Executive Committee

Gwen Wardwell, Chair
438-3800
394-8800 w
ederland@earthlink.net

Jennifer Johnson, Vice Chair
662-3023
yomi@roadrunner.com

Bryan Bird, Secretary
988-9129 w
bbird@figuardians.org

Blair Brown, Treasurer; Central Group
265-3231
BBlairB@aol.com

David Bouquin, Conservation Chair; Pajarito Group
662-3741
bouquin@roadrunner.com

Barbara Leonard
662-7815
Barbara.Leonard@sierraclub.org

Norma Callan
460-4935
Norma.Callan@sierraclub.org

Elizabeth Walsh
915-247-5242
EWalsh@utep.edu

John Buchser
620-2021
jbuchser@nri.net

Margot Wilson; Southern Group
744-5860
johns2@nri.com

Doug Fraser; Santa Fe Group
471-0985 or 622-5204

Ted Mertig; El Paso Group
915 852-3011
TMertig@aol.com

Sierra Club Structure

The Club has three structural levels. The National Board of Directors determines the overall direction of the Club. The National Organization is subdivided into Chapters, and each Chapter is further divided into Groups. One representative from each Chapter reports to the National Board through the Council of Club Leaders. The nearest full-time Club staffers are in Phoenix. The Rio Grande Chapter hires a lobbyist full-time during the session of the New Mexico Legislature. The largest part of the Chapter's budget goes to the printing and mailing of this Newsletter, followed by the salary and expenses for the lobbyist.

Conservation

Energy
Klint Hughes
474-0650
khughes@lscp.org

Military Issues
Marianne Thaeler
522-3421
marianne.thaeler@sierraclub.org

Mines
Alb Jacobson
672-9579
jacobson@nri.net

National Parks
Courtney White
989-3915

Rangelands
Gary Simpson
989-3915

Wilderness
Martín Heinrich
232-7151
mheinrich@aol.com

Transportation
Ken Hughes
474-0650
khughes@lscp.org

Water
John Buchser
820-0201
jbuchser@nri.net

Wildlife
Margot Wilson
744-5860
George Grossman
982-1024

Sierra Club Structure

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

Santa Fe Group
821 Old Santa Fe Trail, #10
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Central NM Group
227 San Pedro Ave. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87108

Sierra Club National
86 Second St., 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

Southern NM Group
P.O. Box 3708
Las Cruces, NM 88004

El Paso Group
P.O. Box 9191
El Paso, TX 79963

Southwest Regional Office
516 E. Portland St.
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste newsprint by Printworld in El Paso.
A New Year:
Together We Accomplish, Divided We Flounder

by Gwen Wardwell, Chapter Chair
and David Bonquita, Conservation Chair

Meeting Together for Greater Effectiveness

We believe that the most important activity of the Sierra Club is promoting conservation, and that all other activities -- fund raising, membership drives, outings, publishing newsletters, etc. -- are performed to advance or support conservation goals. The Executive Committee members, as elected leaders of the Chapter, need extensive contact with all Chapter activists and knowledge about their concerns. Educating the Executive Committee members on conservation issues is crucial for activists to secure support and resources to wage their conservation issue campaigns. Activists, in turn, need contact with Executive Committee members to understand where their concerns fit into the priorities of the Chapter and of the Club as a whole. A well-informed Executive Committee makes the Chapter more effective in pursuit of conservation goals.

Organizational Effectiveness Study Completed

Deb Hibbard, the Chapter's lobbyist during the past two sessions and a part-time staff person for the last year, did a study of the organization and effectiveness of the Rio Grande Chapter and its local groups in 1998. Since the Report and Recommendations were written, there have been some changes in both Chapter and Group Executive Committee members, and we have begun to address some of Deb's recommendations.

Deb was hired through a special fund established by one of our members for the purpose of conducting a Chapter-wide survey, and to make recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of the Chapter. Deb's background of two decades of community organizing and organizational development in Main and New Mexico were believed to be an excellent foundation for this task.

Following the presentation of her report last Fall, the National Club made available two experts to help the leadership of the Chapter plan for the future. Ed Paynter of the Organizational Effectiveness Committee has been a key player in the development of the Club's current model bylaws. Ken Langton, of the National Conservation Committee, is from Tucson and is very familiar with the environmental challenges of the rapidly growing Southwest. Ed's and Ken's advice and expertise have given the Chapter's leadership needed guidance.

Her report on this study is based on a compilation of information from a questionnaire which last summer was completed by 23 of 70 Chapter and Group activists surveyed; meetings with Executive Committee (ExCom) members of the El Paso, Pajarito, Central New Mexico, and Santa Fe Groups and two ExCom members of the Southern New Mexico Group; interviews with eight former Chapter activists; and feedback cards from the 1998 fund appeal. Deb's Report and her Recommendations are reprinted below.

REPORT

Local Groups

The local groups of the Rio Grande Chapter all report that activating members and finding new members are the major challenges facing the groups. There was a recognition on the part of all groups that the Sierra Club has a predominately white and aging membership (most activists are over 40) and that the active ExCom and group members have been at it for a long time and are tired or burning out.

There is a tension among Sierra Club members between the value and importance of outings and political action. General group problems that were identified include lack of leadership, shrinking membership, lack of diversity, and a lack of Chapter support in providing necessary resources and training. In addition, the responses to questionnaires indicate a general lack of agreement among group ExCom members as to what their group priorities and goals are for the current year.

The Pajarito Group is young and very active, reporting a core group of about 20. The El Paso Group is considerably more long-lived, but has a comparable core group of active members. The Southern New Mexico Group reported a loss of activists, without new people to replace them. The Central New Mexico Group is in the process of reorganization and reactivation after dwindling to a half dozen ExCom members. The Santa Fe Group remains active, but continues to rely on essentially the same core group, with no obvious attention given to activating new members.

The Pajarito and Southern New Mexico Groups indicated that they would benefit from training workshops, as well as the assistance and support of a Chapter staff person to help them with the basics of organizing, membership development and activation, fundraising, and publicity. The Central New Mexico Group echoed those needs and acknowledged that they are now a collection of solo players working on their own personal interests. They said they want help with general reorganization (the basic ingredients) and activating members.

The Santa Fe Group was criticized by its own members for being a clique which inhibits new people from participating. The El Paso Group is made up of a number of long-
Organizational Development

Some ExCom members indicated that they often feel bogged down by too much information flowing from the national office as well as too much bureaucracy. Further, Chapters are expected to respond to national dictates without adequate input.

Two local groups cited instances when they requested specific assistance from the national office that was not provided.

Feedback from Sierra Club Activists in Exile

Individuals who were formerly very active with the Sierra Club as either Group or Chapter ExCom members but chose to leave and affiliate with other environmental groups gave their reasons for leaving as too much bureaucracy, too much conflict ("fussing instead of doing"), too little camaraderie, too little action.

They also suggested that the Sierra Club is diluting its effectiveness by trying to address too many issues. The recommendation was repeatedly made to return to its wilderness roots. (The feedback from the fund appeal also indicated Wilderness as the prevailing priority.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Newsletter
1) There should be a written procedure for choosing the Rio Grande Sierran editor which should include a job description and a method for making an opening in this position known to all Rio Grande Chapter members.

2) There should be an editorial board for the newsletter to assure quality control, continuity, and a broad and balanced representation of Sierra Club issues.

3) There is strong sentiment for both Chapter and Group newsletters. Members like hearing from the Chapter for issues, statewide outings, and news of local groups. Local newsletters are potentially effective in activating local members.

Chapter ExCom
1) There should be an Orientation for all ExCom members during the first meeting after the election of new members each year which would acquaint them with Sierra Club history and issues, the Rio Grande Chapter and its local groups, the work of the Chapter committees, and the ExCom meeting process.

2) The development and adoption of some Guidelines for Civility is strongly recommended. These would apply to Chapter meetings as well as email correspondence. Consequences for those who violate such guidelines should be defined. Groups should also adopt these guidelines or establish their own.

3) The role and responsibilities of the Chapter Chair should be more clearly defined. Responsibilities should include annual visits with each Group ExCom as well as regular communication with each Group ExCom Chair.

4) The Chapter by-laws should include a clearly defined process for making (or amending) decisions between regular ExCom meetings.

5) There should be a specified ExCom meeting process. The agenda should be communicated in advance for adequate input and review, and the agenda should be reasonable in content for the time allowed. Time should also be provided for getting acquainted and for affirmation and celebration of efforts and accomplishments.

6) There should be time in ExCom meetings, or at specially scheduled meetings, for adequate discussion of controversial issues. This may, at times, require a mediator trained in conflict resolution.

Chapter Staff
1) A full-time Chapter staff person for the next two years should be a top priority. This could be accomplished through a combination of fund appeal income, Chapter 501(c)(3) funds, a tithe from local groups, and support from National.

2) The staff person could work two months as Chapter lobbyist and ten months in providing training, resources, assistance, and support to local groups.

Local Groups

During the next two years, the developing and strengthening of the local groups should be the priority of the Rio Grande Chapter. This should include providing training in basic organizational skills and membership development and developing the essential ingredients for effective local groups.

Email
1) Email should be used primarily for communicating about issues and action.

2) When conflicts arise or difficult issues need to be discussed, this should be done by talking with people directly by phone or in person. Email is NOT an effective vehicle for resolving conflicts. It instead fuels, complicates, and intensifies them.

3) Adopt guidelines for civility and enforce them.

4) Publicize local outings on the Chapter web page and/or the list serve.

Page 4—Rio Grande Sierran
New Mexico Legislature

1999

NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE SESSION:
CURRENT ISSUES AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 1999 with 2/22 updates

by Helga C. Schimkat, Chapter Lobbyist and Lynda Taylor of the Conservation Voters Alliance

The legislative issues the Club is working on include staving off attacks against our state air quality law; strengthening the water quality act; ensuring electric utility deregulation (competition) includes strong consumer and environmental protections and renewable energy incentives, fighting off the so-called "takings" and industry self-regulation bills, promoting water conservation and rivers information, guarding against numerous efforts to cripple wildlife and habitat protections, and lobbying for increases to environmental agency budgets. See below for more details on key bills by environmental category, listed by bill number, title, sponsor, committee assignments, description, action. Those with a double asterisk to left of bill are highest priorities for which phone calls to legislators are needed immediately. Legislators listen to their constituents. Please take the time to call your representatives and senators as indicated below urging them to take the appropriate position on the bills listed. Generally, you will simply leave a message with the secretary who will keep tally sheets on incoming calls for particular bills.

