PETITION TO THE GOVERNOR

We, the undersigned citizens of New Mexico, request that Governor King declare an immediate moratorium on new start-ups of open pit cyanide heap leach mining or other chemical process mining until an effective regulatory and reclamation law is in place.

NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

TELEPHONE

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
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9.
10.
11.
12.

Clip and send to:
Río Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club
P.O. Box 9191
El Paso, TX 79983
945 Camino de Chelly
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Thanks for your support!

1872 Reform Efforts Picking Up Steam

Senate Field Hearing Scheduled for New Mexico

by Gwen Wardwell

Long regarded as the major piece of unfinished business in the public land reform of the last 20 years, the outdated 1872 Mining Law now appears on the verge of major change.

Nationwide, the climate is growing to reform the last throwback to the official “giveaway era” of public land disposition and access. Elected officials all over the country are feeling the heat to end the mining industry’s special subsidy and to make it follow rules similar to those governing all other resource extraction industries on the public lands.

New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman is tentatively scheduling a field hearing on the 1872 Law in mid-February for Silver City or nearby. Bingaman has thus far been reluctant to support any significant reforms of the law and this year provided a critical vote to keep the “claim” and “patenting” system going for another year.

Feeling threatened, the mining industry has directed nearly $2 million to creating the appearance of grassroots opposition to reform through the industry front group People for the West!

Senator Bingaman’s refusal to support fundamental reforms thus far has been attributed to People for the West organizing tactics, which need a strong and effective counter from the vast majority of citizens who support reform. In a recent poll released by Rep. Bill Richardson, he found that 90 percent of his constituents favor reform.

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club has made reform of the 1872 Mining Law its top priority and encourages all members to write to our Congressional delegation urging comprehensive overhaul of the law and to attend the Senate hearing if possible. Plan to spend one full day in Silver City, from 6:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., the next day. Reform advocates may again be outnumbered by those paid by the mining industry to attend, as they were at last spring’s House hearing in Santa Fe.

The basic law covering hard-rock mining on Federal lands, the 1872 Act allows individuals or corporations to “claim” public land for mining purposes. If the “patent” process is pursued, public land can be withdrawn from the public estate and sold to the claimant for $2.50–5.00 per acre.

Environmental and taxpayer groups along with community organizations in affected mining areas, are pushing for fundamental reforms to the law, including:

(continued on page 5)
Editor:

Regarding the article in the November/December Sierra on junk mail, I found an even more effective way to stop junk mail.

Most solicitations include postage pre-paid envelopes. I take the entire mailing (outside envelope too) and put it in the pre-paid envelope. I include a note that says “Please remove my address from your list. I hate junk mail.” Then I mail it all back to the solicitor. Apparently the cost of paying pre-paid postage is prohibitive, as I now receive very few solicitations. This method also helps me feel I’m more actively expressing my views.

M. Rudd

Editor,

I am a member of the Sierra Club. I am also a strong supporter of Senator Jeff Bingaman. One of the reasons I am a strong supporter of Bingaman is because he is on our side. The editorial in the November/December issue stated: “Who is Jeff Bingaman?” I am unfazed and unmoved.

Some people in the Sierra Club seem to take an “all or nothing” approach to things. There are some that are fine for their personal beliefs, but it is an unreasonable standard to apply to a publicly elected official. Jeff does not always agree with me, but he almost always agrees with us. On the other hand, we cannot expect him to commit political suicide by coming out publicly in favor of the Sierra Club’s position on an issue when there is no chance of its success. In that form, when doing so will enrage large blocks of the people who elected him. If we demand this 100 percent political correctness, we will lose Bingaman’s public positions, even where it is of no practical effect in advancing environmental issues, it will alienate as many of the people who elected him that he will be defeated. We will then end up with another Republican or conservative Democrat who hardly ever supports Sierra Club positions.

Jeff Bingaman does a great job for New Mexico, and he works hard for the things most Sierra Club members believe in. But demanding that he do everything we want, every time we want, and the way we want it, is immature and unrealistic. We should thank Jeff Bingaman for what he does for us, while reminding him of our positions and why we should agree with us in the future.

Robert N. (Tom) Meyer Las Cruces
Chapter Joins Effort to Reform State Mining Law

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club opened its campaign for New Mexico state mining legislation by delivering the letter printed below to Governor King on December 12, 1991. Members of the group who signed the letter then met with the Governor six days later.

