

# Rio Grande Sierran

January / February 2000

News of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

## Inside this Issue

Legislative Updates .....	Page 3
Letters to the Editor .....	Page 4
Wildlife .....	Page 10
Children's Water Festival .....	Page 11
Energy .....	Page 12
ExCom Report .....	Page 12
Wilderness .....	Page 13
Urban Planning .....	Page 14
Water .....	Page 15
Water & Sprawl .....	Page 16

## Group News

Central .....	Page 18
El Paso .....	Page 23
Pajarito .....	Page 17
Santa Fe .....	Page 20
Southern .....	Page 22

## (Com)pact with the Devil?

By Andrew Kelton

Last month, a major water conference was held in Santa Fe, devoted to a single subject: the Rio Grande Compact. In language calling to mind the law enforcement ethos of, say, Wyatt Earp, the conference was subtitled, "It's the law!". To environmentalists concerned with the Rio Grande as much as to New Mexico's water establishment, the Rio Grande Compact is complex, even arcane, and overwhelmingly important.

Signed in 1938 by Colorado, New Mexico and Texas, the Rio Grande Compact was an attempt to 'equitably apportion' the waters of the Upper Rio Grande between the three states, by freezing the quantities of river

See *(Com)pact with the Devil?* on Page 7

## Sprawl Costs/Sprawl Solutions for New Mexico and El Paso

[Editor's Note: The following is taken from the executive summary of the report released this December by the Rio Grande Chapter. Copies of the report can be obtained from any group office for \$10]

Sprawl is the expansion of low-density, automobile-dependent development that occurs at the edge of the existing urban landscape. Sprawl is particularly evident around cities and towns in New Mexico and the El Paso area, which are among the least densely populated and more sprawled-out communities in the nation. Not all growth is sprawl, however. Growth can be a good thing when it represents a population increase, and especially an expansion of the economy. Commonly heard arguments that sprawl fills the need for affordable housing are simply not true. There are many ways to create affordable housing in livable neighborhoods and communities without sprawl. The emerging trend in urban planning to achieve livable communities and stop sprawl is known as "smart growth." Smart growth policies are known to result in more stable markets for investment and housing costs and more people-oriented communities and neighborhoods. National demographic and planning trends are driving this phenomenon.

### Sprawl Costs

Sprawl costs everyone in many ways - in dollars spent commuting, in taxpayer subsidies for sprawl development, in the quality of the air we breathe, in the deterioration of the social fabric, in the loss of agricultural lands and the rural communities it supports, and in the corruptive influence sprawl can have on state and local politics. Numerous studies from around the nation prove that sprawl imposes significant fiscal costs on society that are financed by every person who pays taxes to federal, state and local governments. Sprawl development never generates in new taxes what it costs to provide roads, water and other public utilities, or other ongoing public services. In New Mexico, Albuquerque, Santa Fe and other communities are beginning to quantify the increases in the costs of local government due to natural growth compared with subsidized sprawl. Citizens are aware of their own sprawl costs are encouraging infill and redevelopment in existing neighborhoods. The social costs of sprawl are so significant they almost cannot be measured, from the amount of time a commuter spends driving to work and not with his family to the

See *Sprawl* on Page 3

## Pigeonholing A Prairie Chicken

By Elizabeth Walsh  
Wildlife Issue Committee

The New Mexico State Game Commission (NMSGC) decided on the 9th of September of this year to table a recommendation to list the lesser prairie chicken as a threatened species in the state of New Mexico. In

tabling the decision, the NMSGC ignored a recently completed two-year study by its own scientists that showed adequate cause for listing. In tabling the recommendation, the NMSGC also violated the Wildlife Conservation Act of New Mexico, which is the state version of the federal Endangered Species Act. The prairie chicken has suffered a 74% reduction in its range in the state, and all indications from breeding bird surveys are that the total population has declined precipitously in the last few years.

