense areas of Salinas Missions ruins, prehistoric pueblo communities and burial mounds. This alternative would have entailed additional time. BLM notified Kinder Morgan that it could still file a new application for a right-of-way grant at a later date. “If the company wants to come back to the project, then they would have to start from scratch,” said Mark Matthews, BLM project manager. Resistiendo member Deb Jones summed up the group’s feelings. “Members are cautiously optimistic that New Mexico will not be the site of another unwanted, unneeded pipeline that could do serious harm to our sensitive environment, cultural areas and critical watersheds.”



Open methane flares near Lybrook and the greater Chaco area add potent greenhouse-gas emissions, ruin the night sky and waste a valuable fuel product. Photo by Mike Eisenfeld

# Chaco Coalition challenges BLM

By Teresa Seamster, Northern New M Group

March 11, 2015, was 108 years to the day that President Theodore Roosevelt declared Chaco Canyon to be a historical monument in 1907. The threat to Chaco in that time was the looting of archaeological treasures and sacred artifacts. Today, it is ramped up oil and gas development, especially fracking and contaminated water supply. On March 11, WildEarth Guardians, Western Environmental Law Center, Diné CARE and San Juan Citizens Alliance, all groups in the Greater Chaco Coalition, filed a lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management challenging its approval of more than 100 oil- and gas-drilling permits in the San Juan Basin near Chaco Cultural National Historic Park. Representatives from 34 Navajo organizations and environmental groups, including the Rio Grande Chapter, rallied at the Roundhouse in March to

protest BLM permits to drill in the area. The day the lawsuit was filed in federal court, the larger coalition held a press conference at the Roundhouse to inform legislators about the public’s concern and to thank Sen. Benny Shendo for his sponsorship of Senate Memorial 29, “Natural Gas Flaring and Venting,” in the Chaco area. Tribes, environmentalists, archaeologists and residents have long criticized the idea of drilling near Chaco Canyon, a World Heritage site that includes a series of monumental stone structures that date back centuries. The area was considered a ceremonial and economic center for ancestors of many Native American tribes in the region. “The Bureau of Land Management is not taking serious consideration of the sacredness of the greater Chaco region and the impacts on surrounding Diné communities as they continue to approve more drilling and fracking,” said Colleen Cooley with Diné Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment. The BLM is in the process of updat-

ing its management plan for the San Juan Basin in the face of an expected shale-oil boom, and the groups are urging the agency to stop approving new drilling permits until the plan is in place. In January, the BLM did postpone an oil and gas lease sale for more than 4 square miles in northwestern New Mexico, saying more time was needed to review public comments and concerns. The recently proposed Piñon Oil Pipeline could quadruple oil development and fracking near Chaco, adding another 8,000 wells. The impact on people and land could be enormous. A full Environmental Impact Study and Mancos Shale Resource Management Plan are the first requirements the Coalition is requesting from the BLM. BLM has announced an initial Environmental Assessment will be completed this summer that could be a preliminary to a more in-depth Environmental Impact Study of the Piñon pipeline project.



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- John Muir

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April/May/June 2015

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# Volunteers lead the way in Roundhouse, Bosque

We have a new media celebrity in the Rio Grande Chapter.

Janie Chodosh, who was interested in lobbying on the coyote-contest bill, appeared on KNME-TV as well as KUNM radio and several newspapers in a report created the morning of Wildlands, Wildlife and Water Day at the Roundhouse.

Our chapter director, Camilla Feibelman, was filmed training a big group of volunteer lobbyists and teaming them up with old hands like Melinda Smith and our Legislative Team chair, David Coss, to learn how to



**John Buchser, Chapter chair**

Voters New Mexico and Environment New Mexico, held three lobby-training sessions in Las Cruces, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe

lobby.

Thanks to KUNM and KNME for their super report.

The Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter, with partner groups including Conservation

prior to the legislative session. The trainings, coordinated by volunteer Diane Reese and assisted by local legislators, helped citizens feel comfortable advocating at the Roundhouse.

Chapter lobbyist Dan Lorimier said the citizen lobbying support was key to killing many bad bills, including an attempt to weaken the Mining Act that our chapter worked very hard to successfully pass 20 years ago.

We helped fill virtually every legislative hearing room on days that bills we supported or objected to were being heard.

We trained our local kids group, Global Warming Express, to help them advocate for action on climate change on Renewable Energy Day at the Roundhouse — where Sierra Club Director Michael Brune spoke. Thanks to everyone who helped. Y'all ROCK! Please read more about citizen contributions on Pages 6 through 9.

In Albuquerque, the Bosque team awoke one day this winter to find out that Mayor Richard Berry had allowed earth-moving equipment to plow a 6-foot trail through sensitive areas of the state park. This work, prior to

completion of dialog between concerned citizens and the City, was totally inappropriate.

The Central Group's Bosque Action Team is now involved in negotiations with the City to reroute a portion of the trail that is too close to the Rio Grande. Check out the Bosque Team's website, [savethebosque.org](http://savethebosque.org). A million thanks to the many involved, and particularly to Richard Barish and the councilors who supported the bill to block the work until a plan was completed.

Read more about the issue on Page 5.

# New Mexico's future: Coal or clean energy?

**Nellis Kennedy-Howard**  
Beyond Coal regional  
organizing representative

For decades, PNM's San Juan Generating Station has threatened our air, land, and water with toxic pollution. From soot and smog to arsenic and mercury, the harmful pollution from the plant has endangered the health and well-being of families throughout the Four Corners region. We can see and feel the impacts of this pollution all around us.

According to the Clean Air Task Force, pollution from the San Juan Generating Station contributes to 33 premature deaths, 600 asthma attacks and 31 asthma-related emergency room visits each year. The enormous health problems caused by pollution from the San Juan Generating Station costs the public as much as \$240 million over a five-year period, according to a 2012 analysis by Dr. George D. Thurston, a professor of environmental health at the New York University School of Medicine.

In order to protect New Mexico skies from harmful pollutants coming from San Juan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a rule requiring the reduction of dangerous emissions coming from the plant. PNM's plan to comply with the rule and to cut emissions at San Juan includes the retirement of two of the plant's four coal-burning units and to install pollution controls on the remaining units in order to continue burning coal beyond 2017. In addition, PNM proposes to invest in a combination of other expen-



Tom Solomon

**About 300 people came to a Public Regulation Commission hearing in Albuquerque, most speaking up against PNM's plan to replace San Juan coal power with out-of-state nuclear, natural gas and more coal.**

sive fuels and even increase their reliance on one of the remaining coal units at San Juan.

Today, our state and public officials at the Public Regulation Commission face a choice: prolong the life of one of our region's greatest public-health threats or take this opportunity to transition to clean, renewable energy. This spring, the PRC will decide on whether to approve PNM's plans or whether cheaper, safer and cleaner options must be considered.

For New Mexico ratepayers and families across the state, PNM's plan is a bad investment. Earlier this year, PNM acknowledged that due to accounting errors, the cost estimate for its plan to continue burning coal at San Juan and to spend money on other expensive fuels was more than \$1 billion higher than its initial estimate. According to *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, those costs will likely be borne by ratepayers

**Take Action**  
Go to [sc.org/PNMRiskyPlan](http://sc.org/PNMRiskyPlan) and tell the PRC to protect New Mexico ratepayers and reject PNM's plans for more dirty, expensive coal pollution.

like you and me.

Stakeholders everywhere are seeing the risks and speaking out. Support for continued burning of coal at San Juan has fallen as admissions by PNM have revealed serious financial risks for the future of the plant, including the uncertainty of where the plant will get its coal after 2017 and who will own the plant after an ownership contract runs out in 2022. Of the nine parties that originally supported PNM's proposal to continue burning coal at San Juan, over half of the original supporters (six organizations), including clean-energy and environmental advocates, have pulled their support for the proposal.

Other New Mexico stakeholders have also pulled

away from an agreement that would continue PNM's use of coal at the plant, citing the overall uncertainty about San Juan's operations. The home city of the plant, Farmington, N.M., announced earlier this year that it would not acquire an increased stake in the plant due to concerns about reliability and the huge costs that would be passed on to the community.

We believe PNM can and should do better. This is an opportunity for PNM to create a plan that will protect ratepayers, clean our air and water, and create much-needed jobs by reducing our dependence on coal and replacing it with clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

## And how much will you pay?

**By Nellis Kennedy-Howard**

PNM filed an application for a rate increase of \$107.4 million at the Public Regulation Commission in December that will no doubt impact what you pay for your energy. The PRC will decide how much PNM can charge for its energy and different projects, including the utility's plans to continue burning coal at the San Juan Generating Station. If approved, this rate case will result in the average residential customer's bill increasing by nearly 12% (PNM estimates the average residential user's bill will increase by \$9.75 per month).

Along with the costs of PNM's proposal to continue burning coal at the San Juan Generating Station, PNM also wants to tax rooftop solar users through a monthly \$6/kw solar charge and elimination of a banking option for energy generated. The fee would apply to customers who install rooftop solar on their homes after Jan. 1, 2016. For example, this results in a \$30 monthly fee for a 5kw system.

This is a critical time to stand together and urge our public officials that the time is now to start building a clean-energy economy that puts New Mexico families over big polluter profits.

Clean energy isn't just the safe choice — it's the smart one. New Mexico should be a national leader in wind and solar. Wind already powers the equivalent of more than 200,000 homes in New Mexico — but if the state embraced its full potential, it could meet its energy needs more than 70 times over just with wind.

By increasing the share of power we get from clean energy, we can create good jobs for workers, protect families and small businesses from expensive coal rate hikes, and secure a stronger future for our communities.

### Go solar, get a discount, help our chapter!

To find out if your home is eligible for a \$750 Sungevity solar discount, request an iQuote at [content.sierraclub.org/solar/sungevity?ref=203](http://content.sierraclub.org/solar/sungevity?ref=203) or call Sierra Club Solar Homes Coordinator MacKenzie Cane at 415-977-5634. If your home qualifies, Sungevity will also give the Rio Grande Chapter \$750. Check it out!



# Bosque Blow-Up

By Richard Barish  
Bosque Issues chair

**O**n Feb. 9, ignoring the opportunities for public input it had promised and an ongoing consensus process, the City of Albuquerque plowed a trail through the Bosque. The City breached the public trust that it worked so hard and effectively to rebuild over the prior year.

