

We say to the President, the Congress, the oil industry, and the auto companies that it is time to...

Kick the Oil Habit

We realize that American lives, the stability of our climate, economic security, and the preservation of our environment are worth a major national commitment to energy efficiency and secure, renewable resources. As consumers and as citizens, we urge the Congress and the President to:

- ESTABLISH aggressive programs to improve the energy efficiency of the nation's buildings, utilities, and appliances.
- MOVE towards an economy based on safe, clean and renewable energy sources like solar power and wind—not nuclear.
- REQUIRE automobiles to average 45 mpg by the year 2000.
- PROTECT our natural crown jewels, such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and our fragile coastal areas, from destructive oil and gas drilling.

1. Signature _____ Print Name _____

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Rio Grande Chapter
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 3705, UPB
Las Cruces, NM 88003

THE PROBLEM: President Bush's National Energy Strategy mounts an all out assault on the environment and continues this nation's march down the wrong path to solving our energy problems.

THE SOLUTION: A host of energy bills have been introduced in Congress. Your Senators and Representatives need to reject the President's energy proposal and support bills that would truly free America from the severe environmental, economic and political costs of oil dependency.

THE CHALLENGE: Your commitment to collect a mere 5 signatures (or whatever you can do!) will help the Sierra Club demonstrate public demand for more fuel efficient cars, the protection of our wildlands from destructive oil and gas drilling and aggressive programs to improve the energy efficiency of our nation's buildings, utilities, and appliances.

RETURN TO: Tear off this entire page and mail to "Kick the Oil Habit," Sierra Club, 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 (415) 776-2211. DON'T DELAY! One does not have to be a registered voter to sign. Results of the petition drive will be announced at a major press event in Washington, D.C.

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the rio grande SIERRA

NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB • SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1991 • \$1.00

Message from the Chair

When I was elected Chair of the Rio Grande Chapter, I began encouraging the chapter Executive Committee to focus on a major conservation campaign instead of using all its resources in reacting to a variety of environmental threats. I felt that our efforts as a Chapter had been reduced to supplying small amounts of funds for the conservation project of our own—or more often—other groups to the extent that the Rio Grande Chapter is viewed as a "foundation" instead of a grassroots membership organization. After discussing this issue for several meetings, the Chapter Executive committee voted to mount a major campaign in support of reform of the 1872 Mining Law.

We have hired Bob Salter, a veteran conservation activist from Santa Fe, to plan and initiate this campaign which begins with the following call to action.

—Gwen Wardwell

A Call to Action

SIERRA CLUB VOLUNTEERS ARE needed who have the will and the time to become community organizers and activists in the campaign to reform the 1872 Mining Law and counteract the organized lies of industry front groups that oppose reform (see article on page 7.)

The support of other Club members and interested parties is also urgently needed for attendance at Congressional field hearings and other public gatherings in regard to this issue. Passive concern will not longer suffice in response to the highly successful and well-funded efforts of the extractive interests and their land management agency allies.

Any support for the conservation movement that may have existed in rural western communities is rapidly being eroded by industry supported organizers using the same tactics developed in the civil rights struggle and the peace movement and inherited by the reawakening environmental

movement twenty years ago.

Only by employing the concerted will and energy of volunteer conservation activists can we hope to reclaim the hearts and minds of the Americans who live closest to the wild lands we have long worked to preserve.

Ranchers, farmers of irrigated lands, and small communities dependent on water resources from the public lands have a common interest with the greater conservation community in preserving the headwaters of western streams.

We must act now to turn the tide of reactionary response in the rural west or much that we have struggled for and hold dear will be lost forever.

Your will and personal energy can make the difference!!

Interested persons should contact Gwen Wardwell in Santa Fe at (505) 473-9664 or Ted Mertig in El Paso at (915) 852-3011.

Sierra Club files Lawsuit Over Trade Negotiations

WASHINGTON, D.C. The Sierra Club filed a lawsuit in August against the office of the United States Trade Representative for failing to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in trade negotiations. Under the Act, U.S. agencies are required to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) which are detailed assessments of impact on the environment before major actions are taken.

"It is disappointing that the U.S. Trade Negotiator has not chosen to recognize the wisdom of this law. The U.S. Trade

office has not prepared Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) on proposed trade agreements with Mexico, Canada and proposals under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade," said Michael McCloskey, Chairman of the Sierra Club.

The Trade office is preparing what it calls an "environmental review" on the proposed agreement with Mexico. But environmentalists and consumer groups believe the review falls far short of what is required and is now demanding compliance

(Continued on page 22)

Inside: Awards • People for the West • Nuclear Blast in Carson NF • Wolf Update

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The Rio Grande Sierran is published every other month by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club. Sierra Club members residing within the Chapter receive a subscription as part of their membership dues. Address changes should be directed to The Sierra Club, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109. Subscriptions for non-members is \$8 per year. Send payment and address corrections to Rio Grande Sierran, Star Route Box 26 Mesilla Park, NM 88047.

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LETTERS

Friends of the Petroglyphs Not Obstructionists

Dear Editor:

The letter by Earl Hobbs about the Friends of the Albuquerque Petroglyphs (FOTAP) in your June/July 1991 issue is so filled with misinformation that it demands a strong rebuttal.

FICTION: Mr. Hobbs says that "some archaeologists and historians" have said that the petroglyphs are suitable for extensive preservation while "others of equal reputation and qualification say no."

FACT: The fact of the matter is that not a single archaeologist or historian that I know of has ever suggested the petroglyphs were unworthy of preservation. *Not one.* I know this because I am in frequent contact with the professional archaeological and historical communities. I invite Mr. Hobbs to provide the name(s) of his so-called expert(s) so that all of us can evaluate their "reputation and qualification." (Mr. Hobbs apparently believes that many of the petroglyphs were made by Boy Scouts, another piece of totally ridiculous and erroneous fiction.)

FICTION: Mr. Hobbs says that FOTAP has "consistently argued against every planned development on the Westside that could possibly impact the Monument."

FACT: FOTAP has consistently argued for controlled, quality growth all across the Westside. Several hundred new homes have been built and related development projects have occurred without any objection from FOTAP because their impacts on the Monument were minimal. Mr. Hobbs can be assured, however, that if a project does threaten the Monument directly FOTAP will do what it can to ensure the highest quality and lowest level of impact (Unser Blvd, Paseo del Norte, and Double Eagle II Airport come to mind). To state that FOTAP is a cover for the "complete obstruction of any meaningful development on the Westside or the West Mesa" is a total falsehood. Just look at how much growth has occurred on the West Side since FOTAP was formed in 1986 to get the real story on whether it is not "trustworthy" or "obstructionist."

FICTION: Mr. Hobbs supports his "obstructionism" charge by saying that FOTAP has argued against plans for Vulcan Blvd, Rainbow Blvd, Montano Bridge, Dellyne,

and Paradise Blvd.

FACT: FOTAP has never submitted any negative comments about plans for any of the roads Mr. Hobbs mentions. In particular, FOTAP has never spoken out, pro or con, about Montano Bridge. FOTAP has actually supported the expansion of some facilities if they can act as relievers for the choking traffic and sometimes exaggerated demand for other road facilities. FOTAP has encouraged the examination of systemwide transportation planning (as opposed to piecemeal single project planning) and it supports the development of alternatives such as paratransit and ride-sharing to reduce dependency on the single-occupant vehicle.

Finally, I would like to offer a suggestion to Mr. Hobbs and others like him. Get educated. Become informed. Listen and learn before you go off perpetuating misinformation and reducing the importance of Petroglyph National Monument and planning on the West Side to a name-calling contest. In the mean time, I would expect that the Sierra Club, FOTAP, and at least a dozen other groups will continue to try to strive for rational growth and to try to spread around a lot more knowledge and a lot less hysteria.

Matthew F. Schmader
Albuquerque

"Jobs vs. Environment" a Spurious Argument

Dear Editor:

The last few months have seen a series of potshots at environmentalists for "their responsibility" for eliminating jobs in the forest industry (northern Spotted Owl) and others such as mining (asking for mining law reform), oil and gas industry (asking for a national energy policy that stresses efficiency and renewables), manufacturing (asking for environmental concerns to be addressed in free trade agreements and foreign lending and aid policies).

Economic concerns are cited in the backlash. Industrial and manufacturing groups stress the increased costs to the end consumer of their products if the environmentalists have their way.

What they really want to say is that they

George Grossman Wins National Sierra Club Award

George Grossman of Santa Fe has been honored by the Sierra Club as one of 100 Environmental Heroes across the nation. Grossman is the Rio Grande Chapter's Co-conservation chair, and a longtime member of the Sierra Club. He received the award in recognition of his efforts for the last 20 years to protect New Mexico's wilderness.

"If you don't have wilderness, you don't have a real western experience," says Grossman. "There's a real urgency to protect these lands before their character is destroyed. So much of the country is being developed; some of its needs to be preserved."

Much of New Mexico's wildlands are unprotected and threatened by potential development. The BLM recommends preserving less than a million acres of its vast holdings statewide, while Grossman and members of the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter have proposed a wilderness bill that will protect 2.3 million acres.

As part of the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition, Grossman and his fellow activists have been educating the public on the importance of preserving these natural areas. The Sierra Club helped fund and assemble *Wildlands*, a book on New Mexico's wilderness. Coalition members held meetings to explain and promote an Adopt-a-Wilderness program that encourages people to adopt a wilderness study area to watch over and ensure that no illegal development occurs before it is considered for wilderness designation.

Grossman's efforts also extend to the political arena, where he has worked on state and federal campaigns to get New Mexico's pro-wilderness candidates elected.

DEADLINE
for Nov./Dec. Sierran
is Oct. 15, 1991.

Nominees Sought for Rio Grande Chapter Awards

The Awards Committee of the Chapter Executive Committee is now soliciting nominations for awards. The awards program offers the opportunity to give chapter-wide recognition to exceptional achievements.

The Executive Committee has established the following awards. Any member of the chapter may nominate someone for an award. The number in parentheses indicate the number of each award to be given.

Environmentalist of the Year (1): Member who has shown dynamic leadership and competence in furthering the preservation of the environment. (May be awarded for general contributions or for more specific issues.)

Special Achievement Award (1 or 2): Honors a special service or accomplishment by a member, committee, regional group, or combination.

Excellence in Support of the Rio Grande Chapter (1, maybe 2): Member who has demonstrated professional competence in performance of support activities of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club. (Such as recruitment, fund raising, finance-treasurer, organization, newsletter editing, media work, etc.)

Public Service Award of the Rio Grande Chapter (1): Member who has made material contributions to the public awareness of the Sierra Club and of the issues of concern to the Club.

Outings Leadership Award (1): Member responsible for innovative and dynamic leadership and excellence in organizing and administering the outings program of the club. (Nominated principally from regional groups.)

The names of all nominees will be forwarded to the Chapter chairperson along with the Awards Committee's recommendations. The Chapter chairperson will make the final selection and announce the winners at the chapter retreat.

Nominations should include the name and address of the nominee, the award for which the person is being nominated, the accomplishments / services which qualify the nominee for the Chapter award and any other supporting materials that may be pertinent.

Nominations should be sent to the chairman of Awards Committee: Dan Jones, 1209 Vista Dr., Socorro, NM 87801.

Letters

(continued)

fear the loss of jobs for their particular product or service due to an action taken in regard of our long term environmental health.

In the short term they are correct, supply becomes limited, prices usually increase, jobs are lost, and communities with sole source employment will lose. In the long term, the price increase will spur competition and the consumer will shift their purchasing power to substitutes that promote growth and jobs in a new area.