### The Lesser Prairie Chicken Support Coalition Is Formed

In response to the September 9th decision not to deal with the prairie chicken issue, a group was formed by New Mexico Sportsmen and former New Mexico Game and Fish manager Jim Bailey (who directed the 2 year status review of the prairie chicken) called the Lesser Prairie Chicken Support Coalition. This group appealed the tabling of



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# Rio Grande Chapter Directory

## Executive Committee

### Gwen Wardwell, Chair

438-3060 h  
984-8860 w edenland@earthlink.net

### Jennifer Johnson, Vice Chair, Conservation Chair

289-9183 yomi@cybermesa.com

### Cecily Vix, Secretary

262-9632 cecvix@aol.com

### Blair Brown, Treasurer; Central Group

265-3231 BBlairB@aol.com

### Barbara Johnson, Council Delegate

466-4935 Lunah3@aol.com

### John Buchser

820-0201 jbuchser@ni.net

### Jim Hannan

986-0218 jhannan505@aol.com

### Barbara Leonard

722-3541 Barbara.Leonard@sierraclub.org

### Norma McCallan

471-0005 nmccallan@mindspring.com

### Elizabeth Walsh

915 747-5421 EWalsh@utep.edu

### David Bouquin; Pajarito Group

662-3741 dbouquin@rt66.com

### Doug Fraser; Santa Fe Group

474-7615 or 662-5204

### Ted Mertig; El Paso Group

915 852-3011 TMertig@aol.com

### Marianne Thaeler; Southern Group

522-3421 marianne.thaeler@sierraclub.org

## Sierra Club Structure

The Club has three structural levels. The National Board of Directors determines the overall direction of the Club. The National Organization is subdivided into Chapters, and each Chapter is further divided into Groups. One representative from each Chapter reports to the National Board through the Council of Club Leaders. The nearest full-time Club staffers are in Phoenix.

The Rio Grande Chapter hires a lobbyist full-time during the session of the New Mexico Legislature. The largest part of the Chapter's budget goes to the printing and mailing of this Newsletter, followed by the salary and expenses for the lobbyist.



### Pajarito Group

P.O. Box 945  
Los Alamos, NM 87544

### Santa Fe Group

621 Old Santa Fe Trail, #10  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
983-2703

### Central NM Group

207 San Pedro Ave. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87108  
265-5506

### Southern NM Group

P.O. Box 3705 UPB  
Las Cruces, NM 88003  
522-3421

### El Paso Group

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

Sierra Club National  
85 Second St., 2nd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
415 977-6500

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

## Issue Committee Chairs

### Energy

Ken Hughes

### Military Issues

Marianne Thaeler

### Mining

Abe Jacobson

### National Parks

Cliff Larsen

### Rangelands

Courtney White

### Trade

Gary Simpson

### Transportation

Jennifer Johnson

### Water

Richard Barish

### Wilderness

Ken Hughes

### Wildlife

John Buchser

Martin Heinrich

George Grossman

Liz Walsh

Helga Schimkat

Jeremy Kruger

## Conservation

474-0550

522-3421

672-9579

466-2128

982-5502

298-3315

289-9183

247-8079

474-0550

820-0201

232-7151

982-1024

915 747-5421

474-7340

247-1221 w

b1family@nets.com

marianne.thaeler@sierraclub.org

abe.jacobson@worldnet.att.net

clarsen@ix.netcomm.com

wldwst@rt66.com

garyksimpson@juno.com

yomi@cybermesa.com

rdbarish@aol.com

b1family@nets.com

jbuchser@ni.net

mtheinrich@aol.com

EWalsh@utep.edu

schimkat@earthlink.net

Kruger7@aol.com

## Activism

### Fundraising

OPEN

### Listserver

John Buchser

### Legal

Richard Barish

### Membership

OPEN

### Personnel

Norma McCallan

### Political

Jim Hannan

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## Outings

### Outings

Norma McCallan

### Inner City

### Outings

Ted Mertig

820-0201

247-8079

471-0005

474-7625 h

989-3960 w

265-3231

471-0005

915 852-3011

jbuchser@ni.net

rdbarish@aol.com

nmccallan@mindspring.com

Jhannan505@aol.com

BBlairB@aol.com

nmccallan@mindspring.com

tmertig@warthlink.net

## Regional and National Representatives

### Southwest Region Conservation Committee (SWRCC)

Ted Mertig, Gwen Wardwell, Elizabeth Walsh (alternate)

### Council of Club Leaders Delegate

Barbara Johnson; Norma McCallan (alternate)

## Sierran

### Editor

John Buchser

820-0201

jbuchser@ni.net

All phone numbers area code 505 unless otherwise noted.