The public process was a response to the reaction of the public on Sept. 4, 2013, when about 400 people showed up at the Albuquerque Museum to express their displeasure with Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry's plans for the Bosque. After that meeting, the City appeared to reconsider.

To its credit, the City agreed to take a year to do baseline environmental monitoring. It held a series of wonderful Bosque educational forums in the first half of 2014. It committed to a public process to review options. It engaged in consultations with the Sierra Club and the Bosque Action Team (BAT) about what it would do, and agreement on a consensus option was within reach.

Then, on Feb. 9, with no advance notice to the public or affected agencies and entities, the City began constructing a trail through the Bosque north of Central Avenue to the I-40 bridge. The City apparently told the *Albuquerque Journal* about the construction — it had an editorial supporting the construction on the day it began — but did not tell anyone else, including the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, which owns the land and is required to approve any plans, or its own Open Space Advisory Board.

The trail widens what, for most of the length, was a footpath into a 6-foot-wide trail. The trail will be a perfectly leveled, manicured trail, surfaced in crusher fines. It will be obviously constructed and inconsistent with the natural



**Below: The City of Albuquerque plowed a 6-foot-wide path through sensitive areas of the Rio Grande Bosque in February in the midst of a public process and an incomplete environmental study.**

**At left: Concerned citizens toured the construction area and protested at City Council meetings. The city has now agreed to discuss mitigating damage and vetting future projects.**

Left: Photo by Camilla Feibelman  
Below: Photo by Ian Mentken



materials and wild character of the Bosque. It goes for about a quarter mile along the river's edge, increasing impacts on the most environmentally sensitive zone of the bosque. The best thing that can be said about the trail is that it may allow wheelchair access, but it does not appear to have been well-designed for that purpose. It will encourage fast bicycle traffic, potentially creating a dangerous

situation for wheelchair users in some locations.

Unsurprisingly, people were upset, and they let the City know it. The City has now been willing to engage in discussions with the Club and the BAT over what can be done to mitigate the damage and over procedures for vetting future Bosque projects. These discussions have been promising and hopefully will lead to something good, but

they are not going to undo the fact that Mayor Berry got what he wanted — a developed and groomed trail in the Bosque — by ignoring the promised public process and other required approvals and permits.

City Councilor Ike Benton deserves our thanks for introducing a resolution, co-sponsored by Councilor Ken Sanchez, to halt the construction and complete the public

process. The resolution passed after a contentious debate, but was vetoed, and the veto override vote failed. However, Councilor Benton introduced a second Bosque resolution, which has been deferred while we engage in our talks with the City.

**For occasional e-mail updates, send me an e-mail at richard.barish@gmail.com.**

## Lots of Sierra Club hikes planned for Central New Mexico

**Saturday, April 4, and Saturday, May 2: GPS classes.** Introduction to field use of a hand-held GPS. Class will cover basic navigation techniques including use of the trip computer, using waypoints, saving routes and other navigation tools.

Maximum participants 10; GPS units will be provided for use. No dogs. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Open Space Visitor Center parking lot, 6500 Coors Blvd.

**April/May/June 2015**

To reserve space, e-mail John: gjuanito@hotmail.com. Provide e-mail as well as cell and home phone. No fee for Sierra Club members. Please contact John for details.

### **Sunday April 12 Ojitos:**

Explore the hoodoos in the new Ojito Wilderness. Total of about 5.5 miles. Part of the hike is off trail, and we will go up or down steep slopes over short segments. Dogs OK (2 total). Meet at 9

a.m. in Albuquerque or at 10:15 a.m. at the trailhead.

Email Odile.dlb@outlook.com or call 505-433-4692, providing e-mail as well as cell and home phone.

### **Saturday May 9, South Peak**

Strenuous hike up Embudito trail. Last part to the summit is steep and rocky. Total distance about 11 miles. Elevation gain: about 4,000 feet from the trailhead. Email Odile.dlb@outlook.

com or call 505-433-4692, providing email as well as cell and home phone.

**Sunday, May 17: Easy walk in Elena Gallegos Park.** Total distance about 3.8 miles, around a loop. (Loop walk can be interrupted at any time for shorter distance). Stay for picnic after the walk. Email Odile.dlb@outlook.com or call 505-433-4692, providing email as well as cell and home phone.

**Rio Grande Sierran 5**





# Citizen activism averts threats

By Dan Lorimier  
and Mona Blaber

The 2015 New Mexico legislative session might have been contentious, but it was also marked by an encouraging — and successful — upswell in citizen engagement and by legislators who worked tirelessly to protect our air, land, water and wildlife.

With the new Republican majority in the House of Representatives seemingly intent on expressing an industry-profits-at-all-costs agenda, there were far more threats than opportunities for the environment. Yet several positive pieces of legislation passed, including extension of solar tax credits and a plan for a Rio Grande Trail.

And despite a hostile House and a Senate that is often dominated by an anti-environment coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats, none of the most dangerous legislation passed.

The story of this session was really the stupendous effort by pro-environment legislators — and you.

You rang your representatives' phones off the hook when the Renewable Energy Act was threatened. You filled e-mail "in" boxes to stop an attempt to privatize our drinking water; you crowded hearing rooms to ban coyote-killing contests; you attended our training sessions to learn how to make your voice heard at the Roundhouse. And the results were inspiring.

Here are some of the major threats you helped prevent:

### Federal land grabs:

HB291, HJR10, HJR13 and SB483 were different forms of attempts to ease the path for the state to seize our federal public lands, which would then open them to being sold off to private interests. None of these bills passed either chamber.

**Gutting the Renewable Energy Act:** HB445 would have eliminated New Mexico's requirement for utilities to provide 20 percent of their electricity from renewable energy by 2020. This bill passed the House by one vote but was killed in a bipartisan vote of the Senate Conservation Committee.

**Assault on the Mining Act:** HB625, which was never available for the public to see, would have stripped oversight from copper and uranium mining and allowed new mines to pollute our water for thousands of years. Your calls and e-mails in key districts stopped this bill from



**At left: Roundhouse training sessions run by the Rio Grande Chapter and allies were packed with people who wanted to learn more about lobbying their legislators.**

**Below: Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune spoke to the Global Warming Express kids group and others on Renewable Energy Day.**



being heard. (See Page 7).

### Oil and gas pre-emption:

HB366, HB199, SB421 and other bills would have pre-empted county and local ordinances governing oil and gas drilling and given sole jurisdiction to the political appointees at the Oil Conservation Commission. HB366 passed the House but died in the Senate, and the Senate Conservation

Committee tabled the others.

**Privatization of our water:** "Public-Private Partnerships" (HB299) would have allowed private companies to run public entities, including water utilities, and would have instructed the General Services Department to use taxpayer money to search for private partnerships. This bill passed the House and Senate

Conservation before dying in Senate Judiciary Committee.

One negative bill that did pass would make it illegal for boaters, hikers, anglers, etc. to wade a public stream or river where it crosses private property. The governor has not yet signed this possibly unconstitutional bill.

**Some proactive bills passed both chambers,** including an extension of the

existing Residential Solar Tax Credit (SB391) and the establishment of a Rio Grande Trail from Colorado to Texas (HB563). The governor has not yet signed these bills, but once again, you've demonstrated the power of the people. Hundreds of you have called Gov. Susana Martinez's office urging passage.

Among good bills that died were those prohibiting coyote-killing contests and banning trapping on public lands (see Page 8). Despite the success of the residential solar tax credit, bills to renew expiring tax credits for utility-scale renewable energy failed. Our efforts to pass a tax credit for electric vehicles and charging units came very close but died after passing the Senate and two of three House committees. Three bills (SB461, SB542, SB455) aimed at transparency and accountability at the Interstate Stream Commission all failed (see Page 9).

While this session's gridlock drew much attention, the volume of bills passed shouldn't be the measure of success if those bills profit a few at the expense of the many. Those who watched floor and committee debate this session could see many of our elected officials exposing the dangers of harmful legislation with thoughtful, well-researched arguments. Champions like Brian Egolf, Bill McCamley, Bobby Gonzales, Jeff Steinborn and Javier Martinez in the House and Senate Majority Leader Michael Sanchez, among many others, worked throughout the session to stop dangerous and harmful legislation.

All our successes are in conjunction with the Environmental Alliance of New Mexico, which includes Environment New Mexico, Food and Water Watch, Conservation Voters New Mexico, the Oil and Gas Accountability Project and others. We worked on the EV tax credit with the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project. On wildlife legislation, we joined forces with Animal Protection Voters of New Mexico.

But it is you, our members and supporters, who hold the real power. We logged 2,963 messages to legislators, hundreds of calls, hundreds of concerned citizens packing committee rooms and dozens of people attending our lobby trainings. Your impact was tangible.

These bills, the good and the bad, will be back at future legislative sessions. We hope you'll be back, too.





# Assault on Mining Act stalls in House

*Last-minute move by mining industry thwarted by environmental groups and legislative champions*

**Allyson Siwik**  
Rio Grande Chapter  
Executive Committee, Gila  
Resources Information  
Project Director

**W**ith only 16 days left in the 60-day legislative session, mining giant Freeport-McMoRan, owner of the Chino, Cobre and Tyrone copper mines in Grant County, tried to push through a bill to roll back critical safeguards in the New Mexico Mining Act. Although a strong defense by environmental groups and legislative champions prevented HB625 from ever coming up for a vote in the House Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee, we expect that the mining industry will bring the bill back during the 2016 legislative session.

Freeport-McMoRan owns and operates in Grant County two of the nation's largest open-pit copper mines that contaminate a billion gallons (3,345 acre-feet) of water annually and will cost half a billion dollars to clean up. For nearly 25 years, the Mining Act has ensured that mining corporations like Freeport protect our water, clean up messes they create, and don't leave taxpayers footing the bill for billions of dollars of reclamation costs.

Sponsored by newly elected Rep. John Zimmerman (R-Doña Ana, Grant and Sierra), HB625 proposed changes to the Mining Act that would have



Photo courtesy Gila Resources Information Project

**In a late-session move, Freeport-McMoRan, which operates Tyrone copper mine in Grant County, above, tried to push through a bill that would have allowed mining companies to walk away from reclamation. Your calls and e-mails to your legislators played a big role in defeating this bill.**

serious environmental consequences for mining-impacted communities and financial implications for the state.