Refer to the article on page 7 which describes the acronyms used and the process a bill goes through before it becomes law.

AIR QUALITY

**H 203 EXPEDITED PROCESSING OF PERMIT APPLICATIONS. Heathon. HENC/HJC.

Would arbitrarily cut the timeframe in half for the review and issuance of air quality permits for minor and major sources of air pollutants, seriously curtailing the state air bureau's ability to do adequate technical reviews and substantially cutting public and community participation in permit decisions. The permit reviews include refineries, coal plants, chip manufacturing facilities, oil and gas facilities, smelters, etc. Also would have agency return permit fees if shortened timeframe is not met, further crippling the budget of the agency. Strongly oppose. Stalled in HENCRC over negotiations. Calls needed.

**H 325 AMEND AIR QUALITY CONTROLACT, Pearce. HENC/HJC.

A modest variation of H 203 above cutting the timeframe and public involvement. Strongly oppose. Stalled in HENCRC with H 203 over negotiations. Calls needed.

2/21 update: The Heathon and Pearce bills have been merged and amended and we support the new version. The time frame for issuing permits is reduced but may be extended for good cause at the Department's initiative, including for public hearing. The language regarding permit fees has been deleted. The amended bill received a do pass recommendation from HENCRC.

HJM 41 UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION TREATY, Blanton. HENC/HJC. Would urge the United States Senate not to ratify the Kyoto Climate Change Treaty adopted in December 1997. Strongly oppose. GLOBAL WARMING - We expect a memorial supporting ratification of the Kyoto Treaty, which we support.

Senate: As of Two air bills have been introduced in the Senate: S 626 and S 676.

ENERGY/ELECTRIC UTILITY DeregULATION UTILITY Restructuring. We are still working on having the environmental and consumer protection requirements amended into S 428. In addition, Representative Pederson has introduced H 865 which does not contain the environmental and consumer protection requirements, but will have less support and less chance of making it through the process.

**H 218 ON-SITE ELECTRIC GENERATION, Garcia, MP. HENC/HAPC. Would appropriate $80,000 to energy, minerals and natural resources department to conduct a practical demonstration of renewable solar photovoltaic and fuel cell energy systems to generate on-site electricity (independent from the electrical grid system) for government or public uses. Support.

S 428 ELECTRIC UTILITY INDUSTRY RESTRUCTURING ACT. Sanchez. SCORC/SIC/SFC. Would create a phase-in approach for deregulation, or restructuring, of electric utility industry beginning January 1, 2001, allowing 50% or more of "stranded" costs by utilities (about $7/month on average bill). While it has a limited renewable energy program for three years, the bill includes none of the key elements promoted by the environmental/consumer group Coalition for Clean, Affordable Energy (which includes CVA, NM PIRG, Sierra Club, and Southwest Research & Information Center). Restructuring, or creating "competition" for this industry, would automatically make coal energy from the oldest, dirtiest power plants the most competitive as they are already paid off, have not had to meet recent federal clean air standards, and would be the cheapest energy source. The Coalition has identified three critical areas that

See Legislature on page 6

Rio Grande Sierran—Page 5
must be included in this bill; (1) expanded renewable energy program (including a renewable energy portfolio which requires utilities to have a certain percent renewable energy available), a net metering program which allows homeowners or businesses to self-generate electricity through solar or fuel cells, and a low-interest loan program to help homeowners and businesses install renewable energy sources; (2) pollution emission reduction fund for SOX, NOX and carbon monoxide (global warming) from coal fired plants to offset any increased coal energy production from the oldest plants; and (3) consumer protections (antitrust monitoring, disclosure of energy sources, etc.) and a rate reduction of at least a 10% for residential ratepayers so that the "benefits" of competition will accrue to the "little guy." The Coalition's proposal would amount to about $2.25/month on an average bill, and with 10% rate reduction would amount to lower bills than currently exists. Strongly oppose the bill in its current form, unless amended to include the above. Calls needed immediately urging inclusion of these issues, and if not included, bill should be voted down as bad for the environment, hurting small ratepayers, and thwarting development of renewable energy resources.

GROWTH/SUBDIVISION LAW WEAKENING

SJM 29 STUDY LAND USE PLANNING, Smith. SRC/SFC. Would request that the appropriate legislative interim committee evaluate current planning, zoning, and land use statutes and create a forum for state, county, municipal, private, non-profit groups dealing with growth to make recommendations for revisions. Support. This memorial was submitted by 1000 Friends, a non-profit group committed to "smart" growth.

SUBDIVISION AMENDMENTS. As of this writing no amendments to the subdivision act have been introduced, although the Lt. Governor Walter Bradley has stated numerous times in the press last year a bill would be introduced.

We understand the goal would be to gut the water sufficiency requirements for subdivisions and to create more exemptions for developers.

TAKINGS

ANTI-REGULATORY ANTI-ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY REORGANIZATION

HIM 8 DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT REORGANIZATION, Heaton. HENRC. Would set up an interlegislative committee to review and make recommendations for reorganizing the environment department to make if more user friendly for the industries regulated under the department. Strongly oppose.

S 37 MANDATORY AWARD TO PRE-VAILING PARTY. Adair. SCORC/SIC. S 475. SIC/SFC. Would provide for mandatory award of costs of litigation to the prevailing party. Oppose, as this would have a chilling effect on citizens groups bringing legal actions against industry for pollution violations. Imagine the legal costs if a community group had to pay the legal fees for all of Intel’s lawyers, or PMN’s lawyers if they brought a suit in good faith and lost!

**S 306 PRIVATE PROPERTY PROTECTION ACT, Verno. SPA/SC. Would essentially make an individual private property right higher than public health, safety and welfare by requiring full market-value compensation from any governmental unit – state or local - that promulgates regulations in the public interest which may diminish the value of private property. We believe the constitution has protections for private property rights which are affected by regulations to protect the larger public interest. This bill would have the effect of bankrupting state and local governments which pass regulations for larger public purposes, or, chilling governments from promulgating any new rules. Would apply to laws and rules currently in existence, and seems to target specifically local land-use planning and zoning programs. If the government entity could not pay full costs, the law or rule would be suspended. Strongly oppose. Calls are needed.

**INDUSTRY ENVIRONMENTAL SELF-AUDIT BILL. We expect one will be introduced this year to let industry’s self-monitor and report any pollution voluntarily, eliminating public information on pollution violations and penalties normally assessed when violations of standards occur. Oppose.

WATER QUALITY CONTROL COMMISSION: An acceptable compromise was reached so that the commission will be authorized but the appeals process will not be changed. The interim committee has been directed and the Environment Department has committed to working towards getting greater diversity on the commission and to add provisions regarding permitting for abatement plans. The bill got a do pass recommendation from HENRC.

AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS INITIATIVE received a do pass recommendation from HAGC. There seems to be a lot of misperception about what this program does. Next it goes to HENRC. Calls urging opposition to the memorial would be helpful.

H 29 WATER USE PLANNING, Larranaga. HAGC/HENRC. Would provide for a forty-year water use planning period from 10 to 40 years for municipalities, counties, state universities, nonprofit community water systems and public utilities. Will help with long term planning for treatment plants and water use. A committee substitute was developed. Support. Passed HAGC.

H 105 AGRICULTURAL WATER CONSERVATION, Gubbels. HAGC/HTRC. S 45 WATER CONSERVATION TAX CREDIT, Wilson. SCONC/SWMC/SFC. Companion bills would provide a hefty (75%) personal income tax and corporate income tax credit for agricultural water conservation irrigation systems or water management methods. Oppose the new committee substitute bills which remove any real tests to ensure that water will actually be conserved and looks like a huge tax break on normal business operating equipment purchases by agricultural industry. Passed HAGC and SCONC.

H 209 REVERSE OSMOSIS WATER TREATMENT PILOT, Marquardt. HAGC/ HAFC. S 143 ALAMOGORDO WATER SYSTEM STUDY, Duran. SCONC/SFC. Would provide $300,000 to environment department for a pilot project using reverse osmosis water treatment on non-usable brackish underground water near Alamogordo. Alamogordo needs a new water source as their future supply is seriously limited; concerned since substantial federal funds will be applied that this could be expanded to tap huge underground water reserves that could promote unlimited growth in the area, create land subsidence, and perhaps spend large federal dollars on technology not yet demonstrated feasible. Working on amendments to clarify. No position yet.

H 295 REGIONAL ACEQUIA GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS, Rodella. HENRC. S 71 REGIONAL ACEQUIA INFORMATION SYSTEMS, Cisneros. SCONC/SFC. Would provide $105,000 to state engineer to assist Taos valley and Rio de Chama acequia associations in developing a pilot regional acequia geographic information system. This information is needed to protect acequia water systems. Support. Passed HENRC, passed SCONC w/o recommendation.

S 72 RIVERS INFORMATION SYSTEM, Cisneros. SCONC/SFC. Would provide $150,000 to department of environment to initiate a rivers information system to better understand status of rivers in state. Support. Passed SCONC w/o recommendation, and may be stalled due to lack of interest by environment department.

