

Inside this Issue



Vote in the ExCom Elections!

Chapter Candidate Statements Pages 4-5
Group Candidate Statements Pages 5-6
Some Group News Page 6
Anti-Environmental Riders Page 7
Sierra Club National Priority Campaigns Page 7
Vote: Chapter and Group Ballots Page 8

Conservation Corner

by Marianne H. Thaeler, Chair,
Chapter Conservation Committee

The Chapter Conservation Committee met recently on Sunday, November 8. At this meeting, the following items were brought to the table: the public meetings to be held by the Forest Service on their National Strategic Plan 2000; the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) request for public scoping (scoping is when an agency outreaches to the public and asks, before documents are prepared, what should be considered) input for a proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment and the environmental impact statement (EIS) for fluid mineral leasing (oil, gas and geothermal) in Otero and Sierra Counties; the BLM request for public comments on a proposed Riparian Habitat Management Plan and the EIS for the southwestern portion of the state; and the Army Corps of Engineers announcement and call for comments on its plan to discontinue sending announcements to the public members of its mailing lists and to begin posting planned activity announcements on its Web page.

Funding

The Chapter Executive Committee tasked the Conservation Committee to develop proposals—see *Conservation*, page 3

**Are you passionate about the
environment?**

**Would you like to influence
state legislation?**

See page 2!

ExCom Election Time!

Chapter Elections: Why Should I Vote?

by John Buchser, Chapter Chair

You, our members, determine the general direction our Club takes, through your vote for our elected volunteers. Each year, you have at least three voting opportunities, two in the very near future. You can vote for representation in your group—in my opinion, that is where the real strength of the Club lies, in the heart of your local neighborhood. You can vote for representation in the Chapter—a Chapter office is a harder job: the diversity of issues increases, the difficulty of meeting and of developing relationships with fellow Executive Committee members increases. And in a few months you will be asked to vote for members of the National Board of Directors—that job is really a challenge, as I am sure Dave Foreman, our local former National board member, can attest.

Now there are seven nominated and three petition candidates running for the Chapter
see *Vote*, page 5

The Peloncillos Mountains: Where the West is Still Wild

by Martin Heinrich, Wilderness Chair

The following article is the first in a series about the many unique places proposed as wilderness in New Mexico. The protection of these areas will depend on national legislation. The Sierra Club, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and numerous other conservation groups in the Southwest support a proposal that would designate 2.5 million acres of New Mexico as wilderness areas. With your help, this proposal can become law and each of these places will be preserved for future generations.

Many folks, even many New Mexicans, have never heard of the Peloncillos Mountains. For those of us who know this range, it is never far from our minds. This is a place characterized by rolling Mexican savanna, steep volcanic peaks and spectacular canyons. It has a charm and a spirit unlike any place on earth. Of all the wildlands I have explored in Australia, Alaska, Europe, Central America and the South Pacific, this is the one place I care for most.

This rugged range has been most noted, until recently, for its rich history. The Clanton Gang, a notorious band of outlaws, lived in the foothills of the Peloncillos. They were among the lowest vertebrate life forms to occupy this habitat in recent millennia. That said, they did bestow one of the most colorful monikers of any location in this part of the country. In the days when no one was quite sure if this land would remain under United States, Apache or Mexican control, there was an unnamed canyon that provided the only easy east-west traverse through the Peloncillos. A party of Mexican nationals carrying gold bullion was utilizing this short cut when the Clanton Gang ambushed them. In minutes, all the Mexicans lay dead on the canyon floor. The buzzards stripped their bones clean, and their skeletons lay there for years as a reminder of their unfortunate fate. Nowadays this canyon has a name—it is called Skeleton Canyon.

During the Apache wars, Geronimo used the same steep-walled chasm as his hide-away. After years of eluding the American Cavalry, Geronimo finally surrendered in Skeleton Canyon. In my many trips there, I have always been plagued by the odd feeling that I was not alone. Waking up under the Mexican oaks as the morning sun peaks over the canyon rim, I often expect to see a defiant Apache looking down at me from high above. Not being predisposed to anthropocentric or "spiritual" experiences, this was a very unsettling experience.