For example: a lot of old growth timber (home to the spotted owl) is used for load bearing (structural) lumber. This solid

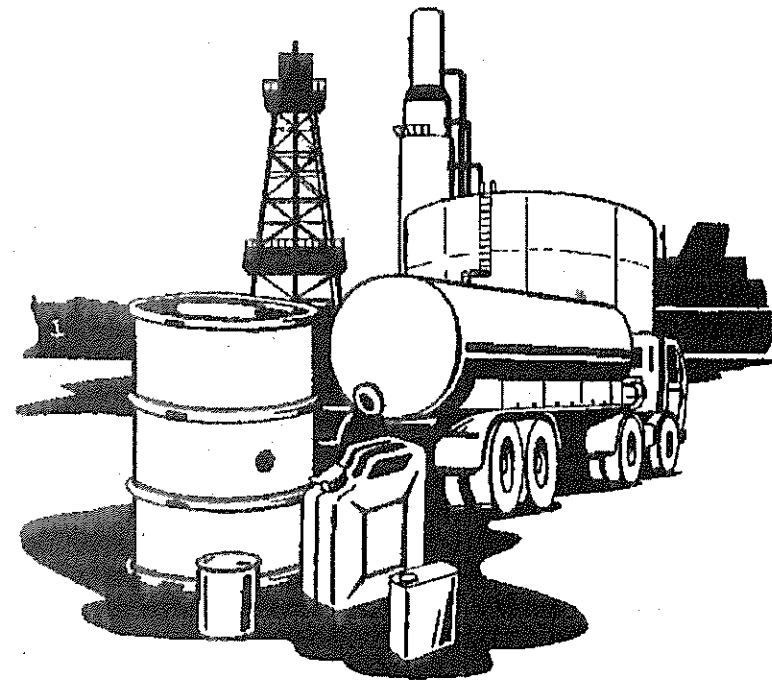
lumber used in floors and ceilings accounts for about 40 percent of the 19.7 billion board feet used per year (Wood Products Promotion Council and the US Forest Service). Replacement of I-Joists made from primarily plantation trees (a dimensional lumber substitute) for floors and ceilings will reduce this wood need by 25-30 percent. The plants that make them have started up in the last 10 years and run at only 50 percent capacity right now. (Tom Mock-Louisiana Pacific Wood Products Engineer)

They are a bit more expensive but they also reduce the need for an average of 1,100 nails per house due to the reduction in bracing that has to be installed to compensate for

(Continued on page 23)

Oil and Gas Wastes: Closing the Loophole

by Heidi Fleischmann



On July 25, 1991, more than 80 citizens' groups and national environmental organizations in 17 states and Washington, D.C., called upon Congress to end the oil industry's exemption from the nation's hazardous waste law and authorize the first-ever federal regulation of toxic oilfield waste - the largest category, by volume, of industrial waste generated annually in the United States.

Since 1980, because of an industry supported statutory provision sponsored by Senator Lloyd Bentsen (TX), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) has exempted oilfield waste from its "cradle to grave" requirements for management and disposal of hazardous wastes. RCRA is up for reauthorization in the Current (102nd) Congress and this gaping loophole for the wastes generated during the exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas is being targeted by grass roots citizens groups and national environmental organizations.

In a letter to members of the U.S. House of Representatives, these groups delineated the nightmare of oilfield waste and addressed its proper disposal.

Oilfield waste threatens human health and the environment because it contains dangerously high levels of benzene and other organic contaminants, radioactive isotopes (Radium 226 and 228), and heavy metals. Current methods of storing and disposing of oilfield wastes in unlined pits and other land disposal units have resulted in contamination of underground sources of drinking water, wetlands, and other sensitive ecological areas. Exposure to radioactive oilfield equipment, contaminated by contact with radium-laden brines that occur in certain oil formations, threatens the health of oilfield workers. Recent information from the state of

Mississippi and elsewhere indicates that school children are at risk, because radioactive oilfield equipment has been routinely sold and reused to build playground equipment and metal fences.

Oilfield waste has been responsible for widespread death of birds and other wildlife, including over 500,000 migratory birds in New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma, in 1989 alone. Particularly in arid regions, birds and wildlife are attracted to oilfield pits containing wastes they mistake for water.

Currently there are no federal requirements applicable to the treatment, storage, and disposal of oil and gas wastes. Some states have adopted limited requirements but minimum federal requirements are necessary to prevent further environmental damage and to protect human health and the environment.

A comprehensive RCRA program for oilfield wastes should address the three principal methods of disposal: discharges to surface sites, discharges to rivers and watercourses, and underground injection. Such a program minimally should:

- Lift the statutory exemption for the low-volume, high toxicity "associated wastes" and regulate those wastes as hazardous wastes;
- Ban storage or disposal of "produced water" (i.e., oily brine water) in pits, unless those pits have multiple liners, leak detection and collection systems, and underground water monitoring;
- Prohibit the storage or disposal of drilling fluids that exhibit a characteristic of hazardous waste in unlined surface impoundments or pits;
- Require EPA to adopt regulations governing the treatment, disposal and storage of radioactive oilfield wastes;
- Require EPA and the states to identify and remediate abandoned oilfield facilities, such as unplugged wells and abandoned pits;
- Require all pits and tanks to be enclosed or netted to protect wildlife from exposure to oilfield wastes;
- Prohibit discharges to rivers and water courses unless those discharges are subject to Clean Water Act permits that contain limits for the organic, radioactive, and salt-forming constituents of produced water; and
- Substantially strengthen existing regulations for underground injection of produced water and other oilfield wastes to prevent contamination of underground sources of drinking water.

What You Can Do

Write your Senators and Representatives and urge them to support stricter regulation of waste disposal by the oil and gas industry. Urge them to close the loophole in RCRA that allows for the unregulated disposal of oilfield wastes.

[Heidi Fleischmann is Chair of the Albuquerque Group of the Sierra Club. Material for this article was adapted from the Audubon Activist and materials of the National Citizens' Network on Oil and Gas Wastes.]

Environmental Groups File Lawsuit to Protect Goshawks, Biological Diversity

On August 12, environmentalists filed suit in U.S. District Court in Phoenix to require the U.S. Forest Service to protect biological diversity in six Southwestern national forests.

The lawsuit asks that approximately one quarter of the 3.5 million acres of commercial national forest timber lands in Arizona and New Mexico not be logged until a thorough environmental study can be completed on the impacts of logging on biological diversity. In addition, an injunction will be sought soon to immediately halt logging on 37 timber sales' areas, 24 in Arizona and 13 in New Mexico.

The lawsuit focuses on the northern goshawk, a wide-ranging forest raptor used by the Forest Service as an indicator of biological diversity in older Ponderosa pine forests. Research by a Forest Service goshawk expert has documented a precipitous decline in the goshawk population as a result of logging and fire suppression on the Kaibab National Forest in Arizona. Of the approximately 260 nesting pairs of goshawks found in 1940 on the Kaibab plateau, only 27 remain today. An Arizona Game and Fish survey found that these goshawks produced only 11 young last year.

The lawsuit alleges that the Forest Service has violated the requirements of the National Forest Management Act to provide for biological diversity on national forests. Several species of birds, salamanders, bats and plants which require older forests are also declining in population. The failure of the Forest Service to maintain healthy populations of all wildlife is also a violation of the National Forest Management Act.

The Forest Service plans to log over one-third of the remaining goshawk habitat in the Southwest in the Kaibab, Coconino, and Apache-Sitgreaves Na-

tional Forests in Arizona, and in the Gila, Santa Fe and Carson National Forests in New Mexico.

"This is a last-ditch effort to save the few remaining big pines left in the Southwest," said Sam Hitt, director of the Santa Fe-based Forest Guardians. "The biological diversity of a unique ecosystem hangs in the balance."

Environmentalists first wrote a letter in February 1990 asking the Forest Service to halt logging in the last of the older forests. Instead, the Forest Service convened a task force to make recommendations concerning logging in goshawk habitat. The two environmental representatives on the task force quit over the failure by the Forest Service to prepare an environmental impact statement.

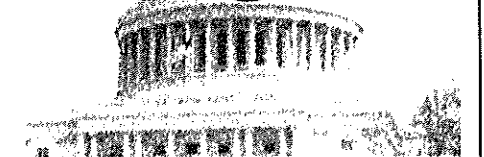
The goshawk is not listed under the Endangered Species Act. However, several environmental groups petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on July 12 for emergency listing of the Southwestern goshawk population. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has until October 12 to determine whether listing the goshawk in the Southwest is warranted.

This lawsuit will not likely affect the many small loggers in the Southwest because they don't generally utilize the larger trees needed for biological diversity and goshawk habitat.

The lawsuit was filed by attorneys with the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund on behalf of Forest Guardians, the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society and several local chapters of the Audubon Society.



Help Clean Up the Environment. Starting Here.



The 1992 elections present a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the way Congress deals with environmental issues. Redistricting could create at least 50 open House seats and far more contested races than usual. In January, 1993, there could be as many as 100 new faces in Congress.

For 100 years, Sierra Club members have been at the forefront of environmental action. When you join, you add your voice to a grass roots membership of over 650,000 members aggressively working on behalf of environmental candidates. Get involved. Help make a difference in Congress—and the world. Join us today!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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People for the West! Flexes Political Muscles

"Grassroots" Organization Bankrolled by Mining Industry

by Esteban Watson

•What group is hitting the streets with a petition drive reminiscent of that to remove Watt from office?

•What group has highly organized phone trees and gets huge turnouts at environmental hearings?

•What group can make the New Mexico delegation change course 180 degrees on environmental issues, due to sustained grass-root and media pressure?

If you smugly answered "the Sierra Club", not only were you wrong, you were probably caught in a 15 year time warp. The correct answer is "People for the West!"

"People for the West!" (PFW!) is a front group for the hardrock mining industry, which is desperately trying to hang on to its approximately \$880 million per year subsidy (according to the Mineral Policy Center) under the 1872 Mining Law. The implications for mischief by PFW! are much broader than merely thwarting reform of 1872, however.

In essence, the 1872 Mining Law allows any U.S. citizen who discovers a valuable hardrock mineral (gold, silver, copper, lead, pumice, etc.) on most public land the right to mine without having to pay any royalty and without adequate reclamation. On top of this injury is the insult that the miner is able to purchase clear title to the land for the princely sum of \$2.50 to \$5.00 per acre. The federal land agency has no choice but to allow the mining and/or sale (the Copar Pumice mine in the Jemez being a splendid local example.)

Such "third world" fiscal and environmental laxity is hard to get folks to rally around. In fact, a poll commissioned by the mining industry found that 82 percent of the respondents thought that miners should pay royalties and be forced to reclaim mining sites on federal land (*Insight Magazine*, June 10, 1991). The pollsters cautioned the industry not to carry on the debate in a public forum. Really!

When faced with such an untenable position, what

is the mining industry to do? Its response has been to go cynical in the extreme—to rely on Orwellian double-speak, exploitation and distortion. Of this strategy was born "People for the West!"

PFW! is funded to the tune of almost \$1 million, almost exclusively by mining companies, in an attempt to give a grassroots appearance to efforts by a corporate elite to hang on to its subsidy. This strategy seems unamazingly similar to several efforts by special interests to conjure up grassroots as described by Hedrick Smith in his book *The Power Game*. He describes them as having the same relationship to grassroots that "astroturf" does to grass. Very apt to PFW! as well.

When PFW! even mentions the mining law, it is often in the context of jobs lost and rural communities devastated because of impending reform. Even if such assertions were true, it is hugely ironic because this is the industry that has victimized (through pollution, union busting, unsafe working conditions, pay and benefit cuts, etc.) the same people that its surrogate is trying to organize. The truth of the matter is that proposed reform is not retroactive and that more jobs will be created through reclamation efforts, if the experience in the coal industry is any indicator.

