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Take Action!

- Write a Letter to the Editor
- Go to a Sierra Club Meeting!
- Write to Your Congress-person
- Talk to an Environmental Leader!
- Read & Learn!!! Then Act.



Rio Grande Chapter
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Save Our Special Places

By Gwen Wardwell
Chapter Chair

Congress is taking action on landmark legislation that could have a big impact on New Mexico. The legislation concerns the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), created to preserve irreplaceable lands of natural beauty and unique recreational value, and the Urban Parks Recreation and Recovery Program (UPARR), created to provide urban parks and other recreational opportunities. Some background information on the issues is described below.

New Mexico's Congressional delegation needs to hear from you regarding how important a good LWCF/UPARR bill is to this state. In addition, our newspapers need to cover the issue by printing letters to the editor and op-ed pieces. Please sit down and write to our delegation and to your local newspapers.

Your letters should state that any final LWCF bill should adhere to the following principles and that you urge the Senator/Representative to fight for that end:

1. The bill must provide a permanent appropriation to the LWCF and other conservation funds that will not be subject to the appropriations process.
2. The permanent appropriation must be in the full amount originally authorized by Congress. That amount is \$900 million for the LWCF.
3. LWCF monies should be divided equally between the federal and stateside programs and must be apportioned equitably among the states, without favoring coastal states or those east of the 100th meridian (east of Texas).

See LWCF on Page 4

Rio Grande: First Casualty in the Valley's "Water War"?

By Steve Harris
Rio Grande Restoration

There's more than an endangered minnow at stake in the Middle Rio Grande's struggle over water, but the minnow's in the worst shape, so far. The future of farming, the sustainability of urban supplies and the supplies of our downstream neighbors are all linked to an overtaxed river. As the minnow struggles for life, Albuquerque confidently prepares to build a water project that will shift its emphasis from mining the underground aquifer to consuming large volumes of water from the Rio Grande and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District continues to depend upon their right to divert almost 90% of the river's flows.

Here's the equation: add the city's termination to use its San-Juan Chama water rights and the district's dogged defense of the status quo, to a very thirsty river; factor in a serious case of political paralysis by state officials and dogged denial by the average water user. It is, or should be, apparent that the river, and the land and people it supports, are all heading for big trouble. Already the river, which owns no water rights, dries out regularly in the Socorro area. Only by applying

See Rio Grande on Page 5, column 1

The Rio Grande: A Downstreamer's Perspective

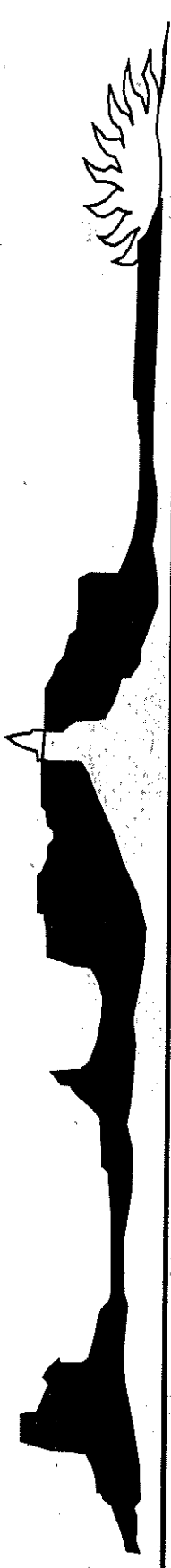
By Kevin Bixby
Southwest Environmental Center

Whenever I hear reports of the conservation caused in certain upstream circles by efforts to save the silvery minnow, I shake my head and think to myself, "they just don't know what they've got."

Losing the minnow would probably not be an ecological disaster (except, of course, to the minnow and its close associates on the food chain). But it would be yet another milestone on the road to somewhere most of us--even the most strident defenders of the status quo in water management--probably don't want to go.

If you want to see what lies at the end

See Downstream on Page 5, column 3



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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.



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Make address changes by contacting Membership Services at 415 977-5649 or send member name and number to address.changes@sierraclub.org

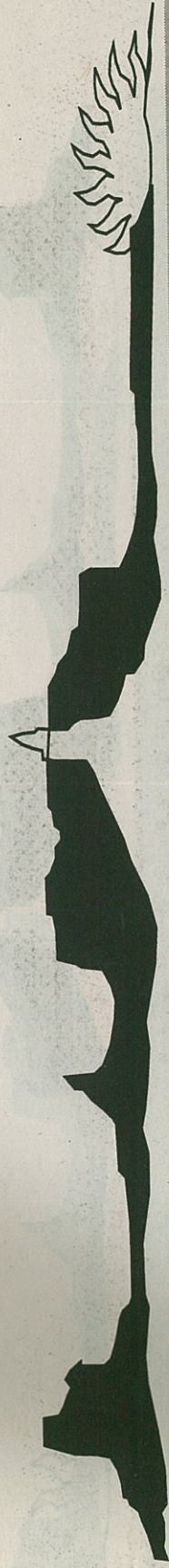
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Contributions are welcome from members. Email contributions preferred. Send to jbuchser@ni.net or mail to John Buchser, 223 N. Guadalupe PMB 419, Santa Fe, NM 87501. **All submissions should be received by the 10th of the month prior to publication.** (The Rio Grande Sierran is published in early January, March, May, July, September, and November.) Photos, artwork and poems are also welcome. Letters and articles are subject to abridgement.

Contact editor for advertising policy and rates.

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Sprawl in New Mexico

Albuquerque is at the Crossroads

Smart growth, or growth as usual? A group of Albuquerque city and Bernalillo county officials have just taken a wrong turn.

Ned Farquhar

1000 Friends of New Mexico

Across the United States, business leaders, public officials and citizens are uniting around the idea that suburban growth -- while inevitable and likely to be dominant for years to come -- should be sensibly managed so that it complements existing development. This is the basic definition of "smart growth." Will development enhance the economy, property and business values, and community character? Or will it, instead, come at the expense of existing businesses, homeowners, and neighborhoods?

The "wrong turn" taken by city and county officials is approval of the Black Ranch development northwest of Albuquerque in Bernalillo County. This development covers 6,700 acres and will accommodate 45,000 people. It is several miles from the nearest major road, significantly removed from existing economic centers, and sited over an area where most of the groundwater is deep, slow-flowing, and low-quality.

1000 Friends' Board of Directors has taken the significant step of joining in a court appeal from the Black Ranch master plan approval granted by the city councilors and county commissioners on the new Extraterritorial Land Use Authority, or ELUA. (Bernalillo County Commissioner Tom Rutherford voted against the project. Additionally, Mayor Jim Baca and city planning officials opposed approval because of concerns about fiscal impacts, transportation and air quality, water, and other issues.) Our Board, which has changed somewhat from the members listed on this stationery, made its decision based on the following issues and concerns:

1. Planned Communities Criteria and comprehensive plan. 1000 Friends wants the existing criteria and plan to be dutifully and responsibly applied. The City and County have adopted clear criteria for master plans in "reserve" areas such as Black Ranch. The criteria say that the master plan should 1) prove the physical and legal availability of water; 2) include a comprehensive transportation plan for the project as it will build out; and 3) provide documentation that there will be "no net expense" to local governments such as Bernalillo County, Albuquerque, and Albuquerque Public Schools. The comprehensive plan also says that decision makers should analyze how the development will affect revitalization

and infill in the existing city. In this case, as our experts showed at the ELUA hearings, the ELUA has failed to meet these critical standards. For instance, the ELUA granted approval despite the fact that Bernalillo County has done no fiscal analysis and the city's analysis showed about \$5 million/yr in net costs to the city. There is no plan for how the estimated \$140 million in school construction costs will be paid. The "availability" of water supplies was staked on a contract with a private utility holding a fraction of the water rights needed to support Black Ranch, and whose application for dozens of wells is being contested by Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, and Corrales. And the transportation plan, which is general and counts on public construction of major roads, is based on faulty assumptions about employment and traffic generation. In sum, this project was rushed to approval prior to completion of major local growth studies (such as the Planned Growth Strategy and the revised comprehensive plan). It should have received much more thorough analysis and review.

2. Process. Key reviewers and decision makers had their minds made up about this project before it even reached them. After a few hours of review, the chair of the extraterritorial land use commission (pre-ELUA) said he wanted to move the project along -- even though city and county staff provided a matrix showing how the project did not meet major requirements of the Planned Communities Criteria. At the first ELUA hearing, one City Councilor went on an extended monologue about his opposition to "anti-growth" groups that were interfering in the process. At the last hearing, authority members criticized Mayor Baca for presenting information that the record had been left open for -- and then they proceeded to allow admission of a last-minute fiscal analysis provided by the developer without any public review or comment.

3. Regional significance. Black Ranch received its approval prior to Mesa del Sol, annexed by Albuquerque in the early 1990's as the likely first area for major new planned community growth. If Black Ranch is developed, can Mesa del Sol succeed? If all three proposed planned communities (Black Ranch, Mesa del Sol, and Westland) proceed, can Downtown revitalization, or the redevelopment projects around the state fair and in other older neighborhoods, succeed? Will this major development, located miles from existing

roads and services, induce sprawling growth on already-parcellized lands throughout the Northwest Mesa? Local decision makers often talk about the need for regional planning, and they have an affirmative responsibility to look at how this development fits in the regional picture. Unfortunately this is a prime example of a development approval that sets the regional development pattern, rather than giving the public an opportunity to shape regional development patterns so that they are efficient and sensible.

Because of this action, we will be labeled as "against growth" -- which we are not, since we have openly supported new growth policy and investment proposals in Albuquerque and elsewhere. We have also supported Mesa del Sol as the best first place for planned community development in the Albuquerque area. Additionally we will be criticized for taking the matter to court. But it is clear to our Board of Directors that the decision makers aren't taking the existing criteria seriously, and that the time for sensible, thoughtful regional planning and development review is now. Around the country some aggressive developers have sued citizens groups that involve themselves in this kind of issue. Yet because approval was opposed by the City, it seems clear that our questions are anything but frivolous. In fact action against us would itself be harassment.

Our partners in this appeal include major state-wide organizations who believe, as we do, that Albuquerque and New Mexico can develop quite positively in future decades. Our city is a diamond in the rough. We can significantly increase infill and revitalization efforts; we can enhance opportunities for walking, biking, and public transit; we can create much more livable neighborhoods and better conditions for long-term economic investment. We can assure more efficient spending of public money and address the \$2 billion backlog in public infrastructure and schools. There is a strong, positive vision for this region's future, and we are committed to that vision. We hope to continue working with members of the development community to achieve it.

[Editor's note: Mr. Farquhar is the Executive Director of 1000 Friends of New Mexico. You may contact him at 848-8232.]



Public Lands

LWCF from page 1

4. The bill should not restrict the use of funds, for example by requiring that the funds can be used only for purchasing federal inholdings or by requiring Congressional approval of purchases over certain dollar amounts.

5. The funds designated for states for wildlife conservation should be substantially dedicated to non-game species. Additionally, landowners should be provided with incentives to protect endangered and threatened species and their habitats, as long as such incentives are not created for merely complying with existing law.

6. The bill must not create an incentive for new offshore oil and gas drilling by favoring distribution of funds to coastal states.

BACKGROUND In 1964 Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) (and in later years the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program—UPARR) to receive revenues from offshore oil and gas drilling and to distribute those revenues to federal and state agencies to preserve open space and parks, protect cultural and historical sites, set aside wildlife habitat and provide outdoor recreational facilities. Since 1980 funding for the LWCF and UPARR has steadily decreased. In fact, in recent years no money has been given to the states.

THE LWCF AND NEW MEXICO
The fund gave almost \$45 million over the years to federal agencies for such federal projects in New Mexico as Aztec Ruins National Monument, Chaco Culture National Historic Park, Petroglyphs National Monument, and the Sevilleta and Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuges, among others. And, the fund granted almost \$34 million to New Mexico State agencies for parks and other recreational facilities.

THE PROBLEM: NO MONEY! In 1966, the first year in which the LWCF made state grants, New Mexico received \$851,900. Grants to New Mexico continued to grow each year until 1979 when grants to New Mexico peaked at almost \$5,200,000. Since then, the grants have decreased. New Mexico received no funding from the LWCF in 1996, 1997 and 1998. That is because Congress continues to use revenues that should be placed in the LWCF for other things, like deficit reduction.

THE CURRENT SITUATION Suddenly Congress is very interested in the LWCF. Six bills have been introduced into Congress that would permanently fund the LWCF and other conservation related funds. Some of the bills benefit New Mexico more than others. The amount of funds that would become available to New Mexico annually under these bills ranges from a projected low of \$8 million in one bill to a projected high of \$28 million in another.

In addition, although wildlife has not been a major beneficiary of the funds in the

past, the current bills set aside certain portions or percentages of the oil and gas royalties to benefit wildlife. We must, however, push to have those funds designated substantially for non-game species.

Finally, some of the bills place unacceptable restrictions on the funds and may cause further environmental damage by creating incentives for additional offshore oil and gas drilling.

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club is supporting the six guiding principles set forth above. We need your help to ensure that our Senators and Representatives work on the bills so that any compromise bill worked out by the various sponsors follows these important guiding principles. You will find the addresses of our delegation and sample letters to the delegation and to the editor following this message.

MORE INFORMATION You may find further information about the bills on the web page of Keep New Mexico Enchanting at <http://www.keepnmenchanting.org>. The page contains bill analyses, a county by county listing of LWCF projects, tables showing dollar amounts spent in New Mexico and links to other sites with even more information.

Please act now. We may never again have such a chance to help bring so many federal dollars to New Mexico for the benefit of our quality of life. We thank you for your interest and action.

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TEXT OF SAMPLE LETTER TO SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE:

Dear Senator/Representative _____:

I am a resident of _____, New Mexico and am writing to you regarding the Land and Water Conservation Fund bills. The funds that would be generated for the state are very important to New Mexico for preserving our parks, wilderness, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

I understand that some of the bills provide more benefit to New Mexico than others. Please take care of this state and its citizens by ensuring that the bills contain the following guiding principles:

[List the six principles stated above]

Please send me a written response regarding your position on this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

TEXT OF SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

To the Editor:

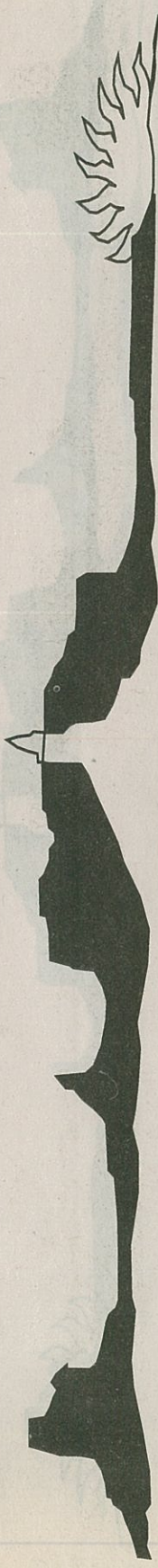
[Use your first paragraph to tie the issue into a recent story printed by your newspaper. For example, you could tie the issue to a story about the Senator or Representative, about a property such as the famed Baca Ranch that should be acquired for public use, or about a wildlife habitat that is being destroyed by development. A link to a printed story will give the newspaper more reason to print your letter.]

