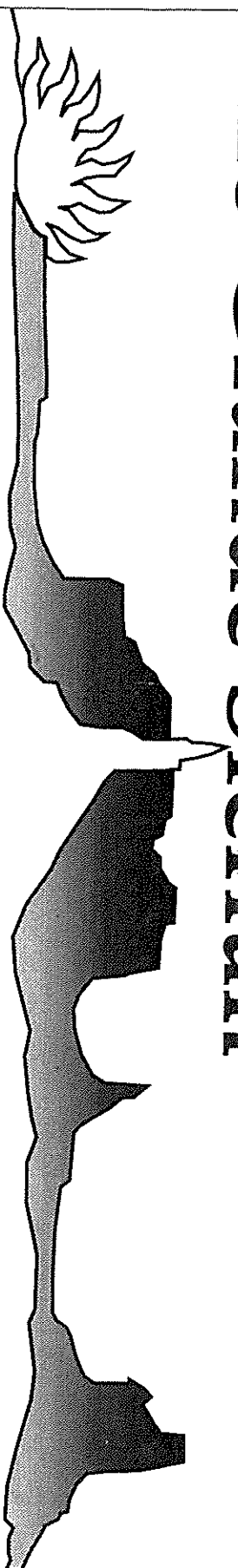


Rio Grande Sierran



News of the Rio Grande Chapter Sierra Club
March/April 1996

A Word From the Chair

by Van L. Perkins

This message is NOT about the legislative session, just over—though at first you may think so. Nor is it about reintroduction of the Mexican wolf. It is really about the importance of environmental activists, and how you can become one, on whatever terms you wish.

The legislative session that ended on February 15 was, in the context of the times, a successful one. The Sierra Club, working with the Audubon Society, the Conservation Voters Alliance, and others, succeeded in defeating bills which would have seriously weakened the New Mexico Mining Act which we worked so hard to enact only three years ago, and the Subdivision Act passed only last year, which would do much to assure clean and adequate water in *colonias*, among other things.

Much of our success was due to our ability to let legislators know that a substantial public opposed both bills. They did so by lobbying individual legislators, by writing letters to them, by calling them, and by attending hearings on the bills. In order to mobilize our supporters, we relied primarily on our telephone tree, and individual calls to those we

knew had a particular interest in the issues.

In October, we mounted a similar effort to support reintroduction of the Mexican wolf. Most of those who opposed reintroduction make their living in activities they feel the wolf threatens—an erroneous assumption in fact—and thus were highly motivated to attend the hearing. In spite of that, proponents of reintroduction outnumbered opponents.

Again, our success was due to our ability to get the word out through mailings, newsletters, telephone calls, etc. The Santa Fe Group called the entire membership. Other Groups mounted similar efforts.

The Club's ability to make a difference always depends on the ability of our membership to make itself heard. But we never have enough individuals who are willing to join the effort. So I am making a personal plea to all of our members—or non-members who may read this. Please join us. Become an: **ACTIVIST FOR THE EARTH!**

Fill out the "coupon" you will find herein. Mail it to me at Rt. 19 Box 128H, Santa Fe, NM 87505. I promise you I will personally call you to learn something about your interests, the level of involvement you would feel comfortable with, and how we might best communicate with you. (Or, if you prefer, call me at 505-983-8801.) Only after that will anyone else call you. You choose the level and kind of activity: write a letter, make telephone call, or whatever. That is all there is to it, but the survival of the planet as we know it depends on you.



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Sierra Club
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El Paso, TX 79983

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Yes! I want to become an Activist for the Earth. I want to hear from you, Van, so I can learn how to help.

name _____

address _____

phone number _____

1996 Legislative Roundup

by Doug Fraser, Sierra Club Lobbyist

The second session of the 42nd New Mexico State Legislature (the "short session") concluded at noon on February 15. It was a good one, insofar as most of the "bad" proposals were stopped and we got a few "good" items through. We await the Governor's action on some of these bills.

Proposed Mining Act Changes

These changes were proposed by the Administration and sponsored by Rep. Michael Olguin (D-Socorro) in HB 466. We met with the sponsor early in the session and, following an extended hearing before the House Business and Industry Committee, Rep. Olguin withdrew the bill. He said he was primarily concerned about the financial hardship of the new law on the small miner. His door remains open to us for further discussions.

Proposed Delay of Subdivision Act

This was another Administration proposal sponsored by Sen. Skip Vernon (R-Bernalillo) in SB 476, which, among other things, would have delayed the effective date of the Act from this June until next. It was heard in another extended hearing, this time before the Senate Corporations and Transportation Committee, where it was permanently tabled. Thanks to Attorney General Tom Udall, Rep. Cisco McSorley (D-Bernalillo), Sen. Mary Jane Garcia (D-Dona Ana), and the Conservation Voters Alliance for their help.

Petroglyph National Monument

There were several bills introduced to add to the Monument properties, conditioned on extending Paseo del Norte through the Monument. Most died. However, a general projects bill, containing some 16 other projects (CS/HB 41), passed through after some horse trading in the last few hours of the session for \$1,000,000 in bonds, conditioned on the Federal Secretary of the Interior declaring his "assistance" by June 1 in the construction of the Paseo del Norte extension. We will work to make sure that this does not occur. Presently, the Department of the Interior is against the extension.

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**Chapter ExCom and
Conservation
Committees Meet
June 1 and 2, 1996**
All Members Welcome
Call Chair Van Perkins for
information, 505-983-8801

RIO GRANDE CHAPTER DIRECTORY

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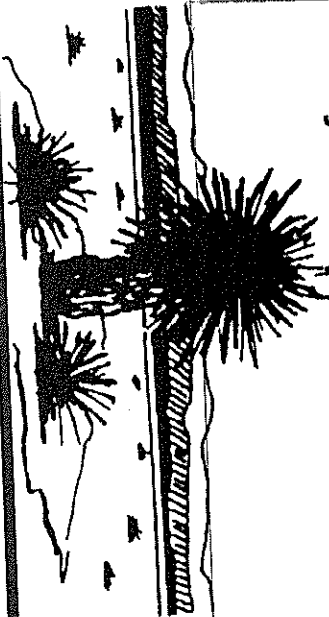
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The Mexican Wolf Update

by Martin Heinrich

First things first. Thanks to all the activists who have kept the Mexican wolf in the spotlight over the last couple of months. It is working. *Outside Magazine* ran an article about the lobo that featured a quote from Sierran and rancher, Jim Winder. Also, CNN has been making some calls about the reintroduction program and may run a story once a decision is reached. Most importantly, Governor Johnson is feeling some heat.

In the last Update, addresses for Gov. Johnson and New Mexico Game & Fish (NM G&F) were omitted because of the slim chance of changing their minds on this issue. Fortunately, many people were so angered by the political nature of the Johnson/NM G&F decision, that they took it upon themselves to write and call Johnson's office and NM G&F. So many people complained, that there is now a rumor that NM G&F may revise its position. If we can put enough pressure on for that, it will be a great victory. Consequently, I urge all of you to write and call NM G & F to let them know how unacceptable opposition is. After all, the Endangered Species Act practically mandates reintroduction, making opposition by state agencies contrary to federal law. It might also be worth giving the Governor a piece of your mind as well, since we all know he could use it.

Wolf Pen Construction

The construction of wolf pens by US Fish & Wildlife (FWS) is nearing completion. These pens will be where the first reintroduced wolves will live and bear their pups until release. The contractors are finished and numerous volunteers are poised to do clean up and finish already spent several weeks doing plumbing and trenching on site. By March, the only major work left should be revegetation.

Reintroduction Decision

Originally, FWS hoped to have a decision on record by the end of March. Unfortunately, their schedule has been considerably sidetracked by the budget shutdowns and a decision probably will not be made until June. Since June is perilously close to the '96 election, politics will no doubt play a role. That makes all your letters to the Secretary of Interior and the Regional Director of FWS immeasurably important. Remember we want Mexican wolves in the Blue Range by 1997. White Sands alone cannot support enough wolves for a self-sufficient population. If FWS decides to release in White Sands first, we may never see reintroduction in the Blue. This may be our last, best hope for truly wild Mexican wolves to roam free. We cannot let ourselves fall victim to political compromise this late in the game.

Wolf Forum

The White Sands Wolf Coalition is organizing a Forum on the Lobo to provide an opportunity for more people to learn about the situation. So far, Hank Fisher, Defenders of Wildlife, Wendy Brown, FWS, Alan May, ADC, and a wildlife biologist from White Sands Missile Range have agreed to participate. The forum will be on March 21, 7:00 PM. School for the Visually Handicapped, Alamogordo. For more information, call Cindy Roper, 434-4494.