Never mind the facts; placards at PFW! rallies equate paying royalties on mineral extracted and reclamation with "dictatorship", and free access to public resources as synonymous with the "strength of the family". Orwell was only off by a few years!

The only other context in which PFW! polemics elevate the 1872 Mining Law is to stress that it is the keystone of "multiple use". The message is that if the 1872 Mining Law is reformed, other uses of public lands—logging, grazing and ORVing—will be restricted or eliminated.

This is the heart of their strategy. The mining industry knows that there is no way its issue can stand alone. The only way that they can protect their prerogatives is to enlist the help of others who feel threatened or aggrieved, either by environmental

regulation, shifting values or economics. The industry is applying the ancient Mid-Eastern organizing strategy: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Those huddling under the PFW! umbrella can then scapegoat "anti-human" elitists, especially the Sierra Club, for myriad problems.

This is the industry that has victimized—through pollution, union busting, unsafe working conditions, pay and benefit cuts, etc.—the same people that People for the West! is trying to organize.

(To add to the "slag-heap" of ironies surrounding PFW!, the term "multiple-use" was first institutionalized in the "Multiple-Use, Sustained Yield Act" passed to try to end abusive logging practices on federal lands. This is indicative of its penchant to pervert symbols to its own ends.)

PFW! field tactics are vintage environmental and civil right movement. While the means may be grassroots, the ends certainly are not. In fact, the 1960s classic *Reveille for Radicals* by Saul Alinsky is very much in evidence on literature tables at conferences hosted by sister organizations. PFW! is even courting organized labor, minorities, city and county governments in rural areas where people are economically vulnerable, anxious and susceptible to its propaganda.

In spite of its Reagan-era cynicism, or maybe because of it, PFW! has been amazingly successful in getting the most environmentally responsible of our delegation to oppose raising grazing fees, oppose reform of the 1872 Mining Law, stall BLM Wilderness legislation, etc. Elsewhere in the West PFW! has been successful in shattering the vision of the greater Yellowstone Coalition.

PFW!'s actions at Congressional hearings on mining law reform in Santa Fe last May give a good overview of its modus operandi. PFW! claimed that it had 1,000 people present against reform. It was probably closer to 400 or 500. Not a bad representation, especially compared to the 50-60 environmentalists

present.

It turns out that many of the mining supporters were employees of Phelps-Dodge and MolyCorp bussed in by those companies from far corners of the state. Also, there were a goodly number of school kids bussed in from the Gallina School District to demonstrate and hold placards. (Amazingly enough, Gallina is the school district where former Land Commissioner, PFW! Field director, NMSU employee and potential U.S. Senate candidate, Bill Humphries, used to teach.)

The crowd in the hearing room heckled environmentalists and pro-reform witnesses, including every state official who testified. They turned in a performance worthy of the Earth First! of the right.

PFW! has been able to storm onto the scene largely because the environmental movement has created a vacuum by letting its grassroots atrophy. (As was pointed out in the June/July issue of the *Rio Grande Sierran*, 24 of each 25 Sierra Club dues dollars goes to San Francisco or D.C.) Increasingly environmentalists have not wanted to "get their hands dirty": going to town hall and county commission meetings, calling, courting the media and reaching out and building alliances with those who should

be our allies.

PFW! will probably metamorphose after the 1872 issue is resolved. How 1872 is resolved will be crucial to the direction of most environmental issues. If there is no significant reform, alliances on the anti-environmental right will coalesce with the Farm Bureau, the National Association of Realtors and others and press their advantage, going after the Endangered Species Act and wetland preservation, as well as issues just entering the stage.

Also, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to predict that if environmentalists don't creatively address the issues of environmentally sustainable economic activity, particularly in rural areas, the fears and anxieties partially fueling PFW! will be greatly elevated and exploited even more.

On the positive side, "People for the West!" could be the best thing that ever happened to the environmental movement, much better even than James Watt and the Sagebrush Rebellion. To quote G. Gordon Liddy, quoting the philosopher Nietzsche, "That which does not kill me, makes me stronger."

[Esteban Watson is a member of the Rio Grande Chapter.]

Western State Land Commissioners Call for Reform of 1872 Mining Law

HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK. The Western States Land Commissioners Association, representing 22 states, has announced its support for efforts to reform the 1872 Mining Law. In a resolution adopted by the group at its summer meeting in Hot Springs, the Association calls for fiscal and environmental reforms to the 119-year old law.

"As state land managers, we see the situation up close," said New Mexico's Jim Baca, the chairman of WSLCA's mining subcommittee. "We support mining, but right now these large companies are taking the public's minerals for nothing. That's bad for the taxpayer, and bad for the Western states, from both a fiscal and environmental point of view."

The WSLCA resolution criticizes current federal mining law, saying it "does

not provide for adequate environmental protection" and places state lands at a "competitive disadvantage". It calls on Congress to require mining companies to pay for development, and to guarantee a state share. In addition, the resolution urges reform which "does not establish the primacy of mineral extraction above all other potential uses of public land".

The action by the Western officials marks the first time it has gone on record in support of comprehensive mining law reform. "The time has come for Congress to take long-overdue action to reform this 1872 Law," Baca said. "We're just asking for a little common sense. Mining companies should pay for the minerals they take, and be required to clean up after themselves, just like anyone else."

Project Gasbuggy

Atomic Blast in the Carson National Forest

by Patricia Wolff

A few weeks ago I received a very strange telephone call. "Have you heard about the nuclear explosion in the Carson National Forest?" the caller asked.

At first I thought the man on the phone must be confused. I had certainly never heard of a nuclear explosion in the Carson National Forest, just one county away from Santa Fe.

The caller identified himself as Vernon Brechin. He said he was doing some research at a U.S. Geological Survey library in California and had some documents that might be of interest to me and others who were planning to hold a forest issues conference in the Carson. I asked him to send the documents and he did. The information he sent was fascinating and inspired further research.

An underground nuclear detonation code-named "Project Gasbuggy" did indeed occur in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico within the Jicarilla Ranger District of the Carson National Forest on December 10, 1967. Its sponsors were the El Paso Natural Gas Co., the U.S. Bureau of Mines, Lawrence Radiation Laboratory and the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (now known as the Department of Energy).

Project Gasbuggy was part of the Atomic Energy Commission's Operation Plowshare, a program that sought to harness nuclear explosives for peacetime uses. Numerous underground nuclear tests were conducted under the Plowshare name. Most took place in Nevada but others were conducted in New Mexico, Colorado, Alaska and Mississippi in the 1960s.

The Gasbuggy experiment was designed to liberate natural gas from an unyielding sandstone formation just half a mile from the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation. The nuclear explosion was supposed to create a massive network of cracks around the blast cavity so that the gas-bearing rock would release natural gas trapped within its pores.

The nuclear explosive, detonated at a depth of 4,240 feet, yielded an energy equivalent to 26,000 tons of TNT or about twice the energy of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima.

Public opposition to Project Gasbuggy, to the extent it existed, was not reported in the New Mexico press. On the contrary, press coverage of the experi-

ment was extremely positive and would be considered blatant boosterism by today's standards.

"BLAST GOOD FOR HUNTERS, FOREST SERVICE SAYS," was the headline in the November 7, 1967 *Albuquerque Tribune*. The article reported that the Forest Service was promising a better deer hunt next season, thanks to an eight-mile paved road constructed that would provide hunters greater accessibility to the Gasbuggy area.

A Forest Service official interviewed also said the blast would benefit ranchers grazing their cows there, since the land affected by the project would be reseeded, thus providing better forage.

The December 3, 1967 edition of *The New Mexican* reported that "[a]t Dulce, New Mexico, capitol of the Jicarilla Apache Indian Nation, the only apparent concern over an upcoming underground nuclear test is that it might cause another earthquake." An earthquake had hit the area in January 1966.

"A BANG-UP GASBUGGY TODAY COULD DOUBLE U.S. NATURAL GAS," proclaimed the headline in the Dec. 10, 1967 *New Mexican*. Two days

The nuclear explosive, detonated at a depth of 4,240 feet, yielded an energy equivalent to 26,000 tons of TNT or about twice the energy of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima.

later, an editorial heralded the Gasbuggy experiment as an historic event that "...holds promise for a new era of economic development in the United States."

"Knowledge gained from this experiment should establish the pattern for many new programs in the accelerated application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes," the editorial stated.

Project Gasbuggy was declared "highly successful" by atomic advocates of the day, but it also demonstrated a fatal flaw with nuclear-stimulated gas

production. The gas produced was radioactively contaminated with both tritium and krypton-85, according to a report published in the June 1970 issue of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*.

The Plowshare program spawned numerous government-industry plans to use nuclear explosives in civilian construction projects. Costs for many large mining and construction jobs could be reduced dramatically, the architects of these ambitious projects claimed, if nuclear dynamite was used.

One of the more preposterous proposals was advanced by physicist Edward Teller. Project Pacer, as it was called, would have involved the explosion of nuclear devices in an underground cavity partially filled with water in order to generate high pressure steam to run turbines to produce geothermal energy. The generation of 2000 megawatts of electricity under this scenario would have required two 50 kiloton nuclear explosions per day, according to a Los Alamos National Laboratory analysis of the proposal.

The promise of the Atomic Energy Commission's Plowshare program never was fulfilled. Instead, the program was phased out, due to a combination of budgetary, environmental and political factors.

The legacy of Project Gasbuggy and other Plowshare experiments is still with us today. Even though these tests have been forgotten by area residents, thousands of tons of plutonium-laden radioactive slag still resides at the test sites. The Environmental Protection Agency continues to monitor water samples at these test sites to determine if the radioactive contamination has migrated. A 1989 EPA Report on radiation monitoring at U.S. nuclear test sites claimed that..."Regardless of the finding of detectable amounts of radioactivity in some water samples, the exposure to the public is negligible."

After finding out what Project Gasbuggy was all about, I asked many others, including anti-nuclear activists, reporters and Los Alamos National Laboratory employees if they were familiar with the event. Ninety-nine percent had never heard of it.

Project Gasbuggy has been virtually erased from public consciousness after only 22 years, but the test site itself will be radioactive for thousands of years.

[Patricia Wolff is a freelance journalist and part-time employee of Forest Guardians, a Santa Fe environmental organization.]

Bombs or Power Plants—It's the Same Poison

Maurice Weisberg, M.D.

The problems of nuclear waste are inextricably tied to the production of nuclear bombs, and it is the public health consequences of this technology that make it unacceptable to the public.

No matter how efficiently the DOE reconfigures the bomb plants or how the design is changed, they can't change the laws of physics. These nuclear plants will continue to pile up astronomical quantities of Sr90, Cs137 and Pu239 for which we have no safe, permanent storage facility.

And while storage of these poisons are an important issue, it tends to obscure the more relevant matter of the loss of radioactive poisons into the environment during mining, milling, transportation, and fabrication of the uranium fuel.

The world's worst nuclear accidents were the 500 bombs exploded in the atmosphere over Nevada. Billions of curies of radioactive Iodine, Sr90, Cs137 and Pu239 were lofted into the atmosphere to descend later throughout the Northern Hemisphere to contaminate the crops, land, and water.

The big lie

The nuclear industry continues to dupe the public into believing it can safely dispose of the accumulating poisonous radioactive wastes. For 45 years we have had confident assertions and vague assurances from the DOE and the Nuclear Regulatory Committee (NRC) that radioactive waste problems will be solved, are about to be solved, could be solved if only the critics and the media were less emotional and less inclined to propaganda.

But the truth remains, as it always has, that there is no eternally safe, tested disposal system; and these wastes are a lethal threat to future generations and a public health menace.