I hope that Senator Bingaman will take on a leading role on behalf of the citizens of this state and for the good of New Mexico. I urge Senator Bingaman to use his leadership skills immediately with respect to the pending bills regarding the Land and Water Conservation Fund by ensuring that the proposed legislation will provide full permanent funding for the LWCF with an equitable allocation between the federal and state governments, and also among the states, without restriction on the use of the funds and without creating incentives for the expansion of the offshore oil and gas industry. In addition, I hope that Senator Bingaman makes sure that none of the funds designated for wildlife be used for wildlife damage management purposes.

Without Senator Bingaman's help, New Mexico may lose the chance of a lifetime.

Sincerely,

Your Name



Water in the Rio Grande

Rio Grande from page 1

heroic measures have the undiverted flows of the Rio Grande been made adequate to maintain the continued existence of its last native minnow. Quite possibly the Rio Grande silvery minnow has escaped extinction the last three years only by borrowing water rights from Albuquerque with which to irrigate the river, and by scooping up stranded fish from isolated pools and moving them to an undry riverbed, upstream. Our beloved bosque can't produce new cottonwood trees without help from bulldozers and planting crews. A river that depends upon applications of machinery and money in order to perform its ecological functions is a river that's alive in the same way that a trauma victim on hospital life support is alive.... just barely. Both the city and the district proclaim that they want to recover the silvery minnow. Nobody wants to kill the river. No one in our valley is quite that cynical. Yet the State Engineer, the conservancy and perhaps the city are poised to take the Fish and Wildlife Service back to court because it had the temerity to recognize and declare the minnow's last refuge, the middle valley, as "critical habitat". Such an action would be more an attempt to fight the Endangered Species Act than forthright confrontation of our *water problem*. Sadly, none of these would-be litigants has stepped out to assume the leadership of a focused effort to find an equitable, balanced solution to the triple challenge of maintaining a river, a growing city and 2200 farms on the modest, variable and finite amount of water the Rio Grande can provide. Maybe there are hegemonies, even empires, at stake here. Albuquerque seems to hold a vision of itself as a new Phoenix rising from the desert mesas, while the conservancy pursues its destiny as the water broker to all the growth and sprawl. State water managers wrestle the federal bully with energy that could be better spent evolving toward rational management of water resources. The spectre of a ghost river, like Phoenix's dry arroyo that was once the mighty Salt River, would be horrifying to most citizens. We are uncomfortably close to this. If we don't change the way we do our water business around here, a dead ditch in place of the river is clearly a possibility. Continued legal wrangling for control over the Rio Grande water seems a virtual certainty. It's not just about this valley, either. New Mexico has a commitment to pass a hefty portion of the streamflow to users below Elephant Butte. Any further diminishing of the river will make our already tenuous compliance with the Rio Grande Compact more difficult. Non-compliance means a sure trip to the United States Supreme Court. River activists may continue to file citizen's lawsuits, unless we can otherwise protect the Rio Grande. Ironically, it may be fortunate that we have been wasting so much water around here. The city's per capita wa-

ter use is still among the highest in the West. A recently built a golf course is reported to require nearly one-half a billion gallons a year. The conservancy's irrigation system may leak away nearly as much as its farms use and a portion of that leakage simply evaporates. Of the water stored in Elephant Butte Reservoir, more evaporates in a year than either the city or the district now uses (180,000 acre feet). Conservation may be the last untapped water source we have. This region will have to do some serious belt-tightening to replace the water that Albuquerque intends to divert, to reduce the growing pressure on farmers to quit farming, to stop the river from drying completely up. Without reference to the political difficulties inherent in such problem-solving, here is a look at the sorts of adjustments we could make:

- * Raise Albuquerque Water Prices-Pricing tap water according to its future value will create an incentive for residential conservation. A doubling or tripling of rates would likely dampen the valley's unsustainable growth rate. * Store public water in the aquifer- The intense rate of evaporation in Elephant Butte points to significant savings, if the city would agree to store some of the reservoir water upstream as part of its aquifer storage and recovery program.
- * Irrigation Rotations- The conservancy's recent op-ed ("Resilient Rio Grande", 7/6) suggested that rotating water deliveries among ditches saves 15%. Couldn't this could become the primary way of operating the system?

- * Metering- After decades of not knowing how much water comes in and goes out of the irrigation system, the conservancy is busily installing gauges on their main canals and return flow structures. Now it's time to meter each farm turnout. Farm turnout metering, even without any enforcement mechanism, has enabled other irrigation districts to conserve 10% to 20% of the water consumed on the farms.

- * Belt-tightening in the North Valley- Presently, the conservancy system provides cheap ditch water to flood irrigate lawns and horse pastures in this area. Lush lawns and wet meadows may be a luxury the region can't afford.

- * Reengineer the Belen/Socorro sections- The complex of irrigation canals gives water an opportunity to sink into the sands or evaporate out of raised water tables. A close study of this system may reveal opportunities to reduce the amount of water the conservancy must divert in order to serve its farms. Western water wars have typically been "winner takes all" affairs: Los Angeles wins, the Owens River and its farms lose. In the history of such conflicts, a moment occurs when the balance is tipped toward conflict and the opportunity for cooperation is forever lost. The Rio Grande stakeholders are poised on that same threshold. Of the choice between

Downstream from page 1

of that road, drive down I-25 to Las Cruces and look at the river. The sight may startle you. This is the ghost of the Rio Grande future.

The first thing you'll notice is the lack of trees. For nearly 200 uninterrupted miles below Caballo Dam, the banks of the Rio Grande are bare. Occasionally you'll find an old, mistletoe-encrusted cottonwood waiting to die, but for the most part, shade is pretty hard to come by.

This is not a natural phenomenon. A riparian forest once flanked the river here, just as it does in Albuquerque today. After a treacherous desert crossing 401 years ago, Onate's expedition revived itself under the cool shade of trees along the river near El Paso before heading north to make history.

But for the past half century, a double whammy of tunnel-visioned management has conspired to rid our river of its original bosque. One federal agency--the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission--has been busy mowing the river's banks every year in the name of flood control, while another--the Bureau of Reclamation--has very efficiently regulated the river's flows to meet the needs of irrigators, thereby preventing the periodic flooding needed by young cottonwoods to get established. The result has been that trees usually can't get started, and when they do, they are cut down. As old trees die, they are not replaced.

(Incidentally, this is not so different than the situation in Albuquerque, where floods are largely a thing of the past. The good news is you still have a lot of beautiful mature cottonwoods. The bad news is that most got their start in the floods of 1941-42, and won't be around much longer.)

You will also notice how straight the river is--unnaturally straight. Beginning in

See Downstream on next page

letting two water behemoths duke it out over a dry river bed, or making difficult adjustments in our use of water, learning to negotiate with good faith and sharing the liquid life with all our neighbors, which is the more costly and painful? Which should we choose? "Fish versus people" is the cry we hear from politicians uncomfortable with the real life mandate for change. Better that we should acknowledge that the life of the river, the city's ambitions, the survival of agriculture, the recovery of the minnow and the bosque are joined together in an odd partnership that will determine the future of all.

[Editor's note: This piece was originally printed in the Albuquerque Journal, and is reprinted with the author's permission. The author may be reached at unclergr@laplaza.org]

Water in the Rio Grande

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the 1920s, government engineers decided the river took too long to get where it was going, so they eliminated most of the meanders, built levees and confined the river to a narrow floodway. In the process they shortened the river's length by about half.

If you visit between mid-October and January, you'll also notice how little water is in the river. In most years, you can walk across and hardly get your ankles wet. The reason? There are no perennial tributaries to the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico and west Texas. For 400 miles, the amount of water in the river is largely dependent on how much is released from the Elephant Butte and Caballo Reservoirs. Since most of that water is destined for agriculture, dam releases are tailored to meet the demands of irrigators.

Unfortunately for the river, most farmers don't farm in the winter and the river is turned off like a big faucet. It has been like this every year since Elephant Butte Dam was completed in 1916. The river certainly went dry at times before that, but not with such depressing regularity.

That's not the worst of it. As school children we were taught that the Rio Grande is the fifth longest river in North America, but that's not true anymore. Thanks to a triumph of legal fiction over hydrologic reality, the Rio Grande is actually two much shorter rivers, an upper and a lower separated by hundreds of miles of an often-dry, salt-cedar choked river bed.

The flows of the upper half are apportioned among Colorado, New Mexico and Texas under the Rio Grande Compact, and between the U.S. and Mexico by treaty. Neither the Compact nor treaty require that any water be delivered to any downstream user past Fort Quitman, about 80 miles below El Paso.

Since the river itself has no rights to its own water, the channel below that point is often dry, even during the irrigation season. (In fact, it is frequently dry above that point all the way up to El Paso because of where the diversion dams are located.) Only after Mexico's Rio Conchos joins it 250 miles downstream from El Paso to form the lower river is the Rio Grande rejuvenated enough to complete its seaward journey.

All these modifications and arrangements were done with the best of intentions, but with devastating consequences for the river ecosystem and all the creatures that depend upon it. The bosque is mostly gone, along with the wetlands, spring floods and perennial flows. Two-thirds of the fish once found in the river have found it impossible to survive, including sturgeon, gar, and yes, silvery minnows. (By contrast, only half the native fish have disappeared from the middle

Rio Grande.)

Can the river be fixed? My organization, the Southwest Environmental Center, is committed to restoring the Rio Grande to some semblance of ecological health. Earlier this year we planted 1000 trees along the river near Las Cruces. It's a small step but a start. Even more significantly, IBWC helped with the effort and, over the longterm, has agreed to consider alternatives to its traditional mow-and-dredge approach to managing the river. Who knows, maybe someday sturgeon will once more swim in the water?

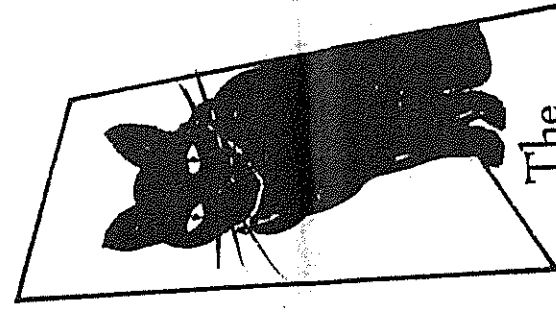
But restoring the river—putting the pieces of a broken ecosystem back together—will take unfathomable quantities of time, money and an even rarer commodity, political will. It'll probably be in a rocking chair before the task is completed. It would have been far easier to hang on to what we once had -- like silvery minnows.

Be careful, Albuquerque, or your Rio Grande will end up looking like ours.

[Editor's note: The Mr. Bixby r is executive director of the Southwest Environmental Center, a nonprofit dedicated to preservation of the Southwest's natural heritage through education and advocacy. This article originally appeared in the Albuquerque Tribune and is reprinted with the author's permission]

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Las Cruces, NM 88001
522-5552, 522-0775 fax
swec@zianet.com]

Whatever you do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it. —Goethe



The Choco Fund

The Choco Fund

mceeeeo000000w

In memory of Choco, a chocolate-colored Burmese who recently concluded his ninth life,

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Public Lands

Spread The News: Conservation Ranching Works

By Courtney White
Quivira Coalition

Lost among the sound and the fury surrounding the grazing debate in the American West is the news that a small group of conservation-minded ranchers are quietly taking charge of their destiny.

These ranchers, whose numbers probably total less than 5% across the region, practice a new brand of ecologically sensitive ranch management that allows them to profit economically and environmentally at the same time.

Amid the lawsuits, finger-pointing, and stock reductions, these ranchers are restoring rangelands to health, protecting endangered species, bringing riparian areas back to life, and shielding open space from destructive development. And they are making a profit while doing so.

One example is Jim Winder, who ranches in southern New Mexico. In the twelve years since he switched to ecologically-sensitive management, he has doubled the size of his cattle herd, increased his forage in riparian areas ten-fold, stopped shooting predators, and discovered new markets for his beef.

Here are some of the techniques ranchers like Jim are employing:

-- **Dormant Season Grazing:** Most of the conflict between ranchers and environmentalists is focused on riparian (streamside) zones - areas critical to the survival of wildlife. Traditionally, these areas are grazed by cattle year-round, with destructive consequences. Progressive ranchers, however, avoid this conflict by grazing riparian areas in the winter, when plants are dormant. The result is a healthy riparian area that protects biodiversity while increasing forage for all grazing animals.

-- **Grass Banks:** Overgrazing occurs when a plant is not given sufficient time to recover after being bitten by a grazing animal, including elk and deer. Conversely, too much rest can cause a plant to decay and lose vigor. A grass bank helps end overgrazing (and

overrest) by making an empty allotment available to cattle for multiple years while the home allotment is restored to health by prescribed burning, temporary rest, and progressive management. The typical response of land management agencies to degraded rangelands has been to cut the numbers of cattle. Grass banks, however, restore land without hurting the rancher financially.

-- **Herding:** The key to progressive ranch management is to gain control of the cattle and manage the timing, intensity, and frequency of their impact on the land. Herding is a good example. By congregating cattle together and moving them every day under the watchful eye of a professional herder overgrazing is easily avoided. For ranchers, herding also relieves the pressure from building fences, low weaning weights, hungry predators, declining forage, conflicts over riparian areas, and seasons being shortened because of a lack of spring grazing. Herding has other economic benefits as well. One award-winning grazing association in Colorado has been so successful at ecologically-sensitive herding in a federally-designated wilderness area that the Forest Service actually allowed them to increase the size of their herd this year.

-- **Holistic Management:** It is important to remember that grazing is a natural process. Some ecosystems in the West evolved in a symbiotic relationship with grazing animals over hundreds of thousands of years. As a result, some soil types are quite resilient to periodic disturbance; they retain health and vigor, and respond positively to the effects of fire or the hoof action of grazers. Holistic management effectively manipulates grazing as an ecological process by employing cattle (which are much easier to control than elk or deer) as tools of range restoration. Nearly all progressive ranches employ some form of holistic management, and do so profitably.

-- **Ecology and Monitoring:** Progressive ranch managers understand that range ecosystems are complex and ever-changing; as a result, they have become environmental experts. By studying the interplay between sunlight, pho-

tosynthesis, water and mineral cycling, and energy flow, they have greatly enlarged their capacity for effective range management. They also constantly monitor the results of their work. Additionally, a healthy range means ranchers can make money from bird-watchers, campers, hunters, and, perhaps, even the protection of endangered species! -- **Partnerships:** Scientists, environmentalists, ranchers, public land managers, and others each hold a different piece of the grazing puzzle. By building bridges between these groups, information and energy begin to flow. Many successfully managed ranches employ a team approach; one public lands ranch in southern Arizona convenes over 30 team members twice a year to review its success at economic and environmental sustainability.