The bill would have opened huge loopholes in the Mining Act that would have allowed mining companies to walk away from reclamation and shifted the burden of mine cleanup onto local communities and the state.

Specifically, the bill would have permitted new mines to pollute surface and ground water for thousands of years by changing the Mining Act to no longer require "perpetual care." Unlimited expansion of mines without public notice and participation would have been acceptable with the bill changes. Industry's proposed changes would also have given mining companies a loophole to indefinitely postpone reclamation/cleanup of a mine,

even after they stop producing, by removing the total number of years a mine can go on standby. Language in the first committee substitute would have reduced the amount of money mining companies are required to post as a cleanup bond.

Freeport-McMoRan did not bring its bill to any interim legislative committees to discuss the changes in a more deliberative way. The bill was given only one committee assignment in the House very late in the session, significantly limiting the amount of scrutiny it would have gotten. Because the dummy bill process was used, the two committee substitutes were never posted on the legislative website, preventing public access to bill language. The sponsor and his expert witnesses insisted that the bill was all about removing dupli-

cation in the Mining Act and streamlining the permitting process.

But a number of factors came into play to prevent the bill from advancing. The Mining and Minerals Division, the agency authorized to implement the Mining Act, had concerns with the bill related to financial assurance and removal of public notice and participation from the standby process, among others.

House Energy, Environment and Natural Resource Committee members Brian Egolf, Javier Martinez, Stephanie Maez, Matthew McQueen and Jeff Steinborn all grilled the bill sponsor, Rep. Zimmerman, and his expert witnesses, Freeport-McMoRan's attorneys/lobbyists Dalva Moellenberg and T.J. Trujillo, questioning why these significant changes to the

Mining Act were not vetted first through the appropriate interim committees and what the impacts would be, not just for large mines, but smaller operations and other types of hard-rock mines. Concerns of Rep. Sarah Maestas Barnes (R-Bernalillo) demonstrated that not all the Republicans were on board with the bill, and after two days of questioning and debate, it was clear the bill was dead.

Your calls and emails played a big role in defeating this bill, showing that the power of citizen engagement in the Legislature can stop powerful industry groups from weakening our environmental protections.

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This is a way to support local environmental protection at no cost to you, so if you do shop at Amazon, please use this link!

Thank you for being a defender of our air, land, water, wildlife and climate here in New Mexico and West Texas!



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# The Wildlife (killing) Committee

By Mary Katherine Ray  
Chapter Wildlife Chair

Last November, a majority of Republicans were elected to the state House of Representatives, turning leadership of the House over to the Republican Party for the first time in 60 years. The consequences were not good for wildlife.

Every single bill on the subject of wildlife had to go through the House Agriculture Committee, which became the House Agriculture, Water and Wildlife committee when the new leadership reorganized and shuffled the committee structure. Placing wildlife issues under the control of agriculture interests was not unlike placing hens under the control of foxes.

The bill to end coyote-killing contests, where people compete to rack up a high body count of coyotes to win cash and prizes (and sometimes to kill the largest adult coyote or smallest coyote puppy), started in the Senate, sponsored by Republican Mark Moores. It sailed through, passing its two committees and the Senate floor handily by a vote of 27-13. It truly had bipartisan support and was co-sponsored by Democratic Rep. Jeff Steinborn in the House. But in the House Ag, Water and Wildlife Committee, the reverse happened and only two members, Democrats Rep. Bill McCamley and Rep. Bobby Gonzales, voted for it.

The bill to end the use of traps and poisons on public land, sponsored by Rep. Bobby Gonzales, was killed by the same committee on the same day with the same 8-2 vote. The hearing room was packed — with citizens whose dogs had been trapped, with hikers, hunters, teachers, veterinarians and wildlife enthusiasts, all supporting the bill. But committee chair Rep. Candy Ezzell, a rancher from Roswell, chose this day to wear what appeared to be coyote-fur boots just in case the



anti-carnivore message wasn't clear enough.

Ag, Water and Wildlife also approved a bill to remove all protections from mountain lions, which would have allowed them to be shot and trapped in any number, at any time. It is currently not legal to set traps for the sport killing of mountain lions, and there are quotas and a bag limit imposed by New Mexico Game and Fish (although arguably they are too high). But in an about-face illustrating how out of step the Agriculture committee is, the bill was killed in the next committee, House Regulatory and Public Affairs, with a unanimous vote from members of both parties.

House Memorial 117, a measure that was assigned only to the House Agriculture, Water and Wildlife Committee before heading to the House floor, called on the governor to “denounce” Mexican wolf recovery and to demand that the U.S. Department of Interior turn wolf manage-



ment over to the state. At the committee hearing, bill sponsor and committee member Republican Rep. Andy Nuñez was asked by Rep. McCamley how many wolves he thought would be a good number for New Mexico, Rep. Nuñez replied “zero.”

Clearly this memorial was about facilitating the extermination of our wolves. HM 117 was in the queue to be heard on the House floor when the session ended, so it never reached a final vote.

The Agriculture, Water and Wildlife Committee also passed a bill to give authority to the state over lesser prairie chickens, another threatened species, and forbid the impair-

**Above: Rep. Jeff Steinborn cheers the crowd at the Feb. 11 Wildlands, Water and Wildlife Day, which also featured the bullsnake at far left. Steinborn co-sponsored a bill banning coyote-killing contests. The bill passed the Senate but died in the House Ag, Water and Wildlife Committee chaired by Rep. Candy Spence Ezzell, who wore her coyote-fur boots for the occasion.**

Top photo by Camilla Feibelman. Far left: By Mary Katherine Ray. Left: Photo courtesy Art Rescues

ment of oil and gas exploration even if at odds with protecting this imperiled bird. This bill did not get past the House Judiciary Committee, so the Ag, Water and Wildlife Committee

passed a memorial that asked the State Land Commissioner, currently a Republican, to work to delist lesser prairie chickens and other listed species on state trust land. That would include the Mexican wolf. This memorial passed the House floor on a party-line vote. No Republican voted against it, but many were absent and did not vote.

The Ag, Water and Wildlife Committee showed itself to be extreme and at odds with most New Mexicans by how its majority voted on wildlife issues compared with how other committees voted and how many citizens showed up with opposing views. The wishes of an extreme special interest should not be held higher than those of all others. If this committee persists with its hostility to wildlife, the outlook, especially for carnivores and endangered species, will be bleak. Elections have consequences, and even though there are wildlife champions in the Republican Party, turning over the leadership effectively muzzled them and all wildlife supporters.

There will be an election before the next long session in 2017. Every legislator will be on the ballot. When you vote (not if!), please don't forget the injustice of having agriculture interests in charge of wildlife. That is a consequence of the last election. Let it not be a lasting one.

## Please respond to our March appeal!

In the last few days, all our members in New Mexico and West Texas received our annual appeal. March is the one month each year that the Rio Grande Chapter asks for your donation.

When you donate directly to the chapter, your contribution stays local and supports our work and yours on the issues we report on in *The Sierran*.

We're clearing a path toward a total transition away from San Juan Generating Station coal and toward clean energy; we're working with coalition allies to stop the Piñon Pipeline from plowing through the Chaco area and bringing with it

quadrupled oil production in this precious area; we're fighting to keep drinking water safe from the millions of gallons of waste produced by industrial dairy operations; your contribution helps us provide you the tools to make a difference, because your activism makes all this happen.

Please support the air, water, climate, land and wildlife right here in your back yard by sending a check to: Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter, 1807 Second St., Suite 45, Santa Fe, NM, 87505.

You can also donate at [riograndesierraclub.org/donate](http://riograndesierraclub.org/donate). Thank you for supporting the environment in New Mexico and West Texas!

Royal Nikusaidie Aviation

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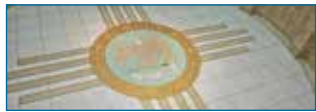
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Outings Leader





# Dairy industry targets water safeguards

By Dan Lorimier  
Chapter Conservation  
Coordinator

The Rio Grande Chapter and our partners in the New Mexico Citizens Coalition are ready to argue our positions at Water Quality Control Commission rule-making hearings in April.

With representation from the New Mexico Environmental Law Center and expert witnesses Bill Olson, former chief of the Environment Department Groundwater Quality Bureau, and Kathy Martin from the Socially

Responsible Agriculture Project, we will challenge the industry's proposed amendments to gut the hard-won groundwater-protection rules on the books.

Since 2009 the chapter and our Coalition allies, including Amigos Bravos, Food and Water Watch, Lea County Concerned Citizens, Mesquite Community Action Committee and Rio Valle Concerned Citizens, have worked with the Environment Department and the dairy industry to set comprehensive protections in a business-friendly framework for New Mexico dairies. With well over half of our dairies out of compliance

with groundwater-quality standards, clear rules need to be in place and enforced.

But the industry is now asking the WQCC to return to the unregulated past by throwing out our current rule and replacing it with loose guidelines. No more required synthetic liners for waste lagoons, no more effective backflow protection for agricultural well water that is mixed with effluence at the well head, no more careful placement of monitor wells downgradient from the lagoons where dairies dump their waste, and no more certified nutrient-management plans to protect

groundwater under fields that are sprayed with the waste. If these amendments are adopted by the current industry-friendly commission, the industry will be operating in a largely unregulated environment. We will attempt to hold on to the current common-sense and scientifically sound rules.

Meanwhile, industry lobbyists did their best during the legislative session to further immunize the industry from accountability for its practices. The Right to Farm Act already contains sweeping pre-emptions against nuisance lawsuits against agricultural operations by

neighbors suffering the consequences of these operations' constant growth and waste. But several bills sought to restrict community members' rights even further. HB564, which limited damages in nuisance suits to property value, passed the House of Representatives and Senate Conservation Committee but died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Thanks to our allies who live near dairies. Their stories of gradually diminishing quality of life because of dairy growth and practices resonated with legislators.

# Sunshine on the Gila process

*Gila bills shine light on Interstate Stream Commission corruption and lack of transparency*

Allyson Siwik, Chapter ExCom,  
Gila Resources Information Project

As the dust settles on the 2015 legislative session, I'm heartened by many of our state senators who voted to hold the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) accountable for its misguided and wasteful plan to divert the Gila River.