Suppose that nuclear plants had been operating in Christ's time. Assume that their operation had stored the radioactive wastes in shielded drums. We would have been guarding these wastes for less than 1 percent

of the time that they need to be isolated from the environment.

Due to the absence of a permanent waste repository, the amount of highly toxic, long-lived radioactive waste being stored at the nation's plants has tripled since 1980.

Short term Effects—especially with accidents—are untold suffering from diseases such as leukemia.

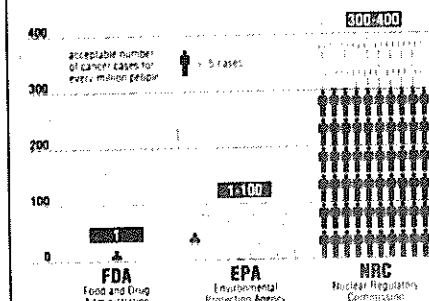
Long Term Effects—degradation of the genetic pool with mutations leading to premature aging, immune system alterations, heart disease, diabetes, and mental and physical disabilities.

You don't need a Ph.D. in physics to understand all the technical issues. In fact, the big debate is not about technology, but about the moral issues of long-term threats to public health and the environment, and of a military-industrial complex that contaminates our drinking water, our air, and our

(Continued on page 22)

Acceptable Risk?

Federal agencies often use the concept of "acceptable risk" to determine the permissible level of public exposure to a chemical or radioactive substance. But agency definitions of "acceptable risk" vary dramatically.



Source: Lave/Byrd, "How Much Risk Is Acceptable?" Forum for Applied Research and Public Policy, Chapel Hill, NC. Safe Energy Communication Council.

Sunland Park Residents Fight Medical Waste Incinerator

by Marianne Thaeler

There is an incinerator, owned by Nu-Mex JOAB Inc., located 1800 feet from the city limits of Sunland Park (a community of 8500 people in southern Dona Ana County.) The incinerator is situated 3000 feet from one school and 4400 feet from another. This incinerator now burns approximately 5 tons per day of hospital waste.

To comply with 1989 Solid Waste Management Regulations, Nu-Mex JOAB Inc. has applied for a permit from the New Mexico Environment Department to operate this incinerator, as well as a land fill for incinerator ash and a recycling operation.

At hearings held by the Environment Department in Sunland Park on August 15-18 and in Santa Fe on August 28-29, members of Concerned Citizens of Sunland Park Association testified that the stack emits smoke and foul odors that cause nausea. The neighbors testified their area "smells like burning plastic and burning meat."

Testimony was given that the emissions from the Nu-Mex JOAB Inc. stack have not been analyzed or monitored. Testimony was given based on analysis of "typical hospital waste." These analyses presumed the presence of cadmium, a heavy metal, found in batteries and disposal containers, i.e., red paper bags. Analysis also presumed the presence of hydrogen chloride and dioxins. The Environment Department's expert on incinerators, Gale Harnes, testified that the citizens living near the incinerator are at risk.

The application to operate a land fill was incomplete. There are insufficient test holes to analyze potential pollution of ground water. This area of Sunland Park is near the Rio Grande and has a high water table. It has been suggested that the land fill should be lined with clay or

plaster, although there are no guarantees these will prevent leaks.

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club's position is that the Environment Department should deny the application for both the incinerator and the land fill. If the permit is approved it should be for a duration of one year or less. There is no position on the recycle operation at this time.

The Rio Grande Chapter supports the Concerned Citizens of Sunland Park Association. Forty Concerned Citizens took time away from work (mostly farm labor), held local gordita sales, hired a bus, and slept in a church gymnasium in Santa Fe in order to attend and testify at the hearings in Santa Fe. The address for the Concerned Citizens of Sunland Park Assoc. is P. O. Box 753, Sunland Park, New Mexico 88063.

Also supporting the Sunland Park Concerned Citizens is the New Mexico Environment Law Center (attorney Doug Meiklejohn is representing the Concerned Citizens), the Southwest Research and Information Center, the Southwest Organizing Project, and the Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces.

A decision on these matters must be made by Judy Espinosa, Secretary for the Environment, by October 15, 1991.

If you agree with the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club's position against the Nu-Mex JOAB, Inc. application for a permit to operate the incinerator and the land fill at Sunland Park, feel free to write as an individual to the Governor, since hospitals may feel threatened. There are alternatives to incinerators: autoclave and microwave technologies are available.

[Marianne Thaeler is a member of the Sierra Club Southern New Mexico Group.]

Riparian Protection on Rio Bonito Needs Support

by Roger Peterson

Acquisition of 1400 acres along the Rio Bonito by the Bureau of Land Management is a project to praise and support. BLM plans to improve stream and streamside habitat, retaining for wildlife the water rights that have irrigated 300 acres of cultivated land.

The acreage—four parcels between BLM-managed Fort Stanton and the town of Lincoln—belongs to the Lincoln County Land Company. The company will receive in trade equally valuable parcels in Dona Ana and Valencia Counties and in Farmington.

The Roswell Resource Area of BLM issued a Management Framework Plan Amendment (available from the Bureau at 505-624-1790) to accommodate this trade and possible future opportunities to protect the river corridor. Little opposition developed during the comment period, keeping that land undeveloped and the water in the east-flowing watershed were attractive to most commenters. The usual strong "no" from the New Mexico Cattle Growers was withdrawn when some of its more prominent members expressed their interest in keeping water in the Rio.

But at a hearing in Carrizozo in early July, right-wing opposition succeeded in putting a hold on the transaction. The Lincoln County Commission voted to ask BLM to defer the deal until county concerns were addressed. Most concerns were from misinformation: displacement of residents, condemnation of property, and decrease in county income were false. But acquisition of land and especially of water rights by the feds are anathema to the New Mexico Land Use Alliance, People for the West, and Representative Joe

(Continued on page 23)



Unser Lawsuit Goes to Appeal

As this issue goes to print, the Sierra Club lawsuit challenging the design of Unser Boulevard as it would impact Petroglyph National Monument is headed for the State Court of Appeals. In a devastating judgment from the lower District Court, Judge Art Encinias had ruled that, not only didn't conservation groups have any standing to review the actions of the City, but the City had "done enough" on Unser and shouldn't be held to the impossible standard of "using all possible planning to minimize harm" to the National Monument.

Judge Encinias ruled that only the State Historic Preservation Officer had standing to challenge the City's construction of Unser under the NM Prehistoric and Historic Sites Preservation Act, and that since only City funds were used, no environmental impact laws or regulations applied.

This decision essentially gave the City, and all other local government entities, carte blanche authority to do as they please with the public's money, even when projects would damage values like Petroglyph National Monument of great public concern. Clearly, we need a mini-NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) here in New Mexico to close this giant, irrational loophole that allows local governments to simply separate project funding in order to avoid any judicial review of their project's environmental impacts.

The Judge also ruled that the City Council Resolution R-455 mandating that Unser be built as a four-lane parkway is unreviewable. Merely another Council Resolution is required to completely wipe out the four-lane parkway mitigation standards. In essence, the City can do whatever it wants with its Council Resolutions, even when they embody essential environmental mitigation measures allowing adoption of a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact).

We need a freight train of letters and phone calls to our State legislators demanding legislation to create a NM Environmental Quality Act which mimics NEPA. The loophole allowing our tax dollars to be used arbitrarily and capriciously to damage the environment we all hold precious must be closed by providing statutory judicial review of local government projects like Unser, regardless of whether Federal, State, or local monies are used.

But we also need to write Governor Bruce King and Attorney General Tom Udall urging their strongest support for a private right of action to enforce the NM Prehistoric and Historic Sites Preservation Act for the following reasons:

- It is politically unrealistic to expect that a State official subject to all kinds of pressures, including threats of budget cuts for his Department, can be the only person with standing to enforce the Sites Preservation Act. Albuquerque's West Side State Senator, Martin Chavez, succeeded during the last legislative session in cutting one staff position from the Historic Preservation Division in vindictive retaliation for enforcement of the Sites Preservation Act on the Montano Bridge issue, for example.

- Both the Sites Preservation Act and its implementing regulations specify that the law can be enforced through injunctive relief, and the regulations, which have the force of law, further specify that enforcement can be by private parties, i.e., conservation groups like the Sierra Club.

Mail your letters to the Governor and Attorney General to the State Capitol, Santa Fe, NM 87503. Switchboard phone is 984-9300.

Petroglyph Appropriation Needs Support

Different Senate and House of Representatives bills will need to go to conference committee when Congress reconvenes after Labor Day to decide on the 1992 Interior Department appropriations. In regards to Petroglyph National Monument funds for land acquisition, the House bill recommends only \$4 million, while the Senate is recommending the full amount requested by the administration, i.e., \$8 million. We need an avalanche of letters to our House representatives urging that they use their influence with the conference committee members to restore the full \$8 million for the following reasons:

The National Park Service now has a fully approved Land Protection Plan in hand which will permit them to swiftly proceed with appraisals, negotiations, and acquisition. House members voting to cut Petroglyphs' appropriation had expressed concern that \$3 million already appropriated from past years wasn't spent.

The value of land is rising since the Monument is squarely in the path of Albuquerque's most intense development pressures. Dribbling out the \$58 million needed for the Federal government's share of land acquisition is "penny wise and pound foolish."

Local government has already appropriated and spent more on land acquisition for the Monument than the Federal government: the City of Albuquerque has spent \$14 million from its quarter cent gross receipts tax, and the State has authorized issuance of \$3 million of its \$6 million commitment in severance tax bonds.

Letters should be directed especially to Rep. Bill Richardson, 332 Cannon Building, Washington, D.C. 20515, with copies to Rep. Steve Schiff, 1520 Longworth, Washington, D.C. 20515. Rep. Richardson's phone is 988-6177, and Rep. Schiff's is 766-2538.



Transportation Bill — an “Environmental Nightmare”

by Stefan Verchinski

The Surface Transportation Act, due to come up for a vote in Congress this fall, is an environmental nightmare and deserves membership phone calls and letters into your congressional offices. The primary reason is that the current bill as proposed HR 2950 asks for a new National Highway System, weakening of wilderness protections and vehicle trails on public lands.

The environmental elements we need to ask for in a new transportation vision are:

•**Preserve the Existing Infrastructure.** The present legislation on both the Senate and House side call for a doubling of the size of the Interstate Highway system. The New Vision should ask for rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure, which is falling apart. For example 60 percent of the urban land mileage and 23 percent of the nations bridges are in serious need of repair.

•**Reduce Urban Congestion.** Travel growth is expected to exceed 5 percent annually for urban areas and causes air pollution. The New Vision calls for High occupancy vehicle programs, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In New Mexico we need alternatives funded such as the Santa Fe to Albuquerque Rio Rail instead of a six lane I-25. In major city areas long term right of ways need to purchased and set aside.

•**Enhance National Energy Security.** Per capita gas use is nearly 4.5 times higher than in Europe with oil imports threatening our economy. Cheap oil and gas is underwritten in the tax laws here to \$14 billion dollars a year (As consumers we spent \$40 billion on oil and gas last year.) These subsidies need to be eliminated to spur conservation and fuel efficiency.

•**Protect the Environment.** Overreliance on autos and trucks undermine the quality of life in the U.S. Health losses alone now are estimates at as much as \$93 billion and crop losses of \$2-4 billion. Wetland losses due to highway construction are in the thousands of acres. Greater reliance upon alternatives is critical and should be allowed in city transportation plans. N.M. is 50th in the country in it's proportion of spending on transit vs. highways.