see *Peloncillos*, page 3



John Buchser, Chair
(505) 820-0201 jbuchser@ni.net
Ted Mertig, Vice Chair
(915) 852-3011 TMertig@aol.com
Barbara Leonard, Secretary
(505) 862-7915 Barbara.Leonard@sierraclub.org
Blair Brown, Treasurer, Central NM Rep.
(505) 265-3231 BBlairB@aol.com
David Farrell
(505) 895-3352 dafarelli@hotmail.com
Doug Fraser, Santa Fe Rep.
(505) 662-5204
Abe Jacobson
(505) 672-9579 jacobson@ni.net
Barbara Johnson
(505) 466-4935 Lunah3@aol.com
Jennifer Johnson, Pajarito Rep.
(505) 662-3023 yomi@roadrunner.com
Norma McCallan
(505) 471-0005 Norma.McCallan@sierraclub.org
Van Perkins
(505) 983-8801 Van.Perkins@sierraclub.org
Jamie Newlin, El Paso Rep.
(915) 747-5421 EWalsh@utep.edu
Elizabeth Walsh
(915) 747-5421 EWalsh@utep.edu
Margot Wilson, Southern Rep.
(505) 744-5860 hshs2@riolink.com

Sierra Club Addresses

Central NM Group
207 San Pedro Ave. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
(505) 265-5506

Southern NM Group
P.O. Box 3705 UPB
Las Cruces, NM 88003
(505) 522-3421

El Paso Group
800 S. Piedras
P.O. Box 9191
El Paso, TX 79983
(915) 532-9645

Southwest Regional Ofc.
516 E. Portland St.
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(602) 254-9330
FAX: 258-6533

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

Sierra Club National
85 Second St., 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 977-5500

Santa Fe Group
621 Old Santa Fe Trail, #10
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 983-2703

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 \$10.00 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.

The opinions expressed in signed articles in the *Rio Grande Sierran* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Articles may be freely reprinted for nonprofit purposes, provided that credit is given to the author and the *Rio Grande Sierran*. Please let us know. Products and services advertised in the *Rio Grande Sierran* are not endorsed by the Sierra Club.

Contributions are welcome from members. Send to **Editor, Rio Grande Sierran, Karen Smith, 120 West Santa Fe Ave., Apt. H, Santa Fe, NM 87105** or by e-mail to **KaoSmith@aol.com**. 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.

Conservation
Energy & Trans.
Fundraising
Inner City Outings
Military Issues
Mining

National Parks
Newsletter

Outings
Political

Rangelands

Water

Wilderness

Wildlife

Marianne Thaeler (505) 522-3421 marianne.thaeler@sierraclub.org
Ken Hughes (505) 474-0550 khughes@igc.apc.org
OPEN
Ted Mertig (915) 852-3011 tmertig@aol.com
Marianne Thaeler (505) 522-3421 marianne.thaeler@sierraclub.org
Abe Jacobson (505) 672-9579 jacobson@ni.net
Cliff Larsen, Sally Smith, Margot Wilson
Courtney White (505) 982-5502 wldwst@rt66.com
Karen Smith (505) 992-2977 KaoSmith@aol.com
Sally Savage, Kay Carlson
Norma McCallan (505) 471-0005 Norma.McCallan@sierraclub.org
Jim Hannan (505) 986-0218 Jhannan505@aol.com
Ned Sudborough, Dutch Salmon, Jim Bell
Gary Simpson (505) 298-3315
Roger Peterson
John Buchser (505) 820-0201 jbuchser@ni.net
Steve Harris, Edy Pierpoint, Gary Simpson
Martin Heinrich (505) 232-7151 mtheinrich@aol.com
Van Perkins, Marianne Thaeler, Michael Smith
Liz Walsh (915) 747-5421 EWalsh@utep.edu
Martin Heinrich, Roger Peterson, Gary Simpson, Bryan Byrd

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

Wanted: Lobbyist

The Chapter seeks a full-time lobbyist for the upcoming New Mexico legislative session from January 4 to March 25, 1999. Position requires knowledge of environmental issues, along with strong organizational and interpersonal skills. Resumes and references must be submitted by December 1 to: *Lobbyist Committee, P.O. Box 31042, Santa Fe, NM 87594*. **Inquiries: 986-0218.**

*Help the planet AND
complete your holiday
shopping list!*

Visit the *Sierra Club Store*
at *Earthwares* in
Promenade Center
5200 Eubank NE, Albuquerque
(505) 323-7207

A unique collection of natural, recycled and earth friendly products, including

Sierra Club calendars

Books and cards

T-shirts

Natural fiber hats and clothing from Blue Fish, Ecosport and Maggie's Clean Clothes.

Bed and bath accessories

Aromatherapy

Recycled papers

Baby and toddler wares

Half of the earnings from the Sierra Club Store support the efforts of Sierra Club members in Central New Mexico to protect our wildlands and wildlife and our children's health and future.

Santa Fe Group Holiday Potluck Supper

Saturday, December 19, 6pm
Unitarian Church, Santa Fe

Special Guest: Robert Julyin,
author of
New Mexico Place Names

Bring: Dish for at least 8 people, or beer, wine, juice, softdrinks. Dishes and silverware are provided.

Warm clothes and blankets will be collected for St. Elizabeth's Shelter.