**H 321 REAUTHORIZE WATER QUALITY CONTROL COMMISSION, Gubbels. HENRC/HIC. S 380 EXTEND CERTAIN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, Cisneros. SRC/SFC. H 321 reauthorizes the WQCC, which promulgates state regulations governing water quality, and changes the current appeals process which may be to the detriment of public involvement. Oppose in current form. The commission includes several state agencies and divisions and three public members appointed by governor. Currently the commission is heavily represented by agricultural interests, and the commission has been reluctant to pass certain water quality regulations and remove exemptions relating See Legislature on page 7

Page 6—Rio Grande Sierran
How Is A Law Made?

by Helga Schinkat

For those who are not familiar with the legislative process, here's how it works. Prior to the start of the session, a person or organization that has an idea for legislation begins working on a draft bill. In addition to that, the person or organization attempts to meet with all individuals, groups, agencies and similar entities who will be affected by the proposal or may oppose it and tries to work out an agreement with those parties. At the same time the individual or group attempts to find a sponsor—a representative or senator—who will carry the bill at the session. The process will be much smoother, and the bill stands a greater chance of passing, if the advance preparation is thoroughly done.

Once the session starts, the representative or senator introduces the bill on the floor and the bill is assigned to one or more committees of that chamber. For example, if a representative introduces a bill regarding air quality, it may be assigned to the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Judiciary Committee. The bill then is scheduled to be heard in the first committee, at which time audience participation is allowed. After the sponsor and one of the individuals behind the bill introduces the bill at the committee hearing, the various lobbyists and other interested individuals stand up and state whether they support or oppose the bill and why. The committee members then ask questions of the sponsor and witness. Then the committee votes to give the bill a do pass recommendation, in which case the bill goes through the same process at the next committee hearing; a do not pass recommendation, in which case the bill dies; allows it to pass on with no recommendation; or tables the bill. In many cases where the committee feels the various interested parties should negotiate an amendment to the bill, the committee will table the bill until the parties agree. Sometimes a bill is tabled permanently by the sponsor of the bill.

The following are committee abbreviations used in this article:

- HAFC: House Appropriations and Finance Committee
- HAGC: House Agriculture & Water Resources
- HCAPC: House Consumer and Public Affairs Committee
- HBIC: House Business and Industry Committee
- HENC: House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
- HGUAC: House Government and Urban Affairs Committee
- HJC: House Judiciary Committee
- SCONC: Senate Conservation Committee
- SCORC: Senate Corporations & Transportation Committee
- SFC: Senate Finance Committee
- SJC: Senate Judiciary Committee
- SPAC: Senate Public Affairs Committee

- Atc, Sanchez. SCONC/SFC. Would create a small grant and technical assistance program to maintain and recover healthy riparian areas and provide $750,000 for the environment department to manage program. Includes a diverse task force. Support, but amendments are being added by the state engineer which need to be reviewed, and have some concerns that funds could be used to aerially spray the herbicide Roundup to get rid of the non-native trees that are choking river systems without notification and buffer zones to protect aquatic life. Passed by SCONC with amendments.

LEGISLATURE continued from page 6

to agriculture. Environmentalists have recommended, including language calling for greater "diversity" of public interests to be represented on the commission, removal of the new appeals language, and providing the commission with authority, not currently available, to abate water pollution. Bill stalled in HENC over negotiations. S 380 simply extends the life of numerous boards and commissions, including the WQCC, which we want to reflect above recommendations. **H 405 STATE ENGINEER ENFORCEMENT, Gabbels. HAGC/HJC. Would provide much needed state engineer authority for greater enforcement powers and to issue compliance orders, including suspension of a permit or license, if water is diverted or there is illegal diversion of water. Strongly supported.**

H 455 NEW MEXICO WATER BANKING ACT, Gabbels. HAGC/HJC. Would create a state authority and board to regulate water banking of conserved and surplus water rights. This is a very complex bill that has pros and cons. ACEquias are concerned and want a more regional approach. Needs further study. No position.

HJM 38 AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS INITIATIVE, Blanton. HAGC/HENC. Urges the President and Congress of the United States to refuse to authorize, endorse, ratify or adopt any international treaty or federal designation that would "usurp" authority of the states and focuses particular attention on the President's American heritage rivers initiative. Implicitly, it opposes treaties such as the biodiversity treaty, Kyoto treaty, and others. These fears generally have come from the anti-environment, "the United Nations is going to take over the world and dictate that we put environmental concerns first globally." The heritage rivers initiative is an important one designed to preserve, protect and restore rivers that are important to our nation's history, culture and natural heritage, and include some federal funding to accomplish these goals. Strongly opposes.

S 208 RIPARIAN ENCHANCEMENT ACT, Sanchez. SCONC/SFC. Would create a small grant and technical assistance program to maintain and recover healthy riparian areas and provide $750,000 for the environment department to manage program. Includes a diverse task force. Support, but amendments are being added by the state engineer which need to be reviewed, and have some concerns that funds could be used to aerially spray the herbicide Roundup to get rid of the non-native trees that are choking river systems without notification and buffer zones to protect aquatic life. Passed by SCONC with amendments.

WILDLIFE WILDLIFE HABITAT ANIMAL RIGHTS

H 7 DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH APPROPRIATIONS, Taylor, Jr. HGUAC/HAFC. and S 7 DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH APPROPRIATIONS, Macias. SCONC/SFC. These bills are identical and make the
from previous page

department's appropriations for fiscal year 2000. The bills did not include a general fund appropriation for Conservation Services Division, which oversees wildlife and habitat for the state. We have raised the issue and amendment is in the works to reinstate the CSD budget. However, Governor Johnson line item vetoed this appropriation last year, and calls are needed to the Governor to support. Strongly support.

**H 385 INCREASE CRUELTY TO ANIMALS PENALTIES, Pederson. HJC. S 379 EXTREME CRUELTY TO ANIMALS, Garcia, SPAC/JIC. Extreme cruelty to animals would become a fourth degree felony; second offense of regular cruelty would become a fourth degree felony; certain acts against police and fire animals would become a third degree felony; and the courts would be given greater leeway in dealing with the perpetrator and the injured animal. A broad coalition of groups from animal rights, police, and human services has formed to support the bill, which links animal cruelty with violence against people. Currently cruelty to animals is only a misdemeanor. Strongly support these bills. Calls are needed as similar bill died last session. Livestock interests are opposing this bill.

**H 410 AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES PROTECTION, Begay, HENRC/HJC. NM is currently the only state not protecting these species. Many are collected and shipped out of state to become exotic pets. Eventually a threatened or endangered species situation could result. The department of Game & Fish is currently not supporting this bill claiming lack of funds and manpower, and previous attempts to provide protection have failed in the legislature. Calls are needed. 2/21 status: Stalled in HJC.

S 34 PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT, McKibben. SPAC/CONC/SFC. The sponsor has tabled this bill in SPAC which would have combined the Department of Game & Fish with the State Parks Division without making any changes to the laws creating these entities. The sponsor stated that he just wanted to initiate a dialogue to combine all natural resources agencies into one entity. He may propose a memorial directing that a study group or task force be formed to look into this. No position as other fundamental changes in law and budgets would need to be made to see the two entities were effective.

S 37 ELK ENHANCEMENT PERMITS, Lyons. SCONC/SFC. The bill would allow the Department of Game & Fish to sell by auction and lottery two additional permits to hunt bull elk. The proceeds funds to go to programs and projects to better manage elk. The first committee resisted efforts to specify that the funds would be used in part for research regarding habitat analysis. No position. Passed SCONC.

S 89 BIG GAME PARTNERSHIP ACT, Lyons. SCONC/SFC. This would allow the Department of Game & Fish to enter into cooperative agreements with private landowners for the purpose of maximizing big game production on private and public property, and to encourage them to "tolerate" wildlife on their land. We are told the bill is designed to increase mule deer population in the state. We are keeping a close eye on this bill as we are not sure what the intentions behind it really are. No position. Passed SCONC.

S 118 ELK RANGES, Rodarte. SCONC/SFC. The sponsor has withdrawn this bill after first attempting to amend it to make broad statements about the negative impact of elk on the land, including the "level of depredation to cattle producers" and to have special hunts to reduce "excessive" numbers of elk. Opposed.

S 229 AMEND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ACT, Feldman. SCONC. The amendments create protection for "threatened" species. Currently, no such protection exists and we support these protections. A provision in the bill allows limited "takings" of threatened species and we have worked with the sponsor to tighten up that language so that takings under habitat conservation plans will not be allowed. Strongly support. 2/21 status: Failed on Senate floor. Strong discussion against endangered species. Bad timing as hearing followed notice of intent to sue under endangered species act.

S 252 JAGUAR PROTECTION, Lyons. SCONC/SFC. Would create minimal state protection for the jaguar if it is ever taken off the federal list of endangered species. Could be worrisome, however, in that state protection is one factor the feds will consider in deciding whether to de-list a species. On the other hand, weak state protection could ensure that jaguar will not be taken off federal list. Passed SCONC with amendment.

**SJR 1 HUNTING AND FISHING CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, Lyons. SCONC/SFC. Would amend constitution of NM to state that lawful hunting and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of NM's heritage and shall be forever preserved for the people in the state constitution. If passed, it would be put on the ballot at the next general election. Such amendments are being proposed in many states by anti-wildlife interests and should be fought on the basis that the constitution should not be trivialized with such statements. Oppose. 2/21 status: Failed on Senate floor (narrowly).

SM 6 OPPOSE BIOSPHERE PROGRAM, Adair. SRC/SCONC. Opposes the Biosphere reserves designation under the United Nations Environment Programme and urges that the proposed Convention on Biological Diversity not be ratified by the United States. Strongly oppose. The Biodiversity Treaty should be ratified by Congress and would have the U.S. recognize the intrinsic value of biological diversity and the ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic values of biological diversity in the world. Passed SRC and tabled in SCONC from which it could be pulled off at any time. 2/21 status: Stalled in SCONC. Could pop up again. Lots of misperception.

MISCELLANEOUS and 2/21 UPDATE NIGHT SKY PROTECTION ACT. 2/21 update: Other bills that have just been introduced are: Interstate Stream Commission (H700); Protection of Growing Timber (H 870 and S 702); Improved Watershed Function (HJM 65); State Water Trust Study (HM 21); New Domestic Water Wells (S 505); Net Metering System for Self-Generation (S 615); Wildlife Management Impact Studies (S 736); Environmental Justice Act (S 742); and State's Natural Resources Legislation (SJM 41).