At the meeting, the viewpoint of communities affected by the current lack of adequate mining regulation was presented by Jeannie Cringin, Friends of Santa Fe County; Wilfred Ray, Concerned Citizens Del Norte; and Janice Varela, Upper Pecos Valley Association.

Bob Salter, Rio Grande Chapter consultant and former Mineral Policy Center field representative, presented the dangers of new mining technologies. He explained how provisions in the New Mexico Coal Surface Mining Act could be applied to non-coal mining, and noted that about 200 jobs in reclamation had resulted from passage of the coal mining legislation.

Mary Feldman, lobbyist for the New Mexico Conservation Voters Alliance, explained the importance of comprehensive legislation, the dangers of a piecemeal approach, and noted that Governor King declare a moratorium on all new mining starts until appropriative legislation can be passed.

After listening sympathetically to the arguments, the governor indicated he was amenable to expanding the scope of the New Mexico Surface Coal Mining Act. Ken Hughes, lobbyist for the Rio Grande Chapter, agreed to work with him on the new legislation.

Signatories to Mining Letter to Governor King:

- ROB GRANDE FLYFISHERS
- MEXICAN/NOCHICHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (GRANT COUNTY)
- SOUTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER (LAS CRUCES)
- CARLSBAD CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE LAND MANAGEMENT
- RO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB
- THE GIFFORD (GRANT COUNTY)
- FRIENDS OF SANTA FE COUNTY
- THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY
- NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS COALITION
- CONCERNED CITIZENS DEL NORTE
- EAST FORK PRESERVATION COALITION
- WATER/INFORMATION/NETWORK
- NEW MEXICO CONSERVATION VOTERS ALLIANCE
- PROJECT LIGHTHOUSE
- NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE
- NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER
- TAOS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATES
- ANCHOR BRAVO
- NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS STUDY COMMITTEE
- THE FOREST TRUST
- SOUTHWEST RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CENTER
- NEW MEXICO LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS
- GILA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE
- SAVE THE JEMEZ
- UPPER PECOS CITIZENS FOR NUCLEAR SAFETY
- NEW MEXICO PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
- UPPPER PECOS CITIZEN'S ALLIANCE
- COOPERATIVE OWNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (GRANT COUNTY)
- FRED GROSS

Fire Destroys Home of Environmental Activist

Janice Varela, who has bravely spoken out for the environment as president of the Upper Pecos Association, suffered a tragedy in November when her house burned to the ground. Janice, a single mother with a 4-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy, lost everything.

She had no insurance of any kind.

Janice and her children need financial support as well as household items, particularly: lamps, dressers, kitchen chairs, blankets, sheets, and pans.

All donations and gifts to Janice are tax deductible. Checks should be made out to: The Varela Family Fund, c/o Linda Velarde, the Burnett Law Firm, Route 1, Box 9A, Glorieta, NM 87535.

For arrangements of household goods, or to inquire further about Janice’s needs, call Linda Velarde at (505) 757-8408.

Janice has come through time and time again for the New Mexico environmental community on ancient forest protection, mining reform, and a whole host of other issues. It is now time to come through for her.

1872 Reform

(continued from front page)

- ending the practice of giving public minerals away for free by beginning to charge royalties, rentals, and bonus payments similar to those paid for oil, coal, and gas;
- ending the practice of public land divestiture through the claim and patent system, currently at 1872 land rates of $2.50-5.00 per acre;
- ending the automatic entry provisions of the law which allow mining companies to enter and control areas of public land not already withdrawn from mining (the vast majority of public land) and allowing discretion on the part of land managers to deny applications for environmental or other reasons;
- strong new reclamation requirements similar to those already in effect for coal and establishment of an abandoned mine cleanup fund to address the toxic legacy of mining already done.

Two reform bills have been introduced in Congress, H.R. 918 by Rep. Nick Rahall II of West Virginia, and S. 433 by Sen. Dale Bumpers of Arkansas. Both bills make substantial strides toward reform; neither provides the whole solution that environmentalists and others have called for, New Mexico reform advocates will be asking Sen. Bingaman to support legislation at least as strong as the Bumpers approach at the field hearing in February.

For more information about the 1872 Law and reform efforts, call or write the Mineral Policy Center at (505) 757-1872, or call Wardwell of the Sierra Club at (505) 473-9644.

Industry Groups Squelch Biodiversity Bills

adapted from Public Lands News and Sierra Club sources

Pressured by commodity interests, Congressional leaders have deferred until next year any attempt to move biological diversity legislation.