•**Improve Transportation Safety.** Reliance upon more roadways and more trucks pose safety threats to the nation estimated at 75,000 deaths per year by

2000. There must be a greater investment in alternative modes and elimination of policies that favor heavy trucks over freight railroads. In Albuquerque alone it is being proposed to open “for the public good” many current streets to heavy truck traffic including such routes as Tramway - with a long term view of being able to override such concerns as the proximity of Unser Blvd. to the new Petroglyph National Monument.

•**Curtail Auto and Truck Subsidies.** Our combined yearly outlays at the Federal, State and Local levels for structuring the transportation system around the auto is almost as large as the national debt—some \$300 billion dollars a year. Heavy trucks only pay 65 percent of their “fair share in user fees. We need a redirection of the Federal gas tax to mass transit, Amtrak, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, a billboard road user fee, and a weight-distance tax on trucks.

•**Create Livable Communities.** Uncontrolled sprawl and the flight for the suburbs is eating up open space by making it seem that costs of living further out is “cheaper” but when commuting costs and time are added, the end result is a diseconomy with millions of dollars flowing out of communities for fuel and losses in free time (43 percent less free time for avg. American commuting than what was available in 1973), and losses of local tax base (40 percent of an average downtown area in the U.S. is now paved over for roads, parking lots and alleyways. We need to “bank” urban open spaces, and abandoned rights of ways from railroads, conservancy districts, and other vital corridors for future use. We also need to strengthen the Highway Beautification Act to reduce visual blight from billboards.

What You Can Do

Please write and call your Senator and Congressman and ask for a written response as to what provisions of this legislation they support and what items they will ask for changes. This legislation will probably be voted on during September and will cause the greatest environmental damage to our urban areas if not changed and refocused.

[Stefan Verchinski is a member of the Albuquerque Group Sierra Club.]

Bush Reverses Earlier Pledge, Erases Wetland Protection

from the Sierra Club National News Report

Under pressure from Vice President Dan Quayle and White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, EPA Chief William Reilly agreed to a new definition of “wetlands” that could remove protection for millions of acres of critical wetlands habitat.

Environmentalists charge that by forcing this change in the manual that outlines the criteria for what can be defined and protected as a wetland, President Bush has gone back on his “no net loss” of wetlands campaign pledge.

“By simply changing the way wetlands are defined, the Bush administration has pulled the plug on federal protection for millions of acres of wetlands,” said Jerry Paulson, chair of the Sierra Club’s Wetlands Committee.

The original 1989 government manual on wetlands, developed for the Clean Water Act by an interagency task force of scientists, granted protection to lands saturated down to 12 inches for at least seven consecutive days a year. Though Reilly offered to raise the limit to 15 straight days of saturated soil at the surface, the White House pushed for a minimum of 21 days of surface saturation.

The compromise, offered by Quayle, settled on 15 straight days of standing water and 21 days of surface saturation. Conservationists say this new definition is short-sighted and unfair.

“If we’re not sure an area is a wetland and performs wetland functions, then we’ll say it’s not a wetland and allow it to be destroyed without any consideration or study,” said Kathy Gregg, chair of the Sierra Club’s Regional Vice Presidents forum. “Better to protect areas that we think are performing important wetlands function until we are sure that they aren’t.”

The proposed definition will now go into the federal register for public comment. If approved,

millions of acres of land that are dry most of the year will be left unprotected, including bottom-land swamps, wet meadows, vernal pools, and seasonal freshwater marshes.

All of these areas serve as critical breeding and staging habitat for many species of waterfowl and, Gregg points out, research has shown that intermittently flooded wetlands make up the first line of defense for water supplies against polluted runoff, pesticides, and sediment.

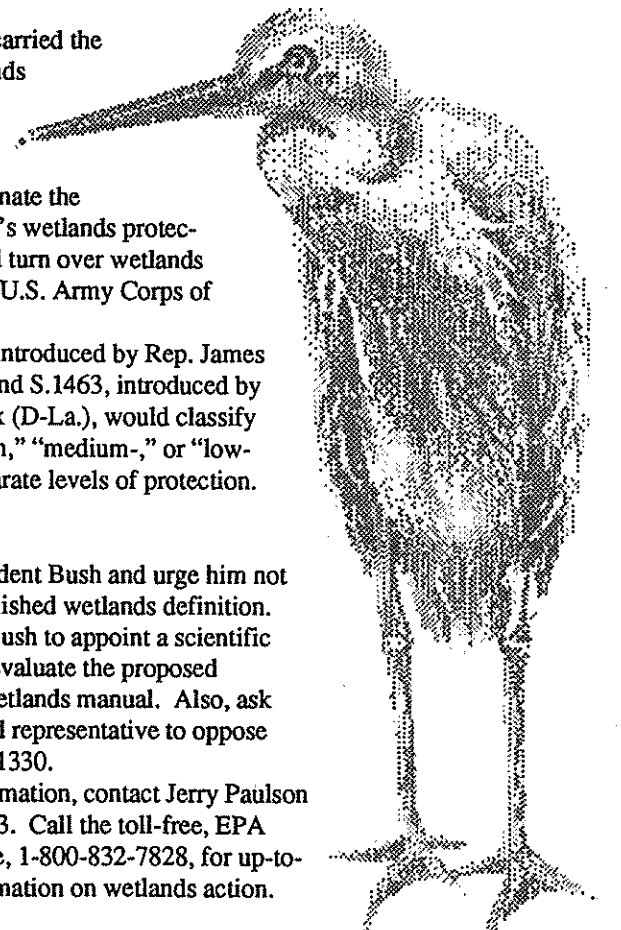
Congress has carried the assault on wetlands protection a step further with two bills that would completely eliminate the Clean Water Act’s wetlands protection program and turn over wetlands regulation to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Both H.R.1330, introduced by Rep. James Hayes (D-La.), and S.1463, introduced by Sen. John Breaux (D-La.), would classify wetlands as “high,” “medium-,” or “low-value,” with separate levels of protection.

What you can do

Write to President Bush and urge him not change the established wetlands definition. Urge President Bush to appoint a scientific review panel to evaluate the proposed changes to the wetlands manual. Also, ask your senators and representative to oppose S.1463 and H.R.1330.

For more information, contact Jerry Paulson at (815) 338-0393. Call the toll-free, EPA Wetlands Hotline, 1-800-832-7828, for up-to-the-minute information on wetlands action.



Fate of Ancient Forests at Stake

There's good news and bad news from Congress. The bad news has serious ramifications for *all* our national forests, not just those in the Northwest. It is especially important that environmental activists across the country realize how devastating newly introduced legislation would be for forests *everywhere*.

The bad news comes in the form of bills sponsored by the timber industry and introduced by Sen. Packwood of Oregon and Rep. Huckaby of Louisiana. Their bills (S.1156 and H.R.2463) would effectively make commodity production i.e., timber and grazing, the primary and unassailable use for public forests nationwide; overriding portions of the Endangered Species Act, the National Forest Management Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the entire concept of multiple-use. Judicial review of agency management would also be severely restricted.

Attached to this complete reversal of forest management laws are some meager "protections" for ancient forests in the Northwest. Small ancient forest reserves would be created, but they would be subject to change with each forest plan revision. This would mean that areas initially designated as "reserves" could face the chain saw only 10-15 years later in the next plan revision.

For this bogus ancient forest protection in the Northwest, national forests across the country would be turned-over to timber industry chain saws with greatly diminished environmental safeguards and public involvement.

The good news is that an excellent ancient forest bill has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Brock

Adams of Washington. The "Pacific Northwest Forest Community Recovery and Ecosystem Conservation Act" (S.1536) is the first ancient forest bill in the Senate that conservationists can enthusiastically support. It is a comprehensive bill that is based on a scientifically credible, ecosys-

tem-based approach to ancient forest protection.

The bill also includes significant and responsible provisions to assist timber-dependent communities through the economic transition they face, including giving states the right to restrict raw-material export of whole logs.

The Adams legislation creates Ecosystem Natural Areas, using the mapped recommendations recently completed by a highly respected group of forestry professionals under the auspices of the House Agriculture Committee. (This group's findings strongly

National forests across the country would be turned-over to timber industry chain saws with greatly diminished environmental safeguards and public involvement.

corroborated what environmentalists have been arguing all along—that ancient forest ecosystems cannot survive if cutting continues at the present rate.)

The Ecosystem Natural Areas would bring *permanent* protection from logging to significant stands of ancient forest as well as watersheds that provide important salmon habitat. Many remaining stands of ancient forest and salmon habitat become Watershed Study Areas and receive interim protection for 3-5 years while a 9-member panel of scientists considers further actions needed to restore and maintain the Pacific Northwest forest ecosystem. Remaining areas are managed in accordance with the spotted owl protection plan outlined in the Thomas Interagency Scientific Committee, with no changes to existing environmental laws. Senator Adams bill deserves our strong and vocal support!

Intense action on ancient forest bills, both good and bad, will be at it's peak in September and October. Now is a critical time to make your voice heard about the impact these bills could have nationwide!

What You Can Do

Letters and meetings with members of congress in every district are critical now that both good and very bad ancient forest legislation is actively being considered.



Illustration: Charlie Raines

Conoco charged with attempted wrongdoing in Ecuador

U.S. oil companies may have threatened to stop all oil investments in Ecuador in an attempt to force the government to grant drilling privileges in Ecuador's Yasuni National Park, according to evidence obtained by an Ecuadorian public interest law group.

The Sierra Club and The Corporation for Defense of Life (CORDAVI) released tape-recorded statements by Dr. Hugo Ordonez, a judge for the Ecuador Tribunal of Constitutional Guarantees, describing threats made by unnamed oil companies which pressured the tribunal into reversing an earlier decision and opening the park for development.

CORDAVI has filed a request with the U.S. Justice Department to investigate allegations that Conoco Corporation—a wholly owned subsidiary of Du Pont, and five other oil companies attempted to improperly influence the actions of the Ecuadorian government.

Ordonez's statements explained the tribunal's reversal by saying that oil companies negotiating new contracts with Ecuador were attempting to "intimidate" government officials with "threats to paralyze all the oil investment in the country." Ordonez termed these threats "severely grave."

Michael McCloskey, chairman of the Sierra Club said, "Allowing such blatant, discreditable, and underhanded methods to obtain oil drilling rights jeop-

ardizes not only the Yasuni National Park, but the future of all national parks in rain forest areas. The national parks of Ecuador and of every other nation in the world must be beyond the bounds of such assault."

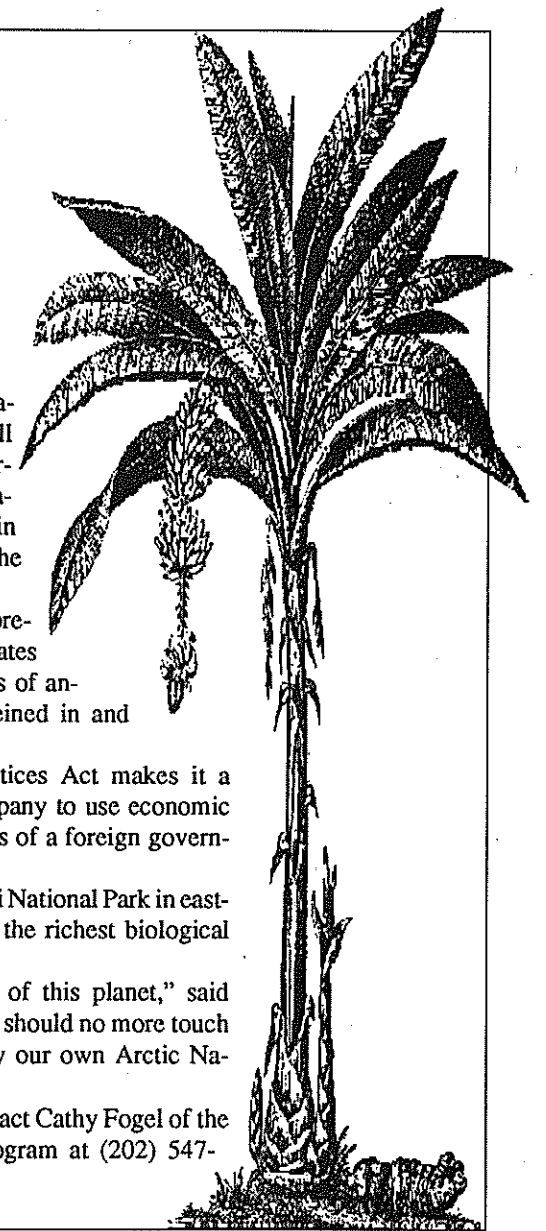
"A company which misrepresents its intentions, manipulates groups, and subverts the laws of another country needs to be reined in and redirected," said McCloskey.