Addresses for Action:

New Mexico State Game & Fish
PO Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Gov. Gary Johnson
Office of the Governor
Santa Fe, NM 87503

Department of Interior
Secretary Bruce Babbitt
Main Interior Bldg.
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240
FAX (202) 208-6956



US Fish & Wildlife
Regional Director Nancy Kaufman
PO Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103
(505) 248-6282

1996 Legislative Roundup

(cont'd from page 1)

Wildlife Conservation

Despite the Administration's original zero budget proposal, we were successful in getting \$350,000 in the Game and Fish Department's budget for habitat protection due to the heroic effort in the House Government and Urban Affairs Committee of Rep. Robert Perts (D-Sandoval), with an assist from Rep. David Pederson (D-McKinley). We await the Governor's action on the budget bills.

Ute Mountain

We were successful in getting through both chambers SJM 45, asking the State Land Office to continue study of the feasibility of transferring these private lands to the public trust. Thanks both Sen. Carlos Cisneros (D-Taos) and La Commissioner Ray Powell.

Tres Pistoles

Rep. Roger Madalena (D-Bernalillo), our and Rep. Jerry Alwin's (R-Bernalillo) request introduced HB 658, which, among other projects would have raised \$1,250,000 in severance bond monies to acquire this area. However, despite support from some legislators, we need a commitment of an equal amount of City of Albuquerque monies. The Federal matching monies already there. Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez is willing to meet with us on this issue. Perhaps next year we can refashion a legislative proposal. Thanks to Reps. Madalena and Alwin.

Pojoaque Lagoons

Thanks to Rep. Gary King (D-Santa Fe) who introduced HJM 34 at our request to assist EPA assistance to help the Pojoaque Pueblo clean up their admitted sewage lagoon problem. I am out of time on the Senate Consent Calendar closing minutes of the session, having passed committees and the House floor.

Natural Resources Trustee

We had hoped to increase the Trust budget to address pollution of the Red River the groundwater pollution under Spartan Inc., in Albuquerque. However, because of appears to be a turf battle with the Environment Department, this Office may be cut. We await Governor's action.

Underground Storage Tanks

Rep. Robert Light (D-Eddy), on behalf the Administration, introduced HB 487 to fund the cleaning up of underground storage tanks. The funds are to be raised from petroleum products loading fee. A thank you to Sen. Shannon Robinson (D-Bernalillo) for his introduction in the Senate. It now needs the Governor's signature.

Trails

Last, but not least, the one truly passed bill (it certainly didn't start that way), which passed without one dissenting vote on either House or Senate floor, was HCS/H introduced by Rep. Wesley Grau (D-Curry) on behalf of the Administration. What a turn of events from the original bill to the rewritten substitute! Please read Ned Sudborough's article on page 16. Thanks to Rep. Grau

(cont'd on page 16)

The New Mexico Bicycle/Equestrian Committee, in its just finished statewide plan, envisions the day when people will be able to cycle, walk or ride safely in all areas of the state. All roads and highways will be designed to be more bicycle/pedestrian/equestrian (BPE) friendly, and all users of the road will be trained to share road and trail space, enabling the bicyclist, pedestrian and equestrian to coexist safely with motorists. Indeed, by designing roads and trails to encourage bicycling, walking and riding, we may help to provide more transportation choices; reduce traffic congestion; reduce air and noise pollution; reduce wear and tear on our roads; boost tourism throughout the state; reduce consumption of petroleum resources; and improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for New Mexico's citizens and its visitors.

The BPE Plan embraces the concept of a comprehensive "4-E" program: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, and Encouragement.

ENGINEERING (Includes Planning)

1. Support regional and local master plans for BPE considerations and encourage them to be included within the transportation element of comprehensive land use plans. Map current and potential routes for nonmotorized travel.

Identify necessary improvements for existing roads.

Provide a transportation system which permits travel that is safe, efficient and free of barriers that impede nonmotorized travel, including the movement of people with disabilities.

Provide a comfortable cycling, walking, and riding atmosphere which both coexists with, and provides linkages to, public transportation.

Provide reasonable accommodation for bicycle/pedestrian traffic and bicycle parking at all facilities under the control of state agencies or public institutions.

Create or develop a statewide BPE plan that can be integrated with other transportation systems.

Dedicate a portion of the State Road Fund for bicycling, walking and riding facilities, education programs and enforcement, especially through the regional and metropolitan planning organizations, to be used for leverage of federal funds.

2. Set up standard procedures for addressing on-going BPE needs.

Encourage municipalities to adopt design standards and functional street classification systems that provide for the creation of safe and convenient facilities to encourage bicycling, walking and riding as appropriate for urban, suburban and rural areas.

Adopt maintenance practices to preserve bikeways, walkways and equestrian trails in a safe condition.

Provide uniform signing and marking of all bikeways, walkways and equestrian trails.

Provide advice and technical assistance to state, local and county governments in designing, constructing and maintaining BPE facilities.

EDUCATION

1. Provide instruction on lawful, responsible behavior among motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.

Develop bicycling, walking and riding safety education programs to improve skills and observance of traffic laws and promote overall safety for bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians of all ages.

Include BPE information in

driver education and educate bicyclists and the general public on how to share the road.

Include in driver's education courses on sharing the road and on alternatives to driving, including bicycling, walking and horse back riding safety.

Encourage BPE education courses, safety courses and bicyclist certification programs.

A week-long program shall be offered to every fifth grader in New Mexico.

Encourage certification of instructors and provision of course instruction materials and educational films or video productions on BPE safety.

2. Deliver safety messages through print and electronic media.

Design messages targeted to different audiences.

Create a process for effective delivery of these messages.

ENFORCEMENT

1. Improve existing traffic laws and enforcement of laws.

Review and analyze current traffic laws that affect bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.

Review and analyze nonmotorized accidents annually by each appropriate jurisdiction for mitigation of facility problems existing at accident sites.

Encourage enforcement of laws that affect BPE safety.

Increase awareness among police officers of the importance of BPE law enforcement.

Amend the policy to allow bicycles on the interstate.

Repeal the mandatory sidepath law.

ENCOURAGEMENT

1. Increase incentives for bicycling, walking, and riding and reduce incentives for driving single-occupant motor vehicles.

Encourage agencies and companies to identify which motor vehicle trips can be modified to use bicycles and which trips can be more efficiently taken on foot.

Encourage companies and agencies to review policies and practices to produce a balanced transportation plan for their employees' commuting needs.

Offer incentives for walking and biking to work. Encourage federal/state/local governments and businesses to offer employees flex time to avoid peak traffic, to establish shower and locker facilities.

2. Provide casual introduction to bicycling, walking and riding as transportation to novices.

Include bicycling, walking and riding activities in local recreation programs.

Promote utilitarian nonmotorized transportation through introductory special events, such as a Bike To Work Day.

Offer key target audiences detailed information on nonmotorized travel.

Create a state-wide bicycle touring map.

3. Use electronic and print media to spread information on the benefits of nonmotorized transportation.

Develop and disseminate positive messages through public service announcements, special events promotion and news releases.

4. Use nonmotorized modes to help accomplish unrelated law enforcement goals.

Implement bicycle, equestrian and foot patrols in appropriate areas.

Require drivers education instruction on sharing the road with bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians, and alternatives to driving.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Bicycle compatibility shall be a goal for state highways, in order to provide reasonably safe bicycle use.

2. Bicycle operation should continue to be prohibited on urban interstate systems where numerous on-off ramps used by high volumes of motor vehicles dramatically increase risks to cyclists.

3. Bicycle riding on rural interstate highways should not be prohibited.

4. Make available appropriate levels of program and promotional support to private and nonprofit bicycling education and activity organizations.

5. Support recreational bicycling and touring.

6. Restore the bicycle's status as a legal vehicle on public roadways.

7. Develop a pervasive understanding and attitude of mutual respect and accommodation between bicyclists and motorists.

8. Integrate bicycle-safety education as a part of educational systems, and reinforce safe and legal bicycling practice.

9. Insofar as possible, provide bicyclists access as sufficient as motorists.

10. Provide design and maintenance of bikeways.

11. Provide direct, continuous bikeways along all arterial and collector routes, unless doing so would be contrary to public safety or cost too much.

12. All bicycle transportation facilities approved by the New Mexico Highway Commission shall conform to the guidelines contained herein and in FHWA standards or with AASHTO guidelines.

13. Establish bike lanes or paved shoulders along all state roads, highways, arterials, and collector routes, where feasible.

14. The continuation of all state highway bicycle routes must be provided into and through towns and urban areas.

15. Secure and adequate bicycle parking facilities should be provided in the design and construction of all state funded buildings, parks and recreational facilities.