House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee leaders had been trying to put together compromise legislation that commodity groups would not oppose. But those groups objected to the legislation on the table on the grounds that it would give priority to a single use—protection of a diversity of flora and fauna on the public lands.

Two very similar bills began to move in two House Committees in July, then became stalemated. The measures would require impacts on biodiversity to be considered in every federal ESA and would order the President’s Council on Environmental Quality to write a national strategy to preserve biodiversity.

One of the bills (H.R. S8) was approved July 30 by the House Science Committee. It is sponsored chiefly by Rep. James Scheuer (D-NY). A second bill (H.R. 2028) was approved July 18 by the House subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife, which is in the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. It is chiefly sponsored by subcommittee chair Jerry Studds (D-MA).

The principal sponsor of both the two is that the Studds bill would authorize federal land acquisition under the Land and Water Conservation Fund to protect a diversity of species. Studds and Rep. Billy Tauzin (D-LA) attempted to revise the Studds to make it less objectionable to commodity groups. They didn’t succeed and decided to postpone until next year action on the legislation.

To make sure that Studds and Tauzin got the point, commodity groups hit all members of the Merchant Marine Committee with several letters this month.

One of the most effective comes from the Nevada Mining Association arguing that H.R. 2028 would "encourage Federal agencies to withdraw more land from any commodity production..." and mandate continued land condemnation when the Federal budget is already strained by existing debt and when one-third of the Nation’s land is Federally owned.

The letter signers, including NMA president Michael J. Doyle, wrote that under the bill "withdraw land without consideration of, or compensation, for preexisting private property rights in Federal land such as mineral rights, grazing rights, hunting and fishing, water rights and capital improvements." Doyle concluded by saying that an "acceptable" strategy to conserve biological diversity must "not be the exclusion of marginal lands.

Another letter written by a timber industry group argued that the bills were objectionable because they did not recognize other natural priorities and would lead to additional land withdrawals.
1992 Legislative Eco-Preview
Ken Hughes

Mining regulation, adequate funding of the state Environment Department, and strengthening existing environmental laws will be the focus of the Sierra Club during the 1992 session of the New Mexico Legislature. Other issues which are likely to be discussed and voted on include energy policy, recycling incentives, Pecos River water rights and eradication of salt cedar trees along its banks, and power plant economics. Many of these issues are highlighted in this article, beginning with mining, the Rio Grande Chapter’s top priority.

Responsible Mining
Disseminated (i.e. non-localized) mining for gold, molybdenum, and copper has reached New Mexico, courtesy of foreign firms who see the state as if it were a Third World nation. It is little coincidence that there are virtually no state laws in place to handle it.

Legislation, whether comprehensive in nature or amendments to current laws on mining and hazardous waste production, will be introduced to focus on what’s to be done before, during and after mining:
- establishment of mining and mining methods criteria
- the public and mining companies alike know up front where it’s appropriate to put a mine or chemicals like cyanide can be used to leach out gold
- reclamations of lands affected by exploration, mining or extraction of non-coal minerals
- setting up accountability measures such as public hearings, ability of citizens to sue, enforcement and disclosure requirements for companies
- regulating hard rock mining in the same way as coal mining has been done for the last twelve years.

Environment Department
Born last year out of the Health Department, the state Environment Department does not have the budget to adequately enforce laws protecting our environment. And it may get worse: one idea legislators have is to revert the general fund $12 million in fees that now go into running EPA programs. That means that monies collected to clean up underground storage tanks, inspect restaurants and monitor effluent discharges would have to compete every year with a myriad of other programs.

Energy
1991 saw the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department put together a voluminous state energy policy document, with many interesting and useful figures and suggestions. Legislation may be introduced to set the state on a course to become energy efficient, use more natural gas and turn towards renewable sources of energy.

Water Quality
The Environment Department is seeking $484,000 for nine new staff positions to increase enforcement of sewage, sludge and liquid waste disposal. Penalties would be increased up to $100,000, with daily fines up to $15,000.

Air Quality
Legislation is contemplated to increase the Environment Department’s enforcement and permitting capabilities, in compliance with the federal clean air act. Civil penalties would be upped to $1000-5000 per day.

Hazardous Waste
Authorizes spending for more Environmental Department staff and contractors to review permits, take corrective actions at contamination sites, groundwater monitoring systems, and closure plans and inspections.

Recycling
Rep. Danie Perea (D-Albuquerque), with the support of the New Mexico Public Interest Research Group, is pushing legislation to promote an expanded market for recycled products, thereby helping to meet the goals of the state’s Solid Waste Act.