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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 MUST 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.

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# Legislative Activities

## 2000 Legislative Session

By Jim Hannan  
*Political Issue Chair*

The Sierra Club is preparing for the upcoming New Mexico state legislative session, which begins on January 18th. The year 2000 session will last thirty days. The session is primarily devoted to the annual budget, and issues raised by the Governor. However, even with those constraints, there will be many bills introduced and the Club will have a strong presence in Santa Fe.

We always welcome volunteers. Volunteer opportunities include attending committee hearings, bill analysis and outreach efforts to our members. If you are interested in helping out this session, please call Jim Hannan in Santa Fe at 989-3960 (day) or 474-7625 (evening).

We are also interested in expanding our activist alert system. The system is currently based upon phone tree systems. We are interested in converting those members with email addresses over to an email alert system. If you are interested in becoming a part of the new system, please send your email address to: [jhannan505@aol.com](mailto:jhannan505@aol.com). We anticipate that our lobbyist will issue a weekly status report on the legislative session. We may ask members to contact their state legislator once or twice during the session.

Last year for the first time, the Rio Grande Chapter had an official Legislative Oversight Committee. The Committee consisted of the Chair, Vice Chair, Political Chair, Conservation Chair and a representative from the Central and Southern groups. The Committee used email to deliberate and pass on recommendations to the contract lobbyist.

This year the Chapter will again utilize an oversight committee. The committee this year will consist of the Chapter political committee, which includes a representative from each group, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Ex-com. In addition, the Ex-com has designated several of the issue chairs as technical advisors for our lobbyist, in the areas of water, wildlife, and land use planning.

The Club will again be using the services of Helga Schimkat as our official lobbyist. Helga, an attorney, worked the session last year and quickly familiarized herself with the workings of the New Mexico state legislature. We look forward to working with her again this year.

It is always difficult to predict what legislation will emerge in a session. However, based upon an analysis of the last two years, the following are some potential issues that may arise. Under the category of bad legislation, there has been an effort to weaken the subdivision act, to dilute some of the water requirements. This has been pushed by the Governor's office. Another annual effort lately has been to try to zero out the budget of the Conservation Services Division.

On the positive side, there should be some bills dealing with water, including increased regulation of domestic wells, attempts to inventory our water supply, and increased enforcement power of the state engineer's office. There may also be an attempt to eliminate the animal damage control program, through the budget process. There will also be introduced a constitutional amendment for campaign finance reform, through a public financing provision.

## 1999 Scorecard

### House & Senate Ratings Released by Sierra Club

By Jim Hannan  
*Political Issue Chair*

The Sierra Club has released their voting scorecard for the 1999 Congress.

The Club rated senators on six votes. **Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)** scored a **66%**. He voted against the Club position on two votes, one regarding mining waste and one regarding oil subsidies. **Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM)** scored a **0%**. He voted against the Club position on all six votes.

The Club rated House members on ten votes. **Tom Udall (D-NM)** scored **100%**. **Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)** scored **90%**. He voted against the Club position on a mining waste issue. **Heather Wilson (R-NM)** scored **9%**, voting with the Club position once, on a vote to help stabilize global population. **Joe Skeen (R-NM)** scored **0%**.

The Sierra Club has also tracked sponsorship of major environmental bills. Tom Udall signed on as a co-sponsor of three major bills last session, including Artic Wilderness, full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Utah Wilderness. Udall also signed a letter to the President calling for permanent protection of roadless areas of 100,000 acres or larger in the National Forest System. Silvestre Reyes signed on to the Land and Water Conservation Fund bill.