The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act makes it a federal crime for a U.S. company to use economic favors to influence the actions of a foreign government.

The 1.7-million-acre Yasuni National Park in eastern Ecuador has been called the richest biological zone on Earth.

"Yasuni is a crown jewel of this planet," said McCloskey. "The oil industry should no more touch Yasuni than it should destroy our own Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

For more information: Contact Cathy Fogel of the Sierra Club International Program at (202) 547-1141.



Here are some key points to include:

- Oppose the Packwood/Huckaby timber industry-sponsored bills (S.1156 and H.R.2463). These bills would be a disaster for forests nationwide, without solving the problem of the impending destruction of ancient forest ecosystems in the Northwest and California. They would subordinate all other values and multiple-use of our national forests to timber and commodity production.

- Oppose any provisions that would undermine the Endangered Species Act, existing national forest management laws, or citizens' right to judicial review. In addition to the Packwood/Huckaby bills, provisions to undermine these cornerstones of environmentally responsible forest management are also part of several regionally-sponsored

House bills and must be opposed whenever they are included.

- In the Senate, cosponsor the Adams "Pacific Northwest Forest Community Recovery and Ecosystem Conservation Act" (S.1536). This bill includes strong ancient forest ecosystem protection and responsible economic assistance to timber communities. It is the best hope for a balanced solution to the ancient forest debate in the Northwest and California.

- In the House, co-sponsor the Jontz "Ancient Forest Protection Act" (H.R.842). There are over 100 cosponsors so far.

For additional fact sheets about these ancient forest bills contact Leslie England in the Washington, D.C. Office, 202-675-6696, or call the Northwest Office, 206-621-1696.

Congressional Addresses

To write your senators:
The Honorable _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

To write your representative:
The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

To telephone your senators or representatives, call the U.S. Capitol switchboard: (202) 224-3121

Wolf News

from Wolf Action, a publication of Defenders of Wildlife

Mexican Wolf Update

Despite high expectations for this year's captive breeding potential, the Mexican wolf captive breeding program has suffered serious setbacks over the past several months. According to Dave Parsons, Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator, the U.S. population now stands at 34 and the Mexican population at 10 (no reports yet on 1991 breeding). In the U.S., 8 pairs were matched for the 1991 reproductive season; 6 of these were presumed to be capable of reproducing.

At the Rio Grande Zoological Park in Albuquerque, one litter of 7 pups (5 females, 2 males) was born and one of the females has died. Concurrently, one litter was aborted prematurely at the Wild Canid Survival and Research Center in Eureka, Missouri and the remaining four pairs apparently failed to conceive.

Although the reasons for these failures are not completely clear, the captive breeding team is relatively certain that genetic atrophy is not to blame. A recent study of the captive population's genetic viability conducted by scientists from Washington University, St. Louis and the UCLA concluded that there have been "no apparent decreases in heterozygosity in the sample captive population."

To help minimize the devastating impact the program suffers from the loss of even one litter, the recovery team has requested that Congress fund additional captive breeding facilities. Sadly, neither the House nor Senate has included the requested \$400,000 in their respective FY92 Interior Appropriations bills.

While there is little probability of acquiring the funding from Congress at this late date, the possibility of forming a strong base of regional Congressional support over the course of the coming year seems good. This year, we were pleased to hear that Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Representative Bill Richardson (D-NM) both made requests to their respective Appropriations Chairs for the complete Mexican wolf funding. Meanwhile, Senators Domenici (R-NM) and DeConcini (D-AZ) seem poised to move off the "fence."

What You Can Do

Letters to Senator Bingaman and Representative Richardson expressing appreciation for their support of this year's funding request and urging them to continue to do so for the coming year are crucial

Letters of support are also needed to Sens. Domenici and DeConcini who will be pivotal players in struggle to get funding for FY93. Importantly, they need to recognize that there is a national interest in seeing Mexican wolves reintroduced to the wild. Letters to these members should be addressed as on page 15.

Defenders Sues Interior Over Yellowstone Wolves

On August 8, Defenders of Wildlife filed suit in U.S. District court in Washington, D.C., calling on the U.S. Department of the Interior to restore wolves to Yellowstone National Park, as called for by the Interior's own wolf recovery plan.

Conservationists have been urging the Interior Department to move forward with Yellowstone wolf recovery for more than a decade. But the Interior Department has consistently bent to political pressure applied by western livestock interests and their supporters in Congress.

Defenders' legal basis for this suit is simple. The Endangered Species Act doesn't call on agencies to restore threatened and endangered species only when it's easy or popular. Rather, the language of the law calls on the Interior Department to use "all methods and procedures necessary" to bring species to the point of delisting.

In the 1987 Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) makes it plain that restoration of wolves to the Yellowstone area is essential for recovery. Further, the plan points out that reintroduction is necessary in order to achieve recovery. Defenders' suit charges that the Interior Department has failed to implement its own recovery plan.

The Interior Department has continuously dragged its feet on wolf recovery for more than a decade. While controversial recovery programs may take more time to implement, we believe federal agencies have allowed political concerns to override legal and biological responsibilities.

In a letter to Secretary of the Interior Lujan, Defenders made it clear that it's still not too late to resolve this dispute, and that we stand ready to discuss ways to move recovery forward outside of the courts.

Wolf Activists Address Arizona Cattle Growers

In early August Hank Fischer, Defenders of Wildlife's Northern Rockies Representative, joined Preserve Arizona's Wolves (P.A.W.S.) Executive Director, Bobbie Holaday in addressing the Arizona Cattle Growers Association.

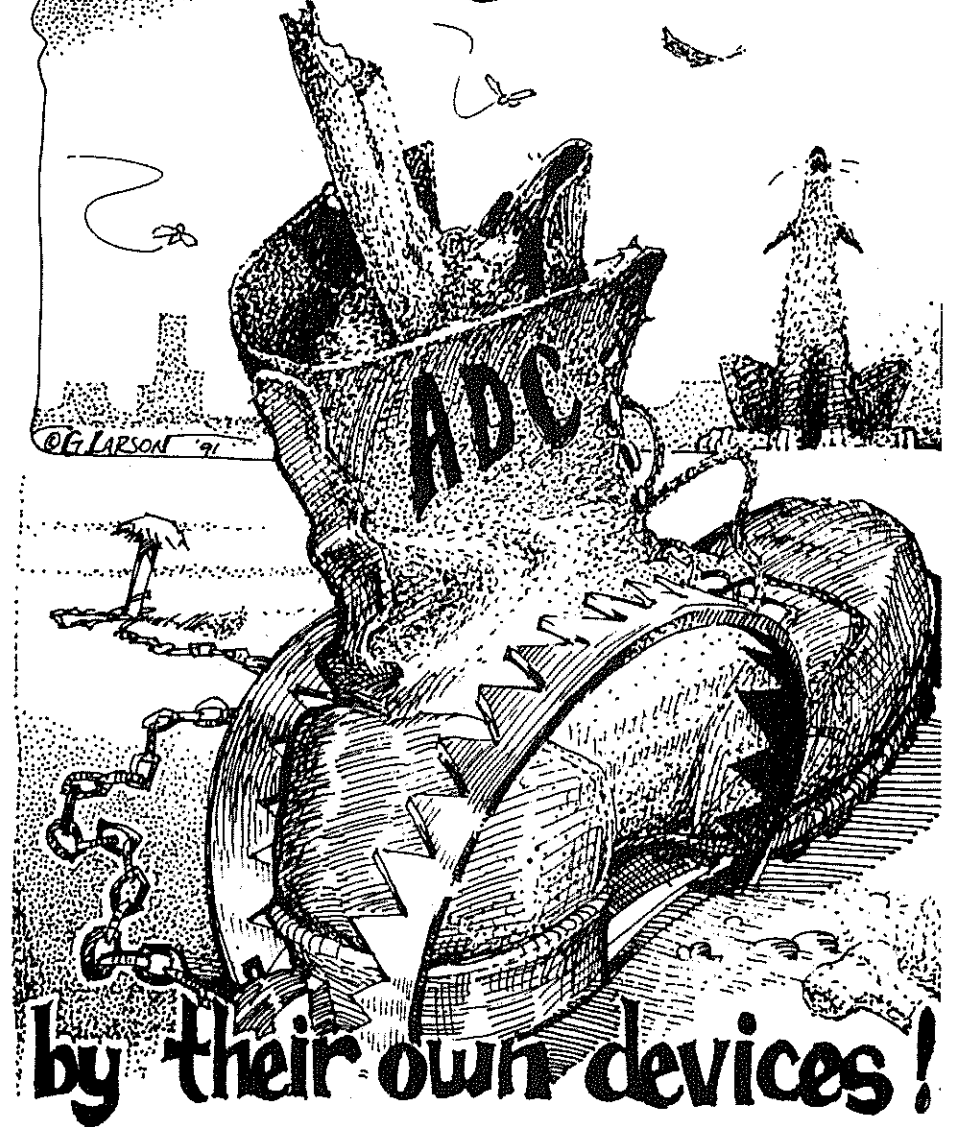
Speaking to Association members at their annual meeting, Fischer and Holaday admonished the ranchers to participate in the process rather than taking a steadfast line of opposition to Mexican wolf reintroduction. Fischer outlined the two scenarios and concluded by saying that the ranchers would be well advised to take part in a process that seemed inclined to move forward. Fischer concluded his talk by detailing the operation of control and compensation programs in the Northern Rockies and by explaining that similar programs are being developed for the Southwest.

During the meeting the Arizona Cattle Growers Association developed a new resolution regarding Mexican wolf reintroduction. While we don't have a copy of this resolution as we go to press, we understand that it drops their stance of total opposition and instead establishes terms for reintroduction. We will not see the finalized "official" document until late September, according to Sandy Naughton, Executive Vice President for the Association.

The Arizona Cattle Growers resolution comes in the wake of a resolution passed by the Arizona Wool Producers Association in February. In their resolution, the Wool Producers announce that they "will not oppose reintroduction of the Mexican wolf" if a number of criteria are met.



Let them get caught...



NEW MEXICANS AGAINST ADC

p.o. box 22335, santa fe, nm 87502

Wolf Action is an intermittent newsletter for wolf activists. To subscribe, contact Defenders of Wildlife, 1244 Nineteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Alter the Landscape of American Politics

by Reid Wilson
Sierra Club Political Director

In 1992, the Sierra Club faces the biggest challenge and opportunity yet to affect the outcomes of important elections. The 1992 elections could profoundly alter the landscape of American politics for years to come. There is a confluence of circumstances that only occurs "once in a blue moon", and it guarantees that come January, 1993, there will be a lot of new faces on Capitol Hill.

Our job is to see to it that these new faces are ones we want to see.