Power Plant Externalities
The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has wisely ruled that companies seeking to sell power to California must include air emissions in their cost equation. Thus the foreign-owned Four Corners Power Plant would have to absorb that externality instead of getting away with putting pollution into New Mexico’s air. The utility wants the New Mexico legislature to pass a memorial protecting the PUC decision.

[The author is the lobbyist for the Rio Grande Chapter.]

Democrats to Run Against Skeen
Two Democrats have announced they will run in 1992 for Republican Joe Skeen’s seat as representative from New Mexico’s Second Congressional District. They are Bruce Wilson of Las Cruces and Paty Reinard of Socorro.

Wilson declared that he will seek solutions to the District and the nation’s problems that are “environmentally sound, fiscally responsible, and that will build the type of life opportunities we want our children and grandchildren to have.”

Wilson currently serves on the New Mexico Game and Fish Commission where he is Chair of the Habitat, Environment, and Lands Council, Vice-Chair of the Habitat Act Committee, and Chair of the Share with Wildlife Committee. He recently cast the deciding vote against rescinding the requirement that trappers must check their leghold traps at least every 24 hours. He also voted to protect the state’s black bear population by eliminating the spring hunting season.

Wilson graduated from the University of New Mexico, where he was captain of the basketball team. After receiving his Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Princeton in 1964, he joined the faculty of NMSU, where he taught for more than 30 years. He currently works as a consulting engineer. Wilson and his wife Alisa have four children.

Reinard is an attorney and businesswoman. Her priorities are helping the ranching community and balancing the federal budget.

“We need someone with creative arguments in favor of the ranchers,” she was quoted as saying in a Las Cruces Sun-News report. “I don’t see that right now ranchers are getting much assistance from Congress.”

Reinard has practiced law in New Mexico for 15 years. She has a degree in economics, and a law degree from the University of Minnesota. She and her husband have seven children, with another on the way.

The State Game Commission voted at a November 22 meeting to cancel New Mexico’s 1992 spring bear hunting season. The Commission also voted to reduce the fall bear hunting season from four months to two months and to authorize a comprehensive study of the state’s black bear population. The New Mexico Game and Fish Department had recommended the change because of a dramatic decrease in the state’s bear population.

Game and Fish officials have noted an increase in the number of sow being killed by hunters, as well as an increase in the number of older bears being shot, and are concerned that fewer cubs are surviving to breeding age.

Bear hunters, guides, and outfitters voiced strong opposition to the proposal during a public comment session prior to the vote. They outnumbered wildlife conservationists attending the meeting by at least 50 to 1.

Pat Wolf has been on behalf of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, offering support for the Department’s recommendation. She also urged the bear hunters to speak out against the destruction of bear habitat in the national forests being caused by excessive large-scale logging. Others environmentalists testifying included Lani Moore, Sun Harrold and Gary Schiffmiller.

For more information on black bears and their status, contact Jim Gonzales at the New Mexico Game and Fish Department, 827-1890.

[The author is Wildlife Issues Chair for the Rio Grande Chapter.]

Hunters, trappers, and outfitters dominated the Nov. 22 State Game Commission meeting in Santa Fe. Photo by Pat Wolf.
Is the U.S. Overpopulated?

by Kathleen Parker

As a population activist, I don't know how many times I have heard the comment, "At least in the U.S., we have our population problems solved." Quite the contrary, many scientists and population activists consider the U.S. to be one of the most overpopulated countries in the world. What's more, the U.S. has the highest population growth rate of any industrialized country.

Admittedly, compared to the astronomical population growth rate of countries such as Kenya at roughly four percent per annum, the U.S. growth rate of about one percent per annum seems small. Nonetheless, even that growth rate, over the span of the next generation or so, is going to have a major impact on our quality of life, just as it has in the past.

In fact, probably no single thing has impacted our lives more profoundly and some might say, more negatively, than population growth. Although this has often been unrecognized or unacknowledged since population growth, unless massive starvation of families is occurring, often does not lend itself well to media coverage.

Yet, high real estate prices as people compete for available housing and higher taxes as government attempts to provide infrastructure for a rapidly expanding population, crime, clogged freeways, inadequate services, crumbling infrastructure, environmental degradation, the break down in the educational system—all are often at least partially symptomatic of rapid population growth or outright population.