*[Editor's note: additional detail is available on the Club's web site at [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)]*

### *Sprawl from Page 1*

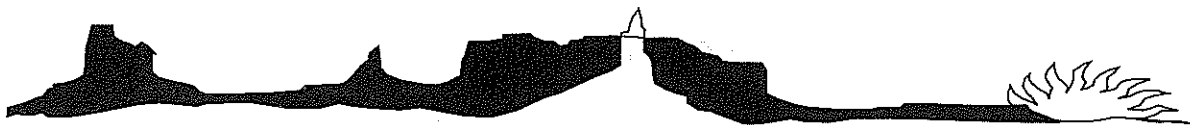
alienation of the elderly, the young and the poor. Some communities and companies are beginning to develop methods for people to work closer to their homes, saving time and money and allowing them to redirect their financial resources to improving their homes and neighborhoods. A major consequence of sprawl, with its over reliance on automobiles, is polluted air. The result in larger cities is increased illness. Sprawl takes over open spaces that should serve as stable habitat for animals and recreation and solace for people. Sprawl also eats up farms and ranches that have sustained rural communities, which are an integral feature of New Mexico's culture and landscape. Despite growing public concern about sprawl, local governing bodies and planning commissions find new sprawling developments irresistible. Often there are business relationships between government planning and governing officials and landowners and developers.

### Sprawl Solutions

There are signs that the tide is turning and that individuals and governing boards are beginning to re-assess their investments in sprawl development. It is driven by fear that sprawl and its social alienation is weakening communities and breaking the bank. Following the principles of smart growth, communities are beginning to emphasize infill, or using vacant lands within existing city service boundaries to maximize the existing infrastructure, provide sufficient concentration of population to support mass transit, and to re-establish formerly strong neighborhood and community centers. Other communities are focusing on redevelopment, or improving substandard and deteriorating neighborhood centers. Others are looking to preserve the open spaces within and without the city service boundaries. Most are using growth manage-

ment to increase the amount of available housing that is affordable by the middle class, and using the value-added effects of infill and redevelopment to encourage investment and bolster local economies. New Mexico took a step in that direction with the adoption in 1996 of the model subdivision act, which is beginning to take effect. Many state and local governments around the United States have implemented growth management laws that are bearing fruit. An impressive array of state and local initiatives is reported. Downtowns are being revitalized, the value of good planning is recognized and exploited by business, large tracts of open space are preserved for non-development, interrelationships between planning, growth management and agricultural lands are studied, major new roadways are re-evaluated and rejected, the value of mass transit is rediscovered.

*See Sprawl on Page 6*



## Letters to the Editor

### Hoof Action Hooey

A response to Courtney White's column about "ecological" grazing in the September/October issue of the *Rio Grande Sierran* is in order. It is hardly the answer to the damage done to our fragile land by cattle that a mere 5% of ranchers will even acknowledge a problem exists. That even these have only now begun to monitor their pastures makes mockery of their claims to stewardship all these years. That leaves 95% oblivious to the loss of plant and animal diversity, soil erosion and watershed damage resulting from their land use.

Regarding this so called ecological approach, it is a myth that bison roamed west of the Rockies in numbers even approaching the number of head of cattle out here now. These areas have not had a history of heavy ungulate use until recently. Still to imitate what did not occur, it is now fashionable to fence off many small pastures to heavily congregate cows for a few days and then move them over to the next pasture after the first one has been totally hammered. Jim Winder has done this by putting up miles of fencing paid for in no small measure by taxpayers. This makes fencing horribly impractical for livestock operators everywhere else unless we are willing to bankrupt the treasury with yet another rancher subsidy. Moreover, do we really want our public land carved up into many tiny parcels? I don't need to tell our readers how hard fences are on wildlife. They maim and kill in addition to hindering natural movement. They are truly a blight on the landscape.

I've seen Jim Winder's ranch. Maybe it was in abysmal shape before he changed his management style. I can tell you that I remain unimpressed. It still has a lot of bare dirt. It doesn't look like something the Sierra Club ought to be advocating.