The ISC is spending millions of dollars planning a massive diversion project that is unlikely to ever be built and may yield little water — at a likely cost of more than a billion dollars. These funds should instead be spent on cost-effective community water projects that will meet long-term water needs without harming New Mexico's last free-flowing river that contributes significantly to our hunting, fishing, and recreation economy.

The ISC's Gila planning process has lacked transparency and meaningful public participation, and the agency has been under fire for illegal actions related to contracting and conflicts of interest.

A suite of Gila River-related bills introduced this session would have provided legislative oversight, prevented wasteful use of public funds on the diversion project, and reformed the ISC's structure.

SB 455 (Sen. Joseph Cervantes, D-Doña Ana) and SB 542 (Sen. Sander Rue, R-Bernalillo) required public participation, greater transparency and accountability from the ISC in its expenditures of Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA) federal funding, as well as disclosure of key information related to a Gila River diversion project, such as financing, affordability, and water yield.

The Gila diversion planning transparency and disclosure bills, combined into a committee substitute for SB455 and SB542, passed the Senate Conservation Committee on a vote of 6-3. Although not heard in the Senate Judiciary



Photo by Dennis O'Keefe

**Although none of the bills that sought to bring transparency and accountability to the Interstate Stream Commission were passed by the full Legislature, the effort brought attention to the secrecy of the commission's process in planning to divert the Gila River, above.**

Committee, this bill sent a strong message to the ISC that the Legislature and the public demand full disclosure, public participation and fiscal responsibility in its Gila planning process.

SB 461 (Sen. Howie Morales, D-Catron, Grant, Socorro) directed the Interstate Stream Commission to spend no less than \$77 million of AWSA funding on non-diversion alternatives to meet high-priority community water needs in southwest New Mexico.

Although tabled in Senate Conservation Committee, Morales' bill put pressure on the ISC to allocate \$2.1 million in AWSA funding to the Grant County Water Commission Regional Water Supply project in late February. The ISC had tabled the funding allocation decision on this project at its November 24, 2014, AWSA decision meeting. The Grant County project

will develop a new well at the Grant County Airport and construct an inter-community pipeline to serve current and future water needs of 26,000 people in the Mining District and Silver City. Water withdrawal will be balanced by return flow credit from the wastewater treatment plant, so there will be no net depletion to the aquifer.

SB467, sponsored by Sen. Peter Wirth (D-Santa Fe) would have restructured appointments to the ISC and required minimum qualifications for members, in order to improve political and geographic balance and multi-stakeholder representation and bring a minimum of professional expertise to the commission. The ISC is responsible for formulating important state public policies pertaining to water, the need for public investments in our water supplies, and use of water.

A reconfigured commission with

professional experience and diverse perspectives on water resources management and with balanced political interests is needed to move beyond the ISC's Gila River planning failures. New Mexico needs, and we as citizens deserve, a more professional commission that will provide improved leadership and guidance to ISC staff on these multimillion-dollar water projects and contribute to making the best water planning and management decisions for all New Mexicans.

The bill passed the Senate floor late in the session on a 28-13 vote but didn't make it through the House.

Thanks to our legislative champions and to all of you who participated this session in supporting efforts to bring transparency and disclosure to the Gila River planning process and to reform the ISC into an effective and balanced water-planning agency.



# 'Save the Bag' comes to Los Alamos

By Jody Benson  
Pajarito Group  
Newsletter Editor

If you have read comments in the *Los Alamos Monitor*, LADailyPost.com, or savethebaglosalamos.blogspot.com, you have seen that well-meaning people are either uninformed, misinformed, or have been activated by the American Chemical Association (ACA) to fight a ban on the single-use disposable plastic shopping bag. An interesting assertion from the save-the-baggers is that bags aren't a problem locally or globally, and there are no bags blowing around Los Alamos.

In order to help inform the savethebaggers, we have the opportunity to offer some data. All we need to do is take a photo of whatever feral bag we find, caption it (location is good), then upload it to Instagram by using: tag@banthebagLosAlamos or #banthebagLosAlamos.

Enlist your friends, and then don't forget to become our friend on www.facebook.com/NoMorePlasticBags, where you can see your photos posted.

Sign the bag-ban petition on paper (call an Executive Committee member) or online at bit.ly/1x4inoO or through our webpage: pajarito.riogrande.sierraclub.org.

## Talking points to Ban the Bag

Here are some talking points related to Los Alamos that will help people realize how expensive is this free use-once-and-toss item. It only takes a few minutes of searching the web to understand what a serious global problem these bags are.

Some questions to ask (and then listen to their response): What do you want your legacy to be? Are you willing to sacrifice the health of your grandchildren and the environment for the mere convenience of carrying something from the store to your car? When you shop at Costco or Sam's, do you get bags? If your objection to a ban is that you don't want more government control, would you let the market drive consumption? (The plastic bag is not free for the merchant;



Photo by Mark Jones

**The American Chemical Association has helped spur a "Save the Bag" movement in Los Alamos. The save-the-baggers say there are no bags blowing around Los Alamos. So when you see a bag like the ones above on Diamond Drive, snap a picture and post it to Instagram or Twitter with the tag #banthebaglosalamos.**

would you be willing to pay 10 cents for a bag?)

**Fact 1:** The only bag to be banned is the single-use disposable carry-out plastic shopping bag. These are the brown Smiths/white Walmart bags made of high-density polyethylene (HDPE).

**Fact 2:** Stores will charge for paper bags so that they can recoup the significantly higher cost of paper. It is not a tax. It is a market-driven cost. We're trying to increase the incentive to reuse. We want to make clear what goes into a plastic bag—all the resources, energy, impacts to human health and the environment — something with as many impacts shouldn't be a frivolous item that we get for free and then throw away. Bring your own bag, and you don't have to pay.

**Fact 3:** For dog/cat bags, the many options include veggie bags, toilet paper bags, diaper bags, take-home food bags (none of which are banned). Check your house for bag-replacement opportunities; for garbage, you can buy bags. The point is to eliminate the 9 bags/person/week.

Why is this becoming an issue worldwide? Waste, cost, environment, and human health.

## Waste:

- Good news: the old Smiths had the highest number of bring-their-own-bags shoppers in the state, and White Rock was ninth. Smiths even worked with PEEC and Mountain School to distribute reusable bags in 2009 and set up the bag-recycling bins in the store.

- Good news: Public Works Director Philo found a recycler who will take plastic bags for Los Alamos: Friedman Recycling in Rio Rancho. Yes, we can recycle now, but why recycle when you can eliminate the bag in the first place by simply bringing your own?

- Bad news: Unless Friedman Recycling has a market for bags, the bags get trucked to the Rio Rancho landfill.

- Good news? More than 75 percent are reused then trashed.

- Bad news: Only 1 percent to 3 percent of bags are recycled; That's about 30 million that are just trashed.

## Cost in dollars:

- Los Alamos County residents (excluding the Laboratory) generate 30-40 tons of trash a week. Smiths shoppers use 330,000 plastic bags=2-tons a month. Two tons of the 30 tons

of county waste per month are plastic bags.

- Each American uses an average of 500 single-use plastic carry-out bags a year. That's over 9 bags per week, which equals 1.2 billion per year. Just in the United States. A trillion are used annually worldwide. The number of plastic shopping bags in the U.S. equals 100 billion per year, which equals 12 million barrels of oil to make that many bags (according to *The Wall Street Journal*). If a percentage of that oil is coming from the Middle East, our use of the disposable bag becomes a national security issue.

- The cost to U.S. retailers for the 100 billion bags is \$4 billion. (*The Wall Street Journal*). Even retailers like Krogers are getting involved and proposing a fee on bags.

- A car could drive about 11 meters on the amount of petroleum used to make a single plastic bag.

## Cost to the environment:

Multiple impacts to the environment include:

- Extraction of petroleum and all its related pollutants.

## Meetings

Tuesday, April 28, 7 p.m.  
The April/May presentation, co-sponsored by PEEC and the first formal presentation in the new PEEC building on Canyon Road, will feature New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Bighorn Sheep Biologist Eric Rominger's long-awaited talk on our very own Los Alamos bighorn ram.

- Water consumption in plastic production.

- Chemical contamination of groundwater from buried plastic leaching toxins in landfills.

- Greenhouse gases from incineration of plastics and landfill venting (methane), and carbon use in transportation from production sources to the consumer and back to plastic-recycling locations.

- Scientists estimate bag litter will survive for 1,000 years.

- Humans have discarded 100 billion tons of plastic since the 1950s.

- Plastic does not biodegrade. Instead, it degrades into chemicals and nurdles (plastic pellets) that get into the ecosystem and are ingested or absorbed by plants, wildlife, domestic animals, and humans.

- Plastics suffocate plant life and plankton.

- Because multiple species mistake plastic for food, wildlife ingests it or becomes entangled in it.

- The Monterey Bay Aquarium cites 97.5 percent of albatross chicks on an island 1,000 miles from the nearest big city have plastic in their stomachs.

- About 50 percent of plastic is used for single-use disposable applications: i.e., our ubiquitous buddy, the plastic shopping bag.

- These bags do not biodegrade, but simply degrade, and during that process last several hundred years and become a hazard and nuisance to humans and animals alike.

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<http://pajarito.riograndesierraclub.org>

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Newsletter Editor, Publicity, Sprawl,

Transportation, Endangered Species/Wildlife:

Jody Benson, echidnaejb@gmail.com, 505-662-4782

Open Spaces, Caldera Issues: Howard Barnum, hnbarnun@aol.com

Political, Membership Co-Chair: Mark Jones,

Water Issues: Barbara Calef, bfcalf@yahoo.com, 505/662-3825



**Margot Wilson helped build the Rio Grande Chapter, and her expertise and passion on a wide range of issues have been key to protecting Southern New Mexico's water, public lands and wildlife.**

Photo by Mary Katherine Ray



# Thank you, Margot Wilson!

By Mary Katherine Ray  
Chapter Wildlife Chair

**W**e wish Margot Wilson a relaxing and rewarding retirement!

From forest-restoration projects to travel management plans to injudicious mining proposals to State Game Commission meetings, Margot Wilson has advocated for the outdoors, our wildlife, our water and our natural landscapes from low elevations to high for decades. And even when doing all that, she also led outings to so many special places across New Mexico.