By the standards of China, Bangladesh, or India with their teeming masses crammed into cities or competing for limited land, the U.S. may not seem overpopulated. However, the U.S. population of 230 million people is especially significant because of the extremely high U.S. standard of living and the resulting impact on the environment.

Mexican Wolf EIS to Begin in January

The preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for a reintroduction of Mexican wolves to sites in Arizona and New Mexico is scheduled to begin in early January, according to a report by the Sierra Club.

The Environmental Protection Agency is expected to complete the statement by mid-April. The Sierra Club is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement.

The decision to conduct an EIS instead of a less involved Environmental Assessment (EA) was apparently made in response to concerns voiced by both wolf proponents and opponents whoEA would fail to fully address certain biological and socioeconomic impacts associated with reintroduction. A schedule for completing the EIS has not yet been announced, but Congress' failure to appropriate funds for the Mexican wolf program in the FY92 budget is likely to leave the EIS on the "slow track."

To receive a copy of the draft EIS, write to: Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

Environmentalists and Loggers Forge Historic Agreement

In a precedent-setting agreement, a coalition of environmental groups and loggers have asked the Forest Service not to log in a controversial area of northern New Mexico.

Both sides on November 13 signed an agreement that would save a 75,000-acre area on the Carson National Forest had been overcut and mismanaged.

Sensing a potential loss of a timber sale in the area, environmental groups asked the Forest Service to stop all timber harvests within a 10-mile radius.

How Not to Be Cowed

Do you want to end chronic livestock grazing management problems on the public lands? Confused about how you can influ-

Conference on New Mexico's Environment Planned

Environmental Department Secretary Judy Espinosa has announced plans to hold a conference on New Mexico's environment next month, during the Environmental Protection Act's 50th anniversary. The conference is designed to examine the Act's goals for environmental protection. Policy and technical papers and exhibits are expected to be available. A series of Governor's Awards on the environment will be handed out to worthy recipients.

Sierra Club National Awards Deadline

Nominations for national Sierra Club awards are due January 15. Twenty awards and honors are available, including the Sierra Club's highest honor, the John Muir Award for distinguished record of achievement in national or international conservation efforts.

Club's Silver and bronze awards, given to Sierra Club chapters and to individuals, will recognize outstanding contributions to the Sierra Club, national and international activist and leadership, and work in the field of conservation. The awards will be presented at the Sierra Club's annual meeting in May. For more information, contact John Thompson, Chair, Sierra Club Honors and Awards Committee, 701-223-1145.
BREIFS

GATT Tuna Ruling Sparks Trade Debate
Spurred by a recent international trade ruling against a U.S. law protecting dolphins, environmental and labor groups are gathering support for congressional resolutions to reject any trade agreement that would jeopardize U.S. environmental, public health, or labor laws.

House Concurrent Res.426 and Senate Res.109 would send a message to the Bush administration and the U.S. trade partners that Congress is concerned about how U.S. trade treaties, such as the U.S.-Mexico Free Trade Agreement, might affect current or future U.S. laws. The Senate resolution would also allow Congress to add environmental and labor protection amendments to the free-trade agreement.

Both resolutions stem from the August GATT decision to overturn part of the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act banning non-dolphin-safe tuna imported from Mexico. The GATT panel decreed that the ban was a barrier to international trade and must be eliminated. The panel also decreed that no country may unilaterally maintain health or environmental standards above international or regional standards.

Renew America’s Search for Success programs identify, verifies, and honors programs that work towards solving America’s environmental problems. All verified programs are published in the annual Environmental Success Index (ESI), which is distributed nationwide to policymakers, business leaders, industry, and media as a valuable tool for locating a wide variety of programs that protect, restore, and enhance the environment.

Renew America would like to add your success story to the Environmental Success Index. Write to Renew America for a Success for Application at: 1400 K Street NW, Suite 710, Washington, DC, 20005 or call (202) 332-2252. The deadline for applying is January 15, 1992.

Lack of U.S. Leadership Blamed for ‘Era of Doubt’
Participants in a landmark symposium agreed that the lack of U.S. leadership in protecting the environment is a major cause of increased worldwide environmental degradation.

The gathering of scientists, authors, activists, and scholars declared that the world is entering “an era of unprecedented doubt” on the future of the environment, and that U.S. leadership is vital to ensure the survival of the planet.

“The precedent to the greenhouse effect is the White House effect,” said Dr. Arthur Rosenfeld, professor of physics at the University of California at Berkeley, about President Bush’s refusal to take action on global warming and energy efficiency.