H 39 NIGHT SKY PROTECTION ACT, Gubbels. HENRC/HJC. "Would provide protections for the state's dark sky for its beauty, which is threatened by "light pollution" and for astronomy by regulating outdoor night lighting fixtures through the use of shields and other lighting techniques. Support. Passed HENRC with numerous amendments. 2/21 status: Moving along.

H 211 WEATHER MODIFICATION SERVICES, Crook. HAGC/HENRC/HJC. Would provide $200,000 to the interstate stream commission to contract for weather modification services (cloud seeding) to enhance precipitation and water supply. Concerned that water may be "created" in one location at the expense of another's natural processes. Designed to help eastern New Mexico create more rain. Supported by agricultural interests. Oppose. Passed HAGC and HENRC.

H 390 AMEND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT ACT, Larranaga. HENRC/HJC. Would provide authority for the environmental department to establish administrative penalties for driving water violations and a capacity development program for communities in need. Support. Passed HENRC.

S 99 MULTICHEMICAL SENSITIVITY EDUCATION PROGRAM, Toosie. SPAC/SFC. Would provide $53,000 for a statewide public education program on multichemical sensitivity. Support. 2/20 URBAN MinING HEALTH EFFECTS, Phito. SIAC/SPAC. Would provide $150,000 to a Shippock clinic to help former Navajo uranium miners suffering health problems from their mining activities. Support. Passed SIAC.

S 214 LEAD HAZARD ACT, Feldman. SPAC/SCONC. Would create a program to prevent lead poisoning in children through regulation of work practices for lead hazard.
from previous page

by Gail Ryba

The City of Albuquerque is sponsoring Albuquerque's 3rd Annual Bike to Work Day, and this year it will be held on Tuesday, May 4th. There will be several events during May to encourage the use of bicycles for transportation, and the theme for 1999 will be bicycle safety. In conjunction with Craig Rivera, the City's Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety coordinator, and Chuck Malagodi, in Craig's office, bicycle advocates have begun planning for a Track Stand contest on Civic Plaza, a bicycle parade in the Nob Hill area on May 1st, the Albuquerque Police Departments Bike Auction (where 500-1000 bikes will be sold), a possible midnight ride through Downtown, a bicycle fashions show, and more. To support the safety theme, we will strongly promote Effective Cycling, a class organized by the League of American Bicyclists, and we plan to hold at least two classes during April. If you are willing to lead bicycle commuting sessions (perhaps during a lunch hour) at your work site, please call Gail Ryba or Craig Rivera at the numbers listed below, and we can arrange to have a speaker come to your work site and talk for 20-40 minutes about the essentials of Effective Cycling, and to try and interest more people in signing up for the full 9-hour course.

If you have other bike-related events you would like to promote, or you are involved in a business that would like to sponsor the bicycle parade or Bike to Work Day, please contact us. Further details can be found on the Web site for GASPI, the Greater Albuquerque Spokes People, a recently formed bicycle advocacy group in Albuquerque: http://www.nmnia.com/~gryba. Gail Ryba can be reached at 292-4873 or gryba@nmnia.com, and Craig Rivera can be reached at 768-3532 or crivera@cabq.gov. And PLEASE ride your bike to work on Tuesday, May 4th.

Many thanks to the following individuals who have been volunteering and making my life a little more manageable: Kirsten Stade, Jim Noel, Eleanor Eisenmenger (organized the River Day reception at the Hilton), Matice Good, John Bucher and Petra Heeger.

Bike To Work Day
Tuesday, May 4th

OTHER POSSIBILITIES
PESTICIDES - We expect a bill dealing with pesticides, herbicides and notification to the public in advance that will be strongly opposed by pesticide users. Support.

SLAPP SUITS PROTECTION - We expect a bill addressing the growing number of punitive lawsuits filed by industry against local community groups and local governments when they call attention to industry pollution, violations, etc. as part of the normal "public comment and involvement" process. SLAPP suits have had a chilling effect on public involvement in pollution issues.

FORESTRY PRACTICES - A bill has been introduced addressing forestry practices issues.

The Choco* Challenge

Eleanor Eisenmenger
and
Animal Protection of New Mexico (APNM)
will match gifts up to a total of $3,000
to establish

The Choco Fund

for

* low cost spay/neuter and emergency veterinary care for companion animals in low income families;

* subsidized veterinary care for companion animals of the low income elderly;

* foster care for the companion animals of domestic abuse victims.

Please mail your contribution to:
APNM
Post Office Box 1215
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. Please indicate on your check that your gift is for the Choco Challenge.

* Choco: a chocolate-colored Burmese cat who lost Bill and Eleanor Eisenmenger live with him for many happy years.

Rio Grande Sierran—Page 9
In the Navajo Origin Story the land was overrun by monsters. Two brothers set out to rid their people of these terrible creatures. They visited their father the sun and he gave them suits of knives, lightning arrows, a sunbeam arrow, and a rainbow arrow for their quest. The brothers took their weapons to Tsosil (Mr. Taylor) where the giant monster Yeitso lived.

I break away from my view and head north along the bluffs in search of a way down. Eventually I find a canyon which appears promising. I scramble down to find a dead end at a thirty foot drop-off. Refusing to turn back I find a narrow crack which allows me to chimney to the ground below.

In the narrow space between bluffs and lava flows the soil is sandy and covered by grass and live oak. Within minutes I locate a visible critter highway. There are badger, coyote, deer, and bobcat tracks overlaid on a narrow game trail. I am thrilled. This area was overlooked by the National Park Service (NPS) in its wilderness recommendation, yet I find solitude, wildlife, and breathtaking views. This is just one of several areas not recommended for wilderness that I will explore today.

At the advice of the four holy people at Tosotl (Warm Springs near San Rafael), the boys learned how and when Yeitso came to drink there. They lay in wait as Yeitso approached making the ground rumble with his footsteps. After drinking, the brothers approached, but Yeitso saw them coming in the pool’s reflection. A great battle ensued with Yeitso and the brothers hurling lightning bolts at each other.

From here I travel to the splendid grasslands along the eastern boundary of El Malpais National Monument. These too have been overlooked. I am excited to learn that even the old two-tracks that once provided access for ranch access are now either revetting themselves or have been mechanically reseeded by the Park Service. In fact, I cannot find any reason to exclude these large grassland tracts of the monument from wilderness designation. Grasslands are among the most under-represented ecological communities in the National Wilderness Preservation System. These areas cannot be overlooked, especially when considering that the overlooked areas are separated by a single two lane road from the grasslands of the Cebolla Wilderness Area. The ecological importance of protecting these native grasslands is evidenced by the eagles, falcons, and hawks which nest in the nearby cliffs and feed upon the rodents living here.

All of this points to old prejudices when evaluating potential wilderness areas. When many of the Park Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recommendations were made, recreation was the overriding wilderness value considered. BLM administrators even remarked that a given roadless area could never be roadless because it was too flat! Evaluation of an area’s value to native wildlife often went unconsidered. Fortunately, the public has voiced its desire for wilderness that isn’t just beautiful, but that provides for abundant native wildlife.

Many of the most visually spectacular areas in the El Malpais area will almost certainly become wilderness. Grand lava tubes, cinder cones, and the Zuni-Acoma Trail will likely be protected. However, we cannot give up on the most biologically rich areas. The NPS boundary proposal follows the lava’s edge in areas that must be expanded to protect the flat, grassy areas most susceptible to the excesses of tourism. This is, after all, a National Monument and only vigilance will ensure that it never suffers from the roads and parking lots which have practically ruined other Parks and Monuments.

The elder brother eventually hit Yeitso with a bolt of lightning. He stumbled and fell four times, finally expiring. The younger brother cut off Yeitso’s head and threw it north over Tosstil. It landed and still rests in that place today. We know it as Cabezon. Then blood poured forth to from Yeitso’s body. If this blood reached the monsters to the south, Yeitso would revive. The elder brother drew lines across the valley with his knife club causing the blood to pile upon itself. The blood remains there today as the lava flows of El Malpais.
HELP STOP OIL & GAS DRILLING WITHIN THE BISTI/DE-NA-ZIN WILDERNESS AREA

by Martin Heinrich

Three hours from the buzz of Albuquerque and Santa Fe is the beautiful Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area. Its surface is lunar and magical, with hoodoos, spires, and painted buttes. Bones of dinosaurs are perpetually eroding to the surface at Bisti's colorful, but fragile soils. It is home to at least one species that lives no where else. It is a sublime landscape like no other. The Bisti was the first BLM wilderness area and represents a landmark in New Mexico landscape protection.

Unfortunately, an oil company called Sperreex is attempting to force the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to let it drill for oil and gas in the Bisti Wilderness. We can't allow this desecrating of New Mexico's landscapes to be defiled with ads, pipelines, and drill rigs.

You can help stop this unnecessary destruction of the Bisti. The BLM still has to approve the drill permits and rights of way for Sperreex to move forward. With enough public pressure they could deny the permits and easements. Please take a few minutes and write the BLM to let them know that you support the 'No Action' alternative in their Draft Environmental Impact Statement. No Action means no drill rigs in the wilds.

The only acceptable alternative is the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE.

Written comments on the Draft EIS will be accepted through April 30, 1999. Only with resounding condemnation from the public will this scheme be stopped.

ee C. Otteni, Field Office Manager
1LM, Farmington Field Office
235 La Plata Highway, Suite A
armington, NM 87401

ARCO--

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt
Department of the Interior
349 C St. NW
ashington, DC 20240
MAIL: exsec@ios.doi.gov

02/09/1999 - ARCO Leader -

"Age of Oil" Entering its Last Days

Rio Grande Sierran--Page 11

Protect Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

The comment period has been extended to March 12. If you haven't written yet, please do. Linda & I led a National trail maintenance outing there last Fall, and it truly is a place worth protecting. It's huge and it's wild. Substantial ORV use is included in one of the options. Let's save it! -- John Buchser

The following is from the club's web site, which includes an e-submission form. http://www.sierraclub.org/activism/escalante.html

Background Information

The federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has unveiled its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, America's newest national monument, and has opened it up for public comment through March 12, 1999. The DEIS presents five alternatives for public comment. Of the five scenarios, Alternative D is most closely aligned with protecting the wildland values of the monument. This alternative would prohibit all-terrain vehicle use throughout the monument, would close many unnecessary and unmaintained roads, and would limit development to levels consistent with the monument's primitive character.

