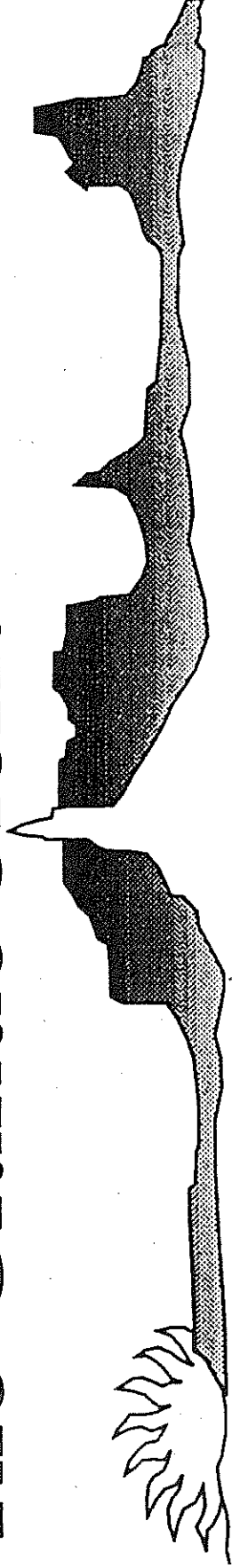


Rio Grande Sierran



News of the Rio Grande Chapter Sierra Club
January/February 1998

Utility Deregulation Raises Clean Air Issues Energy Coalition Proposes Guidelines for Restructuring Electric Utility Industry

by Charles J. Higley

The New Mexico Legislature in his 1998 session will be considering legislation to restructure the electric utility industry. Yet, without certain safeguards, deregulation will cause more air pollution from the burning of coal, prohibit clean renewable energy technologies from ever coming into mainstream commercial use, and lead to higher electricity bills for residential ratepayers and small businesses. To prevent this from happening several environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, have formed the Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy.

We assert that restructuring should not occur unless there are:

- Reductions in air emissions from coal-fired plants
- Programs for renewable energy technologies, like wind and solar
- Assurances that residential and small business consumers will benefit from lower electricity rates.

The Coalition's mission is to ensure that competition in electricity markets improves the condition of New Mexico's environment, encourages renewable energy, and benefits

residents and small businesses across the state with fair and affordable electric rates. Our Guiding Principles are:

1) Competition must improve New Mexico's air quality and environment. Because a market oriented to short term profits could encourage an increased amount of dirty, coal-fired energy, any legislation must include specific provisions to reduce emissions in New Mexico. Clean air is essential to New Mexico to preserve quality of life, health, and economic vitality.

2) Competition must encourage renewable energy and energy efficiency programs. A market oriented towards short-term marginal profit will not reward providers for energy efficiency or renewable energy programs. These programs give significant economic savings and pollution prevention benefits that are not sufficiently accounted for in the short term. Legislation must facilitate the development of renewable technologies, especially in a state where the potential for large-scale practical use of such resources is so high. Legislation must also promote

pollution prevention through energy efficiency programs.

3) Competition must provide consumer protections. Universal service must be maintained and protections for low-income and rural consumers preserved. Protections must include access to competing suppliers, bill assistance, reasonable payment policies, emergency service programs, and affordable rates. Competition must guarantee service quality and reliability. To ensure meaningful choice for electric customers, all

wholesale and retail electric providers must be required to disclose their power sources and the approximate pollution impacts of their resource portfolio on customer bills.

4) Consumers must not shoulder the burden of bailing out the electric utilities. Granting full utility recovery of "stranded costs" would saddle the ratepayers with a burden that prevents many from realizing any benefits from competition. Consumers must not pay for utilities' bad

see Deregulation, page 3

A Look at Immigration Policy

Editor's Note: In February, all Sierra Club members will be asked to vote on two alternatives regarding the Club's policy on immigration. As a service to our readers, two related pieces of information are reprinted here. The first is a brief statement regarding a recommendation by the Chapter. The second is an article from a recent issue of *The Planet* addressing the two alternatives.

Chapter Recommendation

The Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee voted December 7 to recommend to our membership that the existing policy on immigration be left in place.

Reprinted from *The Planet*, Dec. 97, Vol. 4, No. 10

The Pending Vote on Immigration Policy Within the Sierra Club

A petition drive has brought the Sierra Club's population policy to a vote of the membership. In a ballot mailed in February, you will be

see Immigration, page 5

Logging Update

by Charlotte Talberth

On Friday, October 31, in Washington, Representative Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), Congressman Jim Leach (R-IA) and others introduced H.R. 2789, the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act (NFPROA) of 1997, a bill that would put an end to 100 years of commercial logging on national forest and other federal public lands. The bill would leave intact firewood collection and other traditional personal uses of the forest. The bill was introduced in response to the Sierra Club's call for an end to public lands logging.

Federal public lands affected by the Act are defined as lands in the National Forest System, the National Wildlife Refuge System and under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The definitions of "commercial logging" and "timber sales" includes the offering of standing, fallen, living, or dead timber for sale for any purpose, excluding permits under the personal use programs of the Forest Service or the BLM.

Upon enactment, no commercial logging shall occur and no timber sales shall be prepared, advertised, offered or awarded on Federal public lands. The gathering of wood for personal, non-commercial use under existing agency permit programs is not prohibited, provided that such gathering is consistent with environmental law.

Nothing in the Act may be construed to affect any treaty with any Native American tribe.

With respect to all suspended timber sales, the Act directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to exercise contract provisions for early termination and payment of damages or to terminate contracts in order to protect the environment from adverse effects.

see Logging, page 5

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The *Rio Grande Sierran* is published six times a year by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club as a benefit for Sierra Club members living in New Mexico and West Texas. (Make address changes by calling Membership Services at 415-977-5649.)

Non-member subscriptions at \$10 per year are available from the Treasurer, Blair Brown. Send checks to 2226B Wyoming NE #272, Albuquerque, NM 87112. Please allow 8 weeks for processing.

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Contributions are welcome from members and non-members. Send to Editor, *Rio Grande Sierran*, Matt Allen, 607 Richmond Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 or by E-mail to mallenabq@earthlink.net. Articles should be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to publication. (The *Rio Grande Sierran* is published in odd-numbered months.) Photos, artwork and poems are also welcome. Most computer formats should be compatible--check with the Editor. Letters and articles are subject to abridgement.

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste newsprint by PrintWorld in El Paso.

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OPEN

We Get Letters . . .

Plans for Bernalillo Recycling Park Underway

Dear Sierra Club members:

The Home Builders Association of Central New Mexico (HBA of CNM) is currently working with a California-based company on building a recycling "park" for construction and demolition (C & D) waste in Bernalillo County. Raisch Products, out of San Jose, California, began with a presentation to the Association's Build America Beautiful committee last spring.

After months of work, the Bernalillo County Commission recently authorized staff to begin negotiations with Raisch Products, who wants to lease the now-closed West Mesa Landfill. The proposed recycling center could extend the life of the landfills, discourage illegal dumping, and create up to 60 new jobs. The goal for Raisch Products is to defer 60 percent of the area's construction and demolition waste from the landfills.

Initially, the center might accept only a few products such as asphalt and concrete, the goal, however, is to sub-lease portions of the park for other recyclable materials. The more material that can be recycled at one location, the more that everyone benefits. The contractors have to pay to dump these materials at the landfill anyway. If they can pay less, and use it as a marketing tool, they win. The county wins, because they will be receiving royalties from the park.

Timing couldn't be better. The Association's Green Builder Program is up and running and builders are signing up daily. If our efforts pay off and the C & D park succeeds as planned, it will be the first of its kind in the United States. Keep your eyes and ears open for more information (and your fingers crossed).

Jennie Pierce
Home Builders Association
of Central New Mexico
5931 Office Blvd NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Editor:

Richard Barish's Washington Report (Nov/Dec. 1997) was very chilling. We were opposed to NAFTA and this new Fast Track Authority proposed by Clinton is even worse. Thank heaven his pushy power politics didn't work with Congress, but don't think for a minute that he's given up. The endangered Endangered Species Act, Quincy Library Group Bill and the recent vote on the Interior Appropriations Bill are excellent reasons for voting out Bill Redmond and Pete Domenici and replacing Steve Schiff at our next opportunity. We responded to SW Biodiversity's call for letters concerning the Domenici rider and were really disgusted that Pres. Clinton signed the Appropriations bill anyway, despite all the public protest. We intend to voice our opinion on that and his so-called global warming stand in our next e-mail to the President — (expecting our usual "thank you for your interest" return, written by an aide.) "Ah yes," as commentator H.V. Kaltenborn used to say, "there's good news today."

Chuck and Jean Hinkle
Las Vegas, NM

**Visit our homepage
on the
World Wide Web**

www.nm.org/~sierra/

You can contact other activists via E-mail by using our List Server. See story on page 16 for an update on the discussion list and a new, proposed information list.

Cougars Under Attack

by Gary K. Simpson

Recent actions by the New Mexico Game and Fish Commission will put increased hunting pressure on a species that many say is experiencing way too much pressure already. At the October 1997 meeting of the Commission, by a 4-3 vote, the commission voted to allow hunters to kill two cougars in ten Game Management Units, mostly in Southern NM. This decision could double the take of cougars in Southern NM. This action precipitated a lawsuit by Animal Protection of New Mexico asking the New Mexico District Court to set aside the decision that would take effect December 1, 1998 when the cougar hunting season begins. Commissioners Padilla, Brininstool, Elgin and Ortega voted in favor of the increased kill. Commissioners Cramer, Schuler and Mayer voted against the measure.

Some background information would be helpful to the readers. A ten year study, funded by the NM Game and Fish (\$1 million), and conducted by the Hornaker Wildlife In-

stitute led to some common sense proposals to manage (some say save) cougars in NM. Among them was a proposal for management areas for cougars (akin to the deer and elk game management units) with a quota per management unit for cougar take, both female and total kill. Also included were refugia for cougars: two areas of 1000 square miles each in Northern and Southern NM.

This "Cougars Management Plan" was circulated by the New Mexico Game and Fish Department for public comment. Seven-hundred eighty-four comments were received, of which 85% favored stronger protection for the cougar. The New Mexico Game and Fish endorsed the Cougar Management Plan proposed by the researchers of the Hornaker Wildlife Institute.

At the October meeting, the NM Game and Fish Commission, appointed by Governor Johnson, decided to ignore the science, ignore the public comments, ignore the recommendations of the Game and Fish

Department, ignore the Hornaker researchers, ignore the pleas of former Game and Fish Department head Mr. Olson and adopt the policy previously described. Their rationale for doing so, other than an anti-environmental agenda, is to increase deer herd size and decrease desert big-horn mortality in those ten Game Management units. This may sound reasonable until you learn that wildlife professionals repeatedly cite a research project that removed cougars and observed no increase in desert bighorn numbers (desert bighorn are limited by scabies infestations from domestic sheep). Additionally, there is scant evidence that removing cougars will increase deer numbers, leading some to assert that deer herd numbers are not controlled by cougar take but by hunter take. Perhaps limiting the number of deer hunters would be a more successful approach to increase deer numbers and a higher quality hunt.

What is clear is that the NMGF Commission passed the policy with-

out any certainty about the numbers of cougars in New Mexico, without knowing the effect of their proposed policy on cougar numbers and health, without regard to the length of time the policy should stay in place and without the means to monitor the effect of this policy on cougar populations. State law requires the NM Game and Fish Commission to "give due regard to the distribution, abundance, economic value and breeding habits of such game animals" of which cougars are included. This is the basis of the suit brought by the Western Environmental Law Center on behalf of APNM.

Readers should consider these actions:

A). Urge the NM Game and Fish Commission to adopt the a Cougar Management Plan that includes the creation of two large refugia, the monitoring of cougar numbers and

see Cougars, page 6

Deregulation

(continued from page 1)

business decisions. Relieving utilities of liability for their own decisions would penalize efficient utilities.