The symposium, “A Vision for the Future: Environmental Security in the Next 100 Years,” was held in Berkeley, California, and was co-hosted by the Sierra Club, Stanford University, and the University of California at Berkeley.

Nearly all of the participants agreed that America must lead the world toward environmental security, and that this will require large-scale social, economic, and political changes in this country.

For copies of the symposium transcript, contact Alia Paine, in the Sierra Club San Francisco office, at (415) 776-2211. [Source: Sierra Club National News Report]

U.S. Wetlands Officials See Huge Losses From Bush Plan
The Bush administration is attempting to backtrack away from its proposal to redefine wetlands following the release of a government report that called the changes "scientifically unwarranted" and "unworkable," and said they would eliminate millions of acres of valuable wetlands data.

The field testing made it clear we’re not going back to the drawing board," said William Reilly, Environmental Protection Agency administrator.

The report, suppressed by the White House since its completion in October, concludes the new wetland definition "does little, if anything, to improve upon the current policy, and actually deviates from accepted wetlands science."

The Bush administration is reported to be preparing the Federal Register Manual for Difficult and Delimiting Jurisdictional Wetlands in August, in an attempt to appease business interests and landowners. Since then, the scientific and environmental communities, as well as numerous state agencies across the nation, have expedited the proposed changes.

[Source: Sierra Club National News Report]

Hike the English Countryside
English Lakeland Ramblers, a division of Outdoor Bound, Inc., is offering guided hiking tours— with some sightseeing— in England’s enchanting Lakeland, with its unspoiled hiking opportunities, May through October.

Lodging is in charming country inns offering sumptuous meals and friendly service. To enhance the experience, there are video presentations and talks by experts, plus assistance in arranging additional side trips to Scotland, Yorkshire, the Isle of Man and London.

There is a $50 discount for Sierra Club members. It is possible to register for one of these trips, Outdoor Bound will contribute $25 to the Chapter.

For more information, contact the English Lakeland Ramblers at (800) 724-8801.
Santa Fe

Saturday Dec. 14 will be the annual group Christmas celebration, generally a very well attended event, with a lot of good socializing. We will be having a silent auction of white elephants and donated services as a part of our continuing series of fund raisers.

The conservation committee met Tuesday the 10th at Lani Moore's house, with the primary business being the setting up of collection sites for the next year. An impressive number were named, including the 1872 Mining Law and the proposed amendment covering non-coal mining to the New Mexico surface coal mining act; national forest timber issues; the continued legal battle over the Ola power line, the Endangered Species Act; the proposed James National Recreation Area, EILM and Forest Service wilderness; rural community outreach, etc.

Heavy Oat will be representing the Club and his El Jemez Preservation Alliance at the 1872 Mining Law hearings in Salt Lake City next week.

We have a brand new coordinator for our phone tree—Martha Ann Freeman—who is taking the important task of reactivating the people in time for the legislature.

On Sat. Nov. 16th we put on our 2nd annual outing leaders training seminar. Of course we got a big snow storm that morning, but 20 participants braved the bad weather, including 3 from the Albuquerque group.

Our general meeting on Nov. 19th, presented by Ken Hughes, featured the Audubon v. the BLM hearing, with a lively discussion afterwards. Pat Wolff is applying for a National Sierra Club Ethnic Diversity Grant to fund a project which would work with the public schools in northern New Mexico in an education program on the importance of the Endangered Species Act.

Albuquerque

The last couple of months we've had some enlightening meetings. In the general meeting, concern was raised about ground water priority and figures indicated that more water is being taken out of the water table than is being put back. On the 4th, we held a Mining Law panel discussion with panelists from the land management office. Turnout was good, and around fifty people listened to the input of Jim Baca, Bob Salter and Charlie Roybal.

Some good news is that the solid waste department has changed its mind and is in support of a curb-side recycling bill. This city council bill is coming up in January and is most likely that it will pass. One of its provisions will include building a processing center near Albuquerque for recycling materials that are picked up curb-side. The Albuquerque Academy Boys Trust recently is planning to develop some of the land that it owns near the Sandia foothills. Members of the group have been active in working to turn some of the land in open space that could be accessible to the public.

You might remember an article talking about the Preyghyl Cynolgwr National Monument. Currently a management plan is being drawn up to ensure its protection, and the group is giving it their input in the drafting.

Sandia Labs Radioactive Dumping—a ordinance of heated debate that would have authorized the dumping of radioactive waste into the Rio Grande was deferred until the results of a six months study are found. In addition, several members are meeting with the Southwest Organization Project and Sandia Labs to further educate themselves on the issue.