PEDESTRIAN

Pedestrian walkways which are safe and convenient should be considered adjacent to every state road facility. These walkways might include sidewalks, paths, trails, and shoulders.

2. Motorists and pedestrians alike need to be educated on pedestrian rights and responsibilities.

3. Provide a safe walking environment for pedestrians that does not require pedestrians to share space with vehicles.

4. Provide pedestrians with support facilities necessary to connect with other modes of transportation.

5. Provide sidewalk features that assist the movement of people with disabilities.

6. Educate pedestrians and motorists to safely coexist.

7. Increase enforcement against motorists who violate pedestrian rights.

8. Develop community support for traffic law enforcement for pedestrians.

9. Provide incentives to promote walking and other alternative transportation modes.

EQUESTRIAN

1. Teach and demonstrate the proper methods of training and conditioning horses for trail riding.

2. Encourage good horsemanship for trail riding.

3. Equestrian pathways should be provided next to or across roadways

A Plan for Better Cycling, Hiking, and Horseback Riding

by Ken Hughes,
Transportation Chair

where public comment and anticipated use indicates the need.

4. Educate bicyclists on how to courteously encounter equestrians on multi-use trails.

5. Modify interstate and highway rest stops to be more horse friendly.

TREK COPPER CANYON Wilderness Adventure



Copper Canyon, Mexico - Overnight treks along with wilderness lodging in the high Sierras and in the bottom of the canyon in Batopilas, this Spring. Hike with guides & burros to remote abandoned Tarahumara caves high on mesas (about 1,200-1,500 foot ascent), and set up camp at the river's bank, in Batopilas hike to Canuchin Mines - spectacular views of the canyon! Ancient mines and excellent riding here! This is real unexplored country, not a cellophane-wrapped "adventure vacation". Stay at the wilderness lodge high in the pines, and travel by car 7,000 feet below to the very bottom of the canyon and stay at the 19th century restored Hacienda in Batopilas. Week-long trips include campouts, lodging, meals, guides & burros. First trip begins Saturday, April 21.

COPPER CANYON LODGES
2741 Paldan - Auburn Hills, MI 48326
800-776-3942



MINE TALES A Journal of Destructive Subsidies

by
Sue McIntosh

We in New Mexico still labor under the archaic Federal General Mining Law of 1872, a remnant of "Manifest Destiny" and the Indian wars. Its existence today in a form that preserves the ancient favors granted in another century is testimony to the power and influence of the mining industry in America. It is the treasure of the powerbrokers who exploit the mineral wealth of this nation and others.

The 1872 Mining Law is the mother of all federal government subsidies. It is the most obvious and the most debated, but it is not the only method by which we subsidize large mining. We pass protective laws and allow mines to skirt enforcement. We enter into joint Memoranda of Understanding, while the only thing understood is that the terms of the documents are forgotten before the ink is dry. We seek "voluntary compliance" from an industry that knows the difference, but often chooses noncompliance as a matter of course. We puff up our chests and bark because our water is fouled with heavy metals and choked with sediment. But we have been barking for 20 years now.

The mining industry aggressively defends the continued existence of the 1872 Mining Law. In fact, industry claims that it is overregulated (which is hogwash), yet it exploits the advantages of its "most favored" status incessantly. In doing so, the mining industry condemns large portions of New Mexico's heritage—its wild lands and clean waters—to death.

As you have probably noticed, the much maligned title of this column has changed. I still believe in what I said in the first column—mining makes us do silly things. During its short life, the former title seems to have gotten much attention. The Lieutenant Governor asked for a copy of our newsletter so he could read the mining article. I sent him several. Cobre Mining Company has made copies of the last column, and thoughtfully distributed them in several forums. Thank you.

I have received several suggested alternate titles. "Mining is Disturbing." "Mining is Lousy." "Out of respect for Loreta Lynn, the Coal Miner's Daughter, 'You're Not Woman Enough To Take My Mine.'" But now, it is time to move on and to focus on the real problem here. It is not the mine itself, really. It is the artificial and varied subsidies with which we shower the mineral industry. We let mining companies cut loose on our public lands, we throw our mineral resources at them and say "Run to the bank, gentleman, while commodity prices are high! Run, no time to tarry over reclamation." On private lands, we see massive destruction on scales almost incomprehensible, and we say, "Better not give 'em any lip. They'll pack up and move all those jobs to Chile."

So, we subsidize them. We let them pollute and look the other way. Enforcement actions are brought against people with far less clout, if they are brought at all.

From now on, this column will be a journal of these destructive subsidies and their impact on our state. The first tale is one of the worst. I used to think that this federal government was a government by, for and of the people. The BLM has recently disclosed a different truth. In the resource colony of southwest New Mexico, large mines tend to direct things away from the public interest and toward their own.

In last month's column, I pointed out that Cobre Mining Co. had prepared their own National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and given them to the BLM for rubberstamping of Cobre's Continental Mine in Grant County. Cobre is

insightful. Why should they bother to exert inappropriate influence when they can simply make the BLM's decisions for them? And so that is exactly what Cobre did. BLM welcomed the help.

What happens when they were "found out"? NOT MUCH.

Continental Mine--New Mexico's Largest Wildcat

In January 1995, after allowing several years of public lands wildcat operation at the Continental Mine, the BLM finally got around to "approving" mining operations on public land at the large copper mine. Continental Mine had been mining there for two to three years by then, but I'm sure they appreciated the official nod. The trouble is, the BLM had never completed analysis of the proposed Plan of Operations in compliance with NEPA, or the BLM's own regulations. Thus, the BLM never possessed authority to give Continental the go-ahead.

We recently pointed this out to the BLM, chiefly because the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has gathered data which unquestionably reflects the fact that significant amounts of contaminant metals are coming off the Continental Mine site and degrading water resources below. In response, the BLM flippanantly issued a *Finding Of No Significant Impact* (FONSI) and *Decision Record* (DR) and mailed it to us on January 26, 1996.

Two Enormous Problems

Problem one: In its belated decision document, the BLM made a formal decision that the mine Plan of Operations is "not likely to result in significant impacts to the human environment." The problem is BLM was aware that plenty of data exists documenting the actual existence of such significant impacts.

Problem two: BLM regulations at 43 CFR Part 4 provide an automatic stay of the proposed Plan of Operations until the period available for filing an appeal of the FONSI/DR expires and until the Interior Board of Land Appeals decides whether to issue a long-term stay. We reminded the state BLM of the existence of this automatic stay provision. BLM responded, finally, saying that, since the mine was already operating, and since the BLM had ostensibly given them authority to operate (illegally, I might add), this was not a "normal circumstance." Simply put, the BLM refused to implement the stay. Apparently, the agency sheepishly asked Cobre to voluntarily stop operations on public land, but the company refused. And that is where it was left.

We have appealed this entire mess to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. In the meantime, Cobre continues to steal our land under the watchful eye of the BLM. Until our government is made to believe that it will be more difficult for them to screw the public than to enforce the law against big industry, we can expect more of the same. We'll let you know how it turns out.

Until then, here is a little education about mining:

Modern Mining

The glory days of the Comstock lode and high grade ores are gone. What is left is hard to find and destructive to extract. It has been immensely profitable, in part, because the expense has been born by the land and the water and the traditional lifestyles which have been turned upside down by the process.

When we talk about hardrock mines, we generally mean gold, silver, copper, molybdenum. There are many

other lesser known minerals in this category, including agate mines, silica and even gemstones. New Mexico has a vigorous hardrock mining history, but our largest mineral rush is not in the past. Numerous new mining operations are currently in exploration or development phases and include a copper operation on the boundary of the Pecos Wilderness, a possible full-scale open pit copper mine in Taos County and one in Sierra County near Hillsboro, gold exploration in Sierra County, and others in Lincoln County and the Caballos. Nearly everywhere in New Mexico, there is some level of new mining interest.

Despite the long history of mining activity in New Mexico, hardrock mining typically accounts for less than one half of one percent of all New Mexico employment. It is also important to note the trend in mining and employment. For instance, copper production and profit has increased significantly. In 1983, copper mining in New Mexico provided 23.5 jobs per ton of copper produced. In 1990, that figure had fallen to only 8.7 jobs per ton.

There are bigger shovels, better processes, and significantly fewer jobs. And when the ore is gone, or where, as in Questa, the price is too low, it is all over. Mining makes for an inherently boom and bust economy. Some mining operations may continue for 50 or 60 years. Most do not. In all cases, however, production must eventually end. We have historically labeled a town where the mine has closed a "ghost town." Unfortunately, mines create ghost towns in another way. Look at Pterro on Hanover Creek in Grant County. The Continental Mine has dismantled that town piecemeal. The school, homes, . . . gone. There is some of it still left, but many locals aren't exactly hopeful about the future.