Now a word about hoof action. This is the idea put forward by Alan Savory that the hooves of 2000 pound animals trampling the soil to dust is beneficial. Rubbish! This only pulverizes little seedlings, kills beneficial soil microbes, and compacts the soil making water penetration virtually impossible and drastically increasing soil erosion. It might be useful to consider that in National Parks such as Canyonlands and Arches where no grazing occurs, there is such concern about even the effect of human foot treading that great lengths are taken to keep people on the trails to minimize the damage. In addition, as opposed to the claims of ranchers, places like these have not suffered ecological collapse in the absence of livestock. A review just released by Joy Bolsky, Ph.D. in the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* of studies on livestock grazing in the west, including those on the Savory method, finds NO benefit to grazing cattle. On the contrary, in NO instance do any improvements to grazing practices

improve the land as much as no grazing at all. That is what on-the-ground science has been and is telling us. It is easy to see why the majority of native western fish are either extinct, endangered or threatened and why neotropical migrating birds are also losing ground. Dr. Belsky believes that in our perseverance to save a place for cattle we are rapidly losing our window to restore these ecosystems. Much greater loss is at stake.

Instead of trying even more measures to mitigate the harmful effects of cattle, we should be looking for ways to begin to phase our ranching on public land at the very least. The money for more fencing and more water developments would be much better spent paying off rancher debts so they can get out. (Don't you wish someone would offer to pay off your debts?) The touchy-feely rhetoric about building bridges between ranchers and environmentalists sounds so nice. The truth is we are paying a terrible economic as well as ecological price to maintain rancher custom and culture. We don't need to be building more bridges. I say the price is too high and its time we take back our public land and begin to truly protect our wildlife and plant diversity, fragile soils and watersheds by moving livestock out.

Margot Wilson  
Elephant Butte, NM

### Herding One Tool of Many

The long complaint against conservation ranching by Mike Hudak (of the Susquehanna Group, Atlantic Chapter) that appeared in the November/December *Rio Grande Sierran* is sad. While debate about livestock grazing in the West could be stimulating and productive and educational, Hudak's attack on Courtney White and the "radical center" Quivira Coalition is narrow and misleading. It is not the whole picture.

I am an ecologist with 26 years of experience in ecosystem rehabilitation in the Western U.S. and Latin America. I have taught Holistic Management and have since 1985 been using its' principles to make decisions about the applied ecology of land management. Measuring and observing the effects of livestock grazing in deserts and tropical forests taught me that properly managed livestock grazing can benefit Western range lands.

One can honestly argue that when livestock are poorly managed they can be nearly as destructive as a sport utility vehicle. But if humans are going to continue eating meat, I think it makes much more sense to produce meat on well-managed range land rather than in feedlots. The question is how do we properly manage livestock production?

Unfortunately, Hudak's carefully selected bits of "science" are intended to imply

that grazing in the West is always bad. But the debate over livestock grazing will not be enriched if participants continue to ignore the details, continue to ignore the good work that scientists and ranchers are doing to repair damaged Western land. We need to see the whole picture.

For example, Hudak cites a 1989 article by Platts et.al. that warns "...Heavy [winter] grazing can eliminate the streambank vegetational mat...unless controlled..." Hudak conveniently ignores the last two words and their implications. A fundamental principle of conservation ranching is gaining and maintaining control over livestock, a difficult but achievable process that is aided by Holistic Management. Many of the best conservation ranchers use holistic principles in their management, and their results can be seen on the ground. How?

Sierra Club members in New Mexico are lucky. We can participate in the range ecology seminars of the Quivira Coalition, where we see for ourselves ranches where the range shows the beneficial effects of decisions made holistically. On the other hand, I could suggest National Parks and other Federal public lands where folks can see the bad effects of long-term rest from livestock grazing, effects that Hudak claims don't exist. That may not be the whole picture, but it is a part that is missing from Hudak's argument.

Hudak's citation of the research on the Appleton-Whitesell ranch is amusing. When I visited the ranch next door to Appleton-Whitesell a few years ago, our group walked through lush, green grass that a large herd of cattle had just left a month before. Birds and wildlife sign were abundant in that grass land, where the number of livestock had increased over the preceding few years while the health of the range steadily and dramatically improved. Just across the fence on the Appleton-Whitesell land, it was hard to find green grass, but the bare soil between plants was readily apparent.