Questions?

Call Norma at 471-0005.

Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee Meeting

January 9 and 10, 1999

The Chapter Executive Committee will meet January 9 and 10 at Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge.

The meeting will start at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday and will run all day. The meeting will recommence on Sunday at 8:30 a.m. and will run until 12 noon or sometime in the early afternoon. It is possible to stay Friday night, too.

If you are interested in attending, contact Chapter Chair John Buchser at (505) 820-0201 to provide information on what day/night(s) you plan on attending and if you will be bringing guests.

Conservation, cont. from cover

als for 1999 funding. Martin Heinrich submitted a proposal to develop a professional traveling slide show on BLM Wilderness designation proposals, in coordination with the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, of which the Chapter is a member. John Buchser presented a second funding proposal, which would provide assistance for water issues and would focus on the Rio Grande, particularly the Middle Rio Grande. The Conservation Committee determined that these proposals should be brought before the Southwest Regional Conservation Committee (SWRCC) for funding assistance. SWRCC is composed of representatives from Sierra Club chapters in Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and West Texas. The Rio Grande Chapter representatives to SWRCC are Ted Mertig and John Buchser.

Conservation and Wilderness Area Designations

Marianne Thaeler asked and received an endorsement to continue to support the designation of Otero Mesa and the mountain foothills of McGregor Range (Otero County, NM) as a national conservation area and the Culp Canyon Wilderness Study Area as a wilderness area. Presently, the 300,000-acre area is jointly managed by the BLM and the U.S. Army's Fort Bliss under a temporary withdrawal that expires in 2001. Otero Mesa and the mountain foothills are presently managed for hunting, grazing, camping, hiking and wildlife watching. Fort Bliss has issued, for public comment, a draft legislative EIS on alternative uses of the area for the next 50 years. As a sponsor of the German Air Force, the U.S. Air Force has decided it wants to construct a tactical target complex—i.e. a bombing range—in the middle of the area, and the Army wants to use the rest for missile training. Rancher, hunter and environmental organizations have suggested that facility space exists for these activities elsewhere and that the area should be recognized and designated as a national conservation area to preserve the presently recognized national historic landscape with national historic sites that are awaiting official listing on the National Register. To accomplish this, your assistance will be needed in the months and year ahead.

Transportation

Ken Hughes spoke to the issues and ramifications of the National Transportation Efficiency Act and its effect on State Highway Department decision-making processes. The Committee agreed that Ken should attend a workshop in San Francisco to better understand possible remedies to ill-devised highway projects and plans.

Forests

Charlotte Talberth reported on forest issues and encouraged Committee members to attend and present comments on the National Forest Service Strategic Plan hearings, which will occur on December 1 in Albuquerque.

Bryan Bird raised the issue of the marked increase in the cutting of commercial firewood in lieu of timber sales, in northern New Mexico forests particularly and in New Mexico generally. Commercial firewood cuts are being approved as Categorical Exclusions from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Categorical Exclusion designation is supposed to be used by agencies in cases where minor actions are proposed that will have no environmental impact. Brian noted that sanitation sales of fallen trees, important as wildlife habitat, are also being done as Categorical Exclusions. Marianne Thaeler

added that actions taken by the military are routinely classified as Categorical Exclusions from full NEPA process provisions. Questions were raised on this new trend in NEPA and perhaps avoid full public scrutiny.

Mining

Abe Jacobson reported on the status of mine clean-ups and restorations, proposed mine expansions and specific lawsuits being prepared. Abe introduced a guest, Elizabeth Winter, who described the threats of a proposed mica mine to Picuris Pueblo traditional pottery-making. Copies of a resolution passed by the Tribal Council

opposing this mining operation were circulated to the Committee. The Committee voted to recommend that the Chapter support the pueblo of Picuris in their efforts to oppose this mine.

Margaret Wilson gave a status report on the proposed re-opening of Copper Flats copper mine near Hillsboro.

The Chapter Conservation Committee is made up of members who are working on conservation issues for the Chapter. The Conservation Committee meets quarterly at Bosque del Apache, NWR, from 10 am to 3 pm. If you would like to participate, call Marianne Thaeler at (505) 522-3421 in Las Cruces.

Be a Wildlands Advocate—Attend a Meeting

One of the most effective ways to advocate for wilderness is to speak up at government hearings and meetings. If you don't, the guy with the Honda four-wheeler will be the only perspective heard. Don't let that happen. Attend one of the following meetings. YOU can make the difference

Forest Service Planning 2000 Meeting

Topic: Planning for the Future

This is an opportunity to advocate for the protection of all wilderness areas 1000 acres or larger as the Forest Service determines its future direction. Contact Martin Heinrich at (505) 232-7151 for more information.