While Alternative D comes closer than the others to preserving the pristine character of the 1.6 million acres of wilderness proposed by the Utah Wilderness Coalition within the monument, none of the alternatives would require the BLM to use its authority to protect all of the monument's wildlands under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

We need your help. Only a large outpouring of public support for full protection will persuade the agency to improve its plan. You can help by sending your written comments to the BLM via the email petition above (see web site). When commenting on the plan, ask the BLM to designate as wilderness study areas all those lands which the Utah Wilderness Coalition has identified as meeting the agency's wilderness standards. Further, ask the BLM to recommend as suitable for permanent wilderness designation all of these qualifying areas within the monument.

Two issues should be addressed to improve alternative D. The Burr Trail is a route which crosses the Escalante Canyons portion of the Monument. In Alternative D, it is categorized as eligible for developed facilities. This treatment of the Burr Trail, a narrow, winding, infrequently-traveled route, would change the character of the road, significantly increasing the number of people who drive it and adversely affecting adjacent wild areas, which are included in H.R. 1500 and S.773, America's Redrock Wilderness Act. Developed facilities should be confined to the communities adjacent to the monument.

In addition, the issue of livestock grazing in the monument must be more adequately addressed. Despite acknowledging that various federal laws govern grazing management of public lands, the BLM is dragging its feet in applying these laws and delaying compliance until three years after the final plan is signed. Grazing must be managed so as to protect the delicate ecosystems of the monument.

Writing Makes a Difference!

Written comments are of the utmost importance and are the best way to demonstrate to the BLM that citizens from all over the country want the monument managed for its solitude, unspoiled natural character and breath-taking beauty.

Email your comments by March 12, 1999 to the Utah BLM using the form at http://www.sierraclub.org/activism/escalante.html, or contact Pete Wilkins at:

Bureau of Land Management
Attention: Pete Wilkins
337 S. Main St. Suite: 010
Cedar City, Utah, 84720
Fax: 435 865-5170
New Mexico and Its Declining Bio-Diversity

New Mexico has already lost considerable biological diversity; 22 species and subspecies of vertebrates have been extirpated from the state, 5 of which are now extinct. All New Mexico counties have lost wildlife, ranging from 4 to 17 species per county.

VERTEBRATES EXTIRPATED: (* indicates extinct)

Shovelnose Sturgeon
Spotted Gar
Colorado River Cutthroat Trout
American Eel
Bonytail Club
* Rio Grande Buntmose Shiner
* Phantom Shiner
Beautiful Shiner
Palomas Pupfish
Freshwater Drum
Sage Grouse
* New Mexico Sharp-tailed Grouse
Gray Wolf (recent reintroduction into adjacent AZ)
Grizzly Bear
Bison
* Merriam’s Elk
* Hot Springs Cotton Rat
Black-footed Ferret
Mink
Southwestern River Otter
Western Boreal Toad
Lowland Leopard Frog

Inner City Outings

ICO from page 20

Opportunity for Funding

The Inner City Outings group of the Sierra Club is part of the Chamizal Collaborative, a group based in Central El Paso that is seeking funding from the Paso del Norte Health Foundation. The foundation is giving multiyear grants to projects involving youth and healthy behavior. Project Vida, which has worked with ICO before, and many other grass roots organizations are coordinating for this funding. Our representative is Barbara Nehring.

Reports of Fun Times

Tierra Madre

Used tires, old utility poles, and straw bales. These were the major components of a unique ICO service trip for two weekends in February in Sunland Park, NM. Students from Life Management Center and Magoffin Middle School helped build a playground of recycled and donated materials for a low-income community.

Tierra Madre, a community dedicated to environmentally sound, low-cost housing, started its building efforts with a playground. Volunteers from Returned Peace Corps and many other groups transformed a desert spot with nothing but yucca, greasewood, and sand into a place for fun.

Jimmy Jolly, a designer who travels around the world building low-cost playgrounds with community volunteers, spearheaded the effort. Highlights of the playground are a tiny straw bale "playhouse," a gazebo with dragons flying from the roof, and multiple playground equipment pieces using old tires.

What started out as a one-day activity turned out to be so much fun that four boys (and Richard Rheder) worked all five days. They chopped yucca, dug ditches, positioned tires, shaped boards into dragon heads and tails, "rode" the sand "waves" as the backpack dragged logs from the road to the site, and stacked bales of straw.

Several other children worked one or two days. Their efforts were rewarding to them ... and valuable to the community.

Feather Lake

Craig Braginton of the Audubon Society led a group of seven children and several adults from Life Management Center on a late afternoon stroll to watch the evening fly-in at this bird sanctuary. They learned the difference between coots and ducks (ducks quack or that's a joke) and watched a red-tailed hawk circle above. One happy child commented to his mother that they had lived within blocks of this Lower Valley spot, yet they had never known of it.

Aden Center

Two van loads, of children and adults from Life Management Center had a great time exploring, particularly the caves in the lava. The big hit of the day was the bones in the spot where raptors perched. While they might have preferred a "live" volcano, they thought this ancient one was worthwhile, too. Two hearing-impaired children and an interpreter, Suzanne Lightbourn, from the El Paso Center from the Deaf accompanied leaders Ian Hanna, Cheryl Frey, Laura Tourville, and Richard Rheder.

The group was an unwitting ally of a gopher who was being attacked by a Swainson's hawk by the side of the road as the van went home on NM 126. While the children marveled at the size of the wing spread, the hawk decided he didn't want to share the road with the van and headed off for easier prey.

Baca in Trouble

Baca from page 1

The Valles Coalition has grown to include partners such as the Garden Club of America. Ralph Regula, a Republican from Ohio who is a key player in determining which monies are spent out of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, has stated privately that he was surprised when he started hearing from some of our senior citizens around the country, indicating that protecting this ancient volcanic caldera was important to them. As a result of this collaborative lobbying, Rep. Regula has indicated he will leave the $40 million in place at least until this summer. We are hoping that between Rep. Tom Udall's support of this land acquisition and the fact that the Senate is now completed with the impeachment process, that we will see some progress in acquisition of this important ecological and scenic wonder.

Otero Mesa from page 1

by the BLM for multiple use: grazing, wildlife habitat, hunting, hiking, and camping; and as a show case of the custom and culture of southern New Mexico. To succeed we need a sustained campaign for this designation.

The first step has already been taken by local activists in El Paso, Alamogordo, and Las Cruces who appeared at public hearings in January.

The second step was taken by activists writing letters of support for the NCA Alternative presented in the Legislative EIS prior to the deadline in February.

Now, it's up to you to keep the ball rolling. This campaign will need to be sustained over a period of time until Congress acts. Write or email Dr. Viel at Ft. Bliss:
Dr. Andrew Viel
Program Manager, McGregor Renewal
PO. Box 6020
Fort Bliss, Texas 79906
mcgregor@eml10.bliss.army.mil
Contact your local Congressional delegation as well!
Chapter Executive Committee Report
by Jennifer Johnson

The Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee (RGC ExCom) met at Sevillaite Wildlife Refuge on January 9 and 10. The following items were covered. To find out more contact the person listed, or contact the secretary for a more detailed summary.

RGC ExCom Election - committee and results, Barbara Leonard. Results were accepted, new members: Jennifer Johnson, Gwen Wardwell, Bryan Bird. Leaving: Abe Jacobson, Ted Mertig.

New officers - elected-Chair, Gwen Wardwell; Vice-Chair, Jennifer Johnson; Secretary, Bryan Bird; Treasurer, Blair Brown.

Minutes - old minutes and TO DO items. For complete draft minutes of this meeting contact the secretary, Bryan Bird. For final minutes of previous meetings contact Barbara Leonard.

Membership update - submit to National, Bryan Bird.

Future Executive Committee meetings will be held on a Saturday 3-5PM and Sunday 8AM-noon, in March, September, and December at Sevillaite Wildlife Refuge and a yet undetermined place in June. Schedule, Gwen Wardwell. Draft Agenda should be submitted to ExCom members 2 weeks prior to next meeting.

Committee appointments made, Gwen Wardwell. New Conservation Committee Chair, David Bouquin.

Conservation meetings will be 9AM-3PM on the Saturday preceding the Sunday Executive Committee meeting. Funding, cycle of meetings, a big issue to unite club (land) was discussed, David Bouquin.

- John Buchser elected new editor of the newsletter. The newsletter will be published 6 times per year. Schedule, group newsletters, John Buchser.

Editorial board - Blair Brown, Chair. A continuing committee to make recommendations to editor.

Budget - old budget, new budget, funding for conservation activities, mining manual, request audit of books, Blair Brown.

Funding - March Letter Committee, Jennifer Johnson, Chair. Chapter Book (outings/lands), Committee, Barbara Johnson, Chair.

Political report from the State and National elections, legislature highlights, legislative committee responsibilities and procedure, lobbyist, Jim Hannan. The lobbyist is Helga Schimkat, she will work from Jan 1 through March 31. If you are interested in helping, please contact her at 983-4254 or Schimkat@earthlink.net. Robert Haskel spoke on utility deregulation. Conservation Committee - draft minutes from the November 8 meeting at Bosque Del Apache, conservation report, global warming postcards, military issues, Otero Mesa, conservation action, Picuris Pueblo mining. Sen. Bingaman Forest Health, Wilderness Alliance, Marianne Thaeler.

Recycle your Ni-Cd Batteries!
by Jeanne Davies

A new label will appear on Ni-Cd batteries by the end of the year: a battery surrounded by three chasing arrows with the word Recycle above it, in accordance with the Battery Act of 1996.

Cadmium contained in these batteries can leach into water supplies if landfilled or enter the atmosphere if incinerated. Because it is a known carcinogen, we must prevent either action.