What's new in livestock management? Nothing, really, just getting back to basics, like herding. In an astonishing statement that would surprise livestock operators I know, Hudak says "...For most ranchers (herding) is not an option..." Curious statement given the number of ranchers who are successfully experimenting with herding. The economic disadvantages of herding claimed by Hudak are not universally true, a fact that was abundantly clear at a 1998 seminar in Phoenix sponsored by Grass Farmer magazine. Large and small livestock producers there reported success with herding. But herding is only a tool, just like grazing, as subject to misuse and failure as any other tool.

Hudak refers to "...numerous studies of holistic grazing ..." In fact, there is no such thing as "holistic grazing." Holistic Manage-



# Letters to the Editor

## Letters from previous page

ment is process that helps people make good decisions about complex matters, like managing ranches and wildlife refuges. Holistic Management views grazing as one of many "tools" that can be used to manage the ecosystem to achieve a goal. Other tools include technology, fire, and rest. "Holistic grazing" does not appear in either of the textbooks on Holistic Management. Researchers who have claimed to investigate "holistic grazing" are just revealing the constraints of reductionist science: It has produced valuable insights about many things, but it cannot devise a testable hypothesis about Holistic Management. Why?

The multiple independent variables involved in a holistic decision cannot be separated from each other. Their effects cannot be isolated from those of other variables, which is a condition required to test a hypothesis. Research done to date on the use of tools like grazing show mainly that when you examine the use of a tool in isolation from the decision-making process that led to its use, your results have very limited applicability to the world. The picture is incomplete. For example, a hammer is a tool that can break glass as easily as it can pound a nail. Broken glass is not "proof" that hammers are bad.

Rest the West? I invite all Sierrans to get beyond slogans, get own on our knees, get dirty, look closely at soil and plants. Join a Quivira Coalition range ecology trip to a ranch. Start getting the whole picture.

*Sterling Grogan  
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

## Rangeland Research Provides A Scientific Basis For Sustainable Livestock Grazing

Recently, an article written by Courtney White entitled "Conservation Ranching Works" that appeared in the newsletter of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club was labeled as propaganda in a response letter by Mike Hudak of the Susquehanna Group of the Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter. Mr. Hudak questioned several points made by Courtney White in his article, and referenced scientific and non-scientific articles in challenging Mr. White's statements. The purpose of this letter is to provide a broader scientific evaluation of three key points within Courtney White's letter than that provided by Mr. Hudak.

I have worked closely with Courtney White and the Quivira Coalition since their inception in 1997 and am highly supportive of the Coalition's activities to more closely engage people in understanding southwestern ecosystems. I also believe that the overall

body of rangeland research provides a scientific basis for sustainable livestock grazing of healthy rangeland ecosystems. Mr. Hudak's labeling of Courtney White's letter as simply propaganda does a tremendous injustice to this body of knowledge.

I am a rangeland scientist with the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. I work at the Jornada Experimental Range in southern New Mexico, a field research laboratory recognized for its nearly 90 year history of scientific investigations on topics including desert ecology, biogeochemistry, rangeland management, livestock management, geomorphology, and soil sciences. Our research involves scientists from across the nation in agricultural, biological and physical sciences with support from the USDA, the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the NASA, the Department of Interior, and other agricultural and non-agricultural sources.

A committee of individuals representing cattle growers, the public stewardship agencies (BLM and NRCS), environmental groups (World Wildlife Fund and the Sierra Club), and several others provide independent outside review of our research. It is extremely important to us to provide relevant, reliable, and unbiased research findings or we will be of no use to anyone interested in management of our nation's rangelands. Scientists are quite guilty of failing to effectively synthesize scientific information for the public, but this is one goal of my support of the Quivira Coalition as a mechanism to synthesize and communicate information to an interested public.

Mr. Hudak's response letter was neither an effective synthesis of the science, nor a balanced communication of that knowledge to an interested public. I will try to summarize some of the science-based information related to livestock on rangelands in this letter.