BLM Open House

Topic: The Grand Staircase/Escalante National Monument Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Call (435) 865-5100 to request the document or go to www.ut.blm.gov/monument on the Web. The open house is December 1, 1998, from 5:00 to 8:30 PM at the Winrock Inn, 18 Winrock Center NE in Albuquerque. This is not a public hearing and official comment will not be received orally at this meeting. People may submit written comments at this meeting, or until February 12, 1999, either by letter or at the Web site.

Pelloncillos, cont. from cover

Today, the Peloncillos are best known among biologists, hunters and bird watchers. The extreme diversity of life that can be found here is "off the chart" when compared with many famous national parks and wildlife refuges. While the southwestern grizzlies that greeted the Mormon Battalion here are now extinct, there are still more vertebrate species here than in any national park in the United States! Eroded cliff faces house ancient aeries used by countless generations of golden eagles, prairie falcons and other raptors. Rare desert bighorn sheep share habitat with tropical species like coatimundis and near-arctic species such as black bear. Bird watchers come here to see trogons, tropical species of warbler and one of the rarest birds in the nation—the buff collared nightjar. Hunters, myself included, walk the hills looking for Coues deer, a western sub-species of the white-tailed deer. Botanical enthusiasts quickly realize that many of the species of trees seen here do not exist anywhere else in the United States. Stately Chihuahuan pines line the canyons and various Mexican oaks dot the hills.

Even the elusive lobo is still rumored to haunt these hills. While the last confirmed Mexican wolf in New Mexico was killed nearby in the early 1970s, stories still emerge of recent visitations by this rarest of North American mammals. The most compelling of these stories involves a researcher who was using baited camera stations to photograph coatis when she photographed a large wolf-like canid instead.

Another ghost of the Southwest appeared in these mountains only a couple of years ago. While hunting what he believed to be a trophy cougar, Warner Glenn stumbled upon a large healthy jaguar. Mr. Glenn was kind enough to shoot this magnificent cat—with a camera. For anyone who doubts just how magic a place the Peloncillos are, I recommend Warner Glenn's book, *Eyes of Fire*. It has numerous color plates illustrating a magnificent predator in a magnificent landscape. If this largest of North America's felines is to re-establish itself in the upper Gila watershed, the Peloncillos will provide the critical link or corridor of habitat between the Sierra Madre in northern Mexico and the greater Gila ecosystem on the Arizona/New Mexico border.

This illustrates the strongest argument for a Peloncillos Mountains Wilderness Area: the metapopulation theory. A metapopulation is a network of populations. Any one of these populations could not survive in perpetuity because of factors like inbreeding and genetic drift. However, when connected by corridors, these pockets of breeding animals can act as one large genetically stable population. The proposed Peloncillos Mountains Wilderness Area is the largest, most intact link between the northern Sierra Madre and the Gila headwaters ecosystem. It is vital to protect this corridor in order to assure the long-term viability of apex predators like wolves and jaguars. Theoretically, even the mighty griz' could be restored if society is willing to live with her.

With a unique western history, large roadless habitats and a biological treasure trove unmatched in the United States, the Peloncillos is a must for wilderness designation. Please lend a hand to protect these invaluable public lands from off-road vehicles, additional roads and unnecessary development. Write your member of congress and request the inclusion of the Peloncillos Mountains in any future New Mexico Wilderness legislation. It is time we put this "blank spot on the map" on Washington DC's radar screen.

Group Candidates, cont. from page 3

must be convinced that their duty is to protect human health and safety and our environment. Our water and other natural resources demand protection. Let's all work together with nature, not against her, for a sustainable economy and future for far West Texas.

Steven Best

With a Ph.D. in philosophy, I teach humanities and philosophy at the University of Texas, El Paso. I have an extensive background in political activism and community work.

My activist interests began in 1980, when I became involved with aiding refugees from oppressive governments in Central America and in developing funds for medical aid. In the 1990s, I became intensely interested in environmental issues. I have served as faculty advisor to the student environmental group (ECO) at UTEP, and I have given numerous talks to the community on environmental issues. I am very interested in environmental issues such as diminishing water reserves in El Paso and the West, the plans to dump nuclear waste in Sierra Blanca and also species extinction and the harmful policies of agencies such as the Animal Damage Control. With my experience as an activist, teacher and writer, I can be of good service to the Sierra Club, of which I have been a member for the last few years. I hope that I can work with the Sierra Club in a more official fashion.

Laurence Gibson

I am a musician and an educator. I've been active in the Sierra Club since my 1969 arrival in El Paso, serving most recently as Outings Chair. I see the club as an important force in this country for conserving what is left of our environmental quality and helping people enjoy it. I feel one way of getting people involved is in getting people out into the wild. I have enjoyed helping with our Outings Program. I look upon Executive Committee membership as a way of giving back some of what has been given to me.