5) Competition must be full, fair, and equitable. Neither the environment nor consumers can benefit unless competition is fair. No single power supplier should have an unfair advantage over other power suppliers, thus creating an unregulated monopoly. Sufficient authority and funding must be given to the Attorney General to prevent aggressively harm to the consumer as the result of monopolistic business practices. Additionally, competition must benefit all consumer classes, not just large industrial users of electricity. Unless competition delivers benefits to all customer classes equally, a disproportionate cost burden will fall on average citizens and ratepayers.

In order to achieve the goals outlined in these principles, we need your help, to show our legislature that clean air, movement toward renewable energy, and lower electricity bills for residents and small businesses are basic requirements for deregulation to move forward in New Mexico.

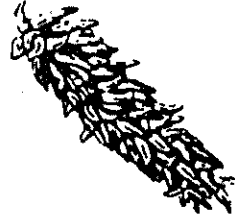
Here are a few easy things you can do to help:

- Pass a resolution endorsing the Coalition's principles
- Write a letter on behalf of your organization to all legislators in your area.
- Invite a representative from the Coalition to speak at your next meeting
- Write an op-ed piece or letter to the editor using information from our principles or sample letter to legislators for your local newspapers

If you have questions about deregulation contact the Sierra Club Energy Chair Ken Hughes at 505/474-0550. Thank you for your help in protecting the citizens and environment of New Mexico.

Coalition members:

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
NM Conservation Voters Alliance
NM Public Interest Research Group
NM Citizens for Clean Air & Water
NM Solar Energy Association
Southwest Research and Information Center
Land and Water Fund of the Rockies



SAMPLE LETTER TO LEGISLATORS

Dear Senator /Representative _____

I understand the New Mexico State Legislature is considering operating the electricity industry to competition through deregulation. Without proper safeguards in place, deregulation could result in serious harms to the environment and to residential consumers. Any restructuring of the industry must contain:

- Reduction in air emissions from coal-fired plants
- Programs for renewable energy technologies, like wind and solar
- Assurances that residential and small business consumers will benefit from lower electricity rates.

Restructuring may encourage energy providers to increase their production of dirty, coal-fired electricity. With an increase in coal burning comes an increase in air pollutants such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide (which cause asthma, heart disease, and respiratory disease, especially in children and the elderly) and greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (which contribute to global warming). New Mexicans' health must not suffer from increased air pollution because of deregulation. Increased emissions will also endanger one of our state's most valuable resources—clean, clear skies and unparalleled vistas. Clean air is essential to preserve our high quality of life and economic vitality.

New Mexico has the potential to be the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy, yet solar and wind energy remains obscure and underutilized in the state. Any deregulation legislation must provide the necessary incentives to bring renewable energy technologies into mainstream commercial use. Any industry wishing to supply electricity to New Mexico should be required to show that it produces a certain percentage (increasing incrementally over time) of its total electricity using renewable resources. Beyond that which is required, customers should also have the option to receive energy produced from renewable sources.

An open market for electricity provides incentives for energy providers to seek aggressively those consumers who use the most electricity. This means that big business and industry will see dramatic rate decreases in a deregulated market. We must make sure that residential consumer's rates do not rise to make up the difference. All consumer classes should benefit from competition, not just big business. In the same vein, residential consumers should not saddle the burden of bailing out the electric utilities. If we are all forced to pay the utilities "stranded costs" it is unlikely that any consumers will see benefit from restructuring.

When you consider legislation this session to deregulate the electricity industry, we will be counting on you to protect New Mexico's consumers and environment. Please make sure any restructuring bill that passes implements competition responsibly with the environment and residents in mind. The status quo, while not perfect, is better than higher electricity rates for residents and small businesses, no movement toward renewable technology, and dirtier air.

Sincerely,
Your Name

Washington Report

Extremists Twist Arms, Moderates Cry "Uncle"

by Richard Barish

Western extremists within the Republican party are playing hardball with their moderate colleagues from the East, threatening to withhold support for bills backed by the moderates. At the center of the debate is a collection of legislation of great concern to the environmental community.

Until the last few months of 1997, Republican moderates were able to prevent the worst anti-environmental bills introduced by Republican extremists from being passed in the House. *The Hill* reported Representative Wally Herger (R-CA; 1996 LCV rating: 0%) as complaining that Republican moderates were "going to war on every issue of importance to us."

The tables have turned for the moment. Republican extremists have succeeded in passing a number of anti-environmental bills during the last several months of 1997, including:

The Forage Improvement Act of 1997, which maintains current grazing levels, gives ranchers a virtual veto power over actions that address resource damage, and creates a new bargain basement grazing fee formula;

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1997, which allows nuclear waste to be shipped to Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for temporary storage;

The Private Property Protection Act of 1997, which permits takings claims to be asserted in the first instance in the federal Court of Claims, bypassing state courts and local boards and turning local zoning disputes into federal cases. (An aside: Apparently, Repub-

licans have no qualms about decreasing state and local government authority and increasing the power of the federal government if it advances the interests of developers and big corporations); and

The National Monument Fairness Act, which curtails the President's authority to designate national monuments under the Antiquities Act. President Clinton used this authority to designate the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and almost every president in this century has used this power to set aside deserving natural areas as national monuments, including Grand Canyon National Park, Zion National Park, and the national parks of Alaska.

Representative Silvestre Reyes voted against the takings, nuclear waste and national monument bills but voted in favor of the grazing bill. Representative Henry Bonilla (1996 LCV rating: 4%) voted against the nuclear waste bill but otherwise voted in favor of these bills. Representatives Joe Skeen (1996 LCV rating: 4%) and Bill Redmond voted in favor of all of these bills. Representative Steve Schiff (1996 LCV rating: 23%) is still recovering from skin cancer and did not vote, but he did cosponsor the Private Property Protection Act.

Generally, in the 105th Congress, the House has been the more moderate chamber on environmental matters. However, if moderate Republicans continue to cave in to the extremists, environmentalists could have a difficult time in 1998 reauthorizing *The Endangered Species Act* and forwarding public lands and natural resource conservation legislation.

Fast Track Trade Authority

Failing to get enough votes for passage in spite of heavy lobbying and dealing, President Clinton has temporarily withdrawn his request for fast track trade authority. The Fast Track bill prohibits trade negotiators from addressing environmental protection issues.

Quincy Library Group Bill

Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA; 1996 LCV rating: 96%) has withdrawn her support for the Quincy Library Group bill, which sets a dangerous precedent by replacing science-based management of forests with a management plan developed by local interest groups in the Sierra Nevadas. Without the support of Senator Boxer, the bill's chances of passage in the Senate are diminished.

Interior Appropriations Bill

Despite considerable veto pressure from environmentalists, the President signed the Interior Appropriations bill into law. This bill contains numerous anti-environmental provisions, including a rider added by Senator Pete Domenici that delays implementation of a court order

restricting environmentally damaging grazing on national forests in New Mexico and Arizona; a provision increasing subsidies for logging roads; and an unprecedented provision allowing Land and Water Conservation Fund proceeds to be spent on maintenance, rather than on acquisition, of land. Senators Kay Bailey Hutchison (1996 LCV rating: 7%), Jeff Bingaman (1996 LCV rating: 78%), and Domenici (1996 LCV rating: 7%) and Representatives Reyes, Bonilla, Redmond, and Skeen all voted in favor of this bill. Curiously, Senator Phil Gramm (1996 LCV rating: 7%) voted against the bill.

International Family Planning Assistance

Republican extremists succeeded in weakening International Family Planning Assistance, allotting \$50 million less than President Clinton requested and the Senate initially approved and including a punitive provision requiring monthly metering of family planning and reproductive health centers. However, extremists failed to insert restrictive language (based on policy in Mexico City) that bars public funds for family planning centers that perform or promote abortions using private money.

The House Agriculture Forest Subcommittee passed legislation creating a five-year program in which a team of scientists will identify national forest areas damaged by disease or insects for various treatments, including logging. The bill is likened to the 1995 salvage logging rider and is criticized as an excuse to log dead or less than perfectly healthy trees, which are important components of forest ecosystems.

Chipping Away At Wilderness

Two bills awaiting floor action set dangerous precedents by undoing the protections afforded by wilderness designation. One bill allows the use of trucks and motorboats in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. The second bill removes critical elk, wolverine and grouse habitat from Hells Canyon Wilderness in Idaho and Oregon to allow vehicles into a seven-mile sarea of the wilderness. Another bill also awaiting floor action allows year-round use of motorized river craft in Hells Canyon National Recreational Area.

Please contact your representatives in Congress regarding the above matters.



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Congressman Steve Schiff (R-NM)
Congressman Joe Skeen (R-NM)
Congressman Bill Redmond (R-NM)
Congressman Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)
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Immigration

(continued from page 1)

asked whether you support the petitioners' position or a reaffirmation of current policy.

Questions/Answers

What is the issue on which the Club will vote?

Club members will vote on whether the Club should take a position on U.S. immigration policy, or remain neutral on the topic.

What is the present Club position?

In February 1996, the Board of Directors voted unanimously (with one abstention and two absences) that the Club should not take a position on U.S. immigration policy. Members of the Board expressed concern that the issue was being discussed in ways that were polarizing the Club and that were unproductive and detrimental to our efforts to reduce global population growth. After

three years of discussion, the Club had failed to develop a policy on immigration that commanded support across the spectrum of Club leaders, activists and members. When a consensus based organization like the Club was not able to find a policy with such broad support, the Board concluded it should remain out of the issue.

Why is the Club voting if the Board does not believe the organization should take a position on immigration?

Under the Club's by-laws, any time a sufficient number of members (presently about 1,300 out of a total membership of 530,000) request a direct membership vote on an issue, such a vote is mandatory. These members disagree with the Board's neutral position and believe that it is important for the Club to take a position on immigration because of its effect on U.S. population growth — Alternative A. Their ballot measure is printed below.

What is the Board's response position?

In September 1997, the Board of Directors voted unanimously (with two ab-

stentions and two absences) to adopt an alternative ballot measure that restates their neutral position and urges the Club members to vote for it. The Board measure — Alternative B — is printed below. At the Club's 1997 annual meeting, the delegates from the Club's 65 chapters and 12 regions also voted for the Board-adopted alternative.

When will the vote take place?

Members will receive ballots early next year, and have until mid-April to return them.

How will members be informed about the vote and the issue?

The January/February issue of Sierra magazine will carry two essays, one representing each side of the issue. (Those arguments are reprinted below.) Each side will present a 400-word ballot statement in the ballot itself. Proponents of each position will also prepare a 750-word essay that chapter newsletters may run if they choose.

Can Club chapters and groups take a position on the issue?

Yes, chapters and groups can take positions on this issue internally, and publicize them through editorials in their chapter newsletters.

I'm a Sierra Club member and I want to get involved in this debate. What can I do?

The most effective thing individual members can do is get involved in the debate within their chapter and groups. Many Club members will be watching the dialogue and the position taken by their chapter or group in making up their minds how to vote.

Can I write a letter to the editor of my Chapter or group newsletter?

Yes, but the Club's rules request newsletter editors to publish a balanced mix of letters from both sides of the topic.

Alternative A

Why We Need a Comprehensive U.S. Population Policy

Shall the Sierra Club reverse its 1996 decision to "take no position on immigration levels or on policies governing immigration into the United States," and adopt a comprehensive population policy for the United States that continues to advocate an end to U.S. population growth at the earliest possible time through reduction in natural increase (births minus deaths), but now also through reduction in net immigration (immigration minus emigration)?

The Argument: Environmental degradation results from too many people using too many resources. For 30 years the Sierra Club demonstrated leadership in addressing the continuing growth of the human population—locally, nationally and globally. In 1970 Club policy stated: "We must find, encourage, and implement at the earliest possible time the necessary policies... that will... bring about the stabilization of the population, first of the United States and then of the world."

But the 1996 Board of Directors effectively abandoned this policy and now continues to abandon it. The grassroots-sponsored petition gives members the opportunity to vote to return the Club to a responsible environmental position.