Southern New Mexico

To give a boost to efforts to establish an office/regional environmental center, the group voted to commit $100 per month toward the expense of operating a Southwest Environmental Center once it is opened. Local Sierra Club and Audubon Society members are still looking for a suitable site.

The group staffed a booth at the 3-day Forest Festival celebration held at the NMFA in early November. Visitation was light. Our booth was adjacent to People for the West's.

We are planning to hold some sort of combined outreach event and outing soon in the eastern part of the state to strengthen the Club's presence there.

After taking the group's newsletter to new standards of excellence, Storm Seymour has stepped down as editor of the Log. The group voted to go ahead and consolidate our newsletter near Albuquerque near Aeropress with Karen Fulker expressing an interest in taking over as newsletter editor.

Group ExCom elections are underway. Votes will be tabulated after January 1.

A strategic planning meeting to discuss the Group's conservation priorities and fundraising needs for 1992 has been scheduled for Saturday, January 23, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Cox Ranch Visitor Center, Dripping Springs Recreation Area. All group members are encouraged to attend and participate. For more information, contact Kevin Bixler at 525-1532.

The Group named Karen Fuller as representative to the Franklin Mountain coalition.

Our Holiday Potluck, held on December 6 at Ann and Ed Machinister's home, was well attended and a lot of fun (and food).

The NMSU student group is applying for a cultural grant to support some of their activities.

The Group is underwriting "Wildfjeln," a twice weekly 5-minute natural history program on our public radio station KWTO. Our sponsored spot is aired on Wednesdays at 3:55 p.m.

Upcoming programs: January 23—"Climate and Chaos" with Jack Zilkic; February 27—"Venomous Animals of the Southwest" with Tom Townsend of National Mexico Center.

El Paso

New Officers Chosen

The new Group Executive Committee members are Ted Merit (Chairman), Joe Rodriguez (Vice-Chairman), Kathy Fend (Secretary), Eddyt Johnson, Carol Greenfield, and Todd Daubert. Ted Merit is the new Outings Coordinator, and Ted Merit is the Public Lands Director.

Recycling Center

The Recycling Center at 800 Piedras is still accepting newspapers, aluminum, steel cans, cardboard, and brown paper bags. The Center has recently begun to collect plastic grocery bags, plastic packing "peanuts," and styrofoam egg cartons, as well. Unfortunately, they no longer accept glass.

El Paso city issues

The October general meeting served as a forum for input into the management plan for Franklin Mountains State Park.

James Jordan (Dan) Jones

by Norma McCallan

Dan Jones, Chapter Executive Committee member and long-time Sierra Club volunteer, was killed by a hit and run driver on Friday night, November 15. He was en route to Albuquerque to attend a concert of the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra with his life-time, Rita Motley.

A memorial service was held at Doe Long's campground in the Sandia Mountains, attended by many family and friends.

Dan's death was sudden and unexpected. An atmospheric research physicist at Langmuir Laboratory and a professor at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, he was an internationally recognized expert in the use of airplanes for measuring electricity inside thunderstorms. Dan had recently won a grant for his work from the National Science Foundation.

Dan was born in Palo Alto, California, where he graduated from Stanford University. He studied one year at the University of Florence, Italy, before receiving his Master's Degree and Ph.D. from the University of Arizona, Tucson.

Dan had been a member of the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee for a number of years, and was always glad to lend a hand wherever needed. About once a year he led a hike in the BLM lands or Magdalena Mountains near Socorro, warning of the encroachment of new roads and threats to the natural landscape.

An avid bicyclist, Dan entered races in Europe, California, and the Southwest. He also loved photography, and had studied under Ansel Adams. Dan was a long-time member of the Socorro Optimist's Club, serving much of his time to youth programs.

Dan's colleagues at New Mexico Tech are working with the State Police to find the driver of the hit and run car. Dan's 1950 VW was hit from behind, by a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed near milenkaer 184, south of Belen. Police are looking for a 1991 or 1992 gray Chevrolet Cavalier with damage to the front left side.

Falls 52, Dan's tragic death was a shock to his many friends and colleagues. He will long be remembered by those who knew him. He was, as one Sierra Club member remarked, a prince of a man.