Ted Mertig

I ask that you re-elect me as a member of the El Paso Regional Group's Executive Committee. (ExCom). I have an extensive experience with

the Sierra Club, having been a member since 1981. My current activities include leading outings for the Club and the Inner City Outings (ICO). The El Paso Group of the ICO just elected me as its Chairperson. I also serve as a member of the Rio Grande Chapter ExCom. My other experience includes the following:

- Chapter Delegate to Southwestern Regional Conservation Committee
- Chapter Council Delegate to National Council of Delegates
- Chapter Vice Chair
- Delegate to Seattle Wilderness Conference, sponsored by numerous environmental organizations
- Delegate to Park City, Utah Grazing Conference, sponsored by National Wildlife Federation

IT IS TIME FOR STRONG POSITIONS.

Weak positions = Weak Victories.

Strong positions = Strong victories.

Jamie Newlin

The Sierra Club is the world's largest politically active, nonprofit environmental group. Understandably, the Club positions are of importance to many—including the enemies of the environment. Influencing the Sierra Club has been quite an industry—politicians, corporations, the White House and business coalitions want to make sure that the Sierra Club doesn't cramp their style. From top to bottom, we are besieged by people telling us to "be reasonable," to take it easy on this environmental protection stuff, that business as usual must continue.

I don't agree. The truth is we need stronger advocacy, enough to guarantee the preservation of all creation for future generations. A recent study from University of British Columbia shows it would take three more planet Earths to provide the world's population with an average American life style. I think that says it all. Environmental groups haven't begun to address the magnitude of this challenge, but we can if we stop trying to please everyone—and put environmental protection first.

If elected to the Executive Committee, I promise to put the environment first. I'll put the environment before short term convenience, before the wishes of any politician or political party

and before personal popularity.

Shirley Phillips

I've been a member of the Sierra Club since 1980. I served with my husband Bill as co-editor of the LORAX from 1982 to 1988. I've been on numerous committees over the years. I work as an administrative assistant for the City of El Paso.

I plan to retire soon and want to become more active in the Club's activities, as well as encourage others to do so. We should continue to work for wilderness preservation and maintain a strong Outings Program to give members an opportunity to experience the lands that the Club is fighting to protect.

As the city experiences explosive growth, new leaders and activists must be identified to speak out for conserving our dwindling natural resources. Bill was committed to the Club. I'd like to continue his legacy by helping in any way I can to ensure the continued success of our Chapter.

Frank Voris

I am part of the problem. . . part of the solution. I see first hand the excesses of our culture. Yet, at times, I'll jump at the chance to bathe within the insanity.

I've spent the last 25 years in civil engineering and heavy construction. I've laid oil pipe on Alaska's North Slope and have paved across the coastal plain of El Salvador. I've attacked locations between the two, locations too numerous to count. My background includes a stretch of interstate highway, a coal mine, a channeled river, a pharmaceutical research center and an addition to what already was the world's largest manufacturing facility. My hands are not just dirty, they are callused.

Now I am here, in your community, and I'm a very busy person. I think in tons—tons of concrete, tons of asphalt, tons of steel. I am busy putting all the above over a big chunk of your landscape. If you want to discover a fresh path to old conflicts and problems, you need to hear me. I am your enemy. . . I am your friend.

Election Information

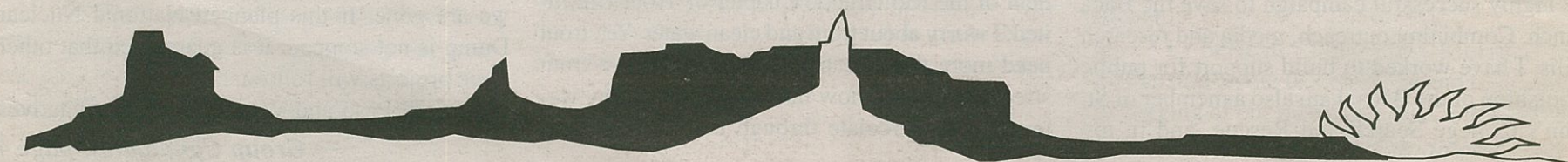
Due to a number of technical complications, we are re-sending the candidates statements for the elections this month. We made three errors on the last issue of the Sierran:

(1) The Chapter Secretary's address was omitted.

(2) Our bylaws require that the "date of election" be 21 days or more after the ballots are mailed, we only allowed 19 days. As a result, we are extending the date of election.

(3) Two nominated candidates for the Chapter ExCom, David Farrell and Karen Smith, decided not to run for ExCom just prior to the publication date of the last issue. We wanted to make sure our members were aware that their omission from the ballot was intentional.