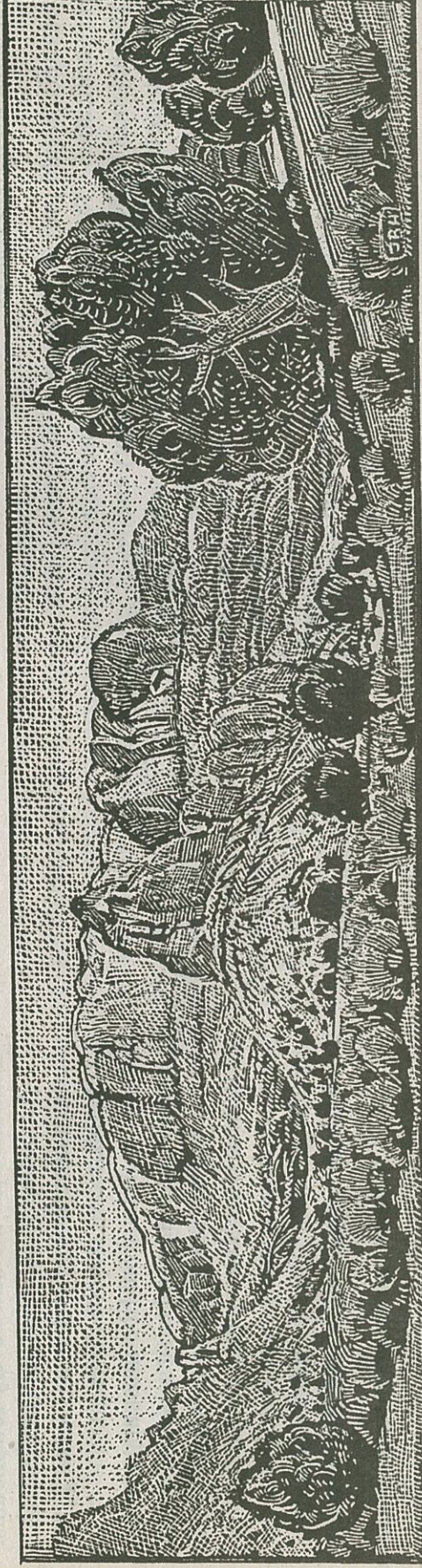
The positive results of conservation ranching are irrefutable. By gaining control of their cattle and employing one or more of the techniques described above, these ranchers have seen environmental health rebound in their riparian areas and uplands. Most have seen their bottom line rebound too. And these ranchers are succeeding in every type of ecosystem across the Southwest, from desert grassland to mountain meadow.

As more and more ranchers are looking to these ideas as a way to stay in business and heal the land, all of us in the "radical center" - environmentalists, ranchers, land management agencies, and especially the public - should start shaking hands and working together to protect what we all love: the West's wide open spaces.

Author and historian Wallace Stegner once labeled the American West as "the native home of hope."

Let's prove him right.

[Editor's note: Mr. White is Executive Director of Quivira Coalition. He has also been involved in leadership roles within the Sierra Club. This piece was previously published in the Santa Fe Mexican and The Albuquerque Journal, and is published here with the author's permission.]



Vecinos del Rio

By Katherine Wells

Vecinos del Rio is a non-profit grassroots group that has grown from what Richard Cook, strip miner extraordinaire, used to refer to as "a bunch of little old ladies who sit around and drink coffee" to a modest force in our communities. Since 1993 we've been nipping at the heels of the Espanola businessman. Our organization's mission is to protect the area from Dixon to San Juan Pueblo on both sides of the Rio Grande. We're trying to preserve the traditional agricultural villages and endangered petroglyph sites on Black Mesa from Mr. Cook's illegal and inappropriate mines. It's a big, tough job. We've waged long and arduous battles over gravel and riprap operations in the communities of El Guique, Estaca, Lyden and Velarde. Those of you who have driven to Taos on Highway 68 have seen the gouged hillsides that stand like giant bookends on both ends of Velarde. The other communities are not visible from a major highway, but the residents are very much affected by 18 wheeler truck traffic on narrow rural roads, noise, dust, the potential for serious erosion and other life-degrading problems that mining brings.

So what have we done? Pretty much everything we've had the time, energy and volunteer hours to do. We've worked with the Attorney General's office, the Environmental Protection Agency, the State Environmental Office and a host of others. We've engaged in long struggles with both the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation to get them to enforce their own regulations and policies. We've spent more than a year working with Rio Arriba County, representatives from industry (including Mr. Cook), the governor's office, the Bureau of Land Management, the State Land Office and others to write comprehensive regulations for sand and gravel mining. We hope that they will soon be adopted and enforced.

We've done the work to get the Chapel of San Francisco in Estaca on the State Register of Cultural Properties and a major petroglyph site in Lyden on the National Register of Historic Places. We've struggled repeatedly with the Highway Department about not permitting 18 wheelers on narrow, curving roads through residential areas. We've even done the groundwork

Continued from right column

alternately, would provide a degree of independent verification. The NMED tells us that their personnel must be accompanied by a County employee during testing. The Council should weigh these factors in making its request for special testing. Based on the LANL data, our organizations believe an appropriate schedule for testing would be once per month or once per six weeks.

Thank you for studying this information relevant to public safety and for considering our joint request for Council action.

John R. Bartlit, Chairman
New Mexico Citizens for Clean Air and Water

Janet Gerwin, Water Committee
Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club

Elizabeth Best, Facilitator
Vision Los Alamos: 2020 and Beyond

Testing for RDX High Explosives in Los Alamos County Production Wells

[Editor's note: This is proposed testimony to the Los Alamos County Council. We believe most of the information is correct, but as always, is subject to reality (ah, revision, that is).]

The undersigned organizations respectfully ask the Los Alamos County Council to request and allow special testing for high explosive (HE) contaminants in the County's water supply wells, PM-5 and PM-2.

BACKGROUND

In several public meetings over many months, the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has provided copious information on the water quality in their Test Well, R-25. These data indicate the levels of high explosives (RDX) at R-25 as high as 77 parts per billion (ppb). This level exceeds the guideline of 2 ppb - the level in the Health Advisory Guidelines for Drinking Water adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These guidelines are set to provide a margin of safety for water that is drunk regularly by a person for many years.

Test Well R-25 is located on lands variously called S-Site, TA-16, and Canon de Valle and is upstream (as the aquifer generally flows) of PM-5 and PM-2. The underground travel time of contaminants from R-25 to the PM wells is not well known: LANL hydrogeologists have said publicly that the high explosives (HE) could appear in the PM wells "in a week, a month, or in 200 years".

PRUDENT ACTIONS

In light of this information, we believe it prudent to begin routine testing for the HE contaminants at PM-5 and PM-2. Both LANL and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) have offered to do such testing, if requested, on some appropriate schedule, on the order of once per month or every few months. According to information from NMED, their cost for one such test is about \$150. LANL's cost may be different.

Who would be most appropriate to do the testing and what schedule would be appropriate? On one hand, since LANL is the source of the contamination, it might reasonably bear the cost of the added testing. On the other hand, testing by both LANL and the NMED, perhaps

Continued on left column, this page

Public Lands & Wildlife

Forest Planning in the Zuni Mountains

By Kathryn T. Gallagher

[Editor's note: This letter was submitted to Liz Agpaa, Cibola National Forest Supervisor's Office in Albuquerque. It concerns the Cibola National Forest Plan Revision process.]

As a resident of Cibola County, living in a wooded area adjacent to the Zuni Mountains, I have become increasingly aware that a serious problem exists concerning population growth, the viability of the National Forests, wildlife habitat and increased accessibility. I relocated here eighteen years ago. I experienced a wonder of the area, the cliffs, ancient Anasazi ruins, and the animal tracks that crossed my property. I thought five to ten acres could support myself and wild life, but it cannot. As homes are beginning to be built here at Timberlake Ranch and new development began to appear in other areas, our land is becoming scarce. At one time, not so long ago, this area was populated with wildlife, unfortunately cattle, and a few ranches. Now we have several hundred people on weekends.

From the time I started to live here, I have been involved in environmental issues, most of which you are probably familiar with. As a group of concerned area residents, we stopped a High Power transmission line being built over the Zuni Mountains to St. Johns, Arizona; a tourist diesel train from running over the Zuni Mountains; Romak Lake from having homesites directly on the shore line; a 91 home development draining into the lake; and the Army from dropping missile boosters on our homes. Unfortunately, they are dropping them over someone else's home in the Datil area. Other unfortunate unsuccessful attempts were the Fence Lake Coal Mining Project (200+ archeological sites and the Zuni Salt Lake, and the reconstruction (destruction) of Forest Roads 50 and 157, presently in progress.

We have had continual issues to be concerned with. I am requesting that the following considerations be reviewed for the Cibola National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan for the Zuni Mountains and other areas.

1. Road Reconstruction: as a prime example, the improvement of Route 50 across the Zuni Mountains can only be described as a "disaster." Noted knowledgeable persons as Wayne Iverson, a former Forest Service Landscape Botanist, and Dr. Keith Kimtigh, Archeologist, opposed this construction, and with the combined efforts of the Zuni Mountain Coalition, were unable to halt this

project. It has become a "high speed" highway, a trash pit, easy access for poachers and pot hunters, has attributed to soil erosion, and continuously disturbs wildlife habitat. The same construction is current on 157 from Fort Wingate to the west end of Rt. 50, resulting in 80 to 90 thousand board feet of lumber, a loss of large trees. Then, to continue this destruction, the third phase of this road "improvement" will be to Post Office Flats, now we have a "super highway"! This will allow landowners in that area to sub-divide and develop, causing fragmentation and eliminating wildlife habitat. Why are you allowing this to occur to this extent?

2. Logging: I guess it took the Spotted Owl to put a compassionate halt to this, not common sense. Unfortunately, most of the old growth forest in the Zuni Mountains were clear cut at the turn of the century. Some remains in inaccessible areas that I hope are never found. The Zuni Mountains are beginning a "recovery stage" and should be allowed to continue on.
3. ATV-ORV: Free access in Public Lands! Are you allowing corporate America to dictate to you? What you essentially have is crushed vegetation, tracks, noise, soil erosion, easy access for poachers and pot hunters, disturbance and destruction of habitat. These dangerous vehicles should be banned from use except for designated roadways, not trails, even it means closing some existing woods.
4. Grazing: Removal of all cattle from public lands. Cattle grazing has resulted in overgrazed lands, tramped and polluted streams, introduced exotic plants and an offense that the Forest Service and BLM has ignored cow pies and trampling on archeological sites. This is equivalent to allowing cows in our family cemeteries and indicates a lack of respect for ancient cultures. It is a known fact that grazing permits and consequent follow-up are not cost productive for the Forest Service.

5. Future Installation of High Voltage Power Lines, Electro-magnetic Fields indicate possible environmental and health hazards. Alternative options should be considered.
6. Maintain Green Corridors to facilitate wildlife migration, accepting the Wildlands Project of biodiversity and re-wilding.

Conclusion: The purpose of this letter is to preserve the natural landscape of our public lands, prevent excessive development, prevent pollution and fragmentation of wildlife habitat and to preserve our public lands from over use and abuse.

[Editor's note: Ms. Gallagher's address is HC 61 Box 764, Ramah NM 87321]

Massive Mountain Lion Hunt Approved By New Mexico

Lion Becomes Scapegoat for Declining Desert Bighorn; Commission Ignores Livestock Conflicts

By John C. Horning
Forest Guardians

The New Mexico Game Commission approved a plan on 7/23/99 to allow a significant increase in mountain lion hunts within four New Mexico mountain ranges that are home to declining desert bighorn sheep herds. The desert bighorn has been decimated throughout the west by overgrazing, disease from domestic sheep and cattle and sprawling development. There are only 250 desert bighorn sheep in New Mexico and each of the populations has declined severely over the last decade or is stable but extremely small. In the last few years, state wildlife biologists have noted very high levels of predation on desert bighorn by mountain lions.

The Commission's plan calls for killing dozens of mountain lions in the Ladrões, Peloncillos, and Big Hatchet Mountains, each of which is designated as a wilderness study area by the Bureau of Land Management. The proposal also includes the Manzano Mountains, managed by the Cibola National Forest, where a small resident herd of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep exists.

The Commission's decision ignores the recommendations of the state's desert bighorn sheep recovery plan which emphasizes the need to restore habitat, eliminate sources of disease and reduce competition for forage, space and water with cattle. Cattle grazing in the Ladrões, Big Hatchets, and Manzano Mountains is undoubtedly harming the desert bighorn.

[Editors note: Mr. Horning is the Director of the Watershed Protection Program for the Forest Guardians,
1411 Second Street Santa Fe, NM 87505
988-9126 505 / 989-8623 fax
<http://www.fguardians.org/>



SIERRA CLUB
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Public Lands

New Mexico Needs More Diverse Wilderness

By Edward Sullivan.

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

As you probably already know, New Mexico is home to one of the most diverse wild landscapes in the west. We are sitting here at the convergence of the Great Plains, Chihuahuan Desert, Sierra Madre, Sonoran Desert, Colorado Plateau, Great Basin and Rocky Mountain ecosystems, with native wildlife species like the Mexican wolf, jaguar, black bear, elk, Mexican spotted owl, mountain lion, and big horn sheep — just to name a few.

So, if our state has such rich diversity, why does our Wilderness Preservation System not demonstrate that? Of the 1.6 million acres of Wilderness in New Mexico, 1.1 million acres of it, or almost 70%, are in forested uplands. Of course our forests are very deserving of Wilderness protection, but why not the deserts, canyons and mesas that are the trademarks of the Land of Enchantment?

Those are also the lands that are integrally important to the viability of our native wildlife populations. They provide connectivity between core habitat areas, allowing this beautiful land to act as one ecosystem, not a series of detached "islands."

The deserts and lowlands that our incredible wildlife species rely upon are in great danger. Extractive industries are continuously expanding their interests and off-road vehicle abuse has increased dramatically in the past decade, creating hundreds of new roads across once pristine areas. These activities threaten not only the ecological wellspring of New Mexico's Lands of Enchantment, but also the recreational and spiritual values these canyons, mesas, and desert lands contain.

But never fear!! The Wilderness Revival is gaining momentum. In New Mexico, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance leads the charge to protect these wild places for us, our kids, the wildlife, and just for the land it-

self. Through public education, grassroots organizing, media outreach, and serving as an agency watchdog, the Alliance will ensure the protection of our remaining Wilderness — New Mexico's Natural Heritage.

The Wild Lands of Enchantment

Let's take a little walk around the state, and visit some of the areas that are still in need of Wilderness protection. We'll start up near Farmington at the Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).

This area is a window into the past. Known for its eerie mushroom shaped hoodoos, and chalky white washes, Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah is also an area of remarkable paleontological value. The area is riddled with fossilized wood, and the nearly complete skeleton of a Dinosaur was found there not too long ago. Devoid of hiking trails, the area seems new and unexplored every time you visit. However, the existence of extensive coal deposits under the area makes its eventual Wilderness designation uncertain.

Next we will travel down to the Sierra Ladrones WSA southwest of Albuquerque. How many times have you wanted to veer off the road to climb those craggy desert peaks as you head south on I-25 to Socorro? Getting up it is not as easy as it seems, but even the surrounding area is worth the hike. Abutting against the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, the Ladrones, as they are affectionately called, are one of the wildest places you will find so close to two of NM's urban centers. On a good day, you may find bear, mountain lion, and the newly reintroduced Desert Big Horn Sheep.

Due Southwest of Sierra Ladrones you will find the Continental Divide WSA. This area alone represents much of New Mexico's diverse lands. Straddling the Continental Divide (was that obvious?) the 100,000 acre WSA has high rolling grasslands to the south and east, and ponderosa pine canyons in the

west. Pronghorn frequent the grasslands, while elk, mule deer and bald eagles call the forests in the north home part of the year. A huge bat cave has also drawn national attention over the years.

Down in the bootheel you might want to stop by the Peloncillo Mountains Wilderness Complex. At just under 200,000 acres, this strip of land running north from Mexico along the AZ border is one of the most ecologically significant places in the Southwest. At the convergence of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts to the west and east, the Peloncillos serve as a corridor between the diverse Gila ecosystem to the north, and the remaining wild lands in northern Mexico. It is the heart of the Sky Islands. Both Geronimo and the last wild Mexican Grey Wolf gave up the fight here almost 100 years apart. Geronimo is gone, but the Wolf has been reintroduced in the Blue Range in recent years thanks to the great work of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Program Director/NMWA Board Member, Dave Parsons.