Already the United States has lost 90 percent of its northwestern old-growth forests, 50 percent of its wetlands (93 percent in California), and 99 percent of its tallgrass prairie. Never-ending population growth overwhelms every environmental victory. This is especially true for land and habitat issues such as protecting forests and wilderness, halting

urban sprawl and farmland conversion and saving endangered species. As the 1996 policy of The Wilderness Society states: "Population policy should protect and sustain ecological systems for future generations.... To bring population levels to ecologically sustainable levels, both birthrates and immigration rates need to be reduced."

The United States is the world's third most populous country. Its 270 million high-consuming Americans affect the global environment as much as several billion people in developing countries do. Then why not curb excessive American consumption? We should; it's a Club priority. But were we to cut per capita resource use in half (itself an enormous task), our environmental impact would not diminish if our population doubled in the meantime. In 1996 the President's Council on Sustainable Development emphasized: "Stabilizing population without changing consumption and waste-production patterns would not be enough; neither would action on consumption and waste without efforts to stabilize population. Each is necessary; neither is sufficient." Unlike other industrialized countries, the United States is growing rapidly—by 3 million people per year. According to the Census Bureau, immigrants and their descendants will account for two-thirds of U.S. growth between now and the mid-21st century. At present growth rates our population will approach half a billion by 2050—the population of India in the 1970s. No wonder the President's Council Task Force on Population and Consumption stated that "reducing immigration levels is a necessary part of population stabilization and the drive toward sustainability."

We urge the Sierra Club to develop, advocate and enlist public support for solutions to the problem of excess immigration, mindful that the United States itself is creating an unsustainable demand on global resources, which in turn causes an unsustainable level of immigration. The solutions will require substantial financial, scientific and humane aid from the industrial nations, especially the United States, to enable people to enjoy life, health and the pursuit of happiness in their native lands. But the solution to the problem of immigration is not, as the Board's position suggests, to pretend that the problem does not exist. The solution is to recognize that world population growth and U.S. population growth must be addressed simultaneously.

In 1994 the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, chaired by the late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, declared: "We disagree with those who would label efforts to control immigration as being inherently anti-immigrant. Rather, it is both a right and a responsibility of a democratic society to manage immigration so that it serves the national interest." Recent polls show most Americans, including most minorities, agree. Clear majorities of African-Americans and Latinos favor substantial reductions in legal and illegal immigration, according to surveys by the Roper Poll, The Wall Street Journal, and the Latino National Political Survey. These Americans, especially those of low income, understand that they and their environment are adversely impacted by excessive immigration.

The 1996 Board decision to take "no position on immigration levels or policies" reverses long-standing Club policy to curb U.S. population growth at the earliest possible time. We believe the Club must adopt a comprehensive popu-

see **Immigration**, page 6

Logging

(continued from page 1)

The Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior are directed to determine the average annual amount appropriated from the General Fund for the commercial logging program and related activities over the 5 years preceding enactment. This amount is referred to as "the logging subsidy." The Act authorizes an appropriation of funds necessary to implement its provisions in the years subsequent to enactment, in an amount not to exceed 1/3 of the logging subsidy described above.

The Secretaries are also directed to establish a Natural Heritage Restoration Corps. This Corps will work to restore logged areas on Federal public lands through activities such as re-vegetation, prescribed burning, stabilizing soils, road removal, and removal of barriers to fish migration. The Act directs the Corps to give preference to dislocated timber workers when hiring.

A committee of independent scientists appointed in each Forest Service region will recommend an effective interdisciplinary approach to restoration on that region's Federal public lands. Advice from these scientific committees will guide the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior in establishing specific restoration goals for each region with a schedule for achieving these goals and in developing regional standards, guidelines, and procedures for restoration. While the Natural Heritage Restoration Plans are developed, the Act directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to implement prescribed burning and slash disposal where necessary to reduce fire risk and implement efforts to stabilize soils where necessary to prevent or reduce further erosion and land slides. All aspects of the Natural Heritage Restoration Plans are subject to the public participation requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Secretary of Labor is authorized to make grants to provide training, adjustment assistance, employment services, and needs-related payments to dislocated timber workers. Needs-related payments include payments to assist with training or education programs.

Timber salvage, Knutson-Vandenberg, and Purchaser-Elect Roads program funds are redirected toward implementation of the Act, including worker retraining. In addition to implementation of other provisions of the Act, these funds are directed toward continuing revenue sharing payments to counties.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) receives \$1-3 million from the funds described above to investigate environmentally sound wood-free alternative products for paper and construction. One year following enactment, the EPA will make grant recommendations for entities developing or producing such products and may distribute up to \$30 million in grants during the 3 years subsequent to enactment.

As support for this Act, Congress finds that Americans do not support use of Federal public lands for commercial goods, recreation and tourism generates 30 times more jobs and income than commercial logging; and, timber from public lands accounts for less than 5% of U.S. annual timber consumption. A Sierra Club economic study published in September found that in fiscal year 1996 alone, the timber sale program operated at a loss to taxpayers of almost \$800 million.

The Club's campaign to end the timber sales program on our federal public lands is underway. To find out more about how you can be involved, call Charlotte Talberth of the Santa Fe Group at 505 982 3662, or the John Muir Project at 626 792 0109.

Immigration

(continued from page 5)

lation policy that necessarily addresses immigration. We agree with mainstream national commissions, with the majority of Americans of all major ethnic groups, The Wilderness Society, and environmental leaders including our supporters Dave Foreman and Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson. Stabilizing population is essential to protecting the environment. A vote for this ballot question will enable the Sierra Club to work realistically toward reducing U.S. population growth . . . for the environment . . . and for present and future generations of life everywhere.

The article above [Alt. A] was written by Dick Schneider, Population Committee Chair of the Sierra Club's San Francisco Bay Chapter, and Alan Kuper, Population-Environment Committee chair of the Ohio Chapter.

Alternative B

Let's Focus on Underlying Causes, Not Symptoms

The Sierra Club reaffirms its commitment to addressing the root causes of global population problems and offers the following comprehensive approach: The Sierra Club will build upon its effective efforts to champion the right of all families to maternal and reproductive health care, and the empowerment and equity of women. The Sierra Club will continue to address the root causes of migration by encouraging sustainability, economic security, human rights, and environmentally responsible consumption. The Sierra Club supports the decision of the Board of Directors to take no position on U.S. immigration quotas and policies.

The Argument:

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe. —John Muir

The Sierra Club stands at a historic crossroads. Two competing positions on the spring ballot will test our understanding of the words of our founder, Scottish immigrant John Muir.

One position says the Club must call for a "reduction in net immigration."

The Sierra Club position, which we ask you to support, asks members to reaffirm and maintain the Club's strong commitment to addressing the root causes of global environmental problems. It recognizes that concern for the population and environment of the United States must be global in scope if we are to live peacefully, side-by-side, in a healthy environment. The Sierra

Club's Board of Directors, Council of Club Leaders (representing local chapters), National Population Committee, and hundreds of Club leaders in each region support this position.

The 1997 United Nations Population Report reveals enormous progress toward reducing population growth worldwide through voluntary approaches consistent with universal human rights. The Sierra Club has successfully worked to reduce birthrates throughout the world by supporting improved educational and economic opportunities for women and by supporting the right of all peoples to reproductive and maternal health care. But this important work is not over. Extremists in Congress are still striving to deny millions of people the critical right of access to family and reproductive health services. And here in the United States, there are more unwanted births than immigrants every year.

Working with activists worldwide, the Club has come to better understand the full range of factors that contribute to global population growth. Numerous studies have found that global birthrates and global migration across borders decrease when (1) people have full access to reproductive and family health services, including maternal and infant care; (2) women have full and equal access to education and equal social, economic and political status; (3) governments protect comprehensive human and environmental rights; and (4) sustainable development preserves local communities and livelihoods.

With these important factors in place, women have healthier and smaller families. This holds true regardless of race, nationality and economic or citizenship status.

But population growth is only one of the many interconnected factors that influence the health of the environment. Much of our environmental degradation is a symptom of an unsustainable global economy, partly driven by government policies that exacerbate poverty and undermine laws protecting public health and human rights. Deeply entrenched government subsidies promote overconsumption, thus wasting natural resources. To protect the natural resources and global environment upon which we all depend, we must find positive alternatives to overconsumption both here in the United States and around the globe. Overconsumption anywhere is a threat to the environment everywhere.

To address the environmental consequences of migration, we should address the causes, not the symptoms. Restrictive immigration quotas will not end the human-rights abuses and economic

inequities that drive millions around the world from their homes. They cannot help provide millions of families with access to the basic means of livelihood. They cannot end the destruction of soil, air and water that drives so many from their place of birth. Any position that grounds us in divisive debate over severe immigration reduction will dramatically cripple the ability of the Sierra Club to effectively address population issues and the multiple factors that drive global migration. Such an effort will also cause serious political damage to the Sierra Club and the environmental movement.

To protect the environment we rely on our ability to build trust and to forge an inclusive movement. African-American and Latino communities and their elected officials are our most consistent allies when it comes to the Sierra Club's conservation priorities. A focus on further restricting immigration quotas would undermine our ability to work with these essential allies. We must not become involved in this issue. Whatever our motivations, focusing on restricting immigration further could associate us with racist groups and the growth of hate crimes such as occurred against Asians and Latinos following passage of California's Proposition 187 (another "color blind" initiative to reduce immigration).

We gain strength politically when our actions demonstrate commitment to the broad underlying causes of environmental degradation globally. We need your help in working together to forge strong alliances based upon mutual respect to solve our environmental problems.

Please cast your vote in support of the Sierra Club position.

The article above [Alt. B] was written by Peter H. Kostmayer, a former congressman and the executive director of Zero Population Growth, and Karen Kalla, co-chair of the Sierra Club National Population Committee.



RAINBOW EXPEDITIONS II

7125 W. 27th Ave., Wheat Ridge, CO 80215
Terry Gustafson (303) 239-9917
e-mail: rainbow@inet-access.com

WINTER BACKPACKS & SKIING

Feb 7 - 14 Superstition Wilderness AZ \$445
Led by renowned international guide Susan Thiele. A variety of Sonoran Desert scenery in the wild eastern Superstitions. About 40 miles in rough country. *Moderately Strenuous.*

Feb 16-20 Colorado Rockies Hut to Hut Skiing \$425
Comfortable, heated cabins at night, ski through legendary Colorado powder by day, among high peaks near Aspen. Open to novice backcountry skiers who are fit. Alpine touring equipment can be rented in Aspen. We'll provide information and prices. *Moderately Strenuous.*

Mar 22 - 29 Waterpocket Fold Canyons, UT \$485
Beginning in Moody Creek, intrepid canyoneer Bruce Chesler leads through seldom seen canyons of the Waterpocket Fold, and along a ledge route with superb vistas of sandstone and shale wilds of the Escalante Canyons. A challenge for experienced backpackers. *Strenuous.*

SPRING BACKPACKING

Apr 4 - 10 Mystery Canyon Country, Utah \$485
Off-trail investigation of remote, nearly inaccessible canyons north of Navajo Mountain. We'll base camp 3 or 4 nights in lower Oak Creek, and explore without packs. The trip ends at Rainbow Bridge. *Moderately Strenuous.*

Apr 26 - May 2 Coyote Gulch & Escalante Cyn \$525
The most beautiful remaining Glen Canyon tributaries. Aches, a natural bridge, rock towers, and a variety of desert life. We'll base camp 3 or 4 nights. We'll backpack 17 miles, with a resupply to lighten our loads. 3 layover days. *Easy to Moderate.*

May 3 - 9 Rainbow Plateau: Canyons & Mesas \$485
A 30-mile cross-country loop through little-known slickrock country in Navajoland. Complex domelands with panoramic views, magnificent narrow canyons and a crossing of 6200' Cummings Mesa. Our favorite! *Strenuous.*

TREK (No Backpacks)

May 5 - 11 Canyons del Muerto & de Chelly, AZ \$685
A week in these beautiful canyons, rich in archeology, rock art and cultural history, with leader Lynn Krause and a resident Navajo guide. His family will visit, too. *Easy.*

Cougars

(continued from page 3)

population health and the implementation of quotas on females and total cougars killed.