We sincerely apologize for the extra expense we are incurring for this special issue, but we want to insure that our members are given a proper opportunity to vote. If you have already voted, we will direct all the ballots to the Secretary, so please don't vote again. If you have not voted, please take the time to review the statements of the candidates and vote!



event in the history of forest protection. As a direct result of that vote, the National Forest Protection and Restoration Act has been introduced in Congress. I am working with Club volunteers nationwide to build a campaign to support that legislation, which will allow us to redirect the \$1 billion of subsidies that currently underwrite logging, and establish a national Natural Heritage Restoration Corps.

I would like to serve on the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee to help create new opportunities for volunteers to become involved with conservation issues, locally and nationally. I would work to make sure that Club members have access to complete and accurate economic and ecological information. I am especially interested in supporting programs that will attract students and young people to join.

No other group is as influential as the Sierra Club when it comes to decisions affecting our public lands. Over the next several years, the Club will be taking positions on such important issues as land transfers, sales and acquisitions, as well as on how much, if any, extractive use of public land should be permitted. I am committed to helping the Sierra Club's governing bodies, such as the Chapter Executive Committee, take strong stands that reflect the will of the membership to

protect our irreplaceable environmental heritage.

Gwen Wardwell (*Petition candidate*)

I have been a member of the Sierra Club since 1985 and was a member of the Chapter Executive Committee from 1989 through 1995.

As Chapter Chair from 1991 through 1995, I encouraged and supported the 1991 planning retreat and continued the process by devoting the fall Chapter meetings to setting major conservation goals and developing specific plans for their achievement. Focusing our efforts enabled us to achieve our 1992-3 goal of passing a strong hard-rock mining bill and subsequent goals of funding for water planning, funding and statutory authority for wildlife and habitat protection and passage of a tire recycling bill.

I am running for the Chapter Executive Committee because the Chapter has become so involved in determining who has the correct "party line" that the process of setting and achieving conservation goals has been neglected.

I believe that we should be willing to talk to persons with differing views, fight our opponents but not demonize them and speak the truth as we see it but listen seriously to those with whom we disagree. This approach provides for strong convictions but demonstrates a willingness to give and receive on the road to truth.

Vote, cont. from cover

Executive Committee. Five of these candidates have previously served on the Executive Committee, three are new to Chapter leadership. All eight have demonstrated to some degree or another their commitment to the environment. I encourage you to read their statements carefully and to talk about their backgrounds with your friends. Then, mark your ballot for the three you believe will best represent your environmental objectives.

This last year's Rio Grande Chapter Executive and Conservation Committee meetings have been very challenging. There have been some very heated discussions about the direction the Chapter should take, and even more heated discussions about the process by which we determine what actions are to be taken by various elected officers and volunteers of the Rio Grande Chapter.

The challenge has been how to reconcile dissimilar views on complex environmental issues. Our membership—about 6,500 persons—has considerable appreciation for the huge diversity of life forms and the complex interrelationships in this beautiful area. But within the diversity of issues also lies a diversity of views and of approaches at solving the dilemmas we constantly face.

cont. on page 7

Group Candidate Statements

Central NM Group

Petra Hegger

I'm Petra Hegger, a nine-year resident of Albuquerque and a volunteer with the Sierra Club for about the past year. During that time I've had a lot of opportunity to learn about the concerns of people here regarding development issues, wilderness, water use and conservation, and the need to act together to protect these values. I would like to see the Central New Mexico Group become a more effective vehicle for members to connect with others who share their interests, and to be a strong voice for the preservation of the land, rivers and cultures of New Mexico.

Jeremy Kruger

Growing up in the East, I spent summers hiking and fishing in the mountains of northern Pennsylvania. A love of the natural world led me to earn a B.S. in resource economics from the School of Natural Resources at the University of Vermont. I was a volunteer ranger with Alaska State Parks and a wilderness ranger for the Forest Service working in the Pecos Wilderness in New Mexico. My wilderness work involved trail work, firefighting, educating visitors on low-impact camping and chasing cows out of the streams.

More recently, I worked from last summer until this April as an outreach coordinator for the Southwest Forest Alliance. A coalition of 50 environmental groups in New Mexico and Arizona, the Southwest Forest Alliance promotes protection of old-growth forests and restoration of degraded ecosystems. Beginning last May, I began work as a program assistant for the National Parks and Conservation Association. My primary responsibility has been grassroots organizing on the highly successful campaign to save the Baca Ranch. Combining outreach, media and research skills, I have worked to build support for public acquisition of the Baca. I am also a member of St. John's College Search and Rescue, and in my

spare time, I enjoy flyfishing in the Jemez Mountains.