As you can see, Wilderness is more than just rock and ice. It's more than mountain peaks, and thick forests. Instead, it is any place where we find wildness — where the land takes care of itself.

Background on the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance seeks to reinvigorate the wilderness movement in New Mexico that was so active just ten years ago. Founded in 1997 by former leaders of the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is organizing a statewide constituency of Wilderness supporters who will stand up to advocate for the protection of their local areas.

Today, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance proposes a Wilderness Preservation System which is representative of all ecosystems — one that gives greater connectivity between the region's major wildlife centers, and gives all New Mexicans the chance to have their own local and diverse Wilderness heritage.

The Alliance has launched a statewide Wilderness Awareness Campaign to invigorate interest and enthusiasm for the designation of more Wilderness Areas in New Mexico. At last count, there were at least 2.5 million acres of undesignated BLM Wilderness, and untold numbers of Forest Service areas. The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is also currently performing a statewide inventory of public lands to determine what areas can be proposed as Wilderness.

If you want to find out how you can help protect the diversity of New Mexico's fragile ecosystems, please contact the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. To get involved, you don't have to lay in front of 'dozers, pledge a millions dollars, or pour over aerial photos (although all of that helps!). We are also seeking out those of you that enjoy Wilderness just by knowing it is there, and that want to make a difference in any way you can. Like the land, we find strength in our diversity.

[Editor's note: Mr. Sullivan may be contacted at 255-5966, x.106, or nmwa@earthlink.net]

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Protect Wilderness -- New Mexico's Natural Heritage

Public Lands

General Management Plan and EIS Public Input Process Capulin Volcano National Monument

General Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement, Capulin Volcano National Monument, NM.

Agency: National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

Action: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the General Management Plan, Capulin Volcano National Monument.

Summary: Under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Park Service is preparing an environmental impact statement for the General Management Plan (GMP) for Capulin Volcano National Monument. This statement will be approved by the Director, Intermountain Region.

Capulin Volcano National Monument (originally Capulin Mountain National Monument) was established by Presidential Proclamation No. 1340 of August 9, 1916, to protect "a striking example of recent extinct volcanoes * * * of great scientific and especially geologic interest." The general management plan is a comprehensive, long-range plan to define resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved in various management units throughout the monument, and to identify the kinds of management, use, and development appropriate to achieving and maintaining these conditions and experiences. The effort will result in a comprehensive general management plan that encompasses preservation of natural and cultural resources, visitor use and interpretation, roads, and facilities.

In cooperation with neighboring landowners; other federal, state, and local units of government; and interested organizations and individuals, attention will also be given to resources outside the boundaries that affect the integrity of Capulin Volcano National Monument. Alternatives to be considered include no-action, the preferred alternative, and other alternatives addressing the following major issues:

How can the monument's natural and cultural resources best be protected and preserved, while providing for present and future visitor use?



SIERRA CLUB
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By Steve Glazer

*Southwest Region
Conservation Chair*

The annual meeting of the Council of Club Leaders, the Board of Directors and the Regional Conservation Committee Chairs is scheduled for San Francisco, September 23-26. If you have any administrative issues or other issues of concern to be raised or addressed at this time, contact your Council delegate, who in this Chapter is Barbara Johnson (466-4935, Lunah3@aol.com). Dave Wells, Chair of the Council of Club Leaders, has asked for all items for the agenda to be sent him by 8/15 -- to provide adequate time to be scheduled on the meeting agenda. The Council will be meeting all day on Friday and will have a joint meeting with the Board of Directors on Saturday. The annual banquet this year will be honoring Mike McClosky on his retirement.

What kind of visitor experiences and levels of visitor use are most appropriate to the monument's purpose and the significance of its resources?

What kind of facilities and what management actions are needed to achieve desired resource conditions and visitor experiences?

How can the monument build positive relationships with nearby communities and landowners, and partnerships with related organizations?

Scoping newsletters have been prepared that detail the issues identified to date. For copies of these newsletters and further information, please contact:

Margaret Johnston, Superintendent
Capulin Volcano National Monument
P.O. Box 40

Capulin, New Mexico;

Telephone: 505-278-2201 extension 210

e-mail: Maggie_Johnston@nps.gov.

Dated: August 13, 1999. R. Everhart,

Director, Intermountain Region.

Annual Meeting of National Sierra Club

FOURTH GREAT SEASON



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Grand Canyon Resources Include Natural Quiet

Quick Action Needed If You Value Silence

Air tour representatives said the public is not concerned about noise at the Grand Canyon. They said it at FAA hearings in Flagstaff on August 17. With some flight free zones instituted in 1988, certain areas of the Park are free from aircraft directly overhead. The South Kaibab and Bright Angel Trails are examples. However, many areas are worse than ever. The area just west of the Hermit Trail is a "loud" example. Despite a 1987 law that requires the FAA to "substantially restore the natural quiet" at the Canyon, today less than five percent of the park is free from tour aircraft noise. The main problems is that the number of air tours continues to climb. In the nine years following the Congressional action, the number of air tours doubled; and they continue to increase!

Now you have an opportunity to tell the FAA that further loss of natural quiet is unacceptable, and that their focus should be to substantially restore natural quiet to the Canyon. Please tell them that you support the proposal to limit the number of flights over the park.

Please send comments to the FAA before September 7, 1999. Even a short informal letter would be very helpful.

Comments on this proposed rule should be mailed in triplicate to:

U.S. Department of Transportation Dockets
Docket FAA99-5927 400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington DC, 20590

Comments may also be sent electronically to the Rules Docket at the following Internet address: 9-NPRM-CMTS@faa.gov. Comments must be marked Docket FAA-99-5927.

Here are some points you might make:

The FAA has allowed noise to get worse at the Canyon. The number of air tours has increased from 50,000 in 1987 to about 120,000 now. The FAA should both reduce and cap the number of air tours.

The FAA is failing to "substantially restore the natural quiet," as mandated in the 1987 law. The progress made to date is being eroded by more aircraft. The FAA proposal falls short of even their weak standard for substantial restoration of natural quiet. The agency says that during the tourist season, only 31 percent of the park will be quiet 3/4 of the day. The rest of the park could have aircraft noise all day!

(This does not even meet the FAA's weak

By Diane Miesen

Simplify Your Life

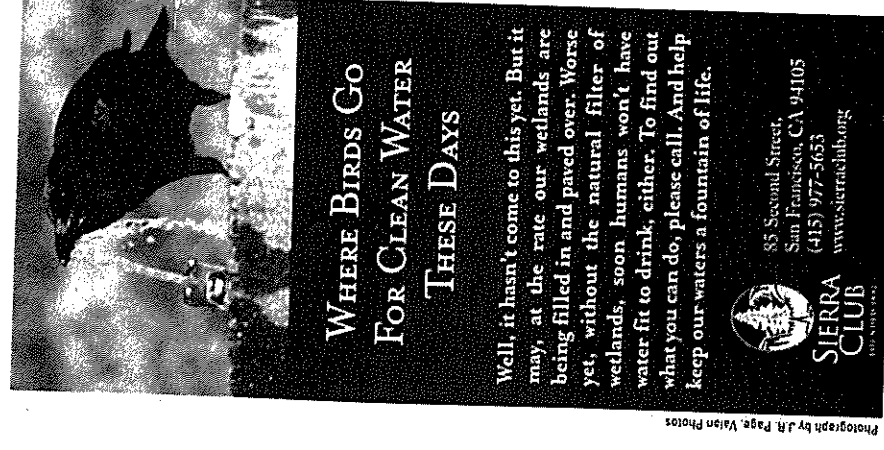
Sustainable changes are happening at the local, regional, and national levels. But many also see it happening on an individual level, as people seek more sustainable and fulfilling lifestyles. According to Trends Research, Inc., "voluntary simplicity" is one of the top 10 trends in the United States. People are choosing to consume less, waste less, and make life and work more meaningful.

Two of the Oregon's leading proponents of living with less, Dick and Jeanne Roy, founded the Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) in 1993 to promote discussion groups. To date, 10,000 people in the Northwest have taken NWEI discussion courses. In the two years NWEI has offered courses outside of the Northwest 4,000 people in 25 states have taken either "Voluntary Simplicity" or "Deep Ecology and Related Topics". This includes a large contingent of Sierra Club members in California, Colorado, and Ohio. The institute organizes the discussion groups in churches, homes, and workplaces to encourage people to examine their personal values and habits and accept responsibility for the Earth. The discussion groups do not provide answers, but encourage people to find their own ways to simplify their lives and reexamine they way they conduct their relationship with the natural world.

NWEI's "Voluntary Simplicity" discussion course can be taken by a group of 6 to 12 in your home, workplace, church, or other setting. After an introductory meeting with Diane Miesen, an NWEI volunteer in Albuquerque, the group meets for seven ses-

sions to discuss selected readings. Each participant pays only \$15 for the course book. For information, contact Diane at 254-3635 or email her at dianemiesen@yahoo.com. Topics include the following:

The Meaning of Simplicity: The concept of simplicity, as a religious practice or philosophy of life, has a long history. Inner simplicity and outer simplicity are both involved. What are some misconceptions about a simple life? Living More with Less: Accumulating material possessions is part of the American Dream. For some, the dream has become a nightmare. When do material possessions add meaning to our lives and when do they detract? Your Money or Your Life: A growing number of people wish to resolve the conflict between the desire to make and spend money and the desire for a simple life. Why is that so difficult in our culture? Do You Have the Time? In modern society, our minds are focused on the "busyness" of the day, our current problems, and our future challenges. Are there alternatives to the fast pace of our mainstream culture? How Much is Enough: As a society, we engage in patterns of material consumption that are damaging the environment. How much do we really need? Swimming Against the Tide: Our country's guiding economic principles push growth, consumption, and technological advance as inextricable and desirable goals. In our efforts to live simply, we may feel like we are swimming against the tide. The Practice of Simplicity: There are countless practical benefits in moving toward simplicity. What steps can be taken to move toward a life simple in means, rich in ends?

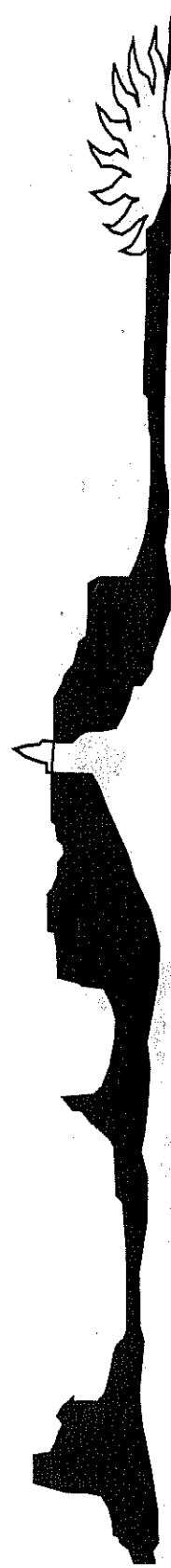


**WHERE BIRDS GO
FOR CLEAN WATER
THESE DAYS**

Well, it hasn't come to this yet. But it may, at the rate our wetlands are being filled in and paved over. Worse yet, without the natural filter of wetlands, soon humans won't have water fit to drink, either. To find out what you can do, please call. And help keep our waters a fountain of life.

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Photograph by J.R. Page, Valen Photos



Trade and the Environment

Udall Delivers on Key Trade Vote

Richard Barish

Trade, Human Rights, and the Environment Program Committee

Congressman Tom Udall, endorsed by Sierra Club in his run for Congress, came high for the Club in a big way with a prominent vote on a important trade measure. The vote was on "NAFTA for Africa," properly, if deceptively, known as the "Growth and Opportunity Act, H.R. Resisting considerable pressure from the rate lobby and from within the Democratic party itself, Rep. Udall did the right and voted against H.R. 434. In spite of, Congressman Udall's vote against the bill, ver, the measure passed on a vote of 234-

NAFTA for Africa is another in a succession of trade agreements and bills that are ned to benefit large, transnational corporations at the expense of local populations, in health, and the environment. The bill result in the degradation of the environment of sub-Saharan Africa by promoting liberalization and increased access for national corporations to African natural resources as a condition for obtaining favorable tariff treatment.

The bill contains no environmental guards whatsoever. To the contrary, at the time that the bill promotes increased s to resources, it would also serve to pressure African countries to comply with International Monetary Fund mandates to cut corporate taxes and social spending. The result d be that money for enforcement of environmental and health safeguards would be ed at the very time that pressure on the onment is increasing. The bill would also ure African countries to adopt various ures that would give new rights to foreign investors and provide them with means allenge environmental regulations, such tional treatment guarantees.

Rep. Henry Bonilla also voted against Il. Heather Wilson continued her almost ct anti-environmental voting record by g in favor of the bill and was joined in y Reps. Skeen and Reyes. The bill now s to the Senate, where the bill died in st Congress.

"UNHAPPILY EVER NAFTA" is Club trade warrior Dan Seligman puts e latest reason for unhappiness with TA is a claim brought by Vancouver- l Methanex Corporation against the State lifornia. Methanex believes that it is en- to \$970 million in compensation because ornia had the temerity to attempt to pro-

tect the health of its citizens by phasing out the use of MTBE, a gasoline additive and suspected carcinogen that has contaminated the state's water supplies. Methanex claims that the California ban constitutes an "expropriation" of its profits in violation of NAFTA, entitling it to damages. According to Rep. George Miller (D-CA), "This is the New World Order's assault on democracy. Local legislation can be nullified because a secret trade tribunal says so."

A similar claim filed several years ago by U.S.-based Ethyl Corporation forced Canada to rescind its ban on a another hazardous gasoline additive, MMT.

WTO Ministerial In Seattle. The World Trade Organization will be holding a ministerial-level meeting from November 29 to December 3 in Seattle. The World Trade Organization is global super-agency created in 1995 with 135 member countries, devoted solely to international commerce. The WTO has promoted the agenda of the transnational corporations in which profit dominates to the exclusion of health, the environment, sustainability, and human rights.

The Seattle summit will set the trade agenda for the coming years. Trade ministers will consider whether launch of a new "Millennium Round" of negotiations to expand the powers of the WTO. The new negotiations would include such matters as investment, agricultural, and a global free logging agreement.

The WTO has restricted the ability of countries to act to protect the environment. A recent WTO decision held that a U.S. regulation requiring that shrimp nets contain devices to allow endangered sea turtles to escape was an impermissible restriction on trade. The powers of the WTO need to be curtailed, not enlarged.

September 15 is the International Day of Action against the WTO. Please take a few minutes and call your senators and representative (capitol switchboard: 1-202-224-3121 or toll-free 1-888-449-3511), along with U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshevsky (202-395-6890) and Vice-President Gore (202-456-1111), and ask them to support an assessment of the WTO's record to date in order to identify ways to change international trade and investment rules so that these rules strengthen, not weaken, protections for health and the environment and promote sustainable development.

[Editor's note: You should particularly thank Rep. Udall for his environmentally-conscious support of this and other bills in Washington.]

Southwest Regional Conservation Committee Meeting October 16-17

The next Southwest Regional Conservation Committee meeting will be in Salt Lake City on 10/16-17. It will consist of our annual business meeting, election of officers and training. We will be developing a workplan and budget for next year. The training will focus on wildlands. We will have the chairs of our national campaigns on wildlands and end commercial logging on public lands. We will also have Debbie Sease, our staff in DC, with a discussion on wilderness history and future strategy (and why we fight for purity).