Damage Caused By Mining

Acid Mine Drainage (AMD): AMD is the highly acidic drainage that mine operations often emit. AMD results when high sulfide pyritic rock is exposed to oxygen and water. The chemical reaction lowers the pH value substantially (to 2.0 and below). When this acidic drainage contacts rock with large heavy metal load, as in much of the rock found in Western hardrock mines, waste piles and tailings, the metals are dissolved and carried with the drainage, contaminating ground and surface water, killing vegetation and accumulating in wildlife, leading to death and serious mutation along the food chain.

The critical point about AMD is that it is extremely difficult and expensive to reverse once it begins. Professionals are confounded regarding permanent solutions to these drainage problems. Often, the remedy must be constructed and operation of one or more treatment plants at point sources, perpetual monitoring and maintenance of disposal plants, plus the problem of disposal of the toxic sludge that the facilities remove from the contaminated water.

Because AMD presents serious contamination problems, often causing wildlife and plant life death on massive scale as well as posing threats to human contamination from high concentrations of lead, mercury, cadmium, copper, zinc, etc., proper baseline investigation and monitoring siting and design are necessary. AMD and other aspects

mining operations, impacts and resultant damage resulting from open pit mining extend far into the future. Often, as with AMD, the problem does not begin to become uncontrolled until mining operations cease and the min-

Adios OLE!

On February 12, we received this note from our attorney, Steve Michel, about the Ojo Line Extension through the Jemez, which we opposed (see the article in the May/June 1995 *Sierra*):

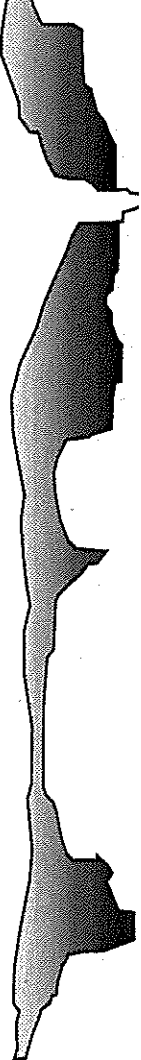
"On February 8, 1996, the time lapsed for PNM to file an appeal of the New Mexico Public Utility Commission's decision rejecting OLE. As such, the Commission Order is final and the OLE Project is dead—at last!"

Electronic Sierra Club

Due to the large number of important articles in this issue, the Electronic Sierra Club will take a short vacation. We'll be back in the next issue.

Bruce Batson & Blair Brown

(cont'd on page 5)



As the eye of the Congressional hurricane passes over the country, giving us a temporary respite from an unreasonable tempest, I find my thoughts turning to history and lessons that have been apparently unlearned.

In my quest to understand how we arrived at this moment in time—in which a shockingly brazen frontal assault is being waged on a generation's worth of environmental achievement, against the will of intense public opinion—I have turned to the history of the conservation movement for clues. What I have discovered, however, has made me very uneasy.

Turn-Of-The-Century Anxiety

Reading history in the shadow of a new and uncertain century, I am struck by how familiar the hopes and fears of 1896 sound, especially to the ears of today's conservationists. A century ago, John Muir and friends were grappling with the increasingly bleak aftershocks of the Industrial Revolution. Physical and spiritual soot were spreading at an alarming

rate. Cities were overflowing with crime, alienation, and anxiety. The nation's quality-of-life was under siege.

Turn-of-the-century America, wrote historian Roderick Nash, "appeared to be overrun by confusion, corruption, and a debilitating overabundance." People became deeply concerned about the eclipse of morality, refinement, and idealism by urbanization, industrialization, and business values."

In response, Muir urged "nerve-shaken and overcivilised" city-dwellers to wander in the wilderness, posthaste. In heeding his advice, many became leaders in the burgeoning conservation movement. The sentiment of Will Dilg, founder of the Isak Walton League, was typical: "I am weary of civilization's madness... I am tired of your piles of buildings and I ache from your iron streets... I long for the unharnessed freedom of the big outside."

"Salve and Savior of Civilization"

He and others urged the populace to fish, hunt, hike, camp--

company leaves the site, often leaves the state and sometimes the country. Thus, the problems at mine sites often become the burdens of the state and its citizens far into the future. In fact, in several cases, mining operations that had been operating under state water and other regulatory programs in the 1970s and 1980s have ceased operations and become perplexing and dangerous Superfund type sites today.

Interrupting

and Reconfiguring Natural Drainage Patterns:

In the absence of regulatory pressure, cost factors usually dictate that mine waste be dumped in as convenient and close a location as possible. Usually, that means the random creation of skyscraper-sized waste piles that fill valleys and truncate the natural flow of surface waters. When this occurs, downstream areas are seriously affected, and the commingling of clean surface water with contaminated or acid producing mine waste has killed entire stream systems and all of the life that formerly depended upon them.

Unique Effects of an Open Pit

Surface mining operations often create large pits and other major surface disturbances that may or may not be capable of repair when operations cease. The standard pit configuration has been essentially the same for 100 years: a conical step down, bench terrace pit with the size of the pit depending on the size and depth of the principal ore body.

When pit construction is undertaken, absolutely everything alive on the surface, including life zone topsoil, is sacrificed. In timberling, this makes a "clear cut" look like a girl scout picnic. In mining, this fact is often overlooked. In some instances, as in very high elevations and arid or semi-arid zones, reestablishing a measure of this sacrificed life is difficult or impossible. Trees and important woody vegetation are rarely restored after mining activities, significantly diminishing the post-mining value of the land for most types of wildlife or agriculture.

As the pit proceeds downward into the earth, groundwater is often intercepted at various levels. During mining, all groundwater that infiltrates the pit must be pumped out. Following

mining, if the pit is not backfilled, it will fill with water to a certain level and become a lake. In most circumstances, the water in the pit will be acidic, and poor quality. Perhaps more importantly in New Mexico, where evaporation usually exceeds precipitation, the pit lake will perpetually waste water into the atmosphere. This evaporative loss, coupled with an extensive "cone of depression" which will actively draw area groundwater toward the pit, typically results in drawdown of local water resources in enormous proportions. Springs and creeks dry up, and wells go dry. Groundwater may not recover to pre-mining levels for hundreds of years following cessation of mining operations, if at all.

Impact of Resource Protection

Using modern chemical process technology, mining companies are now able to extract minerals from ore in concentrations of .002 ounces of mineral per ton of waste in the case of gold. This type of mineral extraction disturbs vast blocks of land and generates massive piles of waste. This and other modern methods of operation cannot, in some circumstances, be economically accomplished if the operator is required to adhere to basic resource protection standards. In these cases, federal land managers (BLM and USFS) choose not to enforce resource protection standards. Their rationale is that the 1872 Mining Law precludes such interference with the "right to mine."

This "preemptive surrender" is uncalled for, and places federal land managers in violation of other statutory mandates which require protection of natural resources. The Forest Service Organic Administration Act of 1897 provides that persons entering the national forests for the purpose of exploiting mineral resources "must comply with the rules and regulations covering such national forests." Other mandates for protection exist but are not fully implemented, if at all.

1 Thanks to Abe Jacobson for coining this useful term, as well as his other contributions for the betterment of this world.

whatever it took to restore mental health. As a result, open space became a prerequisite to a healthy society. Nature became a source for aesthetic experiences, spiritual contemplation, and physical fitness. Even business-minded President Calvin Coolidge endorsed a "life in the open."

In the process of protecting open space, the conservation movement also became profoundly anti-modernist. It savaged society for its "loss of illusions," as historian Michael Cohen wrote, and "its loss of trust in ideology, in God, of love, science, art, and faith." The answer, for activists such as Bob Marshall, was a redefinition of wilderness as the salve and savior of civilization. In nature could be found not only health, beauty, and spiritual renewal, but an antidote to the shortcomings of a materialistic culture. Conceptualizing wilderness, as much as walking through it as Marshall did, meant challenging the standard definitions of growth, progress, and economic value.

Protecting wilderness meant accepting boundaries. Nash put it this way: "Preserving wilderness means establishing limits. We say, in effect, we will go this far, and no further." Unfortunately, self-restraint has proven to be a very elusive goal for Americans.

Ringling In The Ears

The so-called Information Revolution shows every sign of becoming the Industrial Revolution redux. The incessant clamor of our age, the babbling heads on television, the petty vindictiveness of our politicians, the congestion in our cities, not to mention the breakdown in basic civics, morals, and manners, has caused a terrific ringing in my ears. I, too, am beginning to ache from our iron streets.

If others feel as I do, then a return to the natural world as the antidote to our creeping madness should logically follow, especially in this era of shrinking open space.