So where can Ni-Cd batteries be recycled? More than 20,000 retail and community locations are said to be participating. Listed are Ace Hardware, Americitech, Batteries Plus, BellSouth Cellular, Black and Decker, Car Phone Store, Circuit City, NHQ Hardware, RadioShack, Target and Wall-Mart, and there may be more. I called Ace, Black and Decker, Circuit City, RadioShack, Target, and Wall-Mart in San Diego, all of whom said they were recycling.

If you call the possible collection sites in your community, it will remind them that this is an important consumer issue. On the battery label is a phone number to call for information if you have a problem.

Let's keep Ni-Cd and mercury batteries out of the trash.

Attend the Next Meeting of the Rio Grande Chapter Conservation and Executive Committee at Sevillaite National Wildlife Refuge near Socorro, New Mexico on March 20 and 21. Contact Gwen Wardwell, Chapter Chair for details.

Get Involved - Come to the Southwest Grassroots Wilderness Conference!

The Southwest Grassroots Wilderness Conference will be held April 30 through May 2. Activists from New Mexico and Arizona will converge in Albuquerque (exact location to be announced) to kick the Southwest wilderness effort into high gear. Featured speakers will include Dave Foreman and Mayor Jim Baca.

All activists interested in protection and designation of New Mexico and Arizona wilderness areas are invited to attend. Sierra Club members will be key to the protection of our regions wildlands, so get involved! This event is being sponsored by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and the Southwest Forest Alliance.

Call 255-3966 ext. 106

Río Grande Sierra Club—Page 13
General Meeting - March 15

On Monday, March 15, Martin Heinrich of the Sierra Club and New Mexico Wilderness Alliance will be presenting a beautiful slide show on New Mexico's proposed wilderness areas. The slides are from Michael Bernstein's impressive landscape prints of these areas. This is a presentation you will not want to miss! All Sierrans and community members interested in New Mexico's wilderness legacy are welcome!

Friends Meeting Room, 1600 5th St. NW
March 15, 7:30 pm

Volunteers Wanted!

Many of you have called our office offering to volunteer. Right now what we need most of all are folks to lead outings. If you are interested in leading hikes, locally or otherwise, please contact David Ther (520-5550) or Petra Hegger (990-0351). You can volunteer one-time only or as often as you like. First-aid/CPR certification or training will be necessary. Our outings program is an important part of what we have to offer to our members, and it's been sorely missed. With your help we can make it a great one this year!

CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, Sierra Club meetings take place at the Central NM Sierra Club Office, 207 San Pedro NE.

March 4 Deadline for agenda items for Group Excom mtg.; e-mail to bbblair@aol.com
March 8 Group Excom Meeting, 7:00 PM
March 15 General Membership Meeting, 7:30 PM
March 20-21 Chapter Excom Meeting at Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge (see notice)
March 27 3rd Assembly for Water Planning in the Middle Rio Grande Region, NMNM - 4 PM Anthropology Lecture Hall, NM Campus
April 8 Deadline for agenda items for Group Excom mtg.; e-mail to bbblair@aol.com
April 12 Group Excom Meeting, 7:00 PM
April 10 Deadline for submission of articles for Rio Grande Sierran. See Page 2 for details.
April 19 General Membership Meeting, 7:00 PM
April 22 Each Day: Check for activities in your area.

PUBLIC HEARING ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR BLM GRAZING STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

This draft EIS is on standards to be used to judge the health of approximately 13.5 million acres of BLM managed public land in New Mexico. All interested community members are urged to attend and speak out on this important environmental issue! For more information call Gay Simpson 896-6249.

3/22/99 BLM Office, 435 Montano NE, ABQ
5/16/99 BLM Office, 1474 Rodelo Rd., Santa Fe
5/9/99 Civic Center, 200 W. Arrington, Farmington
5/3/99 Crownpoint Institute of Tech., Crownpoint

All meetings 2-5PM and 7PM until last speaker.

Central New Mexico Audubon Society
offers a series of bird-identification classes conducted by some of NM's most accomplished birdwatchers.

Thurs. March 18 Shorebird Identification
by John Parmeter, NM Ornithological Society
Thurs. April 8 Warbler Identification
by Bill Howe, Migratory Bird Specialist for USFWS
Cost $5 per class. For info call Pat at 856-7463
Group Directory

Southern N.M. Group
Executive Committee
P.O. Box 3705 UPB
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011
Cheryl Blevins,
Chair 522-6230 (day)
524-4861
spottle@greatwhite.com
Margo Wilson,
Chapter Representative 744-5860
hhs32@rioblink.com
Marianne Thaler,
Conservation Issues 522-3421
marianne.thaler@sierranm.org
David Farrell,
Legislative Issues 885-3382
dafarrell@hotmail.com
Robin Heard,
ICO Chair 522-1275
Lesa Wilson,
Treasurer 647-4298
Outings Leaders:
Barbara Coon 522-1576
Ron Gordon 522-4527

Outings

We try to get all outings in the Sierran in a timely manner, but this isn’t always the case. So, also check out the web page for outings at http://www.sierra.nm.org

Saturday, March 6 - Ash Canyon Hike on WSMR
Place: Ash Canyon
Class: Moderate
Limit: The El Paso group outing; need to reserve 2 weeks in advance.
Leader: For information call Rollin, 1-915-832-4023 (day)

Saturday, March 13 - Off-trail from Indian Hollow around Sugarloaf
Place: Indian Hollow around Sugarloaf
Class: Strenuous
Leader: For information call Barbara at 522-1576, Ron 522-4527

Saturday, March 20 - San Nicholas Canyon on WSMR
Place: San Nicholas Canyon
Class: Moderate
Leader: For information call Barbara at 522-1576, Ron 522-4527

Saturday, March 27 - Children’s Nature Walk
Place: Dripping Springs in the Organs
Class: Approximately ages 3 to 8. Naturalist at Dripping Springs will interpret approximately 2 hour hike to the springs. Bring food, water, sun protection and meet at north Pam Am parking lot at 8:15 a.m.
Leader: In charge, Cheryll Blevins at 524-4861 or 526-6220 (day)

Saturday, March 27 - Lookout Peak in the Robledos
Place: Robledos Peak
Class: Moderate day hike, off-trail
Leader: For more information call Ron 522-4527

Saturday & Sunday, April 10 & 11 - San Mateo Mountains
Place: San Mateo Mountains
Class: Car camp and day hikes
Leader: For more information call Barbara at 522-1576.

Saturday, April 17 - South Rabbit Ears mostly off trail scramble.
Class: Strenuous - off trail scramble
Leader: Call Ron 522-4527 or Barbara 522-1576

Saturday & Sunday, April 24 & 25 - Car Camp in the Sacramento with day hikes.
Class: Car Camp in Sacramento with day hikes.
Leader: Call Barbara 522-1576.

Program: April 7 Weds. “Alternatives to Sprawl in the West and the Mesilla Valley”. Guest speaker, Dr. Jack Wright of the NMSU Geography Dept. Dr. Wright will present slides and talk about his efforts and research in protecting open space in the West and his ideas and proposals for maintaining open space in the Mesilla Valley.
7:30 p.m. Science Hall Room 107, NMSU campus. The public is welcome; call 524-4861

Executive Director Supports National Conservation Area
January 19, 1999 from Carl Pope to Sylvia Baca
Assistant Secretary BLM Lands and Minerals
Washington DC

Dear Ms. Baca,

This letter will supplement the comments already sent to you from our Rio Grande Chapter concerning the Draft Legislative EIS on the Withdrawal of the Fort Bliss McGregor Range in southern New Mexico.

The Sierra Club considers protection of remaining natural landscapes in New Mexico of the highest priority, and has been active on these issues for many years. We view the review of the existing military use of the McGregor Range as an important opportunity to achieve permanent protection for the Culp Canyon and Otero Mesa area on the northern end of the range.

Specifically, we endorse Alternative 6 in the DLEIS, which calls for creation of a National Conservation Area with the Culp Canyon Wilderness Study Area at the core.

We believe that the essential missions of the military can be conducted on a smaller portion of the McGregor Range and in other areas suitable for that purpose. We urge the Department of Interior to advocate protection of the Culp Canyon/Otero Mesa area through designation into our national lands conservation system.

Sincerely,
Carl Pope
Executive Director, Sierra Club

5th Annual Border Book Festival

* * * Touted by Publisher’s Weekly “One of the top regional book festivals in the U.S. and the N.Y. Times as a “place where books are a success story” * * *

Border Book Festival opens March 7-14 1999 –

The theme of this year’s festival is: “Our Bodies/Our Earth”, exploring the correlation between what is happening to animal/plant life, as well as minerals, to that of the earth as a whole. The week-long event will feature a series of writers, panels/work shops, as well as a luncheon. The event will also feature the work of nationally recognized authors including: Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams and Leslie Silko. Festivities commence Sunday March 7th at 2:00 p.m. at the Las Cruces Branigan Memorial Library.

For more information: Border Book Festival 422 N. Alameda Las Cruces, NM 88005
e-mail at bbf@zianet.com or visit the website at: www.zianet.com/bbf/
New ExCom Officers

The ballots have been counted and it is official. Two members of El Paso a Executive Committee have been re-elected and two new members have been elected.

Laurence Gibson and Ted Merigot will continue to serve on the ExCom. They are joined by new ExCom members Jamie Newlin and Shirley Savage and Liz Wein. With the election behind them, the ExCom elected the 1999 leadership for the El Paso Regional Group.

Combining the efforts of their two-year terms are Ann Falknor, Sally Savage and Liz Wein. With the election behind them, the ExCom elected the 1999 leadership for the El Paso Regional Group.

Laurence Gibson has been elected Chairperson. He and Rollin Wickenden will continue to run the El Paso Outings program. Jamie Newlin is this year's Vice Chair. Ann Falknor will continue as Secretary. Kathy Sunday will continue as Treasurer. Sally Savage has committed to expanded coverage of regional environmental issues as the editor of the LORAX. Ted Merigot will continue to head up the Membership Committee. He will also re-join the El Paso Regional Group at the Chapter ExCom. Bill Addington, of Sierra Blanca fame, has been elected as Eor Secretary. Gary Williams has returned as Program Chair. Leadership of other issues committees are available.