SWRCC does have some \$ to help with travel @ \$.20/mile. We are coordinating Utah hosts for out-of-towners. Contacts: Linda at utah.chapter@sierraclub.org, 801 467-9297 or Wayne at whoskisson@aol.com, 801 583-6053.

Please contact the Rio Grande Chapter representatives Ted Mertig (915 852-3011 TMertig@aol.com) or Gwen Wardwell (438-3060 h, 984-8860 w, edenland@earthlink.net) if you have issues of concern to be addressed to the SWRCC.

meeting



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND.

It took a public outcry and an act of Congress to save the gray wolf from literally vanishing off the face of the earth. But we did it. Today, a lot of other creatures face similar extinction. And unless we step up our efforts to protect their habitats, they may not be so lucky. At the Sierra Club, we've mounted a major campaign to defend the Endangered Species Act and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever. Please, contact us to find out how you can help protect threatened and endangered animals. Because no amount of popular demand can bring an extinct species back to life.



Protect America's Environment For Our Future. For Our Future.
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Or visit our website at: www.sierraclub.org
Email to: info@sierraclub.org

Chapter Leadership

Chapter Nominating Committee Has Some Candidates - But Needs More!

The Nominating Committee of the Rio Grande Chapter has chosen the following candidates to run for the Chapter Executive Committee: Barbara Johnson, Norma McCallan, and Ted Mertig.

There are three positions open for three-year terms beginning January 1, 2000. We need more candidates! Please contact, David Bouquin, Chair, or any other nominating committee member if you or someone you know is interested in being a candidate. The

Nominating Committee members are: David Bouquin, Chair, 662-3741; Laurence Gibson, 915 594-7342; David Farrell, 895-3352; Jeremy Kruger, 242-8022; and Doug Fraser, 662-5204 or 474-7615.

Nominating Committee candidates must be approved by the committee and submitted to the Editor of the Rio Grande Sierran, along with candidate statements, by October 10, 1999.

Anyone who wishes to be a candidate but has not been approved by the nominating committee may become a petition candidate by submitting a petition signed by at least 50 Chapter members and a candidate statement to the Secretary of the Executive Committee, Bryan Bird, by October 5, 1999. The earlier date is needed to allow the Secretary to check petition signatures against the Chapter membership list.

PAX WORLD FUND

A Socially Responsible Balanced Mutual Fund:

Established in 1970, Pax World Fund was the first mutual fund to adopt comprehensive social and environmental screens. At least 25% of the Fund's assets are maintained in fixed-income securities or cash equivalents at all times, providing a cushion from the fluctuations of the stock market.

No Sales Charges or redemption fees and a low (\$250) minimum initial investment make investing easy.

Morningstar™ Overall Risk-Adjusted Star Rating As Of 7/31/99:**

3-yr: ★★★★★ 5-yr: ★★★★★ 10-yr: ★★★★★

6/30/79 \$10,000 6/30/84 \$17,432 6/30/89 \$34,510 6/30/94 \$49,327 6/30/99 \$126,037

Pax World Fund \$10,000 Investment 20-Year Total Return \$126,037 6/30/79 to 6/30/99

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5-Yr: 20.64%	20-Yr: 13.51%

PAX WORLD GROWTH FUND

Investment Objective: The Fund seeks the long-term growth of capital through investment primarily in the equity securities of socially and environmentally responsible companies. Current income is secondary to capital growth.

Types of Investments: Pax World Growth Fund invests mostly in the stocks of small- to mid-cap companies. Its manager searches out growth issues, not just among U.S. equities but internationally as well.

Investment Objective: Designed to meet the short-term investment needs of socially responsible investors, the Fund seeks to maximize current income while maintaining both liquidity and a stable share price. *There is no assurance that the Fund's objectives will be achieved or that a stable share price of \$1.00 can be maintained.*

Social Commitment: The Fund managers seek out banks and institutions that have good environmental records and that are community-based providers of services.

Total return figures include the reinvestment of dividends and represent past performance, which is no guarantee of future results. For more complete information, including charges and expenses, please call 1-800-767-1729 for a prospectus which should be read carefully before investing. Investment return and principal value may rise or fall.

****Morningstar's proprietary ratings reflect historical risk-adjusted performance, change monthly and are calculated from the Fund's 3-, 5-, and 10-year average annual returns in excess of 90-day Treasury bill returns with appropriate fee adjustments, and a risk factor that reflects performance below 90-day T-bill returns. The Fund was rated among 3,092, 1,923, and 746 funds for the 3-, 5-, and 10-year periods, respectively. The top 10% of the funds in a category receive 5 stars; the next 22.5% receive 4 stars.**

Type of fund: Growth
Sales charge: 2.5%
Inception date: 6/11/97
Initial minimum investment: \$250

PAX WORLD MONEY MARKET FUND

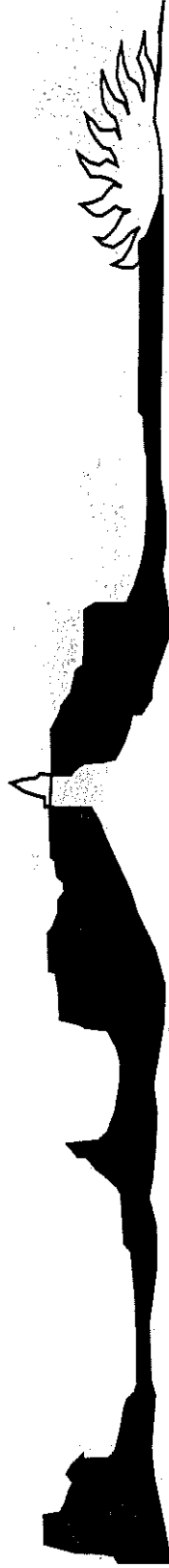
Investment Objective: Designed to meet the short-term investment needs of socially responsible investors, the Fund seeks to maximize current income while maintaining both liquidity and a stable share price. *There is no assurance that the Fund's objectives will be achieved or that a stable share price of \$1.00 can be maintained.*

Social Commitment: The Fund managers seek out banks and institutions that have good environmental records and that are community-based providers of services.

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Type of fund: Money Market
Sales charge: None
Inception date: 4/9/98
Initial minimum investment: \$250



Water and Sprawl

Rio Grande Chapter Retreats to Kingston

ere's your chance to spend a week-
ring the dusty streets of one of New
most notorious ghost towns while
g some of the hottest topics in the
ion world.

t the Chapter Retreat in Kingston,
tico, September 17th through 19th,
and Friday night, Saturday and Sun-
lved in lively discussion, presenta-
planning sessions, with breaks dur-
you can stroll Virtue Avenue, where
e 1800s, 22 saloons, an opera house.
l-light district operated. Or you can
the Gila Wilderness where you may
tain lions and Gila monsters, as well
species of deciduous trees than any-
se in the West.

held at the rustic Black Range Lodge,
tes from the 1880s and over the years
ed miners and soldiers as well as
m's Casino and the Monarch Saloon,
expect comfortable accommodations
ld-West flavor. Included in the price
o-night stay is breakfast on Saturday
day, and dinner on Saturday night at
\$57 per person, or \$49.50 per person
re at least 40 retreatants. Camping is
e at reduced rates, and scholarships
able on request.

The discussions will be informal but
strong intent: At its March meeting,

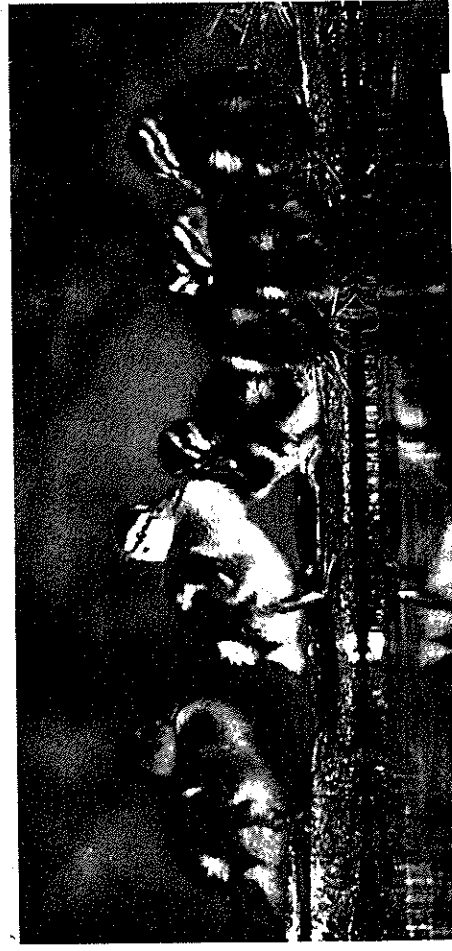
the Chapter Executive Committee determined
that the Chapter-wide campaigns would ad-
dress sprawl and water problems. The last two
issues of the *Sierran* carried extensive infor-
mation on these problem areas, and some plan-
ning has been done around each of them.

The discussion begins on Friday
evening. More discussion, as well as presen-
tations and planning sessions, will take place
starting at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, and con-
tinue—with appropriate breaks—through
noon on Sunday. "The retreat provides an
opportunity for new and old members, begin-
ners and experts to work together on conser-
vation issues, so everyone is welcome," says
Chapter Conservation Chair David H.
Bouquin.

The presentations, discussions and
planning sessions will be devoted to creating
specific campaign plans to address sprawl and
water problems that are local and/or regional.
Everyone who attends will participate in the
process and will be able to vote if or when
that becomes necessary.

The Executive Committee will meet
on Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

If you plan to attend, inform Gwen
Wardwell at 505-438-3060 (evenings) or 505-
984-8860 (daytime) or
edenland@earthlink.net (any old time) by
SEPTEMBER 14, 1999.



1999 New Mexico Water Summit

By John Buchser, Water Issue Chair

Our Governor, Mr. Gary Johnson,
early this year became aware of a collabora-
tive process called Enlibra which interested
him. He has requested that the Environment
Department and State Engineer's Office use
the process on one of the more pressing is-
sues in our State - the important one of water
in the health of our environment.

The process of Enlibra is, in itself,
very promising. It is a process of moving to-
wards balance. There are eight principles:

1. National standards, neighborhood solu-
tions.

2. Collaboration, not polarization.
3. Reward results, not programs.
4. Science for facts, process for priorities.
5. Markets before mandates.
6. Change a heart, change a nation.
7. Recognition of benefits and costs.
8. Solutions transcend political boundaries.

The goals in this particular context are:

1. Disseminate the Enlibra ethic and prin-
ciples.

2. An event setting off a process - facilitate
the use of Enlibra in communities throughout
New Mexico.

3. Develop a longer-term vision for, and es-
tablish better dealings in, water resource man-
agement.

The conference is concurrent with the
New Mexico Environmental Health Confer-
ence, October 24-27, at the Albuquerque Con-
vention Center. The cost for only the water
summit is \$45 and runs October 25-26. The
cost of the full conference is \$90. Scholar-
ships and travel stipends are available. Con-
tact Melinda Hall (827-0197) or Cathy Tyson
(827-2883) at the Environment Department
for further details.

For further details on concerns about
the Enlibra process when used for planning
with environmental issues (it has its down side
too!) contact John Buchser, Rio Grande Chap-
ter water issues chair, jbuchser@ni.net or 820-
0201.



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Sprawl

Pro & Con: Finding Common Ground in a Suburban War

By Carl Pope

Executive Director of the Sierra Club

Now that Washington has turned its attention from scandal and to the problems faced by "real people," suburban sprawl has gained prominence on the national agenda. Environmental organizations, community groups and politicians including Vice President Al Gore are supporting smart-growth policies to combat sprawl. Either from knee-jerk objection to anything Gore says or from fear of big-government intrusion, anti-environmental reactionaries have launched an attack.

Reflexively objecting to environmentalists, these right-wing extremists spoke before they considered their own arguments. To hear the attacks, it seems these conservatives believe broad ribbons of highway, long commutes, unrestrained development, strip malls and Wal-Marts are not merely our birthright as Americans, but they are the much-desired fruits of the exalted "American dream."

In fact, in their eagerness to attack, these reactionaries have turned their venom on people working to accomplish goals conservatives usually hold dear: reducing misguided government intrusion in community life, cutting taxes, protecting small-business owners and resurrecting the family-based neighborhoods we remember fondly from our childhood.

The consequences of sprawl

For most Americans, home ownership is at the heart of their American dream. In this dream, the homes are in cozy neighborhoods, with quiet, intimate streets that are not always clogged with traffic. Around the corner is a grocery for milk and bread. The children walk to school on safe sidewalks every morning, and families swim and fish in nearby lakes. That is the dream we want to protect in our fight against sprawl.

Unfortunately, that dream is not the day-to-day reality most people live. Across the nation, sprawl is destroying our parks and our farms, crowding our streets with more cars, and polluting our air and water.

On the surface of suburban development, people seem to just want their own piece of peace and quiet, but with sprawl comes insidious problems. Scattered sprawl gives people no choice but to drive farther to get from home to work.

In Washington, D.C., the time commuters spent stuck in traffic climbed 69% between 1982 and 1994 -- and you can bet they did not make up for that increased time by working fewer hours. Longer commutes lead to parents who are more tired and have less time for their children.

Sprawling suburbs burden local communities by demanding higher taxes for new water and sewer lines, extra school buses, expanded police and fire protection. In Minneapolis-St. Paul alone, planners estimate that it will cost \$3.1 billion for just the new water and sewage services needed to accommodate projected growth between now and 2020.

Who pays for the big sewer line out to the middle of nowhere? Residents in the existing parts of town. Sprawling growth costs our cities and counties lots of money, and those costs are not offset by the taxes paid by the new users. Instead, sprawl forces higher taxes on existing residents. What conservative would support pricing

a senior citizen out of the home she has owned for decades?

A creation of bad government

The sprawl defenders counter by saying, "But people want to live in these suburbs." Do these families really want long commutes and higher taxes? I don't think so. This pattern has been forced on suburbanites by government programs run amuck.

Generations of laws and tax incentives designed to promote growth led us to today's sprawl. Local government regulations made the close, intimate suburban street of 1920s suburbia illegal, banned the neighborhood corner store and mandated excessively large lots.

Federal and state highway grants fed local politicians' desires to build endless ribbons of six-lane superhighways, and sewer subsidies made wild lands suitable for housing. Foolish fiscal policies like California's Prop. 13 led cities to zone too much land for industry and commerce and not enough for housing, forcing more suburban expansion.

These government programs created and exacerbated suburban sprawl. To take the first step toward better communities, the government must restrain itself from creating more problems.

Government should stop building highways that encourage sprawl and induce traffic, stop subsidizing construction in flood plains where year after year losses are costing taxpayers billions of dollars, and stop giving grants and tax incentives that encourage developers to fragment wildlife habitat and countryside.

Local communities also can adopt smart-growth planning solutions that are appropriate for their areas. In the November election, voters from California to Cape Cod, Republicans and Democrats alike, approved more than 200 ballot initiatives dealing with growth management, land use and urban revitalization. In New Jersey, under GOP Gov. Christine Todd Whitman's leadership, voters -- even in the tax-averse Republican counties of the state -- overwhelmingly approved the use of \$1 billion in tax revenue for the conservation of open space and farmland.

The rewards of smart growth

The voters' actions were not simply stabs in the dark. Communities that used smart-growth policies to guide their growth have seen great rewards.

A study by the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments showed that Michigan communities with smart-growth policies saved \$53 million in road costs and \$33 million in sewer costs, cut housing costs by 6.4% and reduced the destruction of open land by 12%. That is the kind of success applauded by environmentalists and conservatives alike.