I first met Margot in the mid '90s when she started a Sierra Club section in Truth Or Consequences — as unlikely a place to find fellow Sierrans as I thought could exist. But find each other we did as Margot organized and brought speakers to tell about the environmental plights of the places we love.

How she convinced so many up-and-coming environmental leaders to give presentations in little T or C boggles the mind. But that is how I came to know the now directors of groups like WildEarth Guardians, Animal Protection of New Mexico, The

Southwest Environmental Center and more. Even while going through chemo, knee surgeries and more, Margot's energy and commitment never flagged.

Thank you Margot for your mentorship, friendship and inspiration. I can hardly believe you've pulled off retirement without having to move or die — but thank goodness you did neither! May you find many great birds with those binoculars, take great photographs of your travels and enjoy learning about painting with pastels. The Rio Grande Chapter honors and thanks you for your years of service!

## The importance of the Pecos

By Norma McCallan  
Chapter Vice Chair

**T**he 223,637 acres of the Pecos Wilderness, which straddles the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, have long been a key destination for locals and visitors alike, to hike, backpack, birdwatch, climb, fish, ride horses, take photos, hunt, or just relax and enjoy its peace and solitude.

The word “Pecos” means place where there is water. Because of its many high mountains, more than 15 lakes, and broad meadows, it has some of the lushest and greenest landscapes in our arid state. It is the headwaters for the Pecos and Mora Rivers and supplies drinking water to the cities of Santa Fe and Las Vegas as well as critical irrigation water to the many acequias used by the surrounding communities and ranchers.

Fishermen love its clear streams nourishing rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout. If you drive up the road beyond the village of Pecos you will be hard-pressed to find a single parking space along the miles of pickup trucks and campers lining the banks of the Pecos River.

With our current years of drought and rising temperatures, increased demand for water, with a decreasing supply, those mountain lakes and bubbling creeks will become even more important to our environment as a large, still quite healthy ecosystem, our economy, and the culture of the five counties surrounding it. And more critical for the prolific wildlife population which the Wilderness supports — including bear, elk, deer, turkey, and a large herd of bighorn sheep.

Happily, there are still some quite pristine areas surrounding some of the Wilderness —

**April/May/June 2015**



**With drought and rising temperatures, increased water demand and decreasing supply, the mountain lakes and creeks of the Pecos Wilderness will become even more important to a healthy ecosystem, our economy, and the culture of the five counties surrounding it.**

Above: **Pecos Baldy Lake.**  
At left: **Truchas Lake.**

Photos by Sergey Trudolyubov

areas in both the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests designated as “roadless areas” many years ago. But they are likely to succumb sooner or later to the pressures of encroaching development, the increasing spread of off-road vehicles with their subsequent erosion problems, and perhaps mining or oil and gas exploration.

But the 2015 New Mexico

legislative session saw the introduction of yet another measure seeking to prohibit any further designation of Wilderness there — Senate Memorial 40, introduced by former Sen. Phil Griego, called on the U.S. Congress to refrain from designating additional wilderness or special management areas adjoining the existing Pecos Wilderness. The bill

claims that the prohibitions of such designation would prevent fire suppression, proper livestock management, search and rescue operations, forest thinning and handicapped access. However, these claims are very misleading.

While the Forest Service aims to permit lightning-caused fires to play a natural ecological role and reduce the risks

of wildfire both within and outside the wilderness, the Wilderness Act also provides that “measures may be taken as may be necessary in the control of fire.” Moreover, search-and-rescue operations do occur in Wilderness; grazing would not be curtailed simply because of a Wilderness designation; and Wilderness designation does not supersede the Americans with Disability Act.

Fortunately, after six of us testified against the memorial and no one testified for it, Sen. Griego pulled it, saying he created it to encourage discussion among opponents of the bill with the local farmers and ranchers, and felt he had succeeded. But similar legislation will likely pop up again.

We need to be ever vigilant, and meanwhile better educate the public on what can and cannot be done in a wilderness or other protected area.

**Rio Grande Sierran 11**



## New edition of 'Day Hikes' coming

*We need more volunteers to help with this popular Northern New Mexico standby*

By Norma McCallan  
Northern New Mexico  
Group co-chair

We are commencing work on the 8th edition of our best-selling hiking guide, first published in 1981!

It is a serious undertaking to produce a new edition since we are all volunteers, but a very reward-



Teresa Seamster

**Many a dog-eared, sun-faded copy of 'Day Hikes' can be found in Northern New Mexico backpacks.**

ing task! Our small editorial committee could use more help in the following areas:

■ More folks to sign up to

check out existing hikes in the current edition;

■ More draft submissions of new hikes. But nothing

that has to go through private land or has serious access issues like very bad roads to reach the trailhead.

■ Folks with editorial experience — someone to take over the production end who can deal with our printer on the many details of format, style, paper, etc. Alas, our wonderful production point person for the last several editions, Bill Baxter, died recently after a long battle with kidney problems.

Please contact Aku, 505-577-2594, akusantafe@gmail.com or Alan Shapiro, 505-424-9242, nm5s@yahoo.com, for more details!

## Potluck — reserve your spot now!

Our annual Northern New Mexico Group Summer Solstice Potluck is Saturday, June 20, on the beautiful patio at the Commons on West Alameda from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

We have a limit of 50 people for this event so **reservations are required**. Please RSVP to Alice Cox, 505-780-5122, auntialice@cybermesa.com.

Each guest, please bring a covered dish for eight — main dishes, breads, salads, vegetables or desserts, and indicate which when you reply. Drinks and snacks will be provided.

A special event may be held just before the Potluck at 5 p.m. that all members will be invited to. Look for an announcement on this event in June!

### Group, chapter meetings

Northern Group Executive Committee meetings are every first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m., 1807 Second St., Suite 45, in Santa Fe. Conservation meetings are every month on the third Tuesday at 7 p.m. at 1807 Second St., Suite 45.

The Rio Grande Chapter summer Executive Committee meeting will be held in Santa Fe from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 6 and 9 a.m.-noon June 7 at the Commons on the Alameda, 2300 W. Alameda. All members are invited to attend. Contact John Buchser, jbuchser@comcast.net, for more information.



Jessie Emerson

**Sharon Guerrero, pictured here at our table at Santa Fe Community College, is the new co-chair of the Zero Waste team. Sharon was the director of the Santa Fe Public Schools after-school program and was active in the Santa Fe area for many years in education and outreach to end drug abuse.**

## Zero Waste team

The Zero Waste committee of the Northern New Mexico Sierra Club Group is active and will be working hard to implement its goals for 2015:

■ Replace Santa Fe's ecological footprint through educational outreach;

■ People will understand the role zero waste plays in climate change and human health;

■ Collaborate with city, county, schools and neighbors.

The initiatives will be implemented through the following activities:

■ Education and outreach in coordination with Santa Fe Solid Waste Management Agency, Santa Fe Community College, Santa Fe Public

Schools, Sierra Club Pajarito Group, Eldorado group and other community organizations in New Mexico.

■ Tabling events and tours: Earth Day, BrRRT recycling center, Master Gardener event, Recycling Day at SFCC, Water Festival on March 22 at Museo Cultural and others.

Zero Waste team-building: monthly meetings and special events.

We'll host a Beer 'n' Wine social with snacks, item swap (bring donation items in good condition), games and prizes. Adam Schlachter of the Solid Waste Action Committee will be the speaker at The Commons, 2300 W. Alameda,

Santa Fe, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday, April 24.

### Recycling tips

Here are four things that we can do to reduce waste:

1. Stop buying single-use items
2. Buy toilet paper made of recycled paper
3. The paper core of toilet paper can be added to the compost pile
4. Office-supply companies take back printer ink cartridges, and you build up cash credit.

Please contact Co-chairs Jessie Emerson at osoherbal-jessie@gmail.com or Sharon Guerrero at floggiebaloot@yahoo.com for more information or to join our team.

## Northern New Mexico Group Contacts

### Executive Committee

Co-chairs: **Norma McCallan**, 505-471-0005, nmccallan@mindspring.com, and **Teresa Seamster**, 505-466-8964, tc.seamster@gmail.com  
Vice chair: **Tom Gorman**, 505-438-3932, gormantd@gmail.com  
Treasurer: **Jim Baker**, 505-473-0457, bakerjim.sw@gmail.com  
**Alice Cox**: 505-780-5122, auntialice@cybermesa.com  
**Paul Paryski**, pparyski@aol.com  
**Sandrine Gaillard**, sandrine.gaillard@gmail.com  
**Royal Drews**, 505-699-8713, royal-drews22@gmail.com  
**Shane Woolbright**, 405-323-2569, mesoinc@hotmail.com

### Conservation

Chair: Norma McCallan  
Public lands: Norma McCallan, Tom Gorman and Teresa Seamster  
Water: John Buchser, 505/820-0201, jbuchser@comcast.net  
Wildlife: Teresa Seamster  
Zero Waste: Jessie Emerson  
Energy Team: Shane Woolbright, 505-474-2870, mesoinc@hotmail.com; Elliot Stern, 505-989-9486, sternwcs@comcast.net

### Other responsibilities

Chapter Representative: Tom Gorman  
Membership: Alice Cox  
Volunteers: Open  
Office: Jerry Knapczyk  
Outings co-chairs: Tobin Oruch, 505-820-2844, oruch@lanl.gov, and Alan Shapiro, 505-424-9242, nm5s@yahoo.com  
Phone Support: Bebs Taylor, 983-9129  
Political: Susan Martin, 505-988-5206, smartin31@comcast.net  
Publicity: Open  
Book Sales: Janet Peacock 505-988-8929, sfdayahikes@gmail.com.  
Sales backup: Ann Anthony, anrascal@gmail.com, 795-7472.  
Book mailings: Gail Bryant, 505-757-6654.  
Nominating Committee: Open.  
Youth involvement: Paige Pinnell, 505-988-2733

### Regional Contacts

Las Vegas: Joann Sprenger, 505-454-0551, gisprengr@cybermesa.com  
Farmington: Art Jaquez, 505-360-0176, artjaquez2@gmail.com  
Taos: Eric Patterson, 575-776-2833 eepatt@gmail.com



# Transition at Valles Caldera

By Tom Ribe  
of Caldera Action

The Valles Caldera National Preserve is beginning its Sierra Club-supported transition from experimental National Trust to the National Park Service following the December passage of Senate Bill 285.