The rush to nature, however, does not seem to be materializing, at least on the political level. It is true that more Americans than ever before are using our public lands, but it also seems true that fewer Americans are demanding that their representatives do something to protect that land. On top of this apathy is the unparalleled effort by Congress to give away the very land that is so intensely cherished by its constituents.

Why is all of this happening? Blind political hubris on the part of Congress can't be the only answer. Part of it must be found in history and rhetoric. I believe the success of the conservation movement in the early part of this century was directly tied to the link its leaders made between wilderness and human health--mental and spiritual--and not just the physical, as we emphasize today.

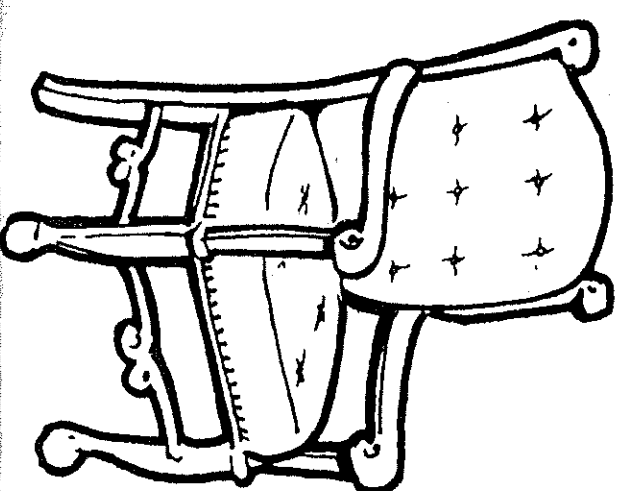
Loss of the Human

Conservation in that earlier age was wedded to human needs and human values in a way that is no longer promoted, or even tolerated

The Uneasy Chair

by

Courtney White



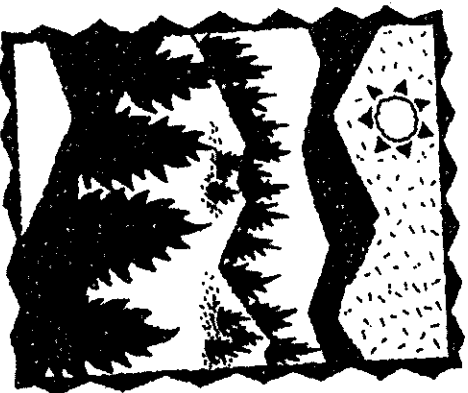
in some quarters. A deep faith in science seems to have supplanted human emotion as the primary interpreter of the natural world, and I wonder if it's turning people off. The movement's capacity to critique society also appears to have been undercut by our obsession with hard science. What good are a thousand facts and figures unguided by a convincing social message, spoken in human terms that we can all understand?

Science has produced significant progress in our effort to protect the environment, and hopefully will continue to do so, but looking back over the course of conservation history, it seems to me that this loss of the human element in the argument for the preservation of open space has endangered the entire movement. Emotions, what we feel and believe, seem to have been dropped from the equation--at the peril of alienating the movement's popular support.

Combined with the creeping chaos of our time, I believe it is time to restore "the human" to the conservation movement. A failure to do so would be a cause for deep concern.

Ski Report

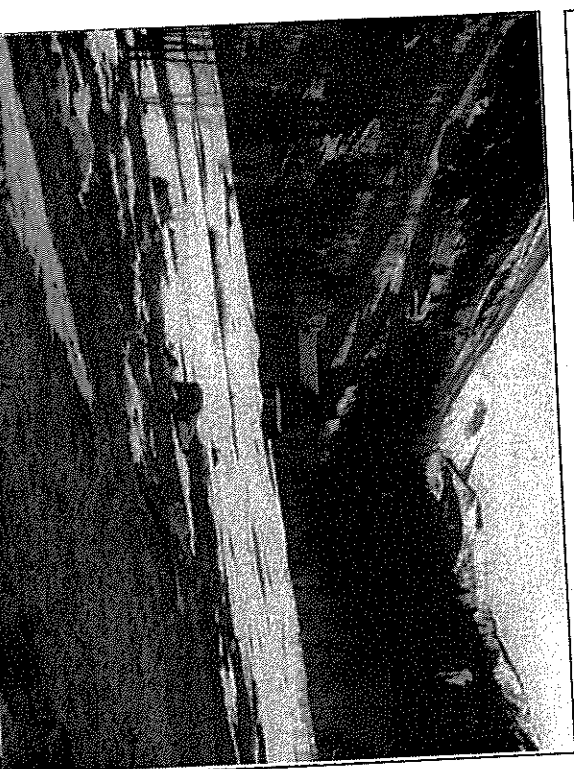
by
John Turnbull



Guessing the Weather. Last issue, all we could report was marginal snow, even at 10,000'. In the two months since, we've had a major accumulation, to the delight of skiers, but the unusually warm weather during mid-February is taking its toll. Above 9,000' in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado, we still have nearly full cover, except on a few south-facing slopes, and about three feet of depth on the open flats. In the shade, snow is still pure powder but, in most places, it's damp, firm, slightly granular snow.

Temperatures this February are as warm as we might expect in April, and skiing opportunities, which still abound, are in warm-weather, spring-like conditions. On sunny days, snow will be soft and easy to ski. On cloudy days, expectancy surfaces for which steel-edged skis will be desirable. Travelling on icy slopes with non-edged skis can be a real heart-stopper. Snow conditions may change from day to day, or even hour to hour, so when planning a trip be flexible, be prepared for anything, and adapt your technique to what's there.

The present snowpack, absent new snowfall, probably won't last through late March. However, northern New Mexico often records heavy snow in late February and early March, and hopes for Spring skiing should not be ruled out quite yet. Absent cooler temperatures and snow, expect some early bargain sales at the ski shops. This might be the year to replace or upgrade



gear.

Thinking about Avalanches.

In the event that we receive a new dump of powder on top of old, icy surfaces, we will have a plane of weakness in the snowpack which invites snow slides, or avalanches. Avalanches are dangerous as well as unpredictable, requiring respect. Skiers coming to the Western mountains from elsewhere, particularly from the flatlands, often are blissfully ignorant of the risks, much less how to avoid them. A person caught in even a medium-sized avalanche has a better than average chance of perishing. Even a slump off a hill no more than 20 feet high can bury a person. It's a terrifying experience, and survivors often, for months afterward, have a blank, shell-shocked look about them. The key to surviving avalanches is simply to stay away from avalanche-prone slopes and be aware of what constitutes avalanche conditions. It can be a complicated subject, but there are a few principles that even the most inexperienced can grasp.

The vast majority of avalanches occur during, or within 48 hours of, a snowfall. If it snowed the night before, or has been snowing on you all day, assume the risk is high.

Even after 48 hours, other things can destabilize the snowpack. For instance, wind blowing plumes of snow off peaks and ridges is also redistributing the snow load at the very tops of the slopes, creating slide energy. Windblown snow cornices, the result of earlier snow blowing, are similarly unstable. Avoid travelling on slopes below cornices (and certainly never stand on top of one!).

Avalanches are by far most frequent on slopes of from 30 to 45 degrees (that's degrees, not percent). Steeper than 45 degrees the snow tends to slide off as it falls. Slopes shallower than 30 degrees don't allow the snowpack to develop sufficient energy to slide. For reference, a 45 degree slope (with run equaling drop) appears, to most of us, very, very steep—so steep that, if you fall, you'll keep on rolling. The steepest runs on lift-served ski resorts typically are 45 degrees or less. Once started on the higher and steeper slopes, however, an avalanche can continue down gentle slopes and even hundreds of yards out on the flats. The 30 to 45 degree slope to watch for may not be under foot, but a long way above. If avalanche risk is high, stay out in the center of the valley—not at the base of the slope.

When skiing on ridge tops or on the higher reaches of slopes, the potential risk, while less than at the bottom, is not to be ignored. The brink of a hill, particularly a steep hill, may not be terra firma at all, but a cornice or snowdrift projecting out into space, waiting to be dislodged by a skier's

weight. Assume that situation if cornices can be seen elsewhere, or if you can't see rocks and trees where you're standing.

Although with notable exceptions, avalanches tend to occur in the same locations repeatedly. The evidence of past slides can often be spotted. There may even be a pile of jumbled up snow and ice visible at the bottom of the hill. Watch also for bent-over and broken saplings, or the trunks of fallen trees accumulated at the bottom. Watch also for open chutes down the mountainside devoid of trees. All of these are warning signs.

How serious is the risk? Should a person be so fearful as to want to avoid the mountains? Certainly not. The vast majority of people skiing the mountains never witness an actual avalanche and, with reasonable caution, are never seriously at risk. It's the ignorant and the foolhardy who create most of the statistics. By way of comparison, each day people subject themselves to vastly greater risk of injury and death on streets and highways. They don't consider driving to work in the morning to be life-threatening because they've learned to take precautions. It's the same with snowslides in the mountains. Don't be frightened—be alert.