Healthy, livable suburban communities are not an impossibility. They simply will require that we discard the anti-environmental reactionaries' tired rhetoric and learn from the mistakes caused by decades of unplanned growth. Conservatives and environmentalists then will find common ground to start debating plans to save money, reduce taxes, rein in government and promote family-friendly communities.

United Nations Population Fund

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), works in 160 countries to ensure that women have access to voluntary family planning, economic opportunities, and education—all of which allows women to choose the size and spacing of their families. Providing access to safe and affordable family planning services and empowering women and girls helps to stabilize population growth, which protects our environment for our families, for families throughout the world, and for our common future.

Anti-family planning radicals in Congress, led by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), claim that because he is anti-choice he has to de-fund family planning. But UNFPA doesn't pay for abortions. Besides, it has been illegal to spend US dollars on abortion since 1973. Talk about behind the times! What is even worse than Chris Smith's failure to keep up, is that his efforts to de-fund UNFPA lead to more abortions because family planning prevents abortion.

Last October, Chris Smith and his small cohort of anti-family planning radicals eliminated all U.S. funding to the UNFPA for 1999. This single action deprived 870,000 women from access to contraceptives and reproductive health services and resulted in:

- * 1,200 maternal and 22,500 infant deaths,
- * 15,000 life-threatening illnesses and injuries to mothers during pregnancy and childbirth,
- * 500,000 unwanted pregnancies,
- * 234,000 unwanted births, and
- * 200,000 abortions.

Chris Smith's attack on family planning is an attack on the environment and women and children everywhere. Having recognized it as such there has recently been a flurry of activity to restore funding.

Help Stabilize Global Population

The U.S. House of Representatives voted on an amendment that would allow up to \$25 million to be appropriated for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in FY 2000. UNFPA works in 160 countries to ensure that women have access to voluntary family planning, economic opportunities, and education - all of which allows women to choose the size and spacing of their families. Providing access to safe and affordable family planning services and empowering women and girls helps to stabilize population growth and protect the environment. Sierra Club supported the Gilman/Campbell/Maloney/Crowley et al amendment to H.R. 2415, the American Embassy Security Act. The amendment passed 221 to 198 on July 20, 1999.

In New Mexico, our representatives voted as follows:

- 1 WILSON (R-NM) +
- 2 SKEEN (R-NM) -
- 3 UDALL, TOM (D-NM) +

In Texas, Rep Reyes (D) of the 16th Congressional District voted for the bill.

We should thank Representatives Wilson, Udall, and Reyes for supporting this bill. Rep. Skeen should be informed about the positive values of family planning.

SANTA FE GROUP MEETINGS

**S P R A W L
HURTS US ALL!**

Tuesday, September 21, 7 PM

lost your favorite urban walking area because the land has been developed and fences and *no trespassing* signs set up? Lumbered by the endless stream of traffic on Cerrillos Road St. Francis Drive?

taken a drive recently southwest of the city and noticed houses and warehouses where yesterday there had been open fields studded with piñon trees and wildflowers?

Edward Archuleta, Director of 1000 Friends of New Mexico's Santa Fe Office, will discuss the growing problems of loss of open space and unplanned growth in our beloved city and county. We will have a dialogue on possible solutions and what all of us can do to protect our clean air, our far vistas, our special quality of life.

*Sprawl is one of the
National Sierra Club's and the Rio Grande Chapter's
priority campaigns.*

*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 Desira · Santa Fe · New Mexico · 87501
505 · 983-2703 · www.santafescene.com**

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Doug Fraser

John Buchser, Water Issues Chair for the Group, is working on a letter of some concern to us — namely, the proposed direct surface injection of treated wastewater. This time it would be in the Tesuque Basin next to the Santa Fe Opera. The injection idea, horized under a new law, would allow the developer of a proposed "n" at the Opera" to obtain a return flow credit, enabling the new "n" to increase the amount of groundwater they could pump from their wells legally. The State Engineer's Office has never considered application of this type before. The adjacent Casas de San Juan meowners Association has many concerns, and John is due to meet with them. Anyone interested in working on this matter, please contact John (820-0201), who committed "we should first have strong environmental regulations in place before anything of this nature is allowed to proceed."

Also on other water matters, Maxine Goad, who is on the water committee with John, is now representing environmental concerns the newly formed NM Environment Department's Water Quality Working Group. To help Maxine, call 455-2464. Thanks.

◇

HIKING HERO

Lionel Soracco, one of our hiking leaders (as well as the Group's c/Treas), reported the following story, which is our small "unsung" contribution toward improved international relations:

Tobin Oruch, popular Santa Fe Group outings leader, was just a rest this time on John Jasper's strenuous La Junta hike in the mountains north of the SF Ski Area road. It was early July, and Tobin was intent on gathering some of the many mushrooms which are cropping up all about. By the time he arrived at the lunch site, a huge meadow, the others had eaten and gone on. But Jasper was aware that Tobin knew the area well, so there was no problem. No problem, that is, until a half dozen European hikers, who had

stumbled in. Except for fatigue, disorientation, lack of water, food, rain protection and proper footwear, they were in good shape. Tobin generously contributed his lunch and all his protective gear to the lost ones and began leading them back to the parking area, near Aspen Ranch. (Another member of the lost party had headed off to no one knew where to seek help! He made it out, somehow.)

Then the real trouble began: rain in buckets. After a few hours of well-hydrated uphill hiking, they reached the lot, with everyone cold and wet but alive, and Tobin barely able to scribble a note to John Jasper explaining what had happened.

Congratulations, Tobin, on a great rescue!



◆ SANTA FE GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ◆

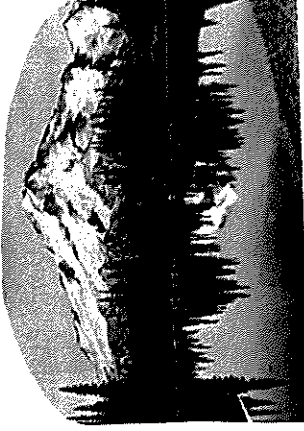
Chair — Doug Fraser *	474-7615 / 662-4104 fax	Newsletter/Publicity — Kay Carlson	982-3926
Ice-Chair — Barbara Johnson *	466-4935	Phone Tree — Jean Winterfelt	989-9224
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Soracco *	983-6715	Chapter Rep — Doug Fraser *	474-7615
		Outings — Norbert Sperlich	983-1962
Conservation — Cliff Larsen *, Mining	466-2128	— Norma McCallan *	471-0005
Water-John Buchser	820-0201	Political Committee—Susan Martin *	988-5206
National Parks-Courtney White *	982-5502	Membership — George Grossman *	982-1024
BLM-Roger Peterson	983-7559	Eleanor Eisenmenger *	820-6401
Sustainability-Barbara Johnson *	466-4935	Gwen Wardwell *	438-3060
SF National Forest-Greg Pollak	988-7650		
Carson Nat'l Forest-George Grossman	982-1024		
Activist Outings-Norma McCallan *	471-0005		

* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

WILDERNESS IN NEW MEXICO

Tuesday, October 19, 7 PM

Edward Sullivan, Director of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, will present a newly created slide show on the magnificent and little known wilderness study areas and proposed wilderness areas around the state. Where are these strange and wonderful lands? How can you get to them? How can we all help in getting Congress to pass legislation designating them as permanent wilderness? Some of you may remember Edward as the dynamic young worker who helped us to get Tom Udall elected last fall. He's back in the state and wants to share with you the wonders of these BLM lands and how we can protect them.



*All the meetings are held at the
Unitarian Church 107 W. Barcelona St
(between Galisteo and Don Gaspar).*

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Cliff Larsen

Please join us at our regularly scheduled Conservation Committee meetings the fourth Tuesday of every month. We are still looking for a volunteer to do publicity and to work on wildlife issues. Contact Cliff Larsen (466-2128) or Doug Fraser (474-7615).

◇

SANTA FE GROUP YEAR 2000 ELECTION

The Nominating Committee of the Santa Fe Group of the Rio Grande Chapter is pleased to announce its selection of candidates for two-year terms of the Executive Committee for the period beginning in the Year 2000.

- Eleanor Eisenmenger *
- Lois Herrmann
- Norma McCallan
- Dee Ann Sands
- Lionel Soracco *
- Gwen Wardwell *
- Courtney White *

*current member of the ExComm

In this election, there will be five positions to be filled.

Submitted by the Nominating Committee,

George Grossman · Cliff Larsen · Susan Martin

◇

(cont'd) spent an unplanned night out in the area without equipment, rain protection and proper footwear, they were in good shape. Tobin generously contributed his lunch and all his protective gear to the lost ones and began leading them back to the parking area, near Aspen Ranch. (Another member of the lost party had headed off to no one knew where to seek help! He made it out, somehow.)

Then the real trouble began: rain in buckets. After a few hours of well-hydrated uphill hiking, they reached the lot, with everyone cold and wet but alive, and Tobin barely able to scribble a note to John Jasper explaining what had happened.

Congratulations, Tobin, on a great rescue!

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Conservation Committee meets:

Tuesday, September 28, 7 PM
Tuesday, October 26, 7 PM

Group Executive Committee meets:

Tuesday, October 5, 7 PM
Tuesday, November 2, 7 PM

Santa Fe Group News

SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

Sat Sun September 1999

- 11 Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Moderate/Strenuous Hike somewhere in the high country. Dogs allowed. Leave 8 AM.
- 12 Lee Sullivan (662-6185) Moderate Hike to Rabbit Hill in the Jemez. 8 miles RT. Leave SF Sierra Office 7:30 AM to carpool or meet in Los Alamos at bank parking lot across Trinity Drive from McDonalds at 8:30 AM.
- 18 Alan Karp (424-8764) Moderate Hike in high country. Boots required. Leave 8 AM.
- 19 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Moderate Hike down to Rio Grande Gorge in BLM's Wild & Scenic Rivers area, near Questa. Side trip to look at Molybdenum mine tailings. Leave 7 AM. Call for reservations.

Friday-Saturday-Sunday, September 24-25-26

- Bob McKee (672-3426) Moderate Backpack in Bandelier to Capulin Canyon (via same route followed 2½ years ago when Dome Fire erupted). Day hike to Dome Peak on Saturday. Call for details.
- 25 John Jasper (466-8572) Moderate Hike to Round Mountain in Pecos. Dogs allowed. Call for time and reservations.
- 26 Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Moderate/Strenuous Hike in high country. Dogs allowed. Leave 9 AM.

**PLEASE ALWAYS CALL THE OUTINGS LEADER
PRIOR TO A HIKE
FOR CONFIRMATION AND DETAILS.**



MANY THANKS to all the contributors to our recent yard sale on Saturday, August 28. Your donations, and clear skies, made the sale a great success. We are grateful to our diligent volunteers who priced, sorted, set up, and manned tables: Doug and Kathy Fraser, Carol Szpakowski, Dee Ann Sands, Barbara Johnson, Lora Lee Freilich, and Alan Karp.

Norma McCallan, Yard Sale Chair

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.



If you go out in the woods today ...

In light of the rising frequency of human/grizzly bear conflicts, the Montana Department of Fish and Game is advising hikers, hunters and fishermen to take extra precautions and keep alert for bears while in the field. They advise wearing noisy little bells on clothing so as not to unexpectedly startle bears and to carry pepper spray for any encounter. Watch out for fresh signs of bear activity and know the difference between black bear and grizzly bear scat. Black bear scat is smaller and contains lots of berries and squirrel fur. Grizzly scat has little bells in it and smells like pepper!!

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

Sat Sun October 1999

- 2 Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Strenuous Hike to Pecos Baldy Lake. 15 miles RT, 2600' elevation gain. Dogs allowed.
- 2 Wildfire Issues in Los Alamos Canyons Field Trip led by Bill Armstrong, USFS (438-7801) Easy to Moderate Hike loop through several canyons just west of town, with discussion of possible options to lessen fire damage. Leave SF 8 AM from BLM Building, 1474 Rodeo Road (Forest Service van available), or meet at Forest Service office at Los Alamos Community Bldg, 475 20th Street, 9 AM. Norma McCallan Sierra contact (471-0005).
- 3 Art Judd (982-3212) Moderate Hike in high country. Leave 8 AM.

Friday to Tuesday, October 8 to October 12

- Norma McCallan (471-0005) Columbus Day Weekend Car Camp and Backpack in the Fable Valley area of Dark Canyon Wilderness, Utah. Exploratory trip to this little visited but archaeologically rich canyon. Exact departure and return dependent on participants' needs.
- 9 Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) Easy Hike on Aspen Vista Road. Wear hiking boots. Leave 9 AM.
- 10 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Strenuous Hike in Dome Wilderness. Rough terrain. Leave 8 AM.
- 16 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Moderate/Strenuous Hike "Atlatla Rediscovered" Some off-trail hiking. Leave 8 AM.
- 17 John Buchser (820-0201) Strenuous Hike from Trampas Lakes trailhead to Santa Barbara trailhead by way of Dominguez Trail. 10 miles total, 2000' elevation gain. Great views. Leave 7 AM.
- 23 Bob McKee (672-3426) Moderate Loop Hike to Ancho Rapids via Ancho Canyon. 8 miles total, 1000' elevation gain. Meet leader at Smith's Supermarket in White Rock at 9 AM or carpool from Santa Fe Sierra office at 8 AM.

- 24 Jeff Jones (466-2389) Easy Hike from Glorieta Baptist Center. Kids welcome. Meet leader at 9 AM at gate to Baptist Center or carpool from Sierra Office at 8:30 AM.
- 30 Ned Sudborough (474-4055) Moderate Hike southward from Kitchen Mesa (Ghost Ranch). Leave 8 AM.
- 31 Victor Atyas (438-9434) Easy Hike to Tent Rocks. Some scrambling. Meet in front of Walgreens at Villa Linda Mall. Leave 9 AM.



Sat Sun November 1999

Saturday and Sunday, November 6 and 7

- Norma McCallan (471-0005) Two Moderate to Strenuous Loop Hikes in Manzano Mountains (Kayser Springs-Ox Canyon loop and Red Canyon-Spruce Springs loop) with car camp. Dogs allowed. Leave Friday evening.
- 6 Jeff Jones (466-2389) Easy Hike in Tent Rocks. Children encouraged. Leave 9 AM.
- 7 Art Judd (982-3212) Moderate Hike with car shuttle. Atlatla Peak to Audubon Center. Leave 8 AM.
- 13 Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) Easy Hike to the Cerrillos Hills. Leave 9 AM sharp from Walgreens, Villa Linda Mall. Wear hiking boots.
- 14 Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Moderate Hike up Dockwiler Trail in Pecos Wilderness. Dogs allowed. Alternative hike if early snows.
- 20 Lee Sullivan (662-6185) Moderate Hike in the Santa Cruz Reservoir area. 7 miles RT. Meet at Cities of Gold Casino, Pojoaque, at 9 AM or carpool from SF Sierra office at 8:30 AM.
- 21 Victor Atyas (438-9434) Easy Hike down Diablo Canyon. Leave 9 AM.
- 28 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Strenuous Hike to San Miguel Ruins, via Turkey Springs and Dome Trailhead. Leave 8 AM.

COMING ATTRACTION - DATE TO BE DETERMINED

Greg Pollak (988-7650) and SF Watershed Committee Chair Paige Morgan. Field Trip into SF Watershed to look at conditions and planning options for the future health of our city's watershed and prevention of wildfires.