Jon Maaske

I've lived in Albuquerque for seven years and have been a member of the Sierra Club since (?) 1981. I admit to not being able to find my membership card. . . but I'm a descendent of John Muir, for what it's worth, though I don't know the exact genealogy. More importantly, Muir's passion and particular ethic—that of the conservation of nature over the "wise-use" ethic—ring true to me and seem vitally important.

Professionally, I am a Psychologist/Jungian Analyst and see our current global and local environmental crisis in terms of the evolution of human consciousness. Humanity faces the challenge of modulating the agentic, aggressive impulse with a sense of the connectedness of all things. We are seeing the disastrous effects of our collective failure to do so everywhere in our environment and society.

Our chapter of the Sierra Club works directly to impact local decision-making on a variety of vital issues such as transportation, regional planning and the like. I would advocate that our chapter augment this with an increase in our efforts in public education, perhaps through occasional public programs of a general nature designed to educate and attract new support for the values of the Sierra Club. My most passionate local concern on a personal level is a result of my love of backpacking and outrage at the practice of allowing cattle grazing in DESIGNATED WILDERNESS AREAS!

Mike Norte

Although my second term as President of New Mexico Trout is ending, I still serve as President of the Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited. I worry about trout and clean water. Yet, trout need more than clean water. To become a trout stream, rain and snow must traverse healthy watersheds or percolate through undisturbed geol-

ogy, before finally being filtered by intact riparian systems. So, conserving trout is actually about conserving everything upstream of those trout, from the timber and grasslands to the soils and insects and all of the symbiotic plant and animal interrelationships that keep an ecosystem in balance. Trout are indicators of total ecosystem health, which is why I worry so much about the fact that, of New Mexico's three native trout species, the first has been eliminated from the state, the second is listed as endangered and the third is the subject of pending litigation to get it listed. I've learned a lot about the challenges facing these species. I want to share what I've learned, and I want to learn what you've learned. I want to get more involved with the Sierra Club because I think it might make all of us smarter. . . and stronger.

El Paso Group

Bill Addington

Our border country and water and all life entrusted to us are in trouble and threatened. Because of the poverty of far West Texas and our remote location, we are being targeted for every kind of activity that more affluent regions find undesirable. Our skies are becoming more fouled everyday. Our state regulatory agency, TNRCC, has allowed and promoted the largest municipal/industrial sludge dump to operate on 91,000 acres, 37 miles from the El Paso County line. Formerly dumped into the Atlantic Ocean, this hazardous material is not permitted by New York law to be spread or landfilled in their state. And now they want to bring us the most toxic kind of waste there is, atomic power radioactive waste and place it over the West Texas Bolson Aquifer—the future water supply of El Paso. This waste will continue to poison our descendants and all life long after we are gone. If this planned National Nuclear Dump is not stopped, it is guaranteed that other toxic projects will follow.

El Paso and West Texas representatives
see Group Candidates, page 6

Group Candidates, cont. from page 5

must be convinced that their duty is to protect human health and safety and our environment. Our water and other natural resources demand protection. Let's all work together with nature, not against her, for a sustainable economy and future for far West Texas.

Steven Best

With a Ph.D. in philosophy, I teach humanities and philosophy at the University of Texas, El Paso. I have an extensive background in political activism and community work.

My activist interests began in 1980, when I became involved with aiding refugees from oppressive governments in Central America and in developing funds for medical aid. In the 1990s, I became intensely interested in environmental issues. I have served as faculty advisor to the student environmental group (ECO) at UTEP, and I have given numerous talks to the community on environmental issues. I am very interested in environmental issues such as diminishing water reserves in El Paso and the West, the plans to dump nuclear waste in Sierra Blanca and also species extinction and the harmful policies of agencies such as the Animal Damage Control. With my experience as an activist, teacher and writer, I can be of good service to the Sierra Club, of which I have been a member for the last few years. I hope that I can work with the Sierra Club in a more official fashion.

Laurence Gibson

I am a musician and an educator. I've been active in the Sierra Club since my 1969 arrival in El Paso, serving most recently as Outings Chair. I see the club as an important force in this country for conserving what is left of our environmental quality and helping people enjoy it. I feel one way of getting people involved is in getting people out into the wild. I have enjoyed helping with our Outings Program. I look upon Executive Committee membership as a way of giving back some of what has been given to me.

Ted Mertig

I ask that you re-elect me as a member of the El Paso Regional Group's Executive Committee. (ExCom). I have an extensive experience with

the Sierra Club, having been a member since 1981. My current activities include leading outings for the Club and the Inner City Outings (ICO). The El Paso Group of the ICO just elected me as its Chairperson. I also serve as a member of the Rio Grande Chapter ExCom. My other experience includes the following:

- Chapter Delegate to Southwestern Regional Conservation Committee
- Chapter Council Delegate to National Council of Delegates
- Chapter Vice Chair
- Delegate to Seattle Wilderness Conference, sponsored by numerous environmental organizations
- Delegate to Park City, Utah Grazing Conference, sponsored by National Wildlife Federation

IT IS TIME FOR STRONG POSITIONS.