Army Deciding Fate of Otero Mesa and Sacramento Foothills

On January 12 714, the Army held public meetings in Alamogordo, Las Cruces and El Paso on the recently completed draft legislative environmental impact statement to renew the land withdrawal for McGregor Range, a 500,000-acre Army training facility located in Otero County, New Mexico.

The focus of the meeting was the McGregor Range, New Mexico Land Withdrawal Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (DLEIS). The DLEIS was required by the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986. Congress will use the DLEIS in making its decision whether McGregor Range should continue to be withdrawn to support the Army's and other military services' training requirements.

The DLEIS analyzed six alternatives that include options for renewal of the withdrawal for all, part or none of the existing withdrawn land area. The Sierra Club supports Alternative 5, which developed using public comments submitted during scoping meetings. Alternative 6 would establish Otero Mesa and Sacramento Mountain foothills as a National Conservation Area and the Culp Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA) as a wilderness area.

The U.S. Army and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jointly manage the Otero Mesa and mountain foothills for multiple use. These management programs will expire in 2001. The U.S. Army occasionally uses portions of the area for multi-national force training. The BLM manages wildlife, recreation, grazing and hunting. Otero Mesa and Sacramento Mountain Foothills are recognized as an Historic Landscape under the rules of the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for designation to the National Register of Historic Places. This historic landscape has 16 historic home sites and over 100 prehistoric sites. The area is being evaluated by the Museum and Tigua Indians for potential historic sacred sites.

The German Air Force wants to use this area for a bombing range complex. The U.S. Army wants it for missile training. Alternative sites for these activities exist.

Comments were due February 9. Congress will now decide the fate of these areas.

Dinner Focused on Franklins

By John Sprud

On Friday, February 26, the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition hosted a special dinner meeting focusing on Franklin Mountains State Park.

The event took place in the Faculty/Staff Lounge in the Student Union Building at the University of Texas at El Paso.

This meeting gave members of the Coalition the opportunity to discuss how the Sierra Club, a chance to get together for fellowship and to discuss current issues affecting Franklin Mountains State Park.

Highlighting the evening was a presentation by Dr. Richard Worthington of UTEP's Center for Biological Research in the Franklin Mountains. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is participating in a natural-resources management plan for Franklin Mountains State Park and wants this plan to have a solid scientific foundation. As Worthington is working on many of the needed biological studies.

League of Women Voters Held Environmental Conference

by Joe Groff

Mission Possible was the message for the January 23rd Environmental Conference in El Paso sponsored by the League of Women Voters. Focusing on survival strategies for our Paso del Norte region, the event featured outstanding speakers and displays. There were awards for members of industry, business, public and private agencies or individuals who are protecting, preserving, and improving our region's natural resources.

The event was at the University of Texas at El Paso. There was no cost to attend.

Keynote speaker was Dr. Charles G. Groat, Director of the U.S. Geological Survey in the Department of the Interior. Before being nominated by President Clinton, Dr. Groat served as Associate Vice President for research and sponsored projects at UTEP.

Other speakers included Mark Lloyd OVM, Deputy Director of the El Paso Zoo, Dr. Carlos Rincon, El Paso Border Air Program, Environmental Defense Fund, and Dr. Francisco Nunez, Environmental Director for Program Coordinator, The Ecology Center, Center for Environmental Research, UTEP, and Dr. John A. Peterson, Director, Anthropology Research Center, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, UTEP.

Speakers focused on efforts to improve air and water quality, renewable energy suited to our area, and the sustainability of our communities in the Paso del Norte region.

Co-sponsors included the Center for Resource Management at UTEP, College of Engineering at UTEP, El Paso Community College, and the El Paso Community Foundation.

ICO News

by Mary Lou Parker

ICO Updates Bicycles for Feminine Comfort

Using donations from the El Paso Bicycle Club, Inner City Outings bought two saddles designed for women and seat posts so females attending the more congested bike trail area also provided a reduced rate for tuning up five mountain bikes which have been actively going up and down the leeve in the Upper Valley.

Earth Day Plans

Inner City Outings is forming a youth committee to explore ideas to celebrate Earth Day in April. A poster contest is one possibility. Anyone interested should contact Ted Merigot, 833-3011.

Youths Enjoy Outdoor Activities

Magrino Middle School students in the class of Mary Lou Parker met outside a school in November to go on a nature hike. They learned about different types of animals and plants, and practiced teamwork.

A group of students went on a nature hike in the Franklin Mountains State Park. They enjoyed the scenery and the peace of nature.

Dinner Focused on Franklins

Outings

FEB 26: ADEN CRATER TOUR
Place: Potrillo Mountains West of El Paso
Class: Easy
Approximate length: 1 mile
Elevation gain: none
Leader: Betty Julian
544-5741

MARCH 6: ASH CANYON - SALT CANYON LOOP DAY HIKE
Place: San Andres Wildlife Refuge, White Sands Missile Range
Class: Moderate
Approximate length: 6 miles
Elevation gain: 1,500 feet
Limit: 10 (Reservations and leader approval required)
Leader: Rollin Wickenden 532-9645 (leave message)

This is our annual outing in otherwise-unsuitable areas of the White Sands Missile Range.

We will meet early Saturday morning in Northeast El Paso and drive up War Road to the WSMR Public Affairs Office. This hike is coordinated with Jim Biales, Public Affairs Officer, who will lead us to our traditional Ash Canyon - Salt Canyon Loop. Points of interest include wall of hanging ferns and foundations of long-abandoned ranch houses.

Participants must be U.S. citizens, Nemes and Social Security numbers

Page 16-Rio Grande Sierran
are needed two weeks in advance.

MARCH 6-7: ALAMO MOUNTAIN BACKPACK
Place: East of Hueco Mountains
Class: Moderate
Approximate length: 4 miles (no trail)
Elevation gain: 900 ft
Leader: Laurence Gibson: 584-7342

MARCH 13: VINTON CANYON DAY HIKE
Place: Franklin Mountains State Park
Class: Easy+
Approximate length: 2-3 miles
Elevation gain: 200 ft
Leader: John Sprout: 545-5157 (H)

MARCH 14: HUNTER PEAK LOOP DAY HIKE
Place: Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Class: Moderate+
Approximate length: 8.7 miles
Leader: Gary Williams: 593-3624 (H)

This loop hike begins at Pine Springs Campground and follows the Beaver Canyon Trail 3.3 miles (and approximately 2,000 feet) on a steep trail to the edge of the Box. We will then proceed along the Hunter Peak Trail to Hunter Peak (8,398 feet). From the peak, we will return to Pine Springs Campground by way of the Toads Trail. The views and scenery make the ascent to the escarpment well worth the effort.

MARCH 14-17: HOT SPRINGS OF THE GILA DAY HIKE/BACKPACK
Place: Gila National Forest
Class: Easy to moderate (2-18 miles, your option)
Approximate length: 4 miles
Elevation gain: 800 feet
Leader: Ann Finkner: (505) 916-2

There will be at least 3 hot springs on the itinerary.

MARCH 20: DOG CANYON DAYHIKE
Place: Cibola Red Rock State Park, Sacramento Mountains near Alamogordo
Class: Moderate
Approximate length: 4 miles
Elevation gain: 800 feet
Leader: Ann Finkner: (505) 916-2

About 11 miles north of Alamogordo, Dog Canyon is one of a few canyons on the west side of the Sacramentos that has water in it year-round. The first 600 feet elevation gain are steep and full of switchbacks. At the end of the canyon is a spring that is shaded by large cottonwoods. There we’ll let our imaginations roam while resting near the ruins of the Lee family. The visitors center has a large photo of what the shack looked like decades ago. There is a small state park entrance fee.

MARCH 28: RON COLEMAN TRAIL DAY HIKE
Place: Franklin Mountains (start at McMillan Canyon)
Class: Moderate
Approximate length: 4 miles
Elevation gain: 1,000 feet
Leader: Carolin Greenfield: 584-7342

We’ll do a shuttle to start at McMillan Canyon and end at Trans Mountain Road.

APRIL 3: FEATHER LAKE AFTERNOON STROLL
Place: Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary
Class: Easy
Approximate length: 1 mile
Elevation gain: none
Leader: John Sprout: 545-5157 (H)

This is the annual walk to enjoy the splendor of migrating birds roosting during their spring migration. Last year, the white-faced ibis flooded us and didn’t leave through the usual large numbers. Maybe this year, we’ll get to see thousands of them flooting down among the pink and purples of the desert.

APRIL 4: AGUIRRE SPRINGS DAY HIKE
Place: Aguirre Mountains
Class: Easy to Moderate
Approximate length: 4.5 miles
Elevation gain: 1,000 feet
Leader: Liz Wall: 584-1471 (H)

APRIL 10-11: CHIRICAHUA CAR CAMP DAY HIKES
Place: Chiricahua Wilderness
Class: Easy to Moderately Strenuos (your choice)
Approximate length: Varied
Elevation gain: Varied
Leader: Laurence Gibson: 584-7342 (H)

APRIL 24-25: NORTH PERCHA CREEK BACKPACK
Place: Black Range, Abo Leopold Wilderness
Class: Easy
Approximate length: 6 miles
Elevation gain: 400 feet
Leader: Roti Wickenden: 532-9645 (leave message)

EL PASO GROUP
Executive Committee
Jim Bell, Chair
Jodi Newlin, Vice Chair
Kathy Sunday, Treasurer
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964

Members
Ann Finkner
Laurence Gibson
Ted Merlott
Liz Walsh
Boarder Issues Chair, Bill Addington
(915) 583-8889
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964

Administration
Chapter Rep
LONNAX, Sally Savage
(915) 583-6869
(915) 583-6869
(915) 583-6869

Project Chairs
BLM Wilderness, OPEN
Environ, Center & Franklin Mtms., OPEN
John Sproul
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964

Grazing & Timber, Liz Walsh
Outings, Lawrence Gibson
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964

Political Action, Jim Bell
Publicity, Gary Williams
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964

ICO Chair, Richard Rheder
OPEN
(915) 584-8964
(915) 584-8964

Sierra Club Environmental Center, 800 South Pecos @
Palsano
Phone: (915) 582-8646, Fax: (915) 582-4676

Degree Masters in Wildlife Management.