B). The reduction of mule deer hunt permits in areas of desert bighorns. This would increase the number of mule deer and thus the prey base for cougars, reducing the number of desert bighorn taken by cougars (cougars prefer the more easily taken deer to wild sheep).

C). Consider how the general public and wildlife enthusiasts that do not kill wildlife can have a greater participation in the formulation of wildlife policy in New Mexico.

If cougars are to continue to be part of the New Mexico landscape, it is imperative that the Game Commission hear from the majority of the public who want stronger protection for the cougar.

Update on Military Use of McGregor Range

by Marianne Thaeler

Well, finally the Army has put the notice in the Federal Register for the Scoping Hearings for the Congressionally mandated Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for McGregor Range, 600,000 acres of New Mexico southeast of Alamogordo, New Mexico, abutting El Paso, Texas. McGregor Range is where New Mexicans made their last stand against the forced condemnation of 7,000 square miles ranch lands and homes for military use to weapons testing and training for the World War II war effort against the Germans and Japanese. Although the families on McGregor watched as their homes were bulldozed down in front of their eyes, the lands went from BLM management, to temporary withdrawal for military purposes, to withdrawal expiration, to military use without Congressional authorization, AND then....

In 1986 Congress passed a law (P.L. 99-606) temporarily withdrawing McGregor for 15 years, under joint management by the BLM and US Army Ft. Bliss, during which time the Army was to clean up McGregor and get off by year 2001, and the BLM was to manage McGregor for multiple use. P.L. 99-606 requires a Draft Legislative EIS be submitted to Congress by Nov 9, 1998. One portion of McGregor is Otero Mesa and the foothills which include Culp Canyon Wilderness Study Area.

Five years ago the Sierra Club, Rio Grande Chapter, adopted a position opposing the use of Otero Mesa and the foothills for military uses and stated that the military should use what it already had for training, i.e. over 7,000 square miles in New Mexico. Following this the Sierra Club, Southwest Regional Conservation Committee did the same, and opposed low level military overflights. Then, the National Board of the Sierra Club adopted a position on military issues.

Now the US Army Ft. Bliss is advertising hearings as Re-Withdrawal Hearings. As you all may remember from my articles, the Otero Mesa portion of McGregor, around 300,000 acres, is presently managed by BLM for multiple use. The Southern New Mexico Group leads an annual field trip to Otero Mesa grasslands, or the uplands, or Culp Canyon Wilderness Study Area. With the help of Audubon, Native Plant Society, 34 Hunter Groups, National Park Conservation Assoc., Cattlegrowers, Otero County citizens and local groups, People of the West, and members of the Sierra Club's Rio Grande Chapter, Southern New Mexico Group over 1,700 persons have gotten recreational access Permits from the Army to use BLM lands on the Otero Mesa portion of McGregor Range (as in live-

stock grazing range, not shooting range, not military range) for picnicking, camping, hiking, hunting, bird watching, wildlife watching, and livestock grazing.

Otero Mesa is pristine grasslands, perhaps the last example of what southern New Mexico was like before overgrazing at the turn of the century. It is prime nesting habitat for the endangered aplomada falcon. It has a herd of trophy pronghorns, and eagles soar overhead looking for food. New Mexico's State Department of Game and Fish manages McGregor hunting seasons including deer in the foothills and uplands, and only antique muzzle loaded gun and archery hunts are allowed on the pronghorns. Game and Fish also manages the hunt on the DOD Personnel Only hunting areas. Otero Mesa has prairie dog towns many threatened cacti, at least 3 sites which qualify for designation to the National Lists of Historic Places, and a world recognized archaeological site. It is special!

Now, also, the US Air Force, as sponsors of the German Air Force, want Otero Mesa to construct a bombing range complex to train Tornado jet pilots on autopilots at low level, right in the heart of the Mesa grasslands an grazing units. Tornado jets have been banned in Germany because of frequent crashes and the health effects of the noise. (The first Tornado crash in the US occurred this June east of Tularosa, New Mexico.) So, the Army wants McGregor Range for Patriot Missile practice by the Japanese and multi national tank training, while the US Air Force/GAF wants it for a bombing range complex.

Some of the New Mexico ranch families have worked with the Rio Grande Chapter and the Southern New Mexico Group informally (don't want to be seen with enviros and loose their "good ol' boy status," to insure that grazing on Otero Mesa will not be displaced by a bombing range complex, and that those ranchers east of Otero will not lose their private property again as a result of low level overflights (120 decibels of noise, 80-88 causes deafness) entering and exiting the bombing range complex.

So, for over 5 years now there has been an informal coalition of environmentalists, hunters, and ranchers fighting to save Otero Mesa and the foothills. We have testified at all Hearings, written formal Comments at every opportunity, attended County Commission Meetings (Otero County Commission opposes the use of Otero Mesa and the foothills for military uses), met with Senators and Congressmen, traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with representatives of the Department of Defense and met with them again at their invitation in New Mexico,

written articles, given interviews to members of the press, and spread the word about Otero Mesa throughout all 50 states. The BLM Resource Advisory Council voted to oppose the use of Otero Mesa for military uses, and specifically to oppose the bombing range complex. Sierra Club members in Alpine, Texas, have formed a new Group and are fighting the low level overflights in Texas along with the ranchers there. Residents, some Sierra Club members, in and around the Gila National Forest and Lincoln NF have already experienced low level overflights and are registering complaints.

The Rio Grande Chapter's position has been expressed at all hearings and meetings to date, *use what you already have*. There are three existing bombing ranges, 2 on White Sands Missile Range used by Holloman AFB, and one south of Clovis, NM, used by Cannon AFB, which are NOT used from noon Friday through noon Monday. But in statement to the Alamogordo newspaper the German Air Force representative said unequivocally, Germans do not train on weekends. Side note: after presenting testimony at USAF/GAF Hearings in Alamogordo last spring (standing room only with more outside who could not get in), the People for the West, much to my surprise, cheered my presentation and thanked me to show the solidarity of New Mexicans on these matters.

Over the years the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies in Colorado allowed their attorney, Ted Zukoski, to help when an attorney was necessary. The Sierra Club clearly has Standing to bring suit. This year, when we were told by the military and the BLM that a suit may be the only way to proceed, I approached the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity, because of their excellent record of success in bringing environmental suits, and their access to pro bono attorneys in New Mexico, about bringing a suit and the Sierra Club joining. (UNM enviro law students have volunteered to help with research.) The Southwest Center agreed and filed a Notice of Intent to sue. A DOD Decision on the bombing range and low level overflights is expected in December. The low level overflights, down to 100 feet above ground level will go from eastern Arizona, across the Gila NF, around the Lincoln NF, and south around Alpine, Texas near Big Bend National Park.

So, everyone wants McGregor Range. As we await a Decision on the proposed bombing range complex by the Air Force, the Army has held hearings in Alamogordo, Nov 18; Las Cruces, Nov 19; and El Paso, Nov. 20, on their desire to have McGregor Range and the Otero Mesa and foothills portion Re-withdrawn for use by the US Army and multinational forces.

As we proceed with the suit against the bombing range complex and low level overflights, I am asking all of you to help our efforts by writing Scoping Comments, what should be included in the mandated Legislative EIS on the withdrawal of McGregor being prepared by the Army. The deadline for Comments is January 9, 1997.

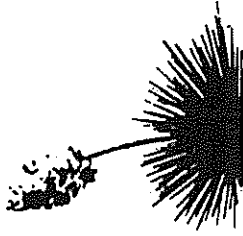
There is an Alternative which we should ask the Army and BLM to consider in the LEIS. It is: consider Otero Mesa and the foothills for National Conservation Area status. I have materials, which I can send you, defining what a National Conservation Area is, and I ask you to write requesting that the LEIS consider, as an one Alternative, the designation of Otero Mesa and the foothills as an NCA. And, oppose the re-withdrawal of McGregor Range.

Comments should be addressed, as MCGREGOR LEIS COMMENTS, and should be sent to:

Dr. Andy Vliet
Program Manager
McGregor Withdrawal
US Army Air Defense Center
and Fort Bliss
ATTN: ATZC-CSA
P.O. Box 6020
Fort Bliss, Texas 79906

If time is short, send your comments by e-mail to:
mcgregor@emh10.bliss.army.mil

Marianne Thaeler is Military Issues Chair, Rio Grande Chapter, Sierra Club





Water Defines the Future of the Middle Rio Grande Basin

by Susan Gorman

"Seeking always to go lower, the running water of the land struggles to fulfill its blind purpose - to find a way over, around or through earth's fantastic obstacles back to the element which gave it origin, the sea."

"And in that arid land, any tree, much less a scattered few, or a bounteous grove, meant good things - water somewhere near, and shade, and shelter from the beating sun, and talk from trifling leaves."

—Paul Horgan, *Great River, The Rio Grande in North American History*, Volume 1, 1954

When the first people came to the river to settle, build pit houses and then pueblo cities, plant corn and beans watered by the river and the occasional rain, they found a place to call home, the green ribbon of the Rio Grande.

Since those early times, more people have come and others are born here. Albuquerque and the other communities of the Middle Valley have expanded into sprawling settlements with networks of roads, tall buildings, industrial complexes, malls, schools, apartments, houses with yards, parks, parking lots. Water managers labor to develop and implement strategies to assure that the people living in the Middle Valley have a sustainable supply of water for all our uses.

The result is that the green ribbon is traversed by canals, ditches, drains, wasteways and acequias and the river's flow is defined by releases from upstream reservoirs. The water of the river must now find a way through not only the "earth's fantastic obstacles" but also through man's.

The San Juan-Chama Project is a pipeline to move water over the Continental Divide to replenish the Rio Grande. Soon the City of Albuquerque will build a system to lift this water from the river, purify it and send it to our homes, yards, businesses and parks. Meanwhile, New Mexico Utilities has applied to the State Engineer for rights to more water which it proposes to pump from 69 new wells to supply 20,000 new homes in the Black Ranch development on the west mesa. Other plans call for drilling more wells and diverting more

surface water as the population of Bernalillo, Valencia, Sandoval and Torrence Counties grows from 650,000 today to a whopping 1,550,000 folks in 2050.

Imagine the impact of another 900,000 humans on the other critters, the land, air, energy, and especially, the water resources of these four counties. What deeply held values must we surrender to enable all those folks to live here? Do we have the collective energy, creativity, vision and will to plan for this growth and to develop the sustainable water, transportation, energy and waste handling systems that will be needed?

The development of a viable Middle Rio Grande water plan which can be implemented effectively is at the heart of the sustainability initiative, since ensuring a sustainable water supply for the region is essential for the health and well being of future generations.

Last August, the First Assembly for Water Planning in the Middle Rio Grande provided the opportunity for people to share ideas and insights on values, challenges and competing interests relating to water in the Middle Basin. During the open mike sessions, folks spoke with passion of their values relating to water. In smaller groups, we shared our thoughts about the boundaries of the MRC Basin, the special qualities and unique characteristics of the MRC Region, the key issues, concerns and problems. We discussed ways to identify the stakeholders and to insure that all stakeholders participate. We struggled with ways to fund this process, define next steps and who should be responsible.

At the conclusion of the Assembly, participants passed a resolution:

The participants of the 1st Assembly for Water Planning in the Middle Rio Grande call for the development of a regional water plan

see **Water**, page 16

Albuquerque Group News

Group Directory

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The Albuquerque Group of the Sierra Club depends entirely on the efforts of volunteers. To help, call any of us!

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Barbara Leonard <i>Western New Mexico</i>	862-7915	
Jack Humphrey & Kathy Love	243-5319	
John Wright <i>Wilderness</i>	247-4353	wright@apsicc.aps.edu
Martin Heinrich <i>Wildlife</i>	232-7151	mtheinrich@aol.com

Special Topics Forum

Regional Transit for the Albuquerque Area: Let's Just Do It!

January 19, 7:30 PM
Friends Meeting House 1600 5th Street NW

A regional transit system for the Middle Rio Grande Valley is critical to preserve the high quality of life residents have come to enjoy. Fast, convenient and safe transit service will give people travel choices they do not have today. If we want clean air and less congestion, we must decide to build a transportation infrastructure which enables us to travel without getting into a car!