Weak positions = Weak Victories.

Strong positions = Strong victories.

Jamie Newlin

The Sierra Club is the world's largest politically active, nonprofit environmental group. Understandably, the Club positions are of importance to many—including the enemies of the environment. Influencing the Sierra Club has been quite an industry—politicians, corporations, the White House and business coalitions want to make sure that the Sierra Club doesn't cramp their style. From top to bottom, we are besieged by people telling us to "be reasonable," to take it easy on this environmental protection stuff, that business as usual must continue.

I don't agree. The truth is we need stronger advocacy, enough to guarantee the preservation of all creation for future generations. A recent study from University of British Columbia shows it would take three more planet Earths to provide the world's population with an average American life style. I think that says it all. Environmental groups haven't begun to address the magnitude of this challenge, but we can if we stop trying to please everyone—and put environmental protection first.

If elected to the Executive Committee, I promise to put the environment first. I'll put the environment before short term convenience, before the wishes of any politician or political party

and before personal popularity.

Shirley Phillips

I've been a member of the Sierra Club since 1980. I served with my husband Bill as co-editor of the LORAX from 1982 to 1988. I've been on numerous committees over the years. I work as an administrative assistant for the City of El Paso.

I plan to retire soon and want to become more active in the Club's activities, as well as encourage others to do so. We should continue to work for wilderness preservation and maintain a strong Outings Program to give members an opportunity to experience the lands that the Club is fighting to protect.

As the city experiences explosive growth, new leaders and activists must be identified to speak out for conserving our dwindling natural resources. Bill was committed to the Club. I'd like to continue his legacy by helping in any way I can to ensure the continued success of our Chapter.

Frank Voris

I am part of the problem. . . part of the solution. I see first hand the excesses of our culture. Yet, at times, I'll jump at the chance to bathe within the insanity.

I've spent the last 25 years in civil engineering and heavy construction. I've laid oil pipe on Alaska's North Slope and have paved across the coastal plain of El Salvador. I've attacked locations between the two, locations too numerous to count. My background includes a stretch of interstate highway, a coal mine, a channeled river, a pharmaceutical research center and an addition to a water treatment facility. My hands are not just dirty, they are callused.

Now I am here, in your community, and I'm a very busy person. I think in tons—tons of concrete, tons of asphalt, tons of steel. I am busy putting all the above over a big chunk of your landscape. If you want to discover a fresh path to old conflicts and problems, you need to hear me. I am your enemy. . . I am your friend.

Group News

Central NM

Holiday Party!

Saturday, December 19, 1998

5:00 to 8:00 PM

Location: home of Becky and Jamie Grebosky

131 Big Horn Ridge Court, Albuquerque

Bring: Favorite dish to share, for at least 6-8 people; plates and utensils

See you there!

Directions: Take Tramway north to Live Oak, which is just North of Tramway. Turn right and proceed to Juniper Hill (stop sign). Turn left and proceed to a Y, where you take the right fork on White Tail. Proceed to Big Horn Ridge Drive, where you turn right. Proceed to Big Horn Ridge Court, where you turn right and look for 131.

Southern NM

Outings

Saturday, December 5—Baylor Pass in the Organs.

Moderate day hike. Please call ahead; Ron Gordon at 522-4527. Non-members welcome.

Saturday, December 12—Organ Needle.

Beautiful but strenuous day hike. Leader approval required. Call Barbara Coon at 522-1576.

Saturday and Sunday, December 19 & 20—Beginning Cross Country Ski Weekend at Cloudcroft.

Leave early Saturday morning, rent skis in Cloudcroft and spend the day skiing. Beginning techniques will be introduced and practiced. If desired, lodging available at Tall Timber Cabins (1-888-682-2301); make your own reservations. Skiing on Sunday as well. Those without gear can call Busik Ski Haus in Cloudcroft (505-682-2144) to reserve skis, boots and poles. For more information and questions, call Barbara Coon at 522-1576.

Saturday, January 16—Hike to Tonuco (San Diego Mountain) petroglyph site 15 miles north of Las Cruces.

Short, easy to moderate off-trail hike; we should return by noon. Participants should meet at 8 a.m. at the north Pan Am parking lot. For more information, call Ben Zerbey at 526-7811.

Saturday, January 23—Rabbit Ears Plateau in the Organs.

Strenuous day hike. Please call ahead, leader approval required; Ron Gordon at 522-4527.