Central New Mexico Group News

Group Directory

207 San Pedro NE
Albuquerque NM 87108

Phone: 505-265-5506 Fax 505-256-0373

1999 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Richard Barish rdbarish@aol.com
Blair Brown bblairb@aol.com

Martin Heinrich mtheinrich@aol.com
Secretary

Petra Hegger pfmh@laughingdesert.com
Vice-chair
Jeremy Kruger kruger7@aol.com
Chair

Jon Maaske 110745.1312@compuserve.com

Mike Norte norte@earthlink.net

Gary Simpson garyksimpson@juno.com
Treasurer

David Ther grelbik@worldnet.att.net

The Central New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club depends totally on the efforts of volunteers. To help, call any of us!

ADMINISTRATION

Petra Hegger 890-0331 pfmh@laughingdesert.com
Administrative Asst.

Blair Brown 265-3231 bblairb@aol.com

Information Technology mtheinrich@aol.com
Julie Hicks 232-7151

Media Coordinator grelbik@worldnet.att.net
David Ther 260-1553

Outings

Richard Barish rdbarish@aol.com
Political Chair

CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN TEAM LEADERS

Mike Norte 844-0935 norte@earthlink.net

Conservation Chair rdbarish@aol.com
Richard Barish 247-8079

Bosque Protection

East Mountain OPEN

Susan Gorman 265-3231 bblairb@aol.com

Sustainable Albuquerque

Julie Hicks 232-7151 mtheinrich@aol.com

Petroglyph National Monument

Barbara Leonard 862-7915

Western New Mexico

Martin Heinrich 232-7151 mtheinrich@aol.com

Wilderness/Wildlife

OUTINGS

September 11 Trigo Canyon. Hike up rocky canyon on the west side of the Manzanos, visit a pair of caves, waterfall and lunch at neat overlook. Bring hiking boots, gear, water and a lunch. Distance: 5-6 miles RT, some stream crossings. Elevation: 1600'. Drive: 90 miles RT. Contact Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com) or Tom Petencin (255-1497) for more info.

Joint with Outdoor Adventures for Singles (OAFS).

September 26 Raven's Ridge/Lake Peak (optional). We will carpool to the Santa Fe ski basin, hike up a little used trail off Windsor to get views of Santa Fe Baldy and (hopefully) changing aspen (4-5 miles RT, 1200'). Continuing to the summit of Lake Peak (7 miles RT, 2000') is optional. Bring hiking boots, gear, water and lunch. Contact Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com) or Tom Petencin (255-1497).

Joint with Outdoor Adventures for Singles (OAFS).

Sometime in September/October San Pedro Parks X-over. Tentatively looking for participants in a key exchange of the San Pedro Parks Wilderness north of Cuba. Hike: 15 miles, elevation: 1100'/2100' depending on starting point. Contact Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com) or Tom Petencin (255-1497).

Oct 8-10 Magdalena Campout/Baldy-to-Baldy Hike. Hike a classic ridge in the Magdalena Mountains west of Socorro, with views of aspen, Langmuir Lightning Institute and VLA. After camping at Water Canyon Campground (~7000'), will drive winding road close to the top of South Baldy (~10,700') and hike down the ridge to North Baldy (~10,002'), 5.5 miles one-way, some up and down. Depending on number in party and car situation, return may be either a descent to Water Canyon Camp or back up ridge to pick up cars.

Don't want to camp? Early Saturday departure from Albuquerque may be possible. Driving distance: 180 miles. Hiking distance: 11-12 miles. Contact Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com) for meeting time and place. **Joint with Outdoor Adventures for Singles (OAFS).**

October 10 Fourth of July - Cerro Blanco, Manzano Mtn. Wilderness Area. Fall color hike - see the famous stands of maples, as well as outstanding views of the northern Manzanos. There should also be stands of aspens in color along the crest. This loop hike is 4.5 miles, so the pace will be leisurely, allowing plenty of time to see the colors and enjoy the fall weather. Difficulty: moderate. Call leader for details: David Ther, 260-1553.

October 17 Stewart Lake. Moderate loop hike to a small but beautiful alpine lake in the Pecos Wilderness. Approach is through a lush forest of aspen and fir. Return is along the Windsor Creek. 10 miles RT, 2000' elevation gain. Leave 7:30AM. Call leader for reservations: Rich Cherian 890-0220.

October 23 Harding Mine. This outing is to a mine near Espanola. It will be a great opportunity to find and learn about lots of rocks and minerals. For details, call Tom Leck at 256-7217.

CALENDAR

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

Sept. 13 Group Excom Meeting, 7:00PM

Sept. 20 General Membership Meeting, 7:30PM
UNM Law School, Rm 2403

Will the Rio have enough water to sustain itself, as well as cities and farms? What are the tradeoffs? Learn about water issues and the regional planning process.

Oct. 11 Group Excom Meeting, 7:00PM

Oct. 15 Childrens Water Festival (see below)

Oct. 18 General Membership Meeting, 7:30PM
UNM Law School, Rm. 2403

Learn about Sky Island Alliance and its efforts to maintain the biological integrity of a unique desert/mountain ecosystem.

Please call the office @265-5506 for details.

Water Festival Volunteers Needed!

Imagine 800 fourth-grade students gathering to spend a wonderful day learning all about water. This is exactly what will happen at the Children's Water Festival on October 15, 1999--and you can help!

Water in New Mexico - Yesterday to Tomorrow is the 1999 Festival theme, so students will participate in fun, hands-on learning activities that incorporate water history, geography and our water future. They will make model aquifers, help create a flowing river with riparian edges, wetlands, upland areas with pastures, fields and parking lots, listen to water stories told by an Isleta elder, compete in Water Jeopardy, make garbage pizzas, meet a raptor, design a xeriscape, write a poem and much, much more!

With so many students gathering, we'll need plenty of help! We are seeking volunteers including guides for student groups, assistants for activity presenters, runners to deliver extra supplies wherever needed, someone to administer first aid in case of small injuries, photographers, snack servers, traffic cops... you're probably getting the picture here! If you'd like to help us on October 15, give us a call!

For more information, contact Maggie Gould, Volunteer Coordinator.

TEL: 505-877-8369; EMail wumbelina@hotmail.com

Children's Water Festival
2226B Wyoming NE, Suite 272
Albuquerque, NM 87112

Group Directory

Southern N.M. Group
Executive Committee

P.O. Box 3705 UPB
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011

Cheryll Blevins,
Chair

526-6220(day)
524-4861

spotblev@greatwhite.com

Margo Wilson,
Chapter Representative

744-5860
hshs2@riolink.com

Marianne Thaeler,
Conservation Issues/Vice Chair

522-3421
marianne.thaeler@sierraclub.org

David Farrell,
Legislative Issues

895-3352
dafarrelli@hotmail.com

Robin Heard,
ICO Chair

522-1275

Lesa Wilson,
Treasurer

647-4298

Outings Leaders:
Barbara Coon
Ron Gordon

522-1576
522-4527

Outings

The Sou. N.M. Group has been active with various area outings, thanks to our tireless outing leaders. If's possible, some outings didn't make it in the Newsletter, so call Ron Gordon for Summer updates.

Saturday, Sept. 11

Place: Turtle Back Mountain near T or C. Meet in front of the Forest Service Office in T or C at 8:00 a.m. Bring lunch and water.
Leader: Call Chet Warwick in T or C at 505-984-6427.

Saturday, Sept. 25

Place: Hillsboro Peak in the Black Range. Moderate but long day hike along the crest trail, great views, should be nice due to recent rainfall.
Leader: Call Ron Gordon at 505-522-4527.

Fri.-Sun., Oct. 8-10

Place: Outings Weekend in Sevilleta We will spend the weekend at Sevilleta Game Refuge, hiking on Saturday and discussing hike leadership on Sunday. Anyone who has participated at any level - staff, trainee or participant - in National Outings is especially urged to join us.
Leader: For information call Barbara in Las Cruces at 505-522-1576.

Saturday, Oct. 16

Place: Birding along the Rio Grande with Margot Wilson. Meet at the front of the Forest Service office at 8:00 a.m. and bring your lunch, water and binoculars.
Leader: Call Margo at 744-5860.

Sat. & Sun., Oct. 16 & 17

Place: Sacramento Mountains near Cloudcroft. Saturday day hike to see Fall colors on Rim trail - at the very least, Maple leaves! Sunday, explore little used trails from West Rim Dr. to Sunspot Road. Car Camp optional.
Leader: Call Barbara at 522-1576.

Saturday, Nov. 6

Place: McKittrick Canyon in the Guadalupe Mountains day hike, rated easy.
Leader: Call Ron at 522-4527.

Sunday, Nov. 14

Place: Baylor Peaks in the Organs. Meet at K-Mart on N. Main at 7:30 a.m. We will carpool. This is a strenuous hike, mostly off-trail with rock scrambling. Only hikers in good condition should attempt. Bring lunch and water.
Leader: Call Ben Zerbey at 526-7811 for leader approval and more information.

Saturday, Nov. 20

Place: Baylor Pass in the Organs. 12 mile moderate hike; we will hike from East trailhead to Aguirre Springs and back
Leader: Call Ron at 522-4527.

Saturday, Dec. 4

Place: Organ Needle Strenuous day hike.
Leader: Call Barbara at 522-4527.

Special Programs

Oct. 6, Wednesday

San Andreas National Wildlife Refuge Biological Programs Mara Weisenberger, wildlife biologist for refuge will present a slide program about ongoing biological programs and research on the refuge. Public welcome: 7:30 p.m. at Science Hall NMSU Room 107. For more information call Cheryll at 524-4861.

Nov. 9, Tuesday

Hiking the Southwest and Beyond Avid hiker Barbara Coon will share slides and highlights of her many hikes over the years around the Southwest. Come get some ideas for your next hike or just armchair adventure! Everyone welcome; 7:30 p.m. at Science Hall NMSU Room 107. For more information call Cheryll at 524-4861.

GRANT COUNTY
LOOKS AT RESOLUTION
CREATING PUBLIC
RIGHTS OF WAY

The Las Cruces Sun News recently reported that Grant County is considering a resolution outlining public rights of way and establishing roads and paths that have been unused whether they run through private or U.S. Forest Service land.

Rights of way would include thoroughfares made by wagon wheels set down by settlers journeying west, which the resolution explained have been established through centuries of use. Eilene Kingsley, director of Planning and Management Information for Grant County, authored the resolution, said the basis for the document was originally granted by the U.S. Congress in the Mining Act of 1866 and was revised in the Revised Statutes 2477 in 1976. The RS2477 allocates rights-of-ways to be "held in trust" or managed by the county. The resolution was tabled at Thursday night's County Commission meeting after attorneys filling the county attorney vacancy suggested they need to further study the document.

Kingsley said she wants to see "four-wheel jamboree" where the mapped roads would be open for drivers to re-establish paths through the county. Gerry Engle, Gila National Forest District Ranger, is concerned with this because of the potential erosion in the land, Engle is willing to work with the county to "finally resolve" the years of question of the public rights of way, but admits "there's pluses and minuses to these things."

Chairs note: RS2477 efforts have been used by off-road, wise use/Sagebrush Rebellion groups to attempt to open public lands and wilderness areas to motorized use and exploitation - - enough reason to keep an eye on this development.

ICO NEWS

This summer ICO ran 2 canoe trips down the Rio Grande from Leasburg dam to Picacho bridge with leader George Duran. Weather was excellent for tipping, however! ICO Chairperson Robin Heard attended the biannual national ICO conference in Malibu, California where she found that the Las Cruces ICO is the fastest and strongest growing of all 46 national ICO groups in the country. Strong leader recruitment has been the greatest factor in this early success. ICO plans for the Fall include: developing teams of certified leaders and volunteers to work directly with specific youth agencies as well as equipment procurement. Thanks everyone!

ELECTIONS COMING UP

Elections for the Group Executive Committee will be coming up soon. Contact members of the nominating committee if you wish to nominate someone; Lesa Wilson 647-4298, David Farrell 895-3352 or Margo Wilson 774-5860, chair of committee by Oct. 8.

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION TO HOLD MEETINGS ON RIO GRANDE

The U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission proposes to gather information necessary to analyze and evaluate the impacts of a River Management Plan by the USBWC on existing Rio Grande Canalization Project in Sierra and Dona Ana Counties, New Mexico and El Paso County, Texas and prepare an EIS to document those effects. **DATES:** The USBWC will conduct two public scoping meetings from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. MST on Tuesday, October 5, 1999 at the Las Cruces Hilton, 705 South Telshor Boulevard, Las Cruces, New Mexico, and on Wednesday, October 6, 1999 at the El Paso Airport Hilton, 2027 Airways Boulevard, El Paso, Texas. Public participation and comment is encouraged during the scoping process.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Comments will be accepted for 60 days after Aug. 10, 1999 by Mr. Douglas Echlin, Environmental Protection Specialist,

Environmental Management Division, USBWC, 4171 North Mesa Street, C-130, El Paso, Texas 79902. Telephone: 915/832-4741, Fax: 915/832-4167. E-mail: dougechlin@ibwc.state.gov.

BACKGROUND: The Rio Grande Canalization Project extends for about 106 miles along the Rio Grande from Percha Diversion Dam, located downstream from Caballo Dam in Sierra County, New Mexico, to the vicinity of American Diversion Dam in El Paso County, Texas. The Canalization Project was constructed between 1938 and 1943 in compliance with the convention between the United States and Mexico concluded May 21, 1906, to provide for the equitable division of the waters of the Rio Grande for use in the two countries.

Proposed construction activities that will be studied in this EIS, include but may not be limited to, raising and strengthening existing levees, channel improvements such as widening or armoring

with riprap, and installation of grade control structures. In addition, the EIS will study the environmental effect of a long-range maintenance plan that will be developed.

The USBWC will analyze alternatives to current management, watershed-oriented and non-structural alternatives and collaborative measures with other agencies and landowners; to determine to what extent project management can support restoration of native riparian and aquatic habitats, as well as the restoration of natural processes such as channel meanders overbank flooding.

The USBWC anticipates the Draft EIS will be made available to the public by March 2001.

CHAIR'S NOTE: Now's the time to comment, this is an important issue for those who would like to get involved and see some possible alternative approaches to habitat restoration and management of the Rio.

Group Directory
Pajarito Group of the Sierran Club
Executive Committee

Abe Jacobson, Chair	672-9579
Miriam Oudejeans, Vice-Chair	672-0414
Karla Atkins, Secretary	
Terry Phillips, Treasurer	662-4838
David Bouquin	662-3741
Guthrie Miller	662-5545
Gordon Spingler	662-9481

Conservation Committee

Michael Smith, Chair	662-2380
Janet Gerwin, Co-Chair	662-9568
Jody Benson, Sprawl/Water	662-4782
Janet Gerwin, Water	662-9568
Abe Jacobson, Mining	672-9579
Carole Jacobson, Adopt-A-Highway	672-9579
Jennifer Johnson, Jemez Mountains Issues	662-3023
Chuck Pergler, Grazing	661-6169
Michael Smith/Gordon Spingler, DOE Land Transfer	662-2380/662-9481
Michael Smith, Forests	662-2380
Wildlife OPEN	

Administration

David Bouquin, Chapter Rep.	662-3741
Janet Gerwin, Publicity	662-9568
Newsletter OPEN	
Guthrie Miller, Membership	662-5545
Warren Steckle, Outings	672-0414

Website and Email Administrator OPEN

General Meetings

All general meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at Mesa Public Library, 7 PM and are open to the public.

Sept. 1, 1999: Edward Sullivan, Executive Director of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance will present a talk titled "Wilderness".