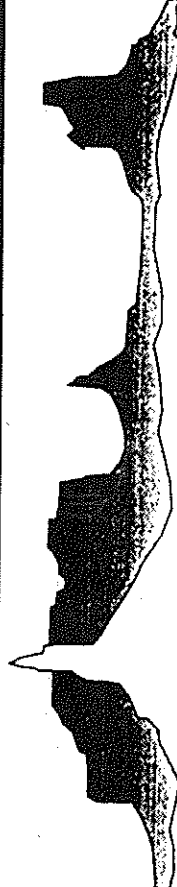
Anne Watkins, Director of the City of Albuquerque Transit Department and friends will give us the latest news on the Transit Service Plan and help us start a campaign to convince State Legislators to approve the RTA enabling legislation.

Bring a friend and a cup for refreshments, too.

CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, meetings take place at the Albuquerque Group's Sierra Club office, 207 San Pedro NE

Jan 11	Chapter Excom Meeting, Socorro, NM
Jan 12	Group Excom Meeting, 7:00 PM
Jan 17	Ski Workshop, Jemez Mountains. See notice, page 9.
Jan 19	Forum on Regional Transit, 7:30PM, at the Friends Meeting House, 1600 5th NW. See notice above.
Jan 20	New Mexico Legislature begins
Jan 24	Winter Bird Festival, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Rio Grande Nature Center
Feb 4	Deadline for agenda items for Group Excom Meeting E-Mail to bblairb@aol.com
Feb 9	Group Excom Meeting, 7:00 PM
Feb 15	Deadline for submission of <i>Sierra</i> articles



Sustainability Campaign: 97 Highlights

Water Customer Advisory Committee

This citizen's committee provides advice and guidance to the City Public Works Department, Water Resources Management Division. The Cabin represents the Sierra Club on this initiative and is its chair.

The City's Water Resources Management Program has been adopted and funded and as implemented, it will completely change the city's water supply system. The changes outlined in the Strategy include direct use of Indian-Chama water. The system for collecting this water from the Rio Grande could potentially cause harm to the river, the bosque's ecosystem. Through participation on the Water Customer Advisory Committee and involvement in the Environmental Impact Statement process, we will work to make sure damage is avoided or mitigated.

Sustainable Community Committee

This citizen's committee has researched and compiled a set of 33 Community Sustainability

Indicators for Albuquerque. The report which describes these indicators and makes recommendations for their use was submitted to the City Council and adopted in October, 1997. Susan Gorman represents the Sierra Club on this committee and is its chair.

The SCC will continue until the appointment of the Indicator Progress Commission. This Commission has broad responsibilities to continue to measure the indicators, to implement a public education and participation initiative that will bring the indicators and the principles of sustainability to the whole community and to guide the community's participation in the City's Goals Process. We are committed to continued participation in the City's Sustainability Initiative.

Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Planning

Members of the Albuquerque Group participated in the 1st and 2nd Assemblies for MRG Regional Water Planning. These events provided the opportunity for people to provide ideas and insights on values, challenges and competing interests relating to water in the Middle Basin. The participants at the 2nd Assembly agreed on a proposal for governance

Regional Transit - Let's Make it Happen!

an Gorman

The water defines the future of the Middle Rio Grande Region, a regional transit system will give the region livable. A regional transit system will give us travel choices which enable us to leave our cars at home, keep the air clean, and let someone else do the driving. The Regional Transportation Service Plan, a five-year summary, Final Draft, which covers short term system improvements has been completed. This plan covers significant expansions in local, express and paratransit bus service. It also includes more express service, Park-and-Ride lots, lots more!

Sections of the plan which cover high speed transit like rail are being finalized and are available in a month or so. The whole plan describes a long range capital and operations framework for a regional transit system. The Service Plan is the component of the Long Range Transportation Plan and for the Middle Rio Grande Region of Governments (MRGCOG) Regional Focus 2050.

Background

In spring 1994, Bernalillo County, working with Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, MRGCOG and the New Mexico State Highway & Transportation Department, initiated a study to determine the feasibility and need for a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) for the region. The study discovered what we already know...that the current situation is due to cars, that roads alone cannot handle the increasing traffic congestion and we need alternatives to Single Occupant Vehicle travel.

The study concluded that creation of an RTA is essential for the region's future. An RTA is critical to the region's future. An RTA regional transit system will enable us to manage future growth, keep the air clean, reduce traffic congestion and delay, provide choices to residents and preserve the environment.

What's an RTA? It is an entity which is legally created to provide coordinated services for the entire region. The RTA has the authority to tax and bond, and has the power to provide and manage the transit system and related facilities. The first step in forming the RTA is to convince the NM

State Legislature to pass enabling legislation. Then an Interim RTA is established and the RTA Board members finalize the Regional Transit Service Plan, figure out what it will cost, and where the funds will come from. Then there is an election by the voters of each jurisdiction to decide whether to join the RTA and if voters say Yes!, a permanent RTA is established.

Then the implementation of the Transit Service Plan would begin and soon we'd all be able to leave our cars at home and leave the driving to someone else or ride our bikes on safe and pleasant trails and routes! Neat, huh?

During the 1997 Legislative session, Senators statewide joined diverse groups, including 1000 Friends of New Mexico and the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, to assist the Albuquerque Transit Department to encourage legislators to vote YES for the enabling legislation. We testified at the committee hearings and called legislators. (Many thanks for all of you who made those calls.)

The bill made it through the committees, passed the House and then became a victim of legislative gridlock in the last days of the session.

What happens next? We are gathering volunteers to convince legislators to support the legislation in the '98 session. Here are the ways you can help!

Come to the Forum on January 19 (see notice)

Join the phone tree - call the Hotline at 505-265-5506 and leave a message to volunteer.

Be a citizen lobbyist and testify at a hearing—a great way to learn how laws are passed!

Write to your NM Representative and Senator - let them know you support regional transit. It's especially important to make calls to those legislators in the NE Heights, far SE Heights, Corrales and Rio Rancho.

Tell your friends to call or write, too.

For more information about the legislative initiative, contact Susan Gorman, TEL: 505-265-3231, FAX: 505-256-0373, Email: bblairb@aol.com

For a copy of the Service Plan Executive Summary or the RTA legislation, contact Doyle Caton, TEL: 505-764-6182, Email: dcaton@cabq.gov

To schedule a presentation about the RTA for another group, call Anne Watkins, TEL: 505-764-6107.

Albuquerque Group News - Outings

and the framework for the planning process. Delegates to serve on the Action Committee, the body which will manage the planning process, were selected, including Susan Gorman and Steve Harris.

The development of a viable MRG water plan which can be implemented effectively is at the heart of the sustainability initiative, since ensuring a sustainable water supply for the region is essential for the health and well being of future generations.

Sustainable Living Workshops

During 1997, we held three workshops. Two provided participants with hands-on information about building a sustainable home. We invited presenters to talk about strawbale construction, using materials with high recycled content and low toxics, incorporating active and passive solar heating into the design and evaluating the natural features of the site to place the home in the optimum location. We critiqued the local Homebuilders Association's Green Building guidelines.

The third workshop was for folks who want to stay where they are and live more sustainably. Presenters talked about recycling, water and energy conservation and what can be done to convert a conventional home into an energy and water saving home. We plan to hold five workshops during 1998.

Upcoming Outings

Outings may be cancelled or changed due to weather or other reasons, please call leader before outing. You must bring appropriate shoes, clothes, pack, rain gear, and water. If you plan on driving, please have your gas tank full prior to arrival at the meeting place. Please do not bring pets unless approval is given by the Trip Leader.

Sat 17 Jan. Snowshoe hike, Sandias
Good December snow makes this snowshoe hike in the Sandia Mountains possible. Leader: Tom Leck - 256-7217.

Sun 8 Feb. Snowshoe hike, Jemez
If you miss the January snowshoe excursion, here's your second chance to snowshoe at Jemez Falls. Leader: Tom Leck - 256-7217.

Tom Leck has served his term as Outings Coordinator so we need someone to take over this important position!

Duties and responsibilities include: Urging outings leaders to plan their outings and write up descriptions. Compiling the outings schedule for listing in the *Sierra*.

If you can help out with any or all of these important tasks, contact Susan Gorman TEL: 505-265-3231, FAX: 505-256-0373, Email: bblairb@aol.com

Ski Workshop in the Jemez Mtns.

January 17, 1998 (Sat.)

Come join us for a trek to the beautiful Jemez Mountains for a Cross Country Ski Workshop with Gordon Spencer. If you are a skier with some limited experience and you want to improve techniques and build confidence for backcountry touring, this is for you!

For more information, call Georgia TEL: 505-881-9365 or Stan TEL: 505-839-4301.

Upcoming Meetings

February 4: Inner City Outings: 6 PM at the Environmental Center
800 South Piedras, El Paso. Contact Richard Rheder at (915) 544-5659 (H).

February 5: Executive/Conservation Committee: 6 PM at Jaxon's
1135 Airway, El Paso. Contact Jim Bell at (915) 581-8864 (H).

Outings

Jan 15-19: Superstition Mountains Wilderness Backpack

Place: East of Phoenix, AZ
Class: Moderate+
Approximate length: 22 miles
Leader: Rollin Wickenden: 832-4023 (W)

Jan 17: Dripping Springs Day Hike

Place: Organ Mountains near Las Cruces
Class: Very easy

Approximate length: 3 miles

Leader: Ann Falknor: 855-2105 (W), 833-9162 (H)
Bring the kids on this almost level hike.

Jan 24: Salt Basin Overlook Day Hike

Place: Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Class: Moderate+

Approximate length: 10 miles
Leader: Jim Bell: 581-8864 (H)

This hike begins at Pine Spring on a round trip to an overlook of the historically-famous salt flats. This hike is suitable for people who have been hiking locally and want to try a longer day hike. It's also a particularly lovely like that more experienced hikers will enjoy.

Jan 24-25: West Potrillo Cones Backpack

Place: West of El Paso

Class: Moderate+

Approximate length: 14 miles

Leader: John Walton: 747-5057 (W)

Spend a night in a cinder cone in the largest wilderness study area in southern New Mexico. The altitude gain is about 1,000 feet. The hike is rated moderate+ because of the necessity to carry all the water you'll need. There will be plenty of time for side trips.

Feb 7: Mayberry Canyon Day Hike

Place: White Sands Missile Range

Class: Moderate

Approximate Length: 8-10 miles

Limit: 15, reservations, leadership approval and citizenship required
Leader: Rollin Wickenden: 832-4023 (W)

This is our annual day hike to White Sands Missile Range. The outing is open to U.S. citizens only. Names and Social Security numbers must be provided two weeks in advance. We will depart from El Paso and meet at the Public Affairs Office at W.S.M.R. From there, Jim Eckles, Public Affairs Officer at W.S.M.R. will lead us to the trailhead for Mayberry Canyon, a trail we have not hiked before. Mayberry Canyon has pools of water and cottonwood trees. As always, the outing is subject to cancellation if a missile test is scheduled for that day. Call Rollin early for details and reservations.

Feb 8: Dog Canyon Day Hike

Place: Sacramento Mountains

Class: Moderate

Approximate length: 5 miles

Leader: Mark Post: 581-2696

With an elevation gain of only 800 feet, the first 600 feet are steep and full of switchbacks.

Feb 14-15: Indian Hollow Backpack

Place: Organ Mountains

Class: Moderate

Approximate length: 5 miles

Leader: Alice Anderson: (505) 523-5179

Expect an excellent view of Sugarloaf from the campsite and water in the waterfall just below camp.

Most outings have a limit of 12. Call leader early to get further information and to sign up.