The transition will largely be complete next July, and the Park Service will manage the Valles Caldera as a preserve, with a budget close to what Congress has been appropriating to the trust.

Over the last 15 years, the Valles Caldera staff has developed an outstanding science program that will continue. This research and monitoring program attracted over \$3 million in outside research at VCNP last year and has increased our understanding of climate change in the southern Rockies.

Some of the research is focused on an ecological restoration project that encompasses much of the preserve and a large area of the Santa Fe National Forest in the Jemez



National Park Service

**A grand reopening party for Valles Caldera is planned for July, and there will be extensive volunteer opportunities to remove fences, help field researchers and assist with watershed restoration projects.**

River watershed. Known as the “Southwest Jemez Mountains Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project,” the U.S. Forest Service and Valles Caldera staff are working on treating more than 156,000 acres that had been overgrazed, logged, and fire-suppressed since around 1880.

The restoration work

involves mechanical thinning of small-diameter trees, prescribed fire, obliterating old roads and restoring streams and riparian areas. The work also includes Jemez Pueblo land and the pueblo’s forestry crews. Nationally, this project is one of eight, treating 1.5 million acres of ecologically degraded lands in nine states.

This summer will be an exciting time at the Valles Caldera. A grand reopening party is planned for July, and there will be extensive volunteer opportunities to remove fences, help field researchers, and assist with watershed restoration projects.

**Please contact [calderaaction@gmail.com](mailto:calderaaction@gmail.com) for more information.**



**Executive Director Michael Brune helped celebrate Norma McCallan’s 40 years of Sierra Club volunteerism.**

## National board in Santa Fe

Each year in February the The Sierra Club’s national Board of Director’s and the Sierra Club Foundation Board meet outside of San Francisco.

This year they met in Santa Fe — on the weekend of the biggest snowstorm of the season. The meeting, at Hotel Santa Fe, coincided with Renewable Energy Day at the Roundhouse, which afforded several hundred participants a chance to hear from Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune.

The board members spent much of their time carrying out a strategic planning process, while the Foundation board discussed digital strategies, lessons learned from September’s Climate March and from local staff Camilla Feibelman and Robert Tohe about our work in New Mexico.

Members of both boards attended a dinner event at the home of Jim and Suzanne Gollin, longtime friends of Michael Brune from his years at Rainforest Action Network. Chapter leaders also attended a dinner with board members the following evening and presented their work highlighting the Chapter’s Action Team model and honoring Chapter Vice Chair Norma McCallan for 40 years of volunteer service to the Sierra Club.

## Successful Sierra Club and Beer

Some 35 to 40 members and friends enjoyed an upbeat evening at the cozy Commons in Santa Fe in February, socializing and discussing with our guests state Rep. Carl Trujillo and Sierra Club lobbyist Dan Lorimier the environmental bills at this legislative session and what we as citizens could do to help move the good bills forward and defeat the very bad ones.



## A special place, protected after 40 years

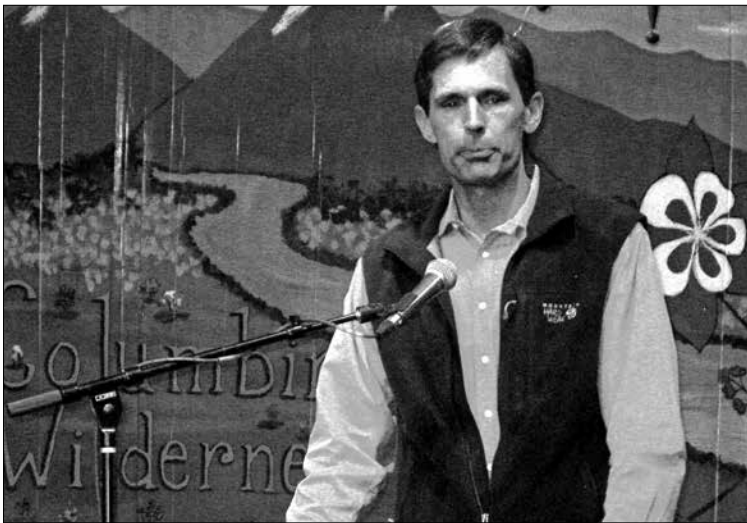
By Eric Patterson  
Water Sentinels —  
Rios de Taos

Finally! Forty-two years ago my friends Al and Judy hiked with me into a roadless area of the Carson National Forest, camped overnight, and returned home to write to the Forest Service. We recommended that this roadless area near Taos Ski Valley be considered for wilderness designation. This place was breathtakingly beautiful. The mountainsides were alive with June flowers while the shaded valleys were still covered with deep snow.

A lot has happened since then. The Forest Service did indeed designate the area as the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Study Area, meaning that it would be considered for possible wilderness designation, permanently protected from development. It remained a “study area” for decades.

Forty years is a long time for people to make up their mind about something.

Although various people over the years have proposed the congressional action needed to finalize the wilder-



Eric Patterson

**Sen. Martin Heinrich at the celebration of the designation of Columbine-Hondo as a Wilderness. Community members worked together for years to permanently protect the area.**

ness designation, not much had really happened until just a few years ago when the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Coalition was formed, including Sierrans Norma McCallan and Tom Gorman. This group actively solicited the support of citizens, businesses, acequia associations, tribal leaders, land grants, farmers, ranchers, hunters, fishermen, government officials and everyone else who would listen. They took the letters of support to members of Congress and suggested that

congressional action was long overdue. Sens. Udall and Heinrich and Congressman Luján and former Sen. Jeff Bingaman were very enthusiastic. They and the members of their staff visited here with the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Coalition and pledged their support. After the needed bill was introduced in Congress, it died without action several times. Finally, in 2014, the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Act was included as part of a major spending bill, which was passed and signed into law by President

Obama.

Many people deserve our thanks for making this happen. All the citizens, leaders, businesses, organizations. Those people that formed the Coalition are especially deserving of our gratitude: Roberta Salazar, Stuart Wilde, John Olivas, Peggy Nelson, Norma McCallan, and Tom Gorman, to name just a few. They saw what was needed and organized so many people and organizations who had wanted this wilderness to happen, focused them, and brought them together. And people working together can really get things done!

I fish in the Rio Hondo and the Red River in water that comes from the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness. I get the water to grow organic fruit and vegetables at Stony Acre Farm in Valdez from the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness. My wife and I hike in the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness. And this summer when my grandchildren from Chicago come to visit, they will be able to hike in the same mountains that their grandfather did 42 years ago, in the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness.

Finally!





Photo by Rick LoBello

Despite efforts from officials on both sides of the border, there is still no Big Bend International Park.

# Sealing the deal on Big Bend

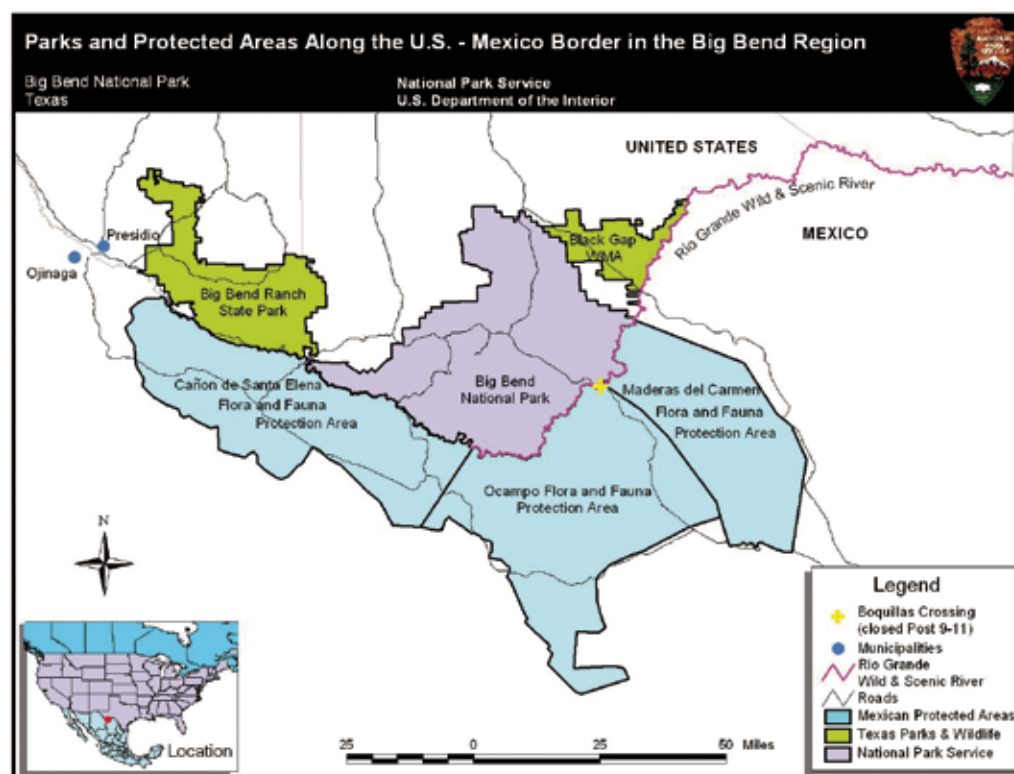
By Rick LoBello  
El Paso Group

**B**ig Bend International Park is one of the best-kept secrets in North America. Since 1932, the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, Mexican President Manuel Avila Camacho, members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, Rotary International and the National Parks Conservation Association have been unable to seal the deal in creating the largest symbol of international peace ever planned in the Western Hemisphere.

Lands on both sides of the border have been protected in the U.S. and Mexico, but today there is no Big Bend International Park. Is an international park needed? Definitely yes; the park is only half there. It was never completed as originally planned.

The giant park would help both countries better address key issues such as protection of the largest tract of Chihuahuan Desert wilderness in North America, water and air quality, control of invasive species, and management of wildland fire. The park would become a permanent monument and symbol of peace between the U.S. and Mexico, one that would celebrate the friendship between the two countries and be a meeting ground where people of both countries and citizens from all parts of the world could come together to learn about one another's culture while better understanding the natural world that they all share.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt said it best in a letter to Mexican Camacho on Oct. 24, 1944: "I do not believe that this undertaking in the Big Bend (the establishment of a national park) will be complete until the entire park area in this region on



both sides of the Rio Grande forms one great international park."