The president of New Mexico Tech has established a scholarship in Dan's name. Contributions can be sent to the Sierra Club Foundation, Dan Jones Fund, c/o Jana Oyler, Treasurer, 411 Paso de Peralta, Santa Fe, NM, 87501.
Bingaman
(continued from page 3)
of Gila River battlefield.
In closing, I'd like to respond to the question asked in last month's editorial: why I vote the way I do on the environment. I vote the way I do because I believe it is in the best interests of the state of New Mexico and the Nation. It is no secret that there is much conflict in New Mexico and across the U.S. on public lands and environmental issues. As a senator from a state where the stakes are extremely high, I am continually challenged by these issues. But while there exists great debate in our state and throughout the nation, I am convinced that we all share the goals of a safe, healthy, prosperous society in which to live and raise our children. It is the means by which we can best accomplish this goal on which we sometimes differ, and that challenges us to come together and forge a consensus by which we can all benefit.

CALENDAR

January 10-12
Chapter Conservation/ExCom Meeting, Hillboro.

January 24-26
Southwest Regional Conservation Committee Meeting, Tucson.

February 14
Deadline for March/April Rio Grande Sierra.

February 17
Tentative date for Senate Energy Committee hearing on 1872 Mining Law Reforms, Silver City.

March 6-8
Chapter Conservation/ExCom Meeting, Luna Park Campground, Cibola NF.

April 4-5
Regional Mining Conference, Ft. Lewis College, Durango, Colorado. Topics: environmental impact of mining, citizen action, regulation and legislation. Contact: David Mullen, Jr., P.O. Box 2998, Durango, CO 81302.

April 24-26
Southwest Regional Conservation Committee Meeting, Salt Lake City.

May 8-10
Chapter Conservation/ExCom Meeting, Springtime Canyon Campground, Cibola NF.

July 10-12
Chapter Conservation/ExCom Meeting, Springtime Canyon Campground, Cibola NF.

Sept. 11-13
Chapter Retreat/ExCom Meeting.

Sept. 18-20
Southwest Regional Conservation Committee Meeting, Santa Fe.

Nov. 13-15
Chapter Conservation/ExCom Meeting, Kingston.

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Las Cruces Residents Oppose BLM Land Trade
by Laura Meyer

On November 21, 1997, the Las Cruces Extra-territorial Zone (ETZ) Commission approved a zoning request submitted by Las Cruces Transit Mix, Inc. for a Special Industry District of up to 2.25 acres of land located on the east mesa between the Organ Mountains and Las Cruces. The property is currently owned by BLM and is part of a land exchange between Las Cruces Transit Mix, Inc., and BLM. This land is intended to be used for a gravel pit, rock crusher, concrete batch plant, and asphalt plant.

The Sociedad Landowners Association of Las Cruces is in the process of preparing an appeal of this zoning decision. We feel the area is an inappropriate site for a gravel pit, as it is open desert, leading to the Organ Mountains, and is fully viewable from anywhere on the west face of the Organs, including the La Cueva/Dripping Springs Recreation Area.

The only access to the planned industrial area would be Dripping Springs Road, a two lane road shared by tourists, residents, college students, and most of those going to Dripping Springs Recreational Area. According to the operator, the gravel pit would require 120 trucks per day traveling over this narrow, winding, dirt road, creating even more dust as well as a hazardous driving situation.

This location for a gravel pit is also completely inconsistent with the planned use of the area; open space and low density residential. Private property owners adjacent to the site had intended to develop this land for residential use. This obviously will be useless with a gravel pit next door.

However, it will make it easier for the adjacent landowners to get permission to rezone their own land for industrial use. Because these owners know their land is worth more as gravel pits and in other industrial uses, they are supporting the application for the gravel pit.

What You Can Do
Please write to the Las Cruces Extra-Territorial Authority, c/o County Planning Department, Dema Ana County Annex, 430 South Main, Room 120, Las Cruces, NM 88001.

If you are interested in attending the meeting in early February, please let us know and we will contact you as to the time and place, which will also be announced in the local newspapers. For further information, please contact Bob or Barry Callamuso at 521- 4130, or Laura or Tim Meyer at 522-1259.

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Be An Environmental Hero

In the 1962 elections, candidates face environmental issues that are crucial to our future—and the future of our children for generations to come. We must work to make sure that environmental concerns are at the top priority of any elected official.

With a grassroots membership of over 650,000, Sierra Club makes a difference—from town hall to the halls of Congress. For 100 years members have been at the forefront of environmental action. Each of them an environmental hero. They wear the white hats. They're the good guys in the campaign to elect pro-environmental candidates who put corporate profits before a healthy environment.