The above notes are certainly not the final statement on avalanche safety, but merely an effort to raise awareness of how and where the risk may occur. Several good books and videos are available on the subject, and well worth their price. Also, classes and seminars are frequently available, especially in Colorado, and at quite reasonable cost. Sierra Club ski tour leaders should seriously consider attending one. I will be happy to provide a list to anyone requesting it (phone me at 505-466-9329).

Ski Tours. The Albuquerque and Santa Fe Groups have sponsored quite a number of joint ski trips in the past couple of years, which have been popular. With the peculiarly warm weather now, Stan Kauchak and I decided to schedule trips on shorter notice, when good snow conditions occur. We encourage those interested in skiing and wishing to be notified of such trips to phone either Stan (505-839-4301) or me (505-466-9329) and put their names on the call-up list. An answering machine message is sufficient. The imprudent, spur-of-the-moment trips often are the best.

The author is a former chairman of the Santa Fe Group, a long-time Nordic skiing instructor, certified by the U.S. Amateur Ski Instructors' Association; editor of *NordicWest Magazine*, published in Bend, Oregon; and an associate of the International Skiing History Association. He also goes skiing now and then.

1. Near Chama, N.M. Mountainsides in the distance are in the range of 30 to 45 degrees. Many of these slopes avalanche off each winter. Note the areas barren of trees which are the most likely avalanche slopes.

2. Not far from Cimbras Pass, above Chama, N.M. Note the long snow cornice beginning to develop on the other side of valley. The slope is at or less than 30 degrees, but the snowpack is becoming very unstable and prone to slide. Comparatively small slumps on short slopes like this can be hazardous, too.

3. Avalanche country, near Aspen, Colorado. In 1994 a series of three slides let go simultaneously from high up on a mountainside to the right, plunged down the hill, and crossed the entire valley floor in the picture, sweeping away a skier standing on a paved county road. Capable rescue runs only a quarter mile away, and immediately responded, but too late to save skier from suffocation. Paradoxically, buildings in the distance, part of historic Old Ashcroft, haven't been hit by such an avalanche in over 100 years.

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Executive Committee Retreat

by Susan Gorman and Blair Brown

On January 13 & 14, the Executive Committee met at Nick Persampieri's home, East of the Sandias, to work out a plan of action for 1996. We agreed on a fairly ambitious program for 1996 and feel that we're going to do most of it.

Communications

We discussed at length how we could improve communication both between our members, but more importantly with the press, the community and other environmental groups. One of our new Excom members, Julie Hicks, has media experience and offered to be the coordinator of the efforts and be the primary contact person for the Group. We will:

- Formalize the letter writing effort at General Meetings.
- Start a program of calling new members, especially those who joined through the Canvass, and welcome them to the Club and offer guidance should they express interest in doing more.
- Re-activate contact with the other environmental and similar organizations with a focus on cooperating on issues and sharing information.
- Set up a database of 'experts' on the various issues who can be contacted by the press or others.
- Initiate a concerted effort to do more to get the Club's message out to the public. Education on media skills will be promoted. This will include media workshops (for local members, perhaps at a General Meeting, and for the Western NM Section).
- Approved expenditures to help activists buy modems in order to improve E-mail communication between ourselves.

Funding of Conservation Efforts

We approved a 'Mini-Cran' program which would offer small grants (up to \$500) to activists to carry out a campaign of their choosing.

Conservation Campaigns

In an effort to more effectively marshal, focus and direct the efforts of our Group's hard-working activists, we have reorganized our primary conservation efforts into Campaigns.

Sustainable Albuquerque

Beginning in 1996, we are inviting everyone interested in urban issues to join us. We will work together to combine Transportation and Land Use and Air and Water Quality and to develop strategies to ensure that future development of Albuquerque does not exceed the local carrying capacity. If you do not wish to live in another Los Angeles or Las Vegas, call the Hotline, 265-5506, and say YES!

Wilderness

Advocates protection of existing wilderness and other natural areas, their important plant and animal species, and creation of new wilderness areas. We are working with the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition to educate the public about the value of Wilderness and to advocate for a good BLM Wilderness Bill.

Leaders: Jack Humphrey/Kathy Love 243-5319; John Wright 247-4353.

Wildlife

Learn what has happened since the highly successful rally at the hearing on Wolf reintroduction in Socorro last October. Join the Wildlife Campaign to continue to work for the Lobo and other critters.

Leader: Martin Heinrich 345-7832.

Petroglyph National Monument

PASEO NOI

The Sustainable Albuquerque Team is Rolling!

by Susan Gorman

The Sustainable Albuquerque Team had its first meeting on January 9. We began by sharing our ideas about sustainability and the special concerns we all have about development in the Albuquerque Area. Here are some: air and water quality, increasing traffic and insufficient alternatives to Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) travel, sprawl, lack of a coherent strategy to deal with population growth, water management and transportation infrastructure, pressures on Petroglyph National Monument, eroding quality of life.

We all agreed that we need to learn more about the current planning process for Albuquerque and Bernalillo County and about the alternatives that have worked in other cities. We all selected articles, documents and books to take home to study. When we met the second time, in February, we shared some of the concepts we had learned through our reading and discussed the need to begin to talk with City Council members, the Mayor, the ABQ Planning, Public Works, Transportation and Environmental Health Departments and the County Commissioners. We also need to seek out other groups with whom we can work.

Everyone is willing to do this but we must have clear Principles and Goals so that we have a coherent message to deliver. We took homework assignments again, this time to draft five Principles and five Goals. We want to include every member of the Albuquerque Group in this effort so please send us your ideas.

We also agreed that we are especially interested in learning about the Mesa Del Sol development. We agreed that we want to open a dialogue with the State Land Office and made a request that they guide us on a walk around Mesa Del Sol so we can see first hand what this large chunk of real estate is really like. The walk was scheduled for February 24 and we'll report on what we have seen in the next issue.

If you want to know sooner, join us! For the schedule of meetings and more information, contact Susan Gorman, 265-3231, EMail blairb@aol.com.

Emphasis would be on how to involve other activists.

Conservation Campaigns

We revamped the concept of Issue Chairs into 'Team Leaders' focusing on the following campaigns:

- Sustainable Albuquerque (including Transportation and Land Use)
- Protection of the Petroglyph National Monument
- Wilderness
- Wildlife
- East Mountain Issues (mostly maintaining the quality of life on the East Side of the Sandia Mountains)
- Western New Mexico Issues
- War on the Environment

Focus will be on formation of 'teams of activists' working on an issue.

Political

We discussed the outlook for the elections in November. All agreed that we must pay close attention to the State House and Senate races.

We also agreed that we need to work with the Southern NM Group to pay special attention to the 2nd Congressional race where Shirley Baca (a state legislator and one of our 'champions') is opposing Joe Skeen. We will continue our support of Bill Richardson in the 3rd district and consider help to whoever runs against Steve Schiff in the 1st District.

Sierra Student Coalition

Two of our new ExCom members (Jack Humphrey & Kathy Love) will be making a major effort to organize a Sierra Student Coalition Group at the University of New Mexico. (See ad for the March 5 Rally in Woodward Hall on page 17.)

We all felt the Retreat was a very productive meeting. We are really feeling good about all of the plans and the determination of the ExCom to work to make them happen.

Work with Native American and other conservation groups to protect the magnificent, culturally and religiously significant rock art within a stone's throw from the burgeoning, unsustainable sprawl on Albuquerque's Westside. The group recently played a key role in convincing the Monument Advisory Commission to recommend elimination of proposed undesirable intensive recreational developments, and in exposing and quashing a secret plan to decommission the Monument.

Leader: Ike Eastvold 255-7679.

War on the Environment

Combat legislation proposed by Speaker Gingrich and over-eager Congressional freshmen to roll back 25 years of environmental reform. Write letters, make calls, send E-mails, join the Phone Tree.

Leader: Richard Barish 247-8079.

East Mountain

This magnificent area is experiencing rapid development pressure and is governed by City and County officials who do not understand the needs and desires of its residents. Currently we're working with other groups to fight a proposal to gut the carefully crafted East Mountain Development Plan by allowing small lot development without designation of open space.

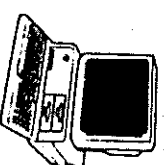
We are working with County Parks staff to develop a plan to protect open space, wildlife and trail corridors.

Leader: Nick Persampieri 281-7845.

Western New Mexico

The Western New Mexico Section seeks activists to develop campaigns and mobilize people in Cibola and McKinley Counties who care about the special places beyond Albuquerque's West Mesa.