The most obvious factor in the fall of 1992 is the presidential election. Under any circumstances, this will provide a national forum for discussion of environmental issues and offer the Sierra Club a chance to present our issues to the candidates, the media and voters.

Another factor is the so-called "volatile" United States Senate class. This is the group of Senators whose seats were last up in 1986, and prior to that 1980. Both these years saw a switch in the majority party of the Senate, with an unusually high number of races won with less than 55% of the vote. Many of these senators are true environmental champions whom we must defend.

The biggest impact on the Congress will be the effects of the redistricting process following the 1990 Census. Lopsided population growth and migrations mean that a number of states will lose seats in Congress, and several will gain. The politics of redistricting means that in some places there will be open seats, in others incumbents will retire or incumbents will be running against incumbents, and others will see their districts moving to whole new areas where they are less well known. There could be more than 100 new members of Congress—imagine if a great majority were pro-environment. This holds true for state legislatures as well.

The opportunities for the Sierra Club's electoral program are enormous. The payoffs for our success

this year will be felt for many years, even decades, to come. The dangers are just as real, for some of our best leaders in the Senate and House may face the toughest races of their careers.

The Sierra Club has a unique advantage to influence this election. We already have the largest environmental political action committee (PAC) in the U.S. in terms of contributions we make to candidates. But we bring more than just money. We bring armies of skilled volunteers, and an endorsement that is prized above almost any other.

Our success this time depends on achieving a level of activity many times greater than in the past. It will require many more training workshops to educate our volunteers in electoral campaigning. It will require advance planning and budgeting by chapters and groups as a part of their overall conservation program. It will require a larger financial commitment by the Sierra Club Political Committee. It will require increased activity on behalf of our endorsed candidates—press events, fundraisers, get-out-the-vote—and the organizing of many more Club activists into campaigns.

The larger the role we play, the more visible our issues will be in the campaigns. This, and the election of proenvironment candidates around the country, could usher in a Congress the likes of which has never been seen—a Congress where environment takes precedence over expediency, where pork-barrel is replaced by park-barrel, and where our children's future is more important than polluter's pocketbooks.



President Bush
A paler shade of green?

House Slows Grazing Fee Hikes

After voting in June to quadruple the fees charged to ranchers who graze their livestock on government-owned land, the House of Representatives voted July 23 to raise the fees in smaller and slower increments. The provision was approved in order to avoid a possible presidential veto.

The measure was attached to a bill directing the Bureau of Land Management to make environmental protection a priority in managing public lands. Environmentalists believe the low grazing fees contribute to overgrazing of the West's rangelands and are supporting the increase.

The original provision, approved as part of the House Interior Appropriations bill, would have raised the present \$1.97 per animal unit month—the amount of land needed to sustain one cow or five sheep—to \$8.70 over the next four years. The revised provision would limit the increases to 33 percent a year.

Bennett Johnston III Calls for Defeat of Father's Energy Bill

The son of the U.S. Senator who is leading the fight for one of the most environmentally threatening pieces of legislation in decades has called upon his father to stop indulging special interests and pass a comprehensive national energy strategy that protects the environment.

Bennett Johnston III, son of Senator Bennett Johnston (D-LA) called on his father at a Sierra Club sponsored rally held in San Francisco in August to kick the oil habit and stop poisoning the environment with a bad energy bill.

Johnston III, signed a blown-up poster of the Sierra Club's

"Kick the Oil Habit" petition that opposes the Johnston/Wallop Energy Bill S.1220. "Dad, I love you, but we're sick and tired of bills that indulge special interests. Future generations of Johnstons depend on an economically sound energy plan which halts the poisoning of our environment," Johnston said to the crowd at the rally.

Johnston, who is running for Representative Barbara Boxer's congressional seat, signed the Sierra Club petition demanding automobiles average 45 miles per gallon by the year 2000, protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling, transition to safe, clean and renewable energy sources and aggressive programs to improve energy efficiency.

Phillip Berry New Sierra Club President

Phillip S. Berry, longtime environmental activist and Bay Area trial and environmental lawyer, is the new President of the 650,000 member Sierra Club.

"It is a privilege and great responsibility to serve as President of the Sierra Club," says Berry, who has been a director of the Sierra Club for some 23 years and served once before as President (1969-1971). "The environmental problems facing this nation and world have never been greater; fortunately, they can be matched by the people's desire to find lasting solutions. The Sierra club is a strong influence and moral force."

As President Berry says he "will lead the Club to know its traditional principles and continue its independence and firmness with purpose."

Berry lives in Lafayette, California and his law firm, Berry and Berry is located in Oakland. A graduate of Stanford University

(AB 1958, LLD 1961), former trustee, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, he is also a member of the California & American Bar Associations, and the American Alpine Club. He served as member of the State Board of Forestry (1974-1986).

Zuni Mt. Classic Mountain Bike Tour

Get to know the wonderful Zuni Mountains and support the local environmental groups working to fight against the unnecessary PNM Zuni Power Line. This tour, September 29, 1991, is sponsored by the Wilderness Center in Albuquerque to Benefit the Zuni Mountain Coalition. The tour will include both a 15 and 27 mile loop beginning and ending in Bonita Canyon. Entrance fee is \$15 with a T-shirt for the first 100 entrants. Raffles will be held for a bike, local jewelry and crafts.

Contact: The Wilderness Center, 4900 Lomas Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, 87110, 268-6767.

BLM Backs Off on Drilling in Utah Wilds

Faced with a legal challenge, the federal Bureau of Land Management in Utah has withdrawn a permit that would have allowed the Coors Energy Company to drill an exploratory oil and gas well in an area environmentalists are working to have declared a federally protected wilderness. The Sierra Club's Utah Chapter and the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, represented by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, had earlier obtained a temporary restraining order to stop the drilling. The environmental groups cited multiple negative impacts on the Goldbar unit of the proposed Behind-the-Rocks Wilderness in southeastern Utah, which is home to Utah's only

self-sustaining herd of desert bighorn sheep.

"The BLM completely ignored the valid concerns raised about the proposed drilling," said Lawson LeGate, the Sierra Club's Associate Southwest Representative. "They continue to dogmatically pretend that our wilderness proposal doesn't exist."

The Utah Wilderness Coalition, of which the Sierra Club is a founding member, is pushing for wilderness designation for the Goldbar area. Rep. Wayne Owens (D-Utah) has introduced a bill in Congress, HR.1500, to grant federal protection to 5.4 million acres of Utah wilderness, including the Goldbar lands.

LeGate said environmentalists continue to battle other proposals to drill in ecologically sensitive areas of Utah, such as the proposed Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness north of Canyonlands National Park.

Sustainable City Design Seminar Planned

A number of planners, politicians, and local thinkers are planning to put on a day long seminar focusing on rehabilitating and redesigning the city. It is tentatively scheduled for February of 1992. Sierra Club members interested in attending as participants or audience should contact Stefan Verchinski, 2700 Espanola NE Albuquerque, NM 87110.



OUTINGS

Listed below is a compilation of the four groups' outings for September and October in the hopes that it will provide the opportunity for all our members to find more outings of interest. It is strongly recommended (and in many cases required) that the individual leader be called to confirm details of meeting place and time of departure. Dogs are allowed only when noted.

For everyone's well-being, leaders reserve the right to turn away anyone whose clothing or equipment or experience appears unsuitable for the particular trip. Carpooling is usually arranged at the meeting place. Happy hiking!

—Norma McCallan
Chapter Outings Chair

Sat Sept 7	ALBUQUERQUE AREA Xeriscaping tour with Judith Phillips. 345-6248 (Albq)	Sun Sept 15	SANTA FE SKI BASIN, PACHECO CANYON. Easy hike. Noreen Sanders 9840386 (Santa Fe)	Sat Oct 12	PECOS WILDERNESS. Moderate/strenuous hike. Joe Whelan 984-0746 (Santa Fe)
Sat Sept 7	LAKE PEAK-PENITENTE LOOP hike (strenuous). Dan Mitchem 982-2082 (Santa Fe)	Sun Sept 15	PETROGLYPHS NAT. MONUMENT, PIEDRAS MARCADAS. Ike Eastvold 255-7679 (Albq) Easy hike.	Sat Oct 12	SACRAMENTO MOUNTAINS. Moderate hike (tentative). Pat Simon 434-1211 (Las Cruces)
Sat Sept 7	HOLY GHOST CAMPGROUND, PECOS. Easy hike. Ron Mitchell 455-3002 (Santa Fe)	Sun Sept 15	CABEZON/LA LENA WILDERNESS STUDY AREA hike. Ralph Genter 881-3147 (Albq)	Sat Oct 19	LOS ALAMOS AREA/ANCHO RAPIDS. Easy/Moderate hike. Noreen Sanders 984-0386 (Santa Fe)
Sun Sept 8	SANTA FE BALDY and CAPULIN PEAK. Strenuous hike. Steven Merdler 988-4137 (Santa Fe)	Sat Sept 21	SAN PEDRO PARKS WILDERNESS. Grazing issues hike. John Wright. 877-5259 (Albq)	Sat Oct 19	PETROGLYPHS NAT. MONUMENT, BOCANEGRA ARROYO. Ike Eastvold 255-7679 (Albq)
Sun Sept 8	RAILROAD CANYON, BLACK RANGE. Moderate hike. Carolina Greenfield 915-593-6187 (work) (El Paso)	Sun Sept 22	PETROGLYPHS NAT. MONUMENT, RINCONADA CANYON. Ike Eastvold 255-7679 (Albq)	Sat Oct 19	BAYLOR PASS. Easy/moderate hike, 4 miles. Ed McBeth 526-3060 (Las Cruces)
Sept 13-15	GILA WILDERNESS, BIG DRY. Backpack. Wes Leonard 915-747-5494 (work) (El Paso)	Sun Oct 6	PETROGLYPHS NAT. MONUMENT, GEOLOGICAL WINDOWS. Ike Eastvold 255-7679 (Albq)	Sun Oct 20	SANTA FE SKI BASIN, NAMBE LAKE. Moderate hike. Louise Leopold 988-4592 (Santa Fe). Dogs allowed.
Sept 13-14	CARSON NATIONAL FOREST, near Tres Piedras. Service Project to mark new cross-country ski trail. Cookout and car camp Sat evening. John Turnbull 982-9329 (Santa Fe)	Sun Oct 6	JICARILLA RANGER DISTRICT, CARSON NAT. FOREST. Easy stroll to site of "Gassbuggy" atomic blast in 1967. Pat Wolff 982-6854 (Santa Fe)	Sat Oct 26	DOG CANYON, OLIVER LEE STATE PARK. Easy & moderate hikes. Joint outing with Las Cruces & El Paso Groups. Ed McBeth 526-8060 (Las Cruces)
Sat Sept 14	SANTA FE SKI BASIN, ASPEN VISTA ROAD. Easy hike. Arnold Keskulla 982-9570 (Santa Fe)	Oct 12-14	GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, HERMIT'S TRAIL. Backpack. David Morrison 344-8693 (Albq)	Sun Oct 27	CERRO PICACHO, SANTA FE AREA. Strenuous hike. Norbert Sperlich 983-1962 (Santa Fe)
Sun Sept 15	JICARITA PEAK from SANTA BARBARA CAMPGROUND. Strenuous hike. Margo Murray 473-1916 (Santa Fe)	Oct 12-14	RAINBOW BRIDGE, UTAH. Backpack. Stefan Verchinski 888-1370 (Albq)	Nov 8-11	CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK, UTAH. Car camp & day hikes. Norma McCallan 471-0005 (Santa Fe)

Ohio Polluters Ordered to Join Sierra Club

An Ohio wire service reported in early July that Stark County Judge Harry E. Klide ordered two local rubber manufacture employees to become "active" members of Sierra Club as punishment for toxic dumping. In an unusual sentence the common pleas court judge ordered Joseph Rauh to become a contributing member of Sierra Club at \$100 a year, and Larry Knepp to become a supporting member of the Club at \$50 a year.