October 6, 1999: Craig Allen, Brian Jacobs and Charisse Sydoriak of Bandelier National Monument will discuss the Park Service's proposal to thin trees in the Monument's backcountry wilderness.

Other Meetings:

Conservation Committee meetings are on the second Wednesday and Executive Committee meetings are on the third Wednesday of the month.

All meetings are at Mesa Public Library, 7 PM and are open to the public.

Outings

October 2, 1999: The Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club has an issue outing scheduled in Los Alamos to look at the canyon forests.

**October 2, 1999
Place:**

Pueblo Canyon Clean-Up. Meet at Sullivan Parking Lot at 8:30 a.m. Bring gloves, lunch and water. Clean up will be from 8:30 a.m - 2:00 p.m. Call Michael Smith for information, 662-2380.

Leader:

Saturday, Sunday and Monday, Oct. 16-18

Place:

Carlsbad Wild Cave Tour. Meet in White Rock at 6:30 a.m. for the drive down to Carlsbad or meet at Whites City campground by noon on Sat. the 16th. If you were impressed with the main cavern at Carlsbad and are interested in seeing more, this outing will explore four of the wild caves at Carlsbad. ranger guided tours for the following four caves have been arranged: Hall of the White Giant, Left Hand Tunnel, Lower Cave, and Spider Cave. These tours cover a broad spectrum of difficulties, from easy level walking passages to twisting crawls. (as stated by the National Park Services) Age 12 and over. Participants must be physically and mentally able to safely negotiate cave passages containing fragile formations without harm to the cave, yourself or others.

Requirements:

Recommended:

Knee pads, cotton or leather gloves, and long pants.

Group Limit:

8 people.

Fees:

the total fee for all four cave tours is \$67 plus the \$6 entrance fee for the park. Camping or lodging and food is not included.

Leader:

Call Warren Steckle at 505-667-5262 for information.

The Lorax - El Paso Group

El Paso Group Represented on Public Working Committee for Long-Range Water Issues

El Paso ExCom member Ann Falknor is representing the El Paso Regional Group on the Public Working Committee (PWC) reporting to the El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) Public Service Board (PSB) to determine water supply reliability for decades to come. ExCom Vice Chair Jamie Newlin serves as an observer. The PWC has had a series of nine meetings to review the region's water supply situation; review proposed projects and programs; examine financing methods; identify community issues; and ensure that community values and concerns are reflected in the recommended funding mechanisms.

Water issues are complex in the Chihuahuan Desert El Paso-Las Cruces-Juárez area. At a growth rate of 2.5%, the regional human population is expected to increase from 2 to 3.5 million by 2025. About half of El Paso's water comes from the Rio Grande; the other half from the Hueco Bolson and Mesilla Bolson aquifers. According to the 1906 Rio Grande Convention, the U.S. is obligated to deliver 60,000 acre-feet of water to México annually. It is estimated that the fresh water in the Texas portion of the Hueco Bolson will be exhausted by 2025. The Mexican share is expected to be exhausted much earlier. An area of debate is whether and how to increase year-round surface water supplies through various delivery and water treatment methods. For more details, contact Ann Falknor at (915) 833-9162 or Jamie Newlin at (915) 584-1471.

ICO Ascends Guadalupe Peak as Children Learn to Aim High

By Mary Lou Parker

"We made it," they gasped as they took the last few steps to Guadalupe Peak in April. These students from Magoffin Middle School and Life Management Center of El Paso made it to the top in several ways. They were literally at the highest point in Texas, and they had achieved a goal set months before when they read about the mountain in a social studies class. These students had the opportunity to scale the heights through the Inner City Outings (ICO) outreach program of the Sierra Club. It provides outdoor activities to those who normally would not experience the wilderness.

The Magoffin students belonged to a special education class taught by Mary Lou Parker who - along with Richard Rheder, events coordinator of the ICO for the El Paso Regional Group - toughened them up with three hikes in the Franklin Mountains before they tackled the Guadalupe. ICO allows leaders to practice the philosophy of outdoor adventure as an agent of positive change. Placed in an unfamiliar and challenging environment, teenagers who have experienced difficulties in their everyday lives have the opportunity to try out new ways of relating to people and new ways to see previously unknown strengths. They also can experience success and enjoy the natural world.

Bicycle Helmets and Safety Training

ICO also is distributing bicycle helmets from the Texas Department of Transportation and El Paso Bicycle club to each participant on ICO bicycle rides. Ed MacBeth, a certified bicycle safety trainer, explains the "rules of the road" to first-timers and helps them practice several techniques to make their rides safer. One young lady had the helmet only a week before she crashed in a skateboarding maneuver. She smashed the helmet, but her brain remained intact. Luckily for her, the helmets come with a replacement policy.

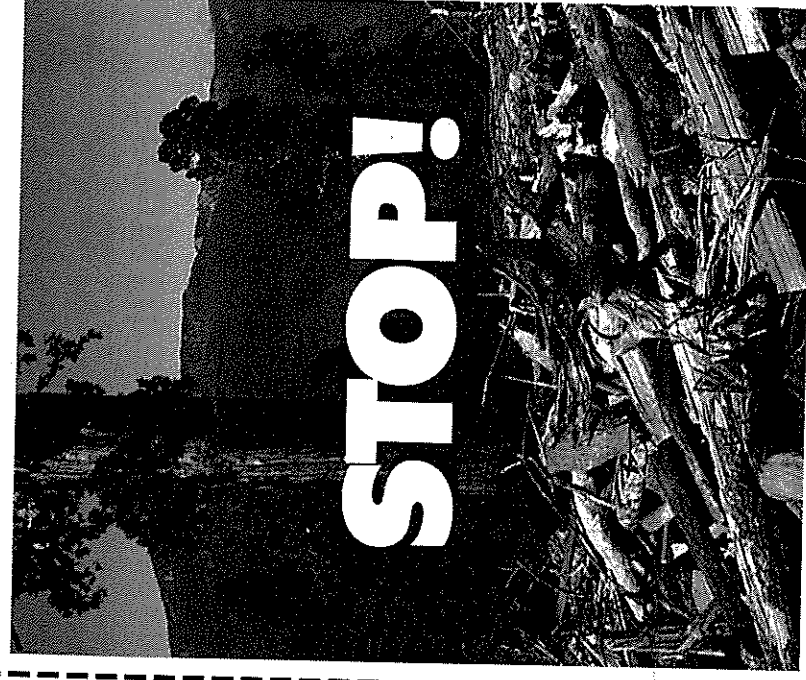
"Zoo Crew" goes Rock Climbing at Hueco Tanks

Tony Torres, a college student in Washington, spent his summer in El Paso helping out ICO. He taught a course in wilderness first aid at Ann Falknor, Anne and Ed MacBeth, Ted Mertig, Mary Lou Parker, and Richard Rheder. In addition,

he taught members of the "Zoo Crew", the teenage docents at the El Paso Zoo under the tutelage of Dave Zucconi, how to go "bouldering" without ropes at Hueco Tanks. Also included in the group were members of Life Management Center and Magoffin Middle School.

Leaders Attend California Conference

ICO chair Ted Mertig and leaders Mary Lou Parker and Richard Rheder met in Malibu, California with other ICO enthusiasts for the national conference held every two years. Mertig explained the gathering "charges up" participants, gives them new ideas, teaches them new environmental games, and keeps them in touch with the national organization of the Sierra Club. Besides the "people" interaction, participants could hike the Malibu hills, swim in the Pacific Ocean, and smell the



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roses in the extensive gardens at the Serra Retreat Center run by the Franciscans.

Upcoming Events

The monthly meeting of the steering committee and volunteers will be at 6:30 PM, Tuesday, October 5, at the El Paso Zoo. Anyone interested in attending or helping out with trips may contact Ted Mertig at (915) 852-3011.

ICO is planning a service/camping trip to the Gila Wilderness with Life Management Center and a camping trip with Socorro High School theater students, also in the Gila.

Outings

Sep 11: Franklin Mountain Day Hike

Place: Eastern Slope, Franklin Mountains State Park

Class: Moderate

Approximate length: 6 miles

Elevation gain: 1,000 feet

Leader: Claus Christensen: (915) 532-4066 (H)

Sep 18: Rim Trail Day Hike

Place: Sacramento Mountains near Cloudcroft

Class: Moderate +

Approximate length: 14 miles

Elevation gain: minimal

Leader: Jim Bell: (915) 581-8864 (H)

Sep 25: Geology Trail Day Hike

Place: Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Class: Moderately strenuous

Approximate length: 10 miles

Elevation gain: 2,600

Leader: Gary Williams: (915) 593-3624 (H)



Tony Torres (second from top) gives rock climbing instructions to ICO participants at the top and those trying to make it to the top at Hueco Tanks in July.

The Lorax - El Paso Group

Sierra Club - El Paso Regional Group Directory

Executive Committee

Chair

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Vice Chair

Jamie Newlin: 584-1471

Treasurer

Kathy Sunday: 584-9301

Members

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Shirley Phillips: 772-6503

Sally S. Savage: 833-6899

Liz Walsh: 584-1471

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Jim Bell: 581-8864

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OPEN

Programs

Gary Williams: 593-3624

Timber

Jamie Newlin: 584-1471

Publicity

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Wildlife

Liz Walsh: 584-1471

ewalsh@utep.edu

By Norma McCallan

September is just around the corner, and our golden autumn is usually a marvelous time for hiking. All the Groups have some good trips planned, so check out everyone's section. Below are listed some of the more unusual, far-flung, and noteworthy outings to whet your appetite. Always call the leader for trip confirmation & further details. All phone numbers are 505, except as noted.

Sat Sept 11 **TURTLEBACK MOUNTAIN.** Chet Warwick. Climb T or C's famous landmark. Meet Forest Service office, 8 am.

Sun Sept 12 - Sat Sept 18 **DIAMOND PEAK CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT.** NM Volunteers for the Outdoors is sponsoring this 5 day work project in the remote Aldo Leopold Wilderness Area, which involves a 10 mile hike in & out. Forest Service will carry in gear, and all meals are provided. Call leader Jan Underwood 888-5005 IMMEDIATELY for reservations.

Sat Sept 25 **CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL CONSTRUCTION, MESA CHIVATA** (west of Cabezon Peak). Charlie McDonald (NM Mtn.Club) 298-8029. Meet BLM office, 435 Montano NE, Albq., 8am.

Sat Oct 2(?) **WILDFIRE ISSUES IN THE CANYONS SURROUNDING LOS ALAMOS.** Guest leader Bill Armstrong, USFS, 438-7801. Easy/moderate loop field trip, with discussion of possible options to deal with forest fire threats.

Sat/Sun Oct 2/3 **MIMBRES LAKE BACKPACK.** Rollin Wickenden 915-532-9645 (work-leave message). Moderate trip into the remote Aldo Leopold Wilderness, Black Range.

Fri/Sat/Sun Oct 8/9/10 **SEVEILLETA WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEKEND.** Barbara Coon 522-1576. Hike on Sat; on Sun discuss outings leadership & recruitment. Anyone who has participated as staff, trainee, or participant on a National Outing is especially welcome. Must make reservations ahead.

Fri/Sat/Sun Oct 8/9/10 **MAGDALENA CAMPOUT.** Rick Hurley 299-8401. Hike the ridgeline from South Baldy Peak to North Baldy Peak on Sat, camping in Water Canyon CG Fri & Sat nites.

Fri Oct 8 - Tues Oct 12 **FABLE VALLEY [UTAH] BACKPACK.** Norma McCallan 471-0005 Exploratory trip into this little visited but archaeologically rich canyon in the Dark Canyon Wilderness. Leave Thurs afternoon.

Outings Notes

Sun Oct 10 **FOURTH OF JULY CANYON.** David Ther 260-1553. Moderate Loop hike (return by Cerro Blanco) to admire the gorgeous maple leaves.

Sat Oct 16 **BIRDING ON THE RIO GRANDE.** Margot Wilson 244-5860. Leisurely jaunt between T or C & Caballo Lake. Meet FS Office 8 AM.

Sun Oct 17 **TRAMPAS LAKE Trailhead TO SANTA BARBARA Trailhead VIA DOMINGUEZ TRAIL.** John Buchser 820-0201. Several years ago John & Linda led a series of National Service Trips to complete this connecting trail. Check out the great views and Fall colors. Strenuous.

Sat/SUN/MON Oct 16/17/18 **WILD CAVES, CARLSBAD CAVERNS.** Miriam Oudejans/Warren Steckle 672-0414. Enjoy a ranger guided tour of White Giant, Lefthand Tunnel, Lower Cave & Spider Cave! Limited to 8, call early for reservations.

Sat Oct 30 **KITCHEN MESA & SOUTH.** Ned Sudborough 474-4055. Moderate Hike on top of NM's best redrock, next to Ghost Ranch.

Sun Nov 14 **SAN AUGUSTINE PASS TO BAYLOR PEAK.** Ben Zerbey 526-7811 for this strenuous hike with great views.

Happy Hiking, Norma McCallan

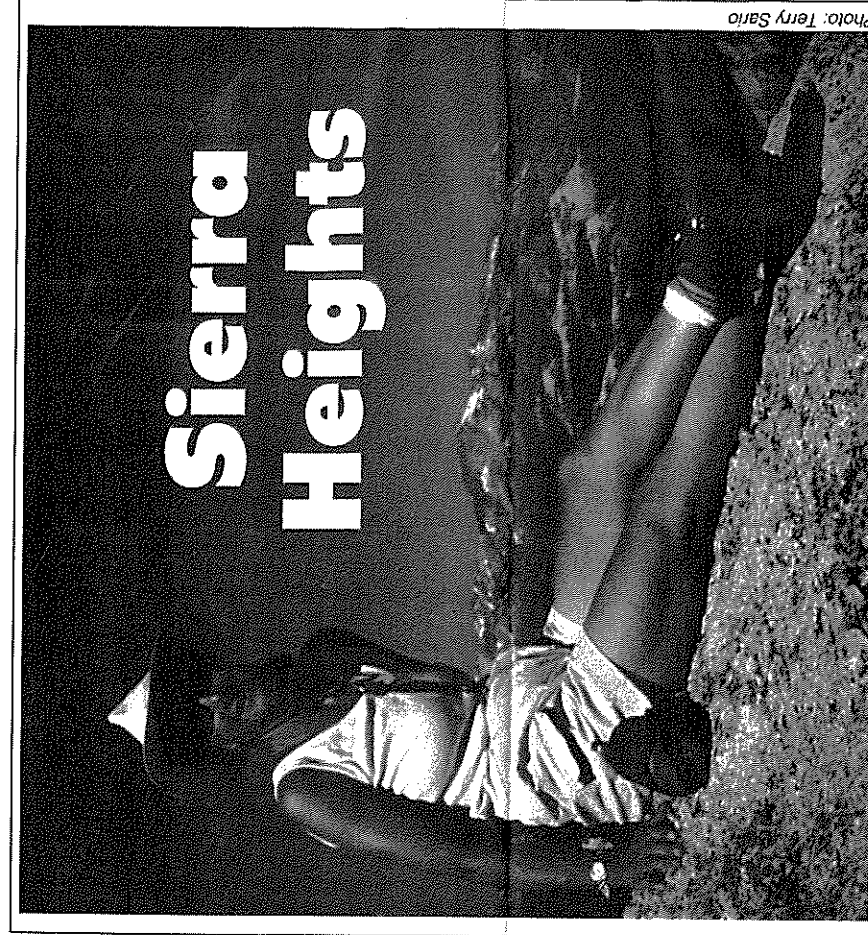


Photo: Terry Sario

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