Leader: Barbara Leonard 862-7915.



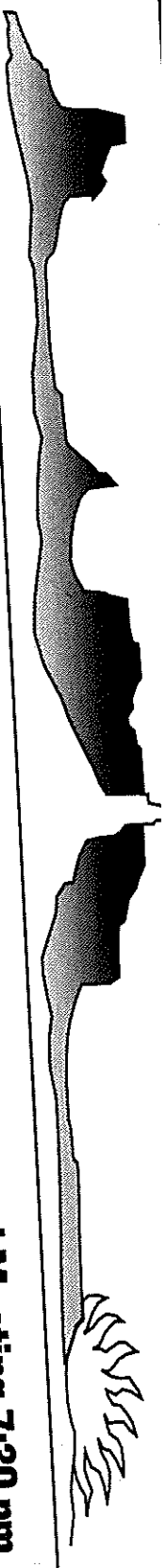
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Larry Compton
President



MY DREAM HOUSE

by Ian Ford

I'm 27 and it's time to buy a house. But the houses for sale around here are not what I'm looking for. Let's suppose I was married and the two of us made average incomes, and we were looking for a nice place to raise children. The normal thing to do would be to buy the largest house we could possibly afford and spend the next few decades working at our jobs in order to finish paying for it. The children would be shuffled around, and we would take occasional trips, and have some time to do yard work and watch TV.

But still, the majority of our lives would be spent working to pay off the house, and on maintaining the two cars we would need to be able to get to work to get the money to pay off the house. No thank you. Why would I willingly enter into a life of slavery, just for a house? There is so much more to life. For example, big trips (the kind you have to quit your job for), caring for children full time, community service, singing, and all the things most people have "no time" to do.

There are other problems with the normal model for housing. Namely, it's destroying the natural environment. Just to get through an average day in Albuquerque within my current lifestyle, I commit all manner of environmental sins, like burning fossil fuels for my electricity and heat, extracting an enormous amount of water (where water is scarce) to dilute human waste, and driving my car--that machine that consumes half of our city's space and murders people regularly without reproach.

No thank you. Why would I willingly do so much unnecessary destruction? So I am going to tell you about my dream house--it's entirely different from the normal American dream.

First of all, I want to own a couple of rooms outright with no mortgage, and have no heating costs, in a place where I don't need to own a car. Then I can work 5 instead of 40 hours per week, and do whatever else I please for the rest of my life. Maybe I'll explore the Pecos Wilderness, or go to India for a while. Maybe I will have an after-school program for kids in the neighborhood. When I'm more free of employment obligations, I can do whatever makes me happiest, all the time. And I would much rather be happy, enjoy every moment of my life, and care for people, than to have nice dining room furniture and a Saab to worry about.

Second, in my dream house, I want to have neighbors who I can share things with. Supposing I have children: it would be great to have the kind of neighbors I can leave them with when I go out shopping or go to Alaska or something. We could also have some rooms and own some things in common. We might do things together too, and have a community that extends beyond the family. I don't think you can force a community to develop, but you can set up a place that fosters a community.

Third, my dream house would be safe for children. It would be out of the way of cars and criminals, so children wouldn't need to be locked up and closely monitored. They would have some freedom to explore on their own. Now, of course this is not realistic any time soon, but it is still a dream to strive for. (Replacing cars with a safe and environmentally friendly transportation option would solve half the problem. The other half of the problem, crime, can be addressed partly by making the kind of affordable housing I am dreaming about available to everyone.)

Right now I am in the first phase of realizing this plan for co-housing--collecting potential neighbors. The next step will be to pool some money together for a building or two. The building will be built with separate units (I'm not planning on giving up privacy) and some common space.

I encourage other people to do this too. Perhaps you are in a similar situation--renting because the idea of buying the kind of houses that are on

(cont. on page 9)

CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, meetings take place at the Club office, 207 San Pedro NE

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Mar 2-3 | Chapter ExCom Meeting, Black Randege Lodge, Kingston |
| Mar 5 | Sierra Student Coalition Rally, UNM Woodward Hall, 7 PM; DaveForeman, speaker (See ad on page 17.) |
| Mar 6 | Mexican Wolf Coalition, 7:30 PM |
| Mar 6 | Deadline for agenda items for Group ExCom. Call Susan Gorman at 265-3231 |
| Mar 8 | Group ExCom, 7:00 PM |
| Mar ?? | Sustainable Albuquerque Meeting, 7:00 PM. Call Susan Gorman, 265-3231 |
| Mar 18 | General Meeting, UNM Law School, Rm 2401, 7:30 PM |
| Mar 20 | Deadline for agenda items for Conservation Committee. Call Richard Barish, 247-8079 |
| | Call Richard Barish, 247-8079 |
| | Wolf Forum, Alamogordo (See Wolf article, page 2.) |
| Mar 21 | Conservation Committee Meeting, 7:00 PM |
| Mar 25 | Sierra Student Coalition, UNM Woodward Hall, 7:00 PM |
| Ap 2 | Mexican Wolf Coalition, 7:30 PM |
| Ap 3 | Deadline for agenda items for Group ExCom. Call Susan Gorman at 265-3231 |
| Ap 3 | Group ExCom, 7:00 PM |
| Ap 8 | Tax Day Rally, call office for information |
| Ap 15 | Deadline for articles for May/June Rio Grande Sierran |
| Ap 15 | Deadline for agenda items for Conservation Committee. |
| Ap 17 | Call Richard Barish, 247-8079 |
| Ap 21 | John Muir's Birthday and Earth Day |
| Ap 22 | Conservation Committee Meeting, 7:00 PM |
| May 10-12 | Regional Gathering of Sierra Club Activists, Colorado Springs. See May/June Sierran for details |
| May 17-19 | Citizens Protecting America's Parks Conference, Albuquerque Convention Center. See May/June Sierran |

March 18, 1996 General Meeting 7:30 pm
UNM Law School, Room 2401

April 15, 1996 General Meeting 7:30 pm
UNM Law School, Room 2401

The topics for the General Meetings will be announced. For further information, call the Albuquerque Group Office at 265-5506. Select Option 2.

General Meetings are held on the third Monday of every month at 7:30 pm at the UNM Law School, Room 2401, on the corner of Mountain Rd. and Stanford NE.

Bring you own cups for refreshments during the break.

Tax Day Rally

April 15

Meet at the Sierra Club Office,
207 San Pedro NE

The federal government spent over \$1 billion from 1992 to 1994 to finance public lands logging. The Forest Service alone spent \$54 million. This is \$24,000 for each logging job. Is this the way you want your tax money spent? Watch your mail for details. Call the Hotline at 265-5506 if you want to participate.

Group Directory

1996 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Office Telephone: 265-5506
Fax: 265-0373

Group Chair	Susan Gorman	265-3231
Vice Chair	Nick Persampieri	281-7845
Secretary	Blair Brown	265-3231
Treasurer	Kathy Love	243-5319
	Richard Barish	247-8079
	Ron Grobeck	296-0944
	Julie Hicks	345-7832
	Jack Humphrey	243-5319
	Barbara Leonard	862-7915

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

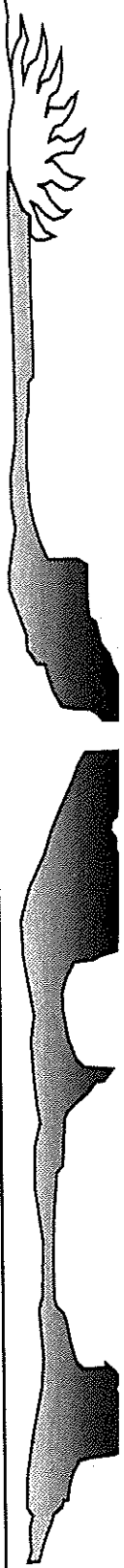
ADMINISTRATION

Office Organizer	Leslie Lazaga	296-0944
Books/Calendars	Larry Compton	899-0679
Information Technology	Bruce Batson	828-2570
	bbatson@ni.net	265-3231

Media Coordinator	Julie Hicks	345-7832
Membership	Barbara Stone	265-5304
Newsletter	OPEN	
Outings	Stan Kauchak	839-4301
Phone Tree	Jean Valentine	869-2090
	Jack Humphrey	243-5319
	Kathy Love	296-0944
	Ron Grobeck	296-0944
Political Chair	Leslie Lazaga	
Programs		

CONSERVATION

Conservation Chair	Richard Barish	247-8079
Campaign Team Leaders	Nick Persampieri	281-7845
East Mountain	Ike Eastvold	255-7679
Petroglyph National Monument	Susan Gorman	265-3231
Sustainable Albuquerque	Richard Barish	247-8079
War on the Environment	Barbara Leonard	862-7915
Western New Mexico	Jack Humphrey	243-5319
Wilderness	Kathy Love	247-4353
	John Wright	345-7832
Wildlife	Martin Hennrich	



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.