In addition to their mandated memberships the two were sentenced to several years of hard time which was suspended and then reduced to 20 days in prison each. The two have to pay for the cost of clean-up of the waste and also have to

contribute to the EPA, and local park and conservation projects.

The court ruling was a result of Rauh and Knepp illegally disposing of 32 55-gallon drums of xylene and toluene at five different sites. Stark County Prosecutor Robert Horowitz estimated that the companies of the two polluters would have had to pay only \$5,000-\$10,000 to dispose of the chemicals legally. As a result of the ruling the companies and men will now have to pay several hundred thousand dollars.

Judge Klide also told Rauh that if he developed a rubber protectant for playground equipment to reduce injuries he would reconsider the probation terms.

GROUP REPORTS

El Paso Group

Administration

The El Paso Group continues to be fortunate with the willingness of its members to volunteer their time. Amana Briones will assume editor duties for the group newsletter. Plans include publishing on 100 percent recycled newsprint using non-toxic sorghum ink. Also, The Lorax will be expanded at no additional cost.

The Environmental Center continues to expand its operations. Aside from serving as a recycling center and group office, it will also serve as an environmental resource and educational center for El Paso. Lisa Olivas has volunteered to develop both a library and educational programs on xeriscaping, recycling, etc.

Under John Greens able guidance, the Center has been landscaped with native plants and trees. Finally, Carolina Greenfield has agreed to serve as membership chairman so as to continue developing our member and volunteer base.

Conservation

•**Recycling.** Member JoAnn Duncan has succeeded in convincing El Paso's new mayor Bill Tilney to introduce a plan for citywide residential recycling originally developed by JoAnn. Although no final decision has been made by city council it appears likely that some type of citywide program will be implemented this year.

•**Hazardous Waste.** The group is supporting a plan which would route all hazardous wastes around El Paso using existing and proposed roadways. Implementation of such a plan becomes especially important given existing problems, anticipated growth from free trade, etc.

•**Timber Sales.** Ted Mertig and

other volunteers continue to monitor developments in the Lincoln National Forest. Issue outings continue to be planned and conducted so as to give members a chance to get a first-hand look at different areas.

•**Franklin Mountains.** The group continues to prepare for participation in the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's development of a comprehensive master plan for Franklin Mountains State Park, the nation's largest urban park. A series of workshops will begin in September and October in order to get public input. A range of alternative plans will then be developed and a document to be released in the spring of 1992.

This process is crucial to the future of the park which has operated without a plan since its inception in the late 1970s. A push toward a park with minimal development will serve as the basis for the group's efforts.

•**Clean Air.** The El Paso group has requested that the Texas Air Control Board conduct public hearings related to Asarco's request to do \$81 million worth of improvements to their plant and its air technology. We want to ensure that this significant effort goes far enough in protecting our already diminished air quality.

Meetings

Recent and upcoming general programs have included:

•Don Couchman's excellent presentation on the Cooke's Range area, with a special look at its significant historical/cultural past.

•Bob Cordts of the Forest Service Black Range District on the Continental Divide Trail.

•Larry Henderson and Jan Wobbenhorst of the National Park Service on Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

We look to finish the year with programs on the Gray Ranch, Franklin Mountains, and perhaps a visit from El Paso's mayor.

Ongoing meetings are being held with the mayor with discussions centered on the plan for introducing a citywide recycling program this fall, development of a master plan for Franklin Mountains State Park, a plan for routing hazardous wastes around rather than through El Paso, and air quality.

A meeting was held with Congressman Ron Coleman on August 6th, and issues discussed were reform of the 1872 Mining Law, Franklin Mountains, federal recycling initiatives, and Guadalupe Mountains National Park. More meetings are planned with Congressman Coleman on

Albuquerque Group

Programs and Activities

Our June program was devoted to Volunteer Conservation Opportunities. We had speakers from the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management discussing potential activities in the Petroglyph National Monument and other nearby public lands. At our July meeting, we were given a comprehensive overview of Bandelier National Monument with an introduction to a five year ongoing study of bats in that park. In August we look forward to our group picnic. We recently participated in Mountain Discovery Days along with many other environmental groups. It was sponsored by the Cibola Ranger District and was well-attended by the public.

Some provisions of the city solid waste management bill are being implemented by the formation of a waste to energy task force and by public hearings on recycling options. More public input is needed.

mental groups were ruled to have no standing in their suit to make certain the construction of Unser Blvd. conformed to parkway standards and caused the least harm to the Petroglyph National Monument.

A lawsuit has been filed to make sure the Forest Service addresses deficiencies in its EIS concerning the paving of the Las Huertas Canyon Road. Our September meeting will also be on this issue.

Stefan Verchinski has been successful in getting a resolution passed by the City Council and the Rio Grande Council of Governments which supports the construction of a bikeway along I-40. This would be included in the upcoming I-40 widening project. Hopefully this concept will be included in 1992 transportation improvement plans.

Dumping of low level radioactive waste into public sewers and ultimately into the Rio Grande is being addressed by a coalition of environmental groups. Though this type of low level discharge is currently permitted for hospitals and medical facilities, local groups are concerned that permitting releases from Sandia, and letting the lab self-monitor these releases may set a bad precedent.

Some provisions of the city solid waste management bill are being implemented by the formation of a waste to energy task force and by public hearings on recycling options. More public input is needed.

Santa Fe Group

No report received.

Southern NM Group

No report received.

Trade Lawsuit

(continued from front page)

under NEPA.

"The administration should not complain that this demand is a surprise. It is really a question of expanding the scope to constitute a real EIS. Any delay that this suit might cause would be unnecessary if the President simply agreed to expand the review into a full EIS," said McCloskey.

"This suit cannot compel the Administration to negotiate a good agreement which protects the environment. However, without an EIS, the Administration may never even know which options would best equip it to do so — and the public won't ever know either," added McCloskey.

The Sierra Club believes Environmental Impact Statements help to make an informed decision, and the administration should not complain about developing them. "This is precisely what the Bush Administration is insisting upon with respect to global warming. There it keeps saying it wants to delay action until all the facts are in hand. The administration believes in study, study, study for global warming...but full speed ahead without environmental impact statements on trade issues," he said.

The lawsuit is being filed by the Sierra Club, Public Citizen and Friends of the Earth.

Bombs and Power Plants

(continued from page 9)

land.

Citizens need only common sense to be aware that the risks of low-dose radiation have to be added to all the other cumulative risks of industrial-agricultural products, such as heavy metals, pesticides, dioxins, chemical toxins. There are renowned scientists who predict that 10,000 pollutants, each of unknown toxicity, could destroy the population in ten years if each pollutant turned out to impose a small risk of one death per 100,000 infants or children per year.

Breaking the rules of radioactivity

The national labs and bomb plants have persistently ignored the cardinal rules of radioactivity:

- *Absolute containment of nuclear materials from the environment.* The record shows that there has been indiscriminate dumping and massive contamination.

- *Dilution is not the solution to pollution.* All of the DOE facilities have spread these long-lived poisonous wastes to larger populations and throughout the biosphere. The radioactivity has concentrated as it moved up the food chain. By diluting, we're just spreading the poisons to more citizens and increasing the collective dose.

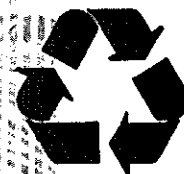
- *There is no safe dose of radiation.* Even so-called background radiation does cause excess cancer, leukemia, and genetic effects. The health effects are proportional to the dose.

We already have convincing evidence that background radiation alone causes excess cancer and genetic effects. Why expose the public, and especially children, to additional doses? These so-called "acceptable" doses benefit the nuclear industry and their promoters by allowing nuclear production to continue, and are given a blanket of respectability by the prestigious agencies such as ICRP and the NCRP.

Nobody in the agencies had the foggiest idea what the health effects of the allowable doses would be, but it is obvious that their original standards were too high, since they have been lowered almost a 100-fold by new evidence. We have considerable human evidence that there is no threshold dose for radiation and that the repair mechanisms for damage to chromosomes is minimal or absent.

National security depends to a large extent on public health integrity. Because public health is threatened by the radioactive and chemical contamination of the nuclear bomb plants, these facilities should be terminated with all deliberate speed. There should be no further production of radioactive weapons by the DOE until the mess of contamination is cleaned up.

The Rio Grande Sierran is printed on 100 percent post-consumer waste recycled paper by PrintWorld in El Paso, Texas.



Rio Bonito

(continued from page 10)

Skeen. Stirling Spencer, chairman of the Lincoln County Commission, is the only commissioner of this persuasion, but his two fellow commissioners are reluctant to overrule him.

If the transaction falls through, the water rights will no doubt be sold to Alamogordo or another town that would take the water from near the headwaters. The environmental interest is a live river. Opening the land to the public and improvement of riparian vegetation are also welcome benefits. George Grossman, Chapter Conservation Co-Chair, spoke for the trade in a letter to the BLM District Manager: "Improvement of wildlife habitat, protection of sensitive species, and your proposed use of water rights for these purposes are the plan's main attractions to us. We will want to look carefully at any proposals for developed recreation facilities on the lands to be acquired."

Persons who wish to support the Rio Bonito exchange should send their reasons to Francis R. Cherry, Jr., District Manager, BLM, POB 1397, Roswell 88201. Lincoln County members can be most effective by contacting their commissioners.

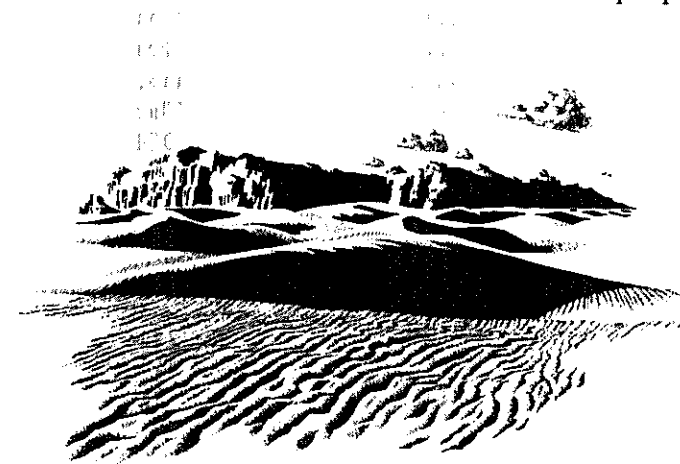
Letters

(continued from page 3)

warps etc. They are stronger so it takes fewer per house and less time to install so builders can be more productive and lower costs to the consumer.

This is one example; substitutions providing both jobs and savings for both the consumer and the environment are seen in the use of rice and wheat straw "plywood" laminates (uses a formerly burnt and wasted agricultural product that caused local health and pollution problems), and cellulose insulation (uses recycled newsprint and cardboard and lowers health risks and higher energy consumption of fiberglass insulation).

Stefan Verchinski
Albuquerque



CALENDAR

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| September 21-22 | SW Regional Conservation Committee (SWRCC) Meeting, Denver |
| September 27 | <i>Silent Spring</i> published |
| September 28 | Chapter Conservation Committee Meeting, Socorro |
| October 2 | Aldo Leopold proposes 1 million acre Gila Wilderness |
| October 16 | William O. Douglas born, 1898 |
| October 22 | Aldo Leopold born, 1887 |
| November 16-17 | Chapter ExCom Meeting, Albuquerque |
| January 4-5 | Chapter ExCom Meeting, Las Cruces |



Dave Foreman's

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