On July 29, 2009, Congressman Ciro Rodriguez of Texas introduced House Resolution 695 — "supporting an international park between Big Bend National Park in the United States and the protected areas of the Coahuila and Chihuahua States across the border in Mexico." In 2013 at a meeting with El Paso County Judge Veronica Escobar, Sen. John Cronyn's staff offered a glimmer of hope of getting the senator's support. That same year I met with Congressman Beto O'Rourke and his staff, and he is willing to help in any way he can. What this effort needs is a national organization with political strength like the Sierra Club to make it a priority.

A new website recently launched by

Forgotten Frontiers LLC (forgottenfrontiers.com), an independent group of researchers and media specialists, uncovers 30 years of lost history and the true story behind efforts to create what the *New York Times* in 1936 called the last great wilderness of Texas. The website's information, combined with the timeline on the Friends of the Proposed Big Bend-Rio Bravo International Park site at [iloveparks.com/peaceparks](http://iloveparks.com/peaceparks), reveals over 83 years of U.S./Mexico conservation history.

I have always believed that if the international park was in place today, so many of the problems we have on the U.S.-Mexico border with the border wall, illegal immigration, wildlife conservation, and socioeconomic problems would not be as intense. Now is the time for one great international park to finally be established.

## El Paso, naturally

*El Paso Group Executive Committee member Jim Tolbert writes a great local blog at [elpasonaturally.com](http://elpasonaturally.com). Here are excerpts from a few recent posts:*

### The Asphalt-Industrial Machine

I missed something the other day. I was so happy to see that the connectivity project for the Franklin Mountains State Park (the access and animal corridor to Tom Mays) was still a "GO" that I overlooked the rest of the report. The rest can be summarized easily: miles and miles and miles of concrete and asphalt.

Project after project widens freeways and highways and spurs. Project after project eats up more land. There is no mention by the Texas Department of Transportation of mixed-used roads. There is no mention of narrowing roads and reducing speed limits to make livable, walkable places, promote communities and neighborhoods and health.

Please read a Better Cities & Towns blog post by Robert Steuteville: They paved paradise, put up a parking lot . . . "Big Asphalt" has compromised our health, safety, and welfare — but we can defeat it if we try.

He's right.

### Torchlight set to drill test well

In spite of plummeting oil prices, fracking may be coming soon next to El Paso in Hudspeth County. Torchlight Energy Resources is set to drill a test well on March 28. They must commence drilling as a term of their lease with the University of Texas that owns the land. In time it could mean drilling 2,500 fracking wells, marring the sensitive Diablo Plateau.

### El Paso Group Executive Committee

[elpasosierraclub.org](http://elpasosierraclub.org)

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Jim Tolbert, Vice-Chair  
525-7364 [diegotolbert@gmail.com](mailto:diegotolbert@gmail.com)

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Kathy Sunday, Treasurer  
5849301 [sundayt@zianet.com](mailto:sundayt@zianet.com)

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Liz Walsh, 342-7630 [ewalsh@utep.edu](mailto:ewalsh@utep.edu)

John Walton, 539-5797  
[walton@utep.edu](mailto:walton@utep.edu)



# Hikes and Events, continued from Page 16

the Rio Grande and the newly cleaned-up Buckman-area landscape. Norma McCallan, 505-471-0005.

**Sunday, April 26: Tour Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks** National Monument, Doña Ana Mountains. Explore East side of the Doña Ana Mountains, the smallest piece of the new Monument but one of the most spectacular. Moderate-difficulty hike on both off-trail and on-trail segments looking for great views. No more than 4 miles, 800-foot elevation gain. Sturdy hiking shoes, lots of water. Paul Pierce, 505 670-7653.

## May

**Saturday, May 2: Easy hike to Glorieta Ghost Town**, about 7 miles and 950-foot gain. Marcia Skillman, (505) 699-3008, marciaskillman@hotmail.com.

**Saturday May 2: GPS class** — Introduction to field use of a hand-held GPS; will cover basic navigation techniques, including use of trip computer, waypoints, saving routes and other navigation tools. Maximum participants 10; GPS units will be provided. Meet at 10 a.m. at Open Space Visitor Center parking lot, 6500 Coors Blvd. To reserve space, email John: gjuanito@hotmail.com. Provide email, cell and home phone.

**Sunday, May 3: Easy hike** along the route of the old Chile Line Railroad from Embudo station. About 5 miles. Alan Shapiro, (505) 424-9242 Nm5s@yahoo.com

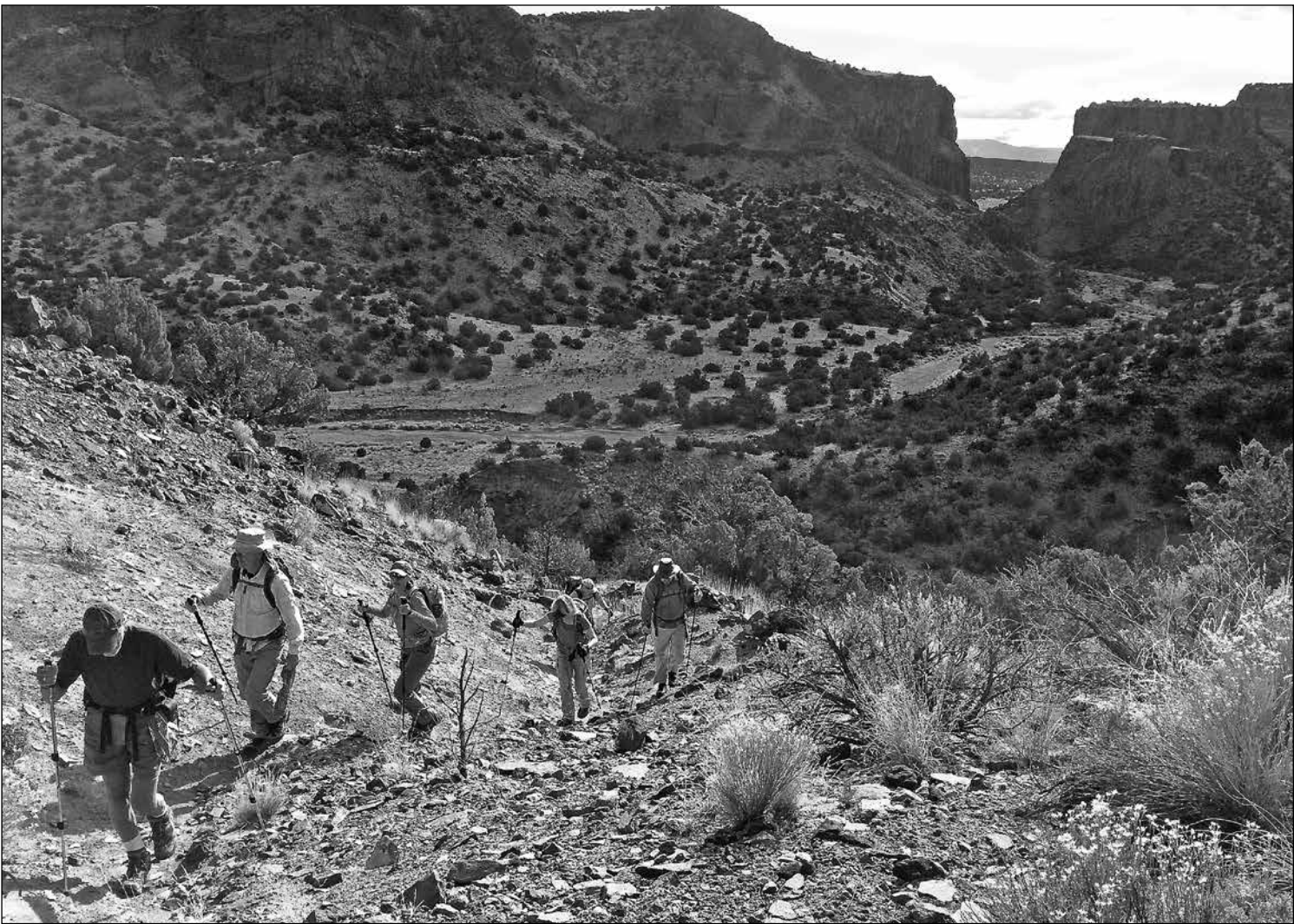
**Sunday May 3: Walk between the narrow tall canyon walls of Monticello Box** and down the Alamosa Creek fed by the historic Warm Springs. The trees will be leafing out and spring migrating birds will be in among them. Wear shoes or rubber boots that can get fully soaked (not sandals; the gravel at stream bottom is too sharp.). The water is shallow; there is no avoiding wet feet. Bring binoculars, camera, sunscreen and lunch for a stroll down the stream about 2 miles and then 2 miles back out. Have dry shoes and socks for the drive home. Meet in Winston across from the store on Highway 52. High-clearance vehicles needed to reach the trail head. Space limited. Mary Katherine Ray at 575-772-5655.

**Saturday, May 9: Easy hike around White Rock**, 6.5 miles with great views, petroglyphs and a lava tube. Alan Shapiro, (505) 424-9242 Nm5s@yahoo.com.

**Saturday May 9: South Peak strenuous hike** up Embudito trail. Last part to summit steep and rocky. Total distance 11 miles, elevation gain 4,000 feet. Odile de la Beaujardiere, Odile.dlb@outlook.com, 505-433-4692. Provide email, cell and home phone.

**Saturday, May 9: Moderate hike on Frijoles Rim Trail** in Bandelier, 9 miles, 1,200-foot gain. Good views and archaeological sites. Bring NPS pass if you have one. Daisy Levine, 505-466-8338.

**Sunday, May 10: Moderate hike to Otowi Mesa** near Los Alamos, 5 to 6 miles along mesa top, narrow at times. Some rock scrambling. 500 feet of elevation gain. Great 360-degree views. Michael Goldey, (505) 820-7302,



Aku Oppenheimer

Hikers make their way through Diablo Canyon on a sunny March day.

## Get into outings:

Tobin Oruch, Outings co-chair for the Northern New Mexico Group, has an excellent weekly e-mail on outings, Sierra Trail Mix.

It provides information on outings plus useful outdoor information such as trail conditions.

Send an email to Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org with any subject and a message that says SUBSCRIBE RIO-NORTH-OUTINGS.

m.goldey@mindspring.com.