Outing Report

Big Hatchet Car Camp & Day Hikes

by Alice Anderson

Nine Sierra Clubbers and guests and five dogs assembled at the mouth of Sheridan Canyon in the Big Hatchet Mountains of New Mexico on the afternoon of November 28th. After setting up camp, we walked east along a ranch road to watch the scattered ranches on the plain turn on their lights in the deepening twilight. A lineup of four bright planets (Mercury was hidden

El Paso Group Directory

Executive Committee	
Chair	Enviro. Center & Franklin Mtns
Jim Bell, 581-8864	John Sproul, 545-5157 ae494@rgfn.epcc.edu
Vice Chair	Grazing & Timber
OPEN	Liz Walsh, 584-1471 ewalsh@utep.edu
Treasurer	Membership
Kathy Sunday, 584-9301	OPEN
Members	Outings
Ann Falknor, 833-9162	Laurence Gibson, 594-7342
Laurence Gibson, 594-7342	gibson@ece.utep.edu
gibson@ece.utep.edu	Political Action
Ted Mertig, 852-3011	Jim Bell, 581-8864
tmertig@aol.com	Population
Sally Savage, 833-6899	Sally Savage, 833-6899
Liz Walsh, 584-1471	Programs
ewalsh@utep.edu	OPEN
Administration	Publicity
Chapter Rep	OPEN
OPEN	ICO Chair
LORAX	Richard Rheder, 544-5659
Sally Savage, 833-6899	af303@rgfn.epcc.edu
Secretary	Sierra Club Environmental Center
Ann Falknor, 833-9162	800 South Piedras @ Paisano
Project Chairs	Phone: 532-9645
BLM Wilderness	Fax: 532-4876
OPEN	

Feb 1: Hondo Pass Day Hike

Place: Franklin Mountains

Class: Easy - Dogs welcome

Leader: Laurence Gibson: 594-7342 (H)

It's time to give Fido and Fida some exercise. Let them romp while you enjoy the crisp late winter weather.

behind the mountains) ornamented the sky as we returned to camp for a warm fire and good conversation. The next morning, six people and two dogs walked up Sheridan Canyon in search of U-Bar Ridge. Since none of us had been there before, we didn't find it. We did find a good lunch spot on a ridge with views on three sides, looking down on the way we should have gone. We returned to camp for another evening of good conversation by the fire. Some of us looked at the Andromeda Nebula, 2 million light years away, through binoculars. Sunday morning we drove to the north end of the range to explore briefly a canyon before returning home.

ICO Honored by Sanchez Middle School

by Richard Rheder

The Inner City Outings (ICO) club of the El Paso Sierra Club Group was honored by the Sanchez Middle School for its involvement at the school. Assistant Principal Mason Gray presented to the ExCom a plaque that reads, "Thank you for being a shining star in Socorro Independent School District".

The ICO is the Sierra Club's outreach program to provide environmental education through wilderness experiences and community service projects to young people who might not otherwise get to have them. Through the ICO, members of the Sanchez drama club were brought on several hiking and camping trips.

Other groups benefiting from ICO in 1997 included Guillen Middle School, the Children's and Adolescents Mental Health Program Services unit of Life Management Center, the therapeutic foster care program of the El Paso Center for Children, and SW Keys' Casa El Paso

If you have equipment to share, or would like to donate time, please contact Richard Rheder at (915) 544-5659.

IM³ to Increase Pollution Prevention Efforts

The Institute for Manufacturing & Materials Management (IM³) at the University of Texas at El Paso is increasing its pollution prevention efforts by adding a pollution prevention information coordinator. According to IM³'s Conrad Soltero, the new staff person "will interact with multiple state agencies and educational institutions." He says they're looking for someone with an environmental background with at least a bachelor's degree. For more information, Mr. Soltero can be reached at (915) 747-8622.

The deadline for the next El Paso LORAX is February 4th.
Submit your listings to editor Sally Savage: (915) 833-6899 (H)

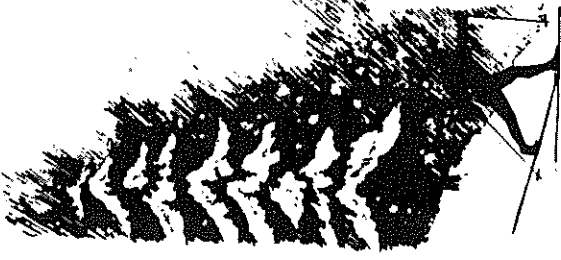
Pajarito Group News

Outings

Jennifer is no longer able to be our Outings Chair, so we are looking for a replacement. Many of you have joined the Sierra Club because you like to hike. If you might like to take this on, please call an Executive Committee member.

Cross-Country Ski Workshop: Saturday, January 17

This workshop is for skiers with some limited experience who want to improve techniques and confidence for back-country touring. Call Gordon or Eve Spencer by January 13 for details. 672-3707.



Saturday hikes in January and February

Meet near the recycling bins in Sullivan Field parking lot at 9AM. The destination and difficulty of each hike will be determined by the group that shows up. Return will be about 1PM. Leader: Tinka Gammel (662-4856).

Birding walks for all abilities January 24, 9AM

Additional walks on February 7 and 21

We will begin winter birding so that by spring we will be ready for the migrants. This will be for fun and education. Any age able to focus on the purpose is welcome. ~~but small children must be with~~ an adult. Call the Leader, Jennifer Johnson (662-3023) for details and meeting place.

Upcoming Meetings

All meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. at Mesa Public Library, upstairs.

The Conservation Committee meets on the second Wednesday of each month, and the Executive Committee on the third Wednesday. Both meetings are open to all, and members are encouraged to attend.

General Meetings

General meetings take place on the first Wednesday of the month; upcoming topics follow:

Wed., January 7, 1998

Dr. Kathy Ramsey, of the Wildlife Center in Española

Wed., February 4, 1998

Dr. Ray Powell, New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands, will speak about "Mining Reform."

Pajarito Group Executive Committee

P.O. Box 945, Los Alamos, NM 87544

Chair	Michael Smith	662-2380
Vice-Chair	Walt Matuska	672-9212
Secretary	Stephany Bouchier	662-6867
Treasurer	Guthrie Miller	662-5545
	Barbara Calef	662-3825
	Warren Lieb	662-7966
	Miriam Oudejeans	672-0414

PERMANENT COMMITTEES

Several Committees have been identified and Chairs have volunteered. All the committees need volunteers! The Committees and their Chairs are:

Conservation	OPEN	
Environmental Education	Janet Gerwin	662-9568
Membership	Terry Phillips	662-4838
Newsletter	Edwina Lieb	662-4013
Outings	OPEN	
Phone Tree	Lonna Evans	662-2621
Political	Michael Smith	662-2380
Publicity	Janet Gerwin	662-9568

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

The Conservation Committee has identified seven focus issues. Currently, we have no member who is responsible for Grazing; call Michael if you are interested.

Community Planning	Michael Smith	662-2380
Mining	Abe Jacobson	662-9579
Forest	Steve Koch	662-9423
Bandelier	Sue Barns	662-9423
Water	Janet Gerwin	662-9568
Grazing	OPEN	
Wildlife	Beth Walter	661-9778

Take Note!
The deadline for the
March/April issue of
the *Rio Grande Sierran*
is Feb. 15, 1998





Santa Fe Group News

SANTA FE GROUP MEETINGS

BUY THE BACA !!

Tuesday, January 20, 7 PM

An all-out united effort is underway to get the privately-owned Valles Caldera/Baca Location No. 1 land, located in the Jemez Mountains above Los Alamos, into public hands. The 95,000-acre Baca is a diverse treasure and occupies the heart of the largest volcanic caldera in the nation. Three rivers rise within its boundaries, diverse wildlife populations abound, and recreational opportunities are plentiful. The Baca shelters over a dozen threatened and endangered species and serves as the wellspring for one of the largest elk herds in the state. Black bear, cougar, and numerous other animals roam freely through its woods and valleys.

Dennis McCaig of the U.S. Forest Service will speak to the Club about the Baca. A member of the environmental Valles Caldera Protection Coalition will speak about the struggle to get the Baca purchased and protected. A short videotape, produced by the Dunigan family, who have owned the Baca land for over 30 years, will be shown.

Senator Pete Domenici opposes the purchase! Come learn why and what you can do to help protect one of the "last best places" in New Mexico. **HELP US BUY THE BACA!**

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

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION IN OUR FORESTS, IS IT POSSIBLE?

Tuesday, February 17, 7 PM

The forests of Northern New Mexico are unhealthy by nearly every measure in the book. Old-growth is nearly gone, young trees are underdeveloped, and "dog's hair" thickets are choking the forest. The forests need controlled thinning and burning, but how?

Jeremy Kruger, of the Southwest Forest Alliance (a new organization that has 55 environmental groups as members, including the Sierra Club), will speak about forest health and opportunities for ecological restoration. The Alliance has begun some innovative projects in the Southwest aimed at partnering ecological work with economic opportunity.

Be there to learn about an exciting new direction in the environmental movement. Jeremy is a dynamic speaker and has lots of great slides. Bring your questions!

The Membership Meetings

are held at the Unitarian Church at 107 W. Barcelona Street (between Galisteo and Don Gaspar).



Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club

621 Old Santa Fe Trail · Salte 10 · Plaza Desira · Santa Fe · New Mexico · 87501
505 · 983-2703

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Doug Fraser

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE Courtney White, Chair

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL !!

ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations to Eleanor Eisenmenger who has been elected to her first term on the Santa Fe Group Executive Committee. And congratulations also to John Buchser, Courtney White, Norma McCallan and Lionel Soracco on their reelection to the Committee. These are dedicated people who spend many hours working to keep the wildness for all of us. Sincere thanks go to Don Goldman, retiring ExComm member, for his years of committed service on the Board, including a stint as Chair. (We note that, unfortunately, the ballot mistakenly asked people to vote for three, not five, candidates. Apologies for any confusion.)



PART-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITY !!

The Santa Fe Group is looking to hire someone to help in the office. The pay is \$8.25 per hour, and the schedule is 10 hours per week. The work will focus on membership activities in the upcoming year. For more information, call Ned Sudborough, at 474-4055. The deadline for application is February 1, 1998.

♦ ♦ SANTA FE GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ♦ ♦

Chair — Doug Fraser *
Vice-Chair — Barbara Johnson *
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Soracco *
Chapter Representative — TBD
Conservation — Courtney White *
National Parks-Courtney White *
Sustainability-Barbara Johnson *
SF National Forest-Greg Pollak
Carson National Forest-George Grossman
Mining-Cliff Larsen
Newsletter Editor — Kay Carlson
Publicity — Kay Carlson
Phone Tree — Norma McCallan *

474-7615
466-4935
983-6715
982-5502
982-5502
466-4935
988-7650
988-4201
982-3926
982-3926
471-0005

Outings — Norbert Sperlich
— Norma McCallan *
Political Committee—Ned Sudborough *
Membership — Ned Sudborough *
Fundraising/Education/Office/Welcomer open
John Buchser *
Eleanor Eisenmenger *
George Grossman *
* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee
Terms expire
12/98: Fraser/Johnson/Grossman/Sudborough
12/98chser/Eisenmenger/McCallan/Soracco/White

IMPORTANT OUTING NOTES

ATTENTION: Local newspapers do not always provide information (accurate or otherwise) about upcoming hikes. If you intend to go on a Sierra Club outing, keep the facing page as reference.

Group Conservation Committee meets:
Tuesday, January 27, 7 PM

Tuesday, February 24, 7 PM

Group Executive Committee meets:

Tuesday, February 3, 7 PM

Tuesday, March 3, 7 PM

OUTING LEADERS MEETING/WORKSHOP

Saturday, April 18

9 AM - 4 PM

Sierra Club Office

Leaders, please mark your calendars now. If you have been thinking about becoming a leader, this is the ideal time to come aboard. Call Norbert (983-1962) or Norma (471-0005) for more details.

CALL FIRST !!

Before planning a hike or X-country ski trip, be sure to call the outing leader. You want to know that you are capable of keeping up with the group and that you have the proper equipment and experience for the outing. Most especially, call the leader for the ski trips — our winter weather is volatile at best and we want you to enjoy yourself and not get in over your head.



SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

Santa Fe Group News

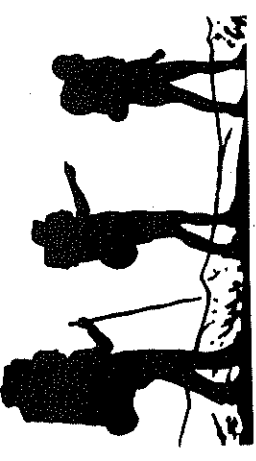
Sat Sun	January 1998	HAPPY NEW YEAR !!	Sat Sun	February 1998
3	Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) <u>Moderate Hike</u> near La Bajada. Call if not familiar with area. Leave 8:30 AM.		1	Victor Atyas (438-9434) <u>Easy Hike</u> in Cerrillos Hills. <u>Meet in front of Walgreens at Villa Linda Mall</u> at 9 AM.
4	Lee Sullivan (662-6185) <u>Moderate Hike</u> Embudo area, 7-8 miles. Call for details.		1	David Bryant (757-6654) <u>Easy X-Country Ski Trip</u> on Aspen Vista Road. Leave 9 AM. Call leader for reservation.
10	Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) <u>Easy Hike</u> St. John's arroyo. Leave 9 AM.		7	Jennifer Johnson (662-3023) <u>Winter Birding Field Trip</u> . How to tell the birds apart. Locations will depend on weather. Call for details.
11	Matt Gervase (466-3479) <u>Moderate/Strenuous X-Country Ski Tour</u> . Call for details and time.		7	Stephen Janus (988-4137) <u>Strenuous Snowshoe/Telemark Trip</u> on Northwest Ridge-Lake Peak-Ravens Ridge Loop. Leave 8 AM. Call leader for information.
17	Jeff Jones (466-2389) <u>Easy Hike</u> Cañada de Los Alamos. Leave 9 AM. Children encouraged.		8	Gordon Spencer (672-3707) <u>Moderate X-Country Ski Trip</u> . Call leader for information.
17	Lionel Soracco (983-6715) <u>Moderate X-Country Ski Tour</u> wherever the snow is good. Call leader for details.		14	Bob McKee (672-3426) <u>Easy/Moderate Hike</u> on White Rock Canyon Rim Trail. <u>Meet leader at 9:30 AM at Smith's Supermarket parking lot in White Rock or carpool from Santa Fe office at 8:30 AM</u> . Call leader if not familiar with area.
17	Gordon Spencer (672-3707) <u>X-Country Skiing Workshop</u> for skiers with limited experience who want to improve techniques and confidence for back-country touring. Possibility of easy follow-up tour on January 18. Call by January 13 for details.		14	Lionel Soracco (983-6715) <u>Moderately Strenuous X-Country Ski Trip</u> . Call leader for information.
18	Bob McKee (672-3426) <u>Moderate Hike</u> in White Rock area. Meet Sierra office in Santa Fe 8 AM to carpool, or meet Bob at Smith's Market in White Rock at 9 AM.		15	Norma McCallan (471-0005) <u>Easy Hike</u> to Barrancas. Dogs allowed. Leave 9:30 AM.
24	Jennifer Johnson (662-3023) <u>Winter Birding Field Trip</u> . How to tell the birds apart. Locations will depend on weather. Call for details.		21	Jennifer Johnson (662-3023) <u>Winter Birding Field Trip</u> . How to tell the birds apart. Locations will depend on weather. Call for details.
24	Lionel Soracco (983-6715) <u>Moderate/Strenuous X-Country Ski Tour</u> wherever snow is good. Call leader.		21	Lionel Soracco (983-6715) <u>Moderately Strenuous X-Country Ski Trip</u> . Call leader for information.



JANUARY (continued)

Sat Sun March 1998

Saturday and Sunday, January 24 and 25			
Margo Wilson (1-505-744-5860) <u>Annual Get Together</u> at T or C to enjoy warmer climes. "Camp" at Margo's, enjoy a <u>moderate hike</u> in area on Sat. and a shorter hike Sun. to allow for drive home. May visit the Armandaris Ranch. Pot luck supper at Margo's Sat. night. Local contact Norma (471-0005). Drive down Friday PM.	7	Steve Janus (938-4137) <u>Moderate/Strenuous Snowshoe Trek</u> up Raven's Ridge-Lake Peak-down ski road. Call for details.	
25 Victor Atyas (438-9434) <u>Easy Hike</u> Diablo Canyon. Leave 9 AM.	8	Lee Sullivan (662-6185) <u>Moderate Hike</u> in Banderier, about 8 miles RT. <u>Meet Santa Fe office 8 AM to carpool, or meet leader 9 AM in Los Alamos</u> . Call for details.	
31 Sherry Evans (473-9632) <u>Moderate Snowshoe Tour</u> Call for details of destination and time.	14	Caroline Glick (984-3184) <u>Moderate/Strenuous Hike</u> Diablo Canyon/Otowi Peak. Dogs allowed. Call for reservations.	
	15	Jeff Jones (466-2389) <u>Easy Hike</u> down Diablo Canyon. Children encouraged. Leave 9 AM.	
	21	Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) <u>Easy Hike</u> in the Cerrillos Hills, <u>Leave from Villa Linda Mall at 9 AM</u> .	
<i>Here are a few key names and numbers to help in your environmental actions to protect our Santa Fe National Forest and other concerns:</i>	22	Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) <u>Moderate/Strenuous Hike</u> Santa Fe River Canyon, near La Cienega. Call if unfamiliar with area. Leave 8 AM.	
Senator Pete Dominici United States Senate Washington, DC 20510 (202) 224-6621 (DC) (202) 224-7371 (DC fax)	28	Norma McCallan (471-0005) <u>Moderate Hike</u> Waldo to Madrid. Dogs allowed. Leave 9 AM.	
	29	Victor Atyas (438-9434) <u>Easy Hike</u> in Tent Rocks. <u>Meet at Walgreens, Villa Linda Mall, at 9 AM</u> .	



Here are a few key names and numbers to help in your environmental actions to protect our Santa Fe National Forest and other concerns:

Senator Pete Domenici
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-6621 (DC)
(202) 224-7371 (DC fax)
(505) 766-3481 (Abq)
(505) 766-1443 (Abq fax)
e-mail: senator_domenici@domenici.senate.gov
senator_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov
Toll free: 1-888-723-5246

Rep. Bill Redmond (3rd District)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6190 (DC)
(202) 226-1331 (DC fax)
(505) 988-7230 (SF)
(505) 988-7296 (SF fax)
e-mail via US House of Representatives Web Site:
<http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

Michael P. Dombeck
Chief, US Forest Service
Department of Agriculture
Auditors Building
201 - 14th Street SW
Washington, DC 20090

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

Group Directory
Executive Committee

P.O. Box 3705 UPB
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011
Larry Hughes, Chair, 522- 4600 ext270(W)
Outings Co-Chair 521-1152(H)
larry@tcisoft.com
Cheryl Blevins, Vice Chair
526 -6220(W)
524 - 4861(H)
spotblev@jaws.
greatwhite.com
Kiki Suggs, Secretary
523 - 5635 (H)
526 - 5442(W)
coues@aol.com
Lesa Wilson, Treasurer
647 - 4298
dwilson@totacc.com
"Dutch" Salmon, Rural
Forum, Political Issues
388-3763(H)
388 - 5705(Fax)
Wayne Suggs, Jr.,
Wilderness Chair
523 - 5635 (H)
526 - 5442(W)
coues@aol.com
Mexican Wolf
Lolina Alvarez, Outings
Co-Chair
521-1152(H)
jalvarez@nmsu.edu
Mario Ruiz, Inner City
Outings Chair
589 - 4622(H)
mruiz@nmsu.edu
Margot Wilson, Warm
Springs Section, Chapter
Delegate
744 - 5860(H)
894 - 7152(W)
hshs2@riolink.com
Marianne Thaeler,
Military Affairs
522 - 3421
marianne.thaeler@
sierraclub.org

Outings

Saturday, January 17 - Baylor Massif Dayhike	
Place:	Organ Mountains
Class:	Strenuous
Limit:	12, reservation and leader approval required
Leader:	Larry Hughes 522-4600 ext. 270, larry@tcisoft.com or Lolina Alvarez 521-1152, jalvarez@nmsu.edu
We will hike to the San Augustin Pass via Baylor Canyon. Call for more information.	
Saturday, January 17 - Bosque del Apache Dayhike	
Place:	Bosque de Apache's Raptor Alley
Class:	Moderate
Limit:	12, reservation and leader approval required
Leader:	Margot Wilson 744-5860. Call for more information.
Sat - Sun, Jan 23 - 24 Famous Annual Chapter Outing in Sierra County.	
Place:	Margot Wilson's house
Class:	Easy
Leader:	Margot Wilson 744-5860
Call Margot or see Chapter Outings for more information.	
Saturday, January 31 - Dofia Ana Peak Dayhike	
Place:	Dofia Ana Mountains.
Class:	Easy/Moderate
Limit:	12, reservation and leader approval required
Leader:	Larry Hughes 522-4600 ext. 270, larry@tcisoft.com or Lolina Alvarez 521-1152, jalvarez@nmsu.edu
We will hike at a leisurely pace to the top of Dofia Ana Peak and then find a nice place for lunch. Call for more info.	
Saturday February 14 Anthony's Nose Dayhike	
Place:	Franklin Mountains
Class:	Strenuous
Limit:	12, reservation and leader approval required
Leader:	Larry Hughes 522-4600 ext. 270, larry@tcisoft.com or Lolina Alvarez 521-1152, jalvarez@nmsu.edu
This hike contains 4th class scrambling and exposure. Call for more info.	

Party Time!!

The Southern New Mexico Group will hold its First Annual Wine and Cheese Party on Saturday, February 21 at 6:00 p.m. Contact Larry or Lolina at 521-1152 or larry@tcisoft.com for more info.

Call for Nominations

If you interested in running for a seat on the Executive Committee of the Southern New Mexico Group, contact Lolina at 521-1152 or jalvarez@nmsu.edu, by Feb 10. The ballot will be printed in the March/April issue of the Rio Grande Sierran.

Getting Ready for Earth Day

If you would like to help with our Earth Day Program, contact Larry or Lolina at 521-1152(H), 522-4600 ext.270(W), jalvarez@nmsu.edu or larry@tcisoft.com. Help us make this year's Earth Day program as successful as last year's.

Warm Springs Section Report
Our Changing Climate

By Margot Wilson

The Earth and its atmosphere absorb energy radiating from the sun. In turn the Earth releases some of this energy back into its atmosphere in the form of infrared light. Some of this infrared light will pass through the atmosphere into space and some of it will be absorbed and re-radiated back to the Earth by carbon dioxide and other gases. This is the "greenhouse effect" and it is responsible for keeping the Earth's temperature about 30°F warmer than it would be without "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere.

Why is the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere a concern? Excessive amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere causes too much infrared light to be re-radiated back to the Earth, increasing its temperature and disturbing the delicate balance which enables life to exist on the Earth. As an extreme example, the atmosphere of Venus consists almost entirely of carbon dioxide. The surface temperature of Venus is more than 750°F. The use of fossil fuel by humans has already resulted in doubling the amount of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere. At the current rate of emission, the amount of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere will double again in 50 years.

Oil companies, the Manufactures' Association, the Cattlemen's Association and others have fiercely denied these facts. However, the accumulated data and a better understanding of our climate, have convinced most climatologists that our climate is indeed changing. Moreover it is recognized that is change is due to the effects of our industrialized societies.

The good news is that we can slow down and eventually stop global warming, but we must begin to act today. The most important step we can take to curb global warming is to improve our nation's energy efficiency. Our cars and trucks, lighting, home appliances, and power plants could be made much more efficient by simply installing the best current technology. Energy efficiency is the cleanest, safest, most economical way we can begin to deal with global warming.

No global warming solution will succeed unless we can control carbon dioxide emissions from cars. More carbon dioxide pollution comes from America's cars and trucks than from the entire nation of Japan. If we are to make any progress in slowing down global warming, we must make our cars go further on a gallon of gas.