X/C Skiing

At this time, conditions for back-country X/C skiing have deteriorated. Ice and crusting snow have taken most of the fun out of the back-country tours. However, winter isn't over yet. A heavy snow in the back-country can turn even the most dismal of skiing conditions around. Because of this, the X/C ski committee has decided that, rather than scheduling X/C ski outings that may have to be canceled, they will instead ask individuals wishing to participate in X/C ski outings to place their names on a list to be notified of planned outings should back-country conditions change. Contact Georgia 881-9365, John 466-9329, or Stan 839-4301. (See John Tunbull's Ski Report on page 6.)

Sat Mar 16 Leisure Miles: 3 Car: 3 Geological Windows Hike

Petroglyph National Monument
The petroglyphs were first created about 1000 BC. The age of petroglyphs can be estimated from the darkness of the patina; comparison of style, content, and execution to the rock art of other areas.

The LodeStar Project: Understanding the Natural World

by John McGraw and Bernadine Garcia

Often the best way to understand a problem in detail is to examine its most global aspects. This is one role of the LodeStar Project in New Mexico. Using astronomy to attract students of all ages, the project will help support activities of educators in New Mexico's elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities and the national laboratories to provide real-world, interactive learning opportunities in all of the natural sciences.

LodeStar will create three educational sites: one near Acoma, Grants and Milan in Cibola County; another in Albuquerque; and a third in Socorro. The Socorro site, hosted by New Mexico Tech, will provide an interactive learning center and access to a remotely-operable research-quality telescope to be used by students statewide to accomplish real research. The Albuquerque site will be a large hands-on learning center developed in partnership with the city. The Cibola County site will be Enchanted Skies Park, the first park and observatory dedicated to providing public access to a great New Mexico natural resource, our clear, dark night skies. Telescopes there will be provided for class, family and individual use. Docents will aid users, describe what can be seen and our current understanding of how the various objects in the sky operate. Native Americans will be encouraged to share their representations of the sky. This function will hopefully provide a focus for all cultures to know and understand the sky and to preserve this knowledge which has, for millennia and for every culture, formed a basis for life in New Mexico.

Astronomy helps us understand conditions on other planets, demonstrating how environmental changes can affect Earth. For example, Venus provides the most dramatic example of a planet warmed by the greenhouse effect. Lead would melt at its surface, and its atmosphere is rich in carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas. It is, in fact, the greenhouse effect (not the closer proximity to the sun) which produces its elevated temperatures.

The goal of LodeStar is to help produce a scientifically literate public which can make legitimate decisions about how all of the sciences affect their lives and the entire natural world. While LodeStar uses the popular science of astronomy to attract students, by providing trained educators who understand individual interests and abilities, students can be directed to programs in all of the sciences: chemistry, ecology, physics, medicine, biology, environmental sciences, as well as mathematics and engineering. Students will be encouraged to develop their understanding of the natural world with the help of a significant community of educators and scientists working in literally all of the scientific fields.

The LodeStar Project has briefed representatives of the Sierra Club on its goals. We encourage you to forward your comments, suggestions, and especially your innovative ideas to the project through your Club officers. Your support in helping LodeStar is greatly appreciated!

comparison of pottery design to petroglyph design, and the superimposition of one petroglyph on top of another. This area of the park is secluded in a near wilderness-like setting. Meet at 9:00 AM. Bring camera, binoculars and sturdy shoes. RSVP.
Leader: Ike Eastvold 255-7679

Sun Mar 17 Leisure Miles: 3 Car: 3 Rinconada Canyon w/ Volcanoes Option Hike, Petroglyph National Monument

We will hike up Rinconada Canyon to view thousands of petroglyphs. Hikers can return to their cars, or take the option of continuing to the volcanoes. Bring sack lunch for the volcano option. Meet at 9:00 AM. Bring camera, binoculars and sturdy shoes. RSVP.
Leader: Ike Eastvold 255-7679

Sat Mar 23 Leisure Miles: 3 Car: 180

Chaco Culture National Historic Park Outlier Hike
Although most visitors are attracted to the canyon, there are several Anasazi ruins outside of the park. Contact Tom for information.
Leader: Tom Leck 256-7217

Sat-Sun Mar 23-24 Moderate-Strenuous Miles: 10-12 Car: 360 Chama X/C Ski Yurt Trip

This X/C ski trip has been in planning since last year's ski season. Enjoy the beauty of the Southern San Juan Mountain back-country on this two-day trip. Plan on skiing 4 1/2 miles on the yurt system trails and staying overnight in a yurt. Space is limited and will be filled on a first come basis. Warm sleeping bags and clothing are a must. Participants must also provide their own food. Contact leader for more information.
Leader: Val 265-5945

Sun-Mon Mar 24-25 Moderate-Strenuous Miles: 10-12 Car: 360 Chama X/C Ski Yurt Trip

This X/C ski trip has been in planning since last year's ski season. Enjoy the beauty of the Southern San Juan Mountain back country on this two-day trip. Plan on skiing 4 1/2 miles on the yurt system trails and staying overnight in a yurt. Space is limited and will be filled on a first come basis. Warm sleeping bags and clothing are a must. Participants must also provide their own food. Contact leader for more information.
Leader: Val 265-5945

Sat Apr 6 Leisure Miles: 1 Car: 240

Trinity Site Tour
Tour the site of the first nuclear explosion in 1945. Contact Tom for information.
Leader: Tom Leck 256-7217

Sun Apr 14 Leisure Miles: 3 Car: 3 Boca Negra Arroyo Hike

Petroglyph National Monument
Agricultural terraces were built along the escarpment to catch water and hold soil. Exciting flute and parrot figures together with some of the oldest petroglyphs in the Monument. Meet at 9:00 AM. Bring camera, binoculars and sturdy shoes. RSVP.
Leader: Ike Eastvold 255-7679

**Sun Apr 21
Earth Day Hike and Clean-up**
March for Parks, culminating in clean-up of the Ladera Wash portion of Petroglyph National Monument. Meet at 8:30 AM at the Petroglyph National Park Service Visitor's Center located at 4735 Unser, NW. Call Ike for more information 255-7679.

Sat Apr 27 Moderate-Strenuous Miles: 5-7 Car: 230

Ghost Ranch Area Day Hike
Exploratory day hike in an area just Southeast of Ghost Ranch that has beautiful multi-colored sandstone cliffs and badlands. Hiking will be off-trail. The hike should be moderately strenuous, but not difficult. Good hiking boots are strongly recommended due to the sandy, rocky terrain. The scenery should be exceptional. This will be a joint outing with "Outdoor Adventures for Singles." Bring lunch and plenty of water. Meet at 8:00 AM behind Winchell's Donut House at 6300 San Mateo Blvd. NE (San Mateo & Academy).
Leader: Tom Petencin 255-1497

Western New Mexico Section

All Sierra Club members and friends from Cibola and McKinley Counties are invited to join us at our meetings. If you have questions or suggestions, or need information about the following activities in the Gallup/Grants area, call the Co-chairs, Barbara Brandt (488-5233) or Barbara Leonard (862-7915).

Sunday, March 31—Combined hike and meeting. Leslie Thackara will lead us as we explore some little known historical and natural delights in the McGuffy area. Meet at Bear Springs Plaza, Wingate, at 12 noon.

Saturday, April 13—It's tax time! Congress says conservation and environmental programs cost too much, but where does our tax money really go? We'll have leaflets with this important information to hang on doorknobs. If you can help pass out these leaflets, please call Barbara Leonard, 862-7915.

Sunday, April 14—Combined hike and meeting in the Cottonwood Gulch area near Thoreau. Meet at the Thoreau exit of I-40 (south side) at 1 p.m.

My Dream House

(cont'd from page 8)

the market (\$150,000 cardboard castles in a desert suburb called "Oak Springs Village") makes you queasy. Or perhaps you already live there and would like to free up some time and money for other pursuits. Either way, the co-housing route might be just the thing. After enough people demonstrate the benefits of co-housing on a small scale, we may be able to redirect real estate development in general towards more livable, higher density, walkable, mixed-use patterns. What I have described is one alternative to sprawl. We need more effort on this front to protect the health of our environment, society, and ourselves.

Sierra Club Store
in
Earthwares
Books, Calendars, T-Shirts, Shopping Bags,
Natural Goods & Clothing

El Dorado Square, 11200 Montgomery NE
10% off recycled office supplies with this ad through March 31
Bring your Sierra Club card for additional discounts!

Albuquerque Group News - Outings