**Wednesday, May 13: Second-Wednesday evening hike** experiment continues. Moderate/strenuous hike with a reasonably fast pace. We'll meet in town at 5 p.m. and be off the trail by dark (8:20 p.m.). Maybe Big T/FR 102 loop, but maximum of 6 miles and 1,100-foot gain. Two-three dogs OK. Tobin Oruch, (505) 690-6253, tobin.oruch@yahoo.com.

**Saturday, May 16: Strenuous hike to North Sandia Peak.** Starting at Tunnel Spring trailhead, we will hike to North Sandia Peak via the Del Orno Trail (Tr. 130B) and North Crest Trail (Tr. 130). Our return will be via the 10K Trail (Tr. 200), Osha Loop Trail (Tr. 201), and Osha Spring Trail (Tr. 247). We will need to set up a short car shuttle before starting the hike. Early start. Two or three dogs OK. About 14 miles and 4,000-foot elevation gain. Larry, lorenz.hughes@gmail.com, (505) 913-0589.

**Saturday, May 16: 9-11 a.m. Santa Fe River Cleanup.** Meet at Closson Street Footbridge by 9 a.m. Bring work gloves. Rubber boots helpful if recent rains. Leader will supply trash bags. Contact leader if attending. Kathleen Davis, (505) 795-3286, kdav40@gmail.com.

**Sunday, May 17: Elena Gallegos easy walk** in Elena Gallegos Park.

Total distance 3.8 miles around a loop, can be interrupted at any time for shorter distance. Stay for picnic after the walk. Odile de la Beaujardiere, Odile.dlb@outlook.com, 505 433 4692, provide email and cell and home phone.

**Saturday, May 30: Easy to moderate loop hike** with steep sections from Aspen Vista up to Carl's Meadow, up to the ski lift and around back down to the road. Looks like about 3.5 miles and 1,100 feet of gain. Lisa Bowdey, (505) 699-2953.

**Saturday, May 30: Moderate to strenuous hike to Deception Peak** 12,320 feet via Ravens Ridge. About 6 miles with 2,000-foot elevation gain. Dogs OK. Royal Drews 505-699-8713

**Saturday, May 30: Strenuous hike to Caballo Peak**, pending the outcome of a determined scouting excursion, or similar destination along the Valles Caldera rim. Strenuous in either case, especially if through areas burned by the Las Conchas fire. Michael Di Rosa, mddbbs@gmail, 505-667-0095 (weekdays), 505-231-9629 (evenings).

## June

**Saturday, June 6: Strenuous hike to South Sandia Peak.** 9-mile round-trip route via the CCC trail makes it shorter, but steeper. Beautiful high meadows and great views. Alan Shapiro, (505) 424-9242 Nm5s@yahoo.com

**Saturday June 6:** Strenuous four-peak hike. Starting at Big Tesuque Campground, we will hike to Tesuque Peak, continue on to Deception, Lake, and Penitente. Return via Puerto Nambe and the Winsor trail. Early start. Two or three dogs OK. About 15 miles and 3,700-foot elevation gain. Larry, lorenz.hughes@gmail.com, (505) 913-0589.

**Sunday, June 7: Moderate hike to Cerro Grande** overlooking the Valdes Caldera outside Los Alamos.

About 4 miles, 1,300-foot elevation gain, 90-mile RT drive, Michael Goldey, (505) 820-7302, m.goldey@mindspring.com.

**Wednesday, June 10: Moderate/strenuous hike** with a reasonably fast pace. We'll meet in town at 5 p.m., carpool if necessary, and be off the trail by dark (8:45 p.m.). Maybe Big T/Carl's Meadow loop, but maximum of 6 miles and 1,100-foot gain. Two-three dogs OK. Tobin Oruch, (505) 690-6253, tobin.oruch@yahoo.com.

**Saturday, June 13-Monday, June 15: Colorado high** without the newly legal stuff. Redcloud 14,034 feet and Sunshine 14,001 feet. About 12 miles with 4,800-foot elevation gain. Travel to via Lake City with possible return via Silverton. Royal Drews (505) 699-8713.

**Saturday, June 13: Easy hike to the eagle traps in Bandelier** National Monument backcountry. About 4.5 miles round-trip offtrail as we locate two old Indian eagle traps. Alan Shapiro, (505) 424-9242 Nm5s@yahoo.com.

**Saturday, June 20: 9-11 a.m. Santa Fe River Cleanup.** Meet at Closson Street Footbridge by 9 a.m. Bring work gloves. Rubber boots helpful if recent rains. Leader will supply trash bags. Contact leader if attending. Kathleen Davis, (505) 795-3286, kdav40@gmail.com

**Sunday, June 21, Moderate/strenuous hike from Jacks Creek to Dockweiler**, 10 miles, 1,600-foot gain, with car-shuttle. Daisy Levine, (505) 466-8338.

**Saturday, June 27: Strenuous hike to North Truchas Peak** by way of Rio San Leonardo and Lakes, a walk in greenery and blooming columbines before ascending "Sheep's Head" ridge for a view of Hades below. About 11 miles total with a net climb of 4,000-plus feet, mostly off trail with scree scrambling. Michael Di Rosa, mddbbs@gmail, 505-667-0095 (weekdays), (505) 231-9629 (evenings).





Dave Gabel

**A half-dozen people joined outings leader Tobin Oruch for a cross-country romp to Nambé Lake in March. The Rio Grande Chapter offers outings of all levels — easy, moderate and strenuous — and lists difficulty level in the descriptions. Check out the great variety of free, expert-led adventures available on Pages 15 and 16!**

# Hikes & Events for April-May-June

## April

**Saturday, April 4:**  
**Moderate hike on Black Mesa** near Ojo Caliente, about 8 miles, 800-foot elevation gain, mostly offtrail with a scramble on loose rock and boulders to the mesa top. Great scenery and petroglyphs. Daisy Levine, (505) 466-8338.

**Sunday, April 5:**  
**Moderate bike/hike to Cerro Colorado** peak above Ojo Caliente. About 9-mile round-trip with about half by mountain bike on 4-wheel-drive road. The hike's last half-mile is off-trail and steep. Alan Shapiro, (505) 424-9242 Nm5s@yahoo.com.

**Wednesday, April 8:**  
**Moderate/strenuous evening hike.** We'll meet in town at 5 p.m., carpool if necessary, and be off the trail by dark (7:50 p.m.) with a reasonably fast pace. If Atalaya, would be 7 miles and 1,700-foot gain. Two-three dogs OK. Tobin Oruch, (505) 690-6253, tobin.oruch@yahoo.com.

**Saturday, April 11:**  
**Easy/moderate hike in Bandelier** to ruins on mesa, maybe 5 miles and 500-foot gain, some off-trail, starting from Visitors Center

(bring park pass if you have one). Marcia Skillman, (505) 699-3008, marciaskillman@hotmail.com.

**Saturday, April 11: GPS class** — Introduction to field use of a hand-held GPS, class will cover basic navigation techniques including use of the trip computer, using waypoints, saving routes and other navigation tools. Maximum participants 10; GPS units will be provided. No dogs. Meet 10 a.m. at Open Space Visitor Center, 6500 Coors Blvd., parking lot. To reserve space, email John: gjuanito@hotmail.com. Provide email as well as cell and home phone.

**Sunday, April 12:**  
**Moderate hike up Tetilla Peak** via a short route of 3 miles, some steep and all off-trail. Alan Shapiro, (505) 424-9242 Nm5s@yahoo.com.

**Sunday April 12: Ojito** — Explore the hoodoos in the new Ojito wilderness. Total miles 5.5. Part of the hike is off-trail, up or down steep slopes over short segments. Dogs OK (2 total). Meet at 9 in Albuquerque or 10:15 at the trail head. Odile de la Beaujardiere, Odile.dlb@outlook.com, 505-433-4692,

## Remember

**Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter outings are free and open to the public.** Level of difficulty is listed in hike descriptions. All mileages 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, unfavorable conditions, or insufficient number of participants. Unaccompanied minors need written permission from a parent or guardian. Ask leader for form. Dogs permitted only if so noted in write-up.

**Always contact leader before the outing to confirm participation and details.** Please see riograndesierraclub.org/outings for the most up-to-date information and new hikes.

**To receive Tobin Oruch's weekly e-mail** with updated outings information, send an email to Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org with any subject and a message that says SUBSCRIBE RIO-NORTH-OUTINGS.

provide email, cell and home phone.

**Saturday, April 18:**  
**Strenuous loop hike** in the Caja del Rio, including Montoso Peak, Montoso Mar, and a several-mile stretch along the Rio Grande. Route covers 12 miles and an elevation gain of 2,000 feet, many off-trail sections, some rock scrambling. Michael Di Rosa, mddb@comcast.net, 505-667-0095 (weekdays), 505-231-9629 (evenings).

**Saturday, April 18,**

**9-11 a.m. Santa Fe River Cleanup.** Meet at Closson Street Footbridge by 9 a.m. Bring work gloves. Rubber boots helpful if recent rains. Leader will supply trash bags. Contact leader if attending. Greg Lower, 505-699-6893 or glower@lanl.gov

**Sunday, April 19: Easy to moderate hike to Kitchen Mesa** at Ghost Ranch. About 4.5 miles with 600-foot elevation gain and short slot scramble. Slot-climbing canines

welcome. Quiet time for meditation at top. Optional Box Canyon spur adds 2-3 miles. Royal Drews, (505) 699-8713.

**Sunday, April 19: Tour Organ Mountains Desert Peaks** National Monument, Soledad/Bar Canyon. Easy to moderate three-mile loop in the Organ Mountains. The Bar Canyon Trail includes scenic vistas of the central Organ Mountains and the southern Mesilla Valley. Howie Dash, 575-652-7550, howiedash@aol.com.

**Saturday, April 25:**  
**Strenuous loop hike to Yapashi Pueblo** and Stone Lions in Bandelier. Starting at the visitors center, we will take the usual route to Yapashi and Stone Lions, but return via the Upper Alamo Canyon trail crossing and the Frijoles Rim trail. Early start. About 15 miles and 2,300-foot elevation gain. Larry, lorenz.hughes@gmail.com, (505) 913-0589

**Sunday, April 26: Work trip cleaning up brushy vegetation** along the short section of the old Chile Line Railroad at the foot of Buckman Road with Alan Hamilton. Enjoy the views of

**Continued on Page 15**

**April/May/June 2015**