While there is no technology known to remove carbon dioxide from our cars' exhausts, we can make them pollute less by making them more fuel-efficient. By using today's best technology, car makers could dramatically increase the fuel economy of cars and trucks. In fact, vehicles such as the 1994 Honda Civic VX have shown that with only minor changes today's cars could get over 50 miles per gallon.

We also need to clean up our electric power plants. Most electric utilities still use coal to produce electricity, spewing millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year. Converting these plants to burn cleaner natural gas could solve part of the problem.

We could do much more to save energy in our homes and office buildings. More energy efficient lighting, heating and air-conditioning could keep millions of tons of carbon dioxide out of our air each year.

Southwestern states in particular hold enormous potential as sources of renewable energy. States like Arizona, New Mexico and Texas have the potential of becoming the Saudi Arabia of solar energy.

Sierra Club Policy: Grazing On The Public Lands

A Note from the

Chapter Chair

There has been discussion on grazing policy both on the list server and at the last ExCom meeting in Kingston. Following is the current Club Policy.

The following policy on Grazing On The Public Lands has been adopted by the Sierra Club Board of Directors:

Grazing On The Public Lands

The goal of the management of grazing on the public lands is to restore and maintain fully functioning natural ecosystems, with their full complements of native species.

Federal and provincial resource agency management emphasis shall be on the restoration of native biodiversity and rehabilitation of all public lands, especially riparian areas, damaged by grazing. Such restoration shall be accomplished through the development and imple-

mentation, with full public participation, of land-use plans and integrated management plans that are based on ecological units, such as watersheds, rather than on grazing allotments, and that are fully monitored for compliance and effectiveness.

To minimize environmental costs, livestock grazing shall be permitted only on public lands in satisfactory condition, except under agency approved rehabilitation plans. The criteria for satisfactory condition include lands in good and excellent condition with static or upward trends, with healthy riparian areas and wildlife habitat, and with grazing practices in compliance with land-use plan objectives, standards and guidelines, and with permit requirements.

To minimize economic costs as well as environmental costs, livestock grazing must be permitted at no less than fair market value established on a regional basis.

Livestock grazing is not an appropriate use for every acre of public lands. Livestock use shall be prohibited on National Wildlife Refuges

and National Parks unless it is currently allowed, if necessary for achieving Refuge or Park purposes, and is not causing environmental damage. Other lands that should be withdrawn from livestock grazing include critical habitats for threatened or endangered species, lands that are actively desertifying or on which grazing is not ecologically sustainable, sensitive cultural resource areas, and lands on which monitoring by public land agencies is inadequate to establish conditions and to evaluate whether grazing practices are in compliance with planning objectives and permit requirements. On those geographically limited areas where wild horses are causing environmental problems, their impacts shall be controlled.

The Sierra Club reaffirms its policy that public range should be retained under public ownership. Further, the Sierra Club urges the public acquisition of private lands by the federal government that are critical to carrying out its public land management responsibilities.

Adopted September 12, 1992 Policy Code 10.5

Upcoming Outings

January 24/25

Saturday/Sunday

Contact: Margot Wilson 505-744-5860

Truth or Consequences Area "Camp" & Day Hikes

Head for the balmy air of Sierra County, camping in at Margot's house, sharing a pot-luck supper Saturday evening, and exploring the nearby countryside, with a longer day hike on Sat. (possibly to Armendaris Ranch) & shorter one on Sun. Dogs allowed. Call for details.

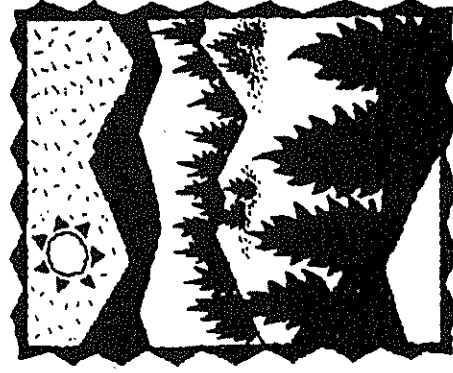
Jan. 24, Feb. 7 & Feb. 21

Three Saturdays

Contact: Jennifer Jones 505-662-3023

Los Alamos Winter Birding

Learn how to recognize the winter birds. Location of field trips will depend upon weather conditions. Call for details.



March 7

Saturday

Contact: Gary Williams 915-593-3624

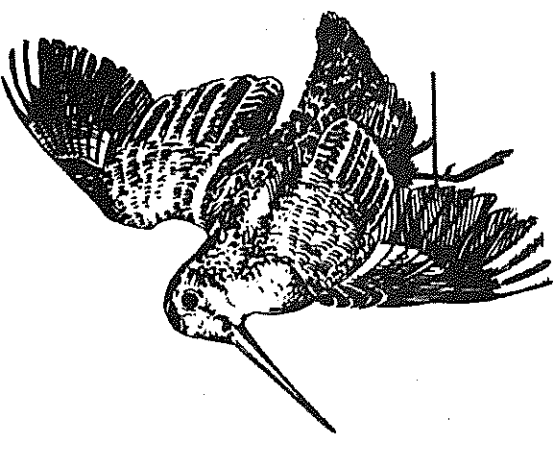
Cowboy Springs WSA

Possible day hike to this small, exquisite wilderness study area north of the Big Hatchets in the Boot Heel of NM. Call Gary to see if trip is on, & get details.

Feeling Depressed?

Take a Hike!

I was feeling pretty depressed the last week or two after some discordant issues/voices had been raised at recent meetings, which indicated some serious dis-unity within the Chapter. I went out on a SF Group snowshoe trip this past weekend. A rather short trip into the snowy woods, but the brilliant blue sky, fresh snow, and the enthusiasm & camaraderie of the 9 participants were a wonderful tonic for my low spirits. And I remembered my Thanksgiving weekend trip to the Big Hatchets - a window of clear weather, all sorts of unusual, spiny desert plants I don't see up north, tantalizing vistas into Mexico, and, most importantly, the sense of community which came from sharing the hike & evening fire with the oth-



Chapter Outings Notes from Norma

by
Norma
McCallan

Outings Chairs to Gather at Retreat

Saturday/Sunday March 7/8, Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. It has been some time since the group outings chairs have gotten together, and at this retreat we will endeavour to share ideas re improving our outings programs & discuss some changing policies from National, plus have fun exploring nearby countryside. Outing leaders/those interested in outings administration are welcome to attend. Call me (Norma) for details, 505-471-0005

Chapter Proposes Separate E-Mail Lists

One for Information, One for Discussion

by John Buchser, Chapter Chair

Over the last year, lively discussion on the Rio Grande Chapter's list server (sierra@conchas.nm.org) has sometimes become so lively that we have lost a number of members on this list. The Chapter is creating a new list for discussion of issues. I think it is important for our members to get information (without discussion) such as timely announcements of meetings and other environmental alerts. Sometimes just a few more voices on environmental issues can make a difference. The existing list will remain for this purpose. I propose as the starting point for rules on the two lists:

Information list

sierra@conchas.nm.org

Intended for announcements of meetings, environmental alerts, legislative alerts, and anything else which is informative in nature and in some way relates to informing the general environmental community in New Mexico and El Paso about what's happening, particularly in our part of the Southwest.

Not intended for discussion. If someone posts a message which can be interpreted as discussion, then the moderator will send a private message pointing this out. If it happens again, a message will be posted to the entire list. The third time, the offending person will be removed from the list.

Water

(*Albuquerque Group News, continued from page 8*)

through an open, inclusive, and participatory process.

We asked that the Assembly Coordinating Committee make a recommendation for governance of the planning process.

The 2nd Assembly was held in November. Our mission was to agree on the governance proposal and to select the delegates who will serve on the Action Committee (AC), the governing and coordinating body for MRG water planning.

The Action Committee will develop and implement a public education and participation campaign which will include public meetings and future Water Assemblies. The AC will develop a strategic plan which includes a proposed organizational structure and planning process, provides for collection of data and information and identifies sources of funds for ongoing water planning. In order to select the AC delegates, the participants at the 2nd Assembly were asked to join one of three groups:

Advocates - for example, pueblos, irrigators, environmental advocates, advocates for critics, domestic well owners, residential, industrial, commercial & institutional water users, development interests, young people, neighborhoods....

Managers - for example, pueblos, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, county and municipal water systems, mutual domestics, private water companies, flood control districts....

Specialists - for example, bosque & ecosystem specialists, geologists, hydrogeologists, surface flow specialists, water quality and quantity specialists, regulators.

Each large group selected delegates to the Action Committee including the author and Sierran Steve Harris. The AC has 35 members, a large and perhaps unwieldy number. We met in Nov. and Dec. and are struggling to decide how we will operate and develop and implement a plan. Steve and I would welcome your thoughts, ideas, suggestions and help as we work with the other AC members. We urge you to contact us and get involved!

The Proceedings of the 1st Assembly can be found at <http://www.nmia.com/luvabc>.

Contact Susan Gorman, TEL: 505-265-3231, FAX: 505-256-0373, EMail: bblair@aol.com and Steve Harris, Rio Grande Restoration, TEL: 505-751-1269, EMail: uncleg@laplaza.org. Web: <http://www.farfjung.com>.

What is a Regional Water Plan?

A Regional Water plan must answer three questions: What is the region's available water supply? What is the region's future water demand? How will the region meet future demand with available supply? Planners should focus on the following:

- Location, quality and extent of the current water resource supply
- Current water use by category
- Projections of future water use (quantified)
- Projections of the effect of conservation initiatives on future water use
- Source and quality of future water supply considering cost, technical feasibility, social and political issues, risks of contamination
- Status of current water rights
- Public involvement in the planning process

Water planning should embody democracy in action! Planners must listen to the people, the stakeholders who live in the region and depend on the water supply for their health, livelihood and life.

Discussion List

name-to-be-determined@conchas.nm.org

No personal attacks. It's OK to discuss differences on issues, but even if we disagree (we frequently do!), we are fellow environmentalists, and need to have respect for each other. If there is what may be interpreted as a personal attack, then the moderator will send a private message pointing this out. If it happens again, a message will be posted to the entire list. The third time, the offending person will be removed from the list.

Both lists will require users to hold Sierra Club membership. Neither list will be moderated in any way beyond the above mentioned rules. The existing membership in sierra@conchas.nm.org will remain as-is, but, of course, will change with your requests. I will act in the role of "moderator" for both lists.

Send your thanks to Susan Gorman (BBlairB@aol.com) for being the list handler for so long! She is moving on to being the list guru for water (more details on that later).

If you are interested in subscribing to one or both of these lists, please send e-mail to me (JBuchser@aol.com), preferably with a subject line of "Sierra List Request".

Activists Go 4th for the Petroglyphs

On January 4, 1998, Sierra Club activists and Albuquerque West Side neighbors took to the streets to spread the word about the impact the proposed Paseo extension through Petroglyph National Monument will have on West Side neighborhoods. Though many see the road as a solution to traffic congestion, the real issue is development and the out-of-control sprawl west of the Monument which the road would help to create. This would compound traffic problems, not solve them, and further stress infrastructure needs for people on the West Side. For more information on this educational effort, contact the Sierra Club's Petroglyph Protection Project, 505-842-0238.

Enviro/Lobby Day: February 5th

Mark this date—Thursday, February 5, 1998—and be a part of Enviro/Lobby Day at the Roundhouse. The day's events will include a press conference in the Rotunda at noon, followed by a Lobbying 101 workshop at 1pm for those who need to learn or brush up on lobbying fundamentals. The workshop will also include a briefing on the key environmental issues of the session. The afternoon is a time for meeting with your legislators to discuss environmental concerns and specific legislation. And, the finale, beginning at 6pm, is a reception for legislators and environmental activists. This event got rave reviews last session...don't miss it! For further info, call 505-983-4254.

Election Results

The winners of the election for Excom of the Rio Grande Chapter are:

John Buchser
Barbara Leonard
Liz Walsh

Full results of the election, including Group election results will appear in the March/April issue of the Rio Grande Sierran.

Chapter Executive Committee

Next Meeting: January 11

Socorro, NM