Executive Committee
Abe Jacobson, Chair
Karla Atkins, Secretary
David Bouguin
Allison Shumaker, Vice-Chair
Janet Gruenwalt, Treasurer
Gordon Simpson
Beth Walter
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670

Conservation Committee
Michael Smith, Chair
David Bouguin, Treasurer
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670

Board of Directors
President
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670
(915) 582-3670

General Meetings
All general meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at Mesilla Public Library. 7 PM and are open to the public.
March 3, 1999
Jim Bailey, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, will speak on New Mexico wildlife protection programs.
April 7, 1999
Bill Dye, fisheries biologist, will speak on the natural fish and wildlife history of northern New Mexico.

Other Meetings
Conservation Committee meetings are on the second Wednesday of every month. All meetings are at Mesilla Public Library. 7 PM and are open to the public.

Pajarito Group News
BAD NEWS FOR BEARS:
Delisting Threatens the Yellowstone Grizzly
Tuesday, March 16, 7 PM

The few hundred remaining grizzlies of Yellowstone are imperiled by a new threat: premature removal from Endangered Species Act protection - or delisting. Although there's been progress in the 20 years since listing, many experts believe delisting is biologically unsound and would reverse recent gains. Delisting is particularly inappropriate now, as the grizzly is facing unprecedented development pressures from the oil and gas industry, recreation, subdivision on private lands, logging and road-building, as well as loss of habitat quality inside Yellowstone National Park. And, not just Yellowstone bears would be affected: following delisting in Yellowstone, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has announced that the Northern Continental Divide grizzly population around Glacier would also be delisted.

Because grizzlies are long-lived, adverse effects can be masked until it is too late to stop a spiral toward extinction. Delisting would not only harm bears by loosening the current habitat protections, it would adversely affect other wildlife whose well-being is measured by the health of the bear. Come learn how you can help prevent such consequences and ensure the Great Bear remains a part of the Western landscape for generations to come. And see great slides of bears in the wild.

SANTA FE GROUP MEETINGS

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN
Tuesday, April 13, 7 PM

John Pierpont, long time Sierra member, will show us the acclaimed movie Fire on the Mountain and talk about his experiences as a member of the 10th Mountain Division, the famed army unit in World War II, which was specially trained to operate in cold weather and high mountain conditions. From their experiences came a lot of our modern equipment and gear and the start-up of many ski resorts.

Be a part of history and learn about this amazing group of men who trained virtually in our back yard!!

The Membership Meetings are held at the Unitarian Church 107 W. Barcelone St. (between Gallisteo and Don Gaspar). All meetings, outings, and activities are FREE and open to the public.

SANTA FE GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB
621 Old Santa Fe Trail · Suite 10 · Plaza Deseo · Santa Fe · New Mexico · 87501
505 · 983-2703

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR
Doug Fraser

The purchase of the Valles Caldera appears stalled — with Senators Bingaman and Domenici, as well as Representative Udall, all on board. Let us hope the log jam breaks soon.

Cliff Larsen held his first Conservation Committee meeting in January and we actually had some new faces. But we need more! If anyone likes conservation issues, please give Cliff a call at 466-2128.

The New Mexico legislature is in full swing. If you are interested in helping, call our lobbyist, Helga Schimkat at 983-4254.

Finally, we will be forming a committee to review and develop a Group policy on the transfer of public lands to private ownership, i.e. the Spanish land grant issue. This is a sensitive matter in Northern New Mexico. We need lots of input. Anyone out there wanting to get involved? My phone number is 474-7615.

Help Wanted:
Land Use Sustainability Issues
We need people to attend the county and city planning commission meetings! If interested, please call Eleanor Eisenmenger at 820-6401. Thank you.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
Cliff Larsen

As I write this, there is a movement (albeit slight) to merge the Game and Fish Department (G&FD) with the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department to create "The Parks and Wildlife Department," even something as mild as a name change was soundly defeated in the Round House a few sessions ago. So this initiative will likely meet the same fate (and, by the time you read this, probably has).

The unfortunate truth of the matter is that animals (the occasional dog or cat excepted) have little value in New Mexico if they can't be eaten or shot for "sport." The Game and Fish Commission (which creates all regulations governing G&FD), under the sway of Commissioners Padilla and Hettings, has worked earnestly to use the wildlife of New Mexico as a cash crop for harvest by landowners, outfitters and guides. With predator species, they get a double-bagger by permitting off-season hunts that the local rancher can profit through by selling entry permits and by preserving the myth that hoofed animals are being protected (for future killing, of course). The sad fact is that habitat loss is creating the most depredation, not predator species, and that trend will not change.

Long-term planning by the commission rarely extends past the next hunting season, and virtually all game species are dwindling as a result. It is rare that the commission pays much attention to the biologists in G&FD or to the constituents whom they hired for reproductive-health studies. The recent solution is to stop making studies and eliminate the Conservation Services group within G&FD (the "kill the messenger" ploy, to avoid receiving the message).

Here at the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club, we need your help with wildlife issues. Come to the monthly Conservation Committee meeting to learn what you can do.
### SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

**March 1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>David Bryant (1-505-757-3477) Easy X-country Ski Tour on Aspen Vista Road. Leave 9 AM. If not sufficient snow, Dave will lead a moderate hike somewhere appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Victor Atayas (438-9434) Easy Hike in the Cerillos Hills. Leave 9 AM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Carolyn Glick (884-3184) Moderate Hike to Window Rock, north of Española. Dogs OK. Call for time/reservations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Jeff Jones (466-2389) Easy Hike down Diablo Canyon. Kids encouraged. Leave 9:30 AM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Matt Gervases (465-3479) Moderate X-country Ski Tour (snow permitting). Call for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Jennifer Johnson (662-3023) Easy/Moderate Hike through a magical old growth forest in the Jemez. 3-4 miles, hilly and cross country. Meet 9 AM in Los Alamos, at overpass to the high school in Sullivan Field parking lot on Diamond Dr., or at 8 AM at SF Sierra office to carpool to LA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Lionel Soroeco (983-6715) Moderate X-country Ski outing to wherever snow is good. Must call for details and reservations. Leave 8 AM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Tom Petron (255-1497, Abq) and Rick Hurley (299-8401, Abq or <a href="mailto:RICKHURLEY@aol.com">RICKHURLEY@aol.com</a>) Moderate/Explore Hike on the Ojo Trail in the Chama River Wilderness. 12.5 mi RT; elevation gain 1750'. Steady, though not rapid pace. Great scenery on this little used, marked section of the Continental Divide Trail. Call by March 17. (Joint hike with Outdoor Adventures for Singles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Strenuous Hike in Diablo Canyon to Sagebrush Flats &amp; Rio Grande overlook. 9 miles RT. Mostly off trail; some rock scrambling. 500' elevation gain. Call for reservations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Carolyn and Arnold Keskaulla (982-9570) Easy Hike up the Rail Trail. Beautiful views. Meet 9 AM at BLM Building on Kasha-Katuwe (come to witness the RB crossing) (hike R:R).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Bob McKee (672-3926 or 471-0005, Norma McCallan) Moderate Hike to Ancho-Rapids, near White Rock. Cumulative uphill hiking 1000+. 3 miles RT. Dogs OK. Meet 8 AM at Santa Fe Sierra Office to carpool, or meet 9 AM at Smith's Grocery in White Rock.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**April 1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Moderate Hike to Glorieta Ghost Town. 6.5 mi RT, 500' up. Dogs allowed. Leave 8:30 AM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Tom Petron (255-1497, Abq) and Rick Hurley (299-8401, Abq or <a href="mailto:RICKHURLEY@aol.com">RICKHURLEY@aol.com</a>) Exper. Hike to Cerro Pedernal, the prominent flat-topped peak near Abiquiu. Non-technical, but steep, route to top with some rock scrambling, 3-6 mi RT, 750'-1200' el gain, depending on route. Call by April 7. (Joint trip with Outdoor Adventures for Singles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Bob McKee (672-3426) Strenuous Hike from Ponderosa CG to Obidias Ridge. 11 mi RT, 1200' el gain. Meet and carpool in SF at 8 AM. Meet leader at Ponderosa CG at 9 AM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Lionel Soroeco (983-6715) Strenuous Hike to Glorieta Baldy via Apache Canyon. Leave at 8 AM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Moderate Hike Atalaya Peak. Steep climb. 5.5 mi RT, 1300' el gain. Dogs OK. Leave 8:30 AM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Warren Steele/Miriam Ouddejans (672-0414) Moderate Hike to Ancho Canyon from R:4, down to the Rio Grande, starting at rim of Ancho Canyon, then scrambling down some loose tuft to bottom of canyon and following canyon floor to Rio. Meet leaders at White Rock &quot;Y&quot; at 9 AM or carpool from SF Sierra office at 8 AM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>Carolyn Glick (884-3184) Strenuous Hike up (and down) the Winsor Trail, from Tesuque to ski Basin, trail conditions permitting. 16 mi RT, 3300' up, dogs OK. Call leader!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### COMING ATTRACTIONS

**June 12**

Overlook of the Moabstrip Mine and hike along the Columbia Creek Trail in a proposed wilderness area with Ernie Atencio, Amigos Bravos, guest leader. **ATTENTION:** Local newspapers do not always provide information (accurate or otherwise) about upcoming hikes. If you intend to go on a Sierra Club outing, keep this page as reference. and **PLEASE ALWAYS CALL THE OUTINGS LEADER PRIOR TO A HIKE, AND ESPECIALLY FOR A X-COUNTRY SKI OUTING, FOR CONFIRMATION AND DETAILS.**

---

**Page 19—Rio Grande Sierran**