### Grazing Management

First, stocking rate is the major factor affecting responses of rangeland resources to grazing (see Pieper and Heitschmidt, 1988, *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 43:133-137). It is well recognized that "heavy" stocking is an inappropriate rate for most rangelands irrespective of season of use.

Research results on effects of grazing in the western U.S. has been summarized by region in several different publications. For example, S. Clark Martin reviewed 84 publications in writing his synthesis article entitled "Ecology and Management of Southwestern Semidesert Grass-Shrub Ranges: The Status of Our Knowledge" (1975, U.S.D.A. Forest Service Research Paper RM-156). Two conclusions from that extensive review were that grazing during winter is apparently not harmful to perennial grasses, and that utilization should not exceed 40 percent of current year's growth. Martin points out that grazing needs

to be managed, that management has improved greatly on most desert rangelands during the mid part of this century, and that semidesert rangelands can still (in 1975) be improved.

A major thrust of rangeland research today is to continue to provide knowledge for improved management of rangelands. There are several textbooks which further summarize hundreds of scientific publications that further illustrate these management principles for the different rangelands in the U.S. (for example, see Holechek et al., 1998, *Rangeland Management Principles and Practices*, Prentice-Hall, Inc.)

### Rest

There have been a few long-term studies on the effects on arid rangelands of extended rest periods with no grazing by livestock. Mr. Hudak cited one study by Bock and Bock in *Conservation Biology* (1993) which described an increase in total canopy cover of perennial grasses after 22 years of rest from what was assumed to be moderate grazing by livestock. In this study, there was no doubt that rest increased total canopy cover, but especially favored one species, plains lovegrass, which comprised the bulk of this response to rest. Other grass species, including black grama and hairy grama, had either similar or increased cover under grazing. An earlier paper from this same study by Brady et al. (1989, *Journal of Range Management* 42:284-288) drew similar conclusions and stated that vegetation changes on the rested area could only be partially explained by the influences of livestock grazing. Highly variable responses to rest were also demonstrated in a very nice study by Atwood (1987, Ph.D. dissertation at New Mexico State University) that involved studying exclosures of various ages from 17 to 48 years. In 1982, Chew (*American Midland Naturalist* 108:159-169) reported that 20 years of rest did not affect vegetation changes in the Chihuahuan Desert, and Havstad et al. (1999 in *Journal of Arid Environments* 42:155-166) reported no improvement in degraded creosotebush dominated rangeland with over 56 years of rest.

Another study in the southwest showed improvement in species diversity and cover with rest (see Gardner, 1950, *Ecology* 31:44-50), but drought greatly reduced differences between grazed and rested areas. In a shorter exclusion study four years of rest (see Thurow et al., 1988, *Journal of Range Management* 41:108-114) from livestock generated similar responses in total cover and biomass of mid-grasses as in the moderately grazed areas. In one of the most interesting studies of this type, Brown and Heske (1990, *Science* 250:1705-1707) reported tremendous vegetation changes in a desert shrubland with removal of kangaroo rats from study plots for

See *Letters on next page*



# Sprawl

## Sprawl Costs/Sprawl Solutions for New Mexico and El Paso

*Sprawl continued from page 3*

### Action Plan

"*Sprawl Costs / Sprawl Solutions for New Mexico and El Paso*" is part of a national initiative by the Sierra Club. This report by the Rio Grande Chapter is one of several that have been published in regions around the country. The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club offers New Mexico and El Paso a framework for addressing sprawl in a comprehensive and responsible way. Sierra Club, Rio Grande Chapter's Ten Point Plan to bring sprawl to a crawl:

**1. It's the water.**

Set boundaries for the area that you can afford to serve with municipal water supplies.

**2. Save what we can't bear to lose, zone out what we can't bear.**

Save established neighborhoods, plan to avoid anonymous sprawl development.

**3. Just buy it. Open space has value.**

Compensate landowners so they won't be forced to use their land for sprawl.

**4. Back to the future.**

Those old neighborhoods were more than just convenient, they fostered a sense of community and kept neighborhoods strong. It can happen again.

**5. Get dense.**

Infill and redevelopment are the new frontier of urban growth. Intelligent design and mixed, integrated uses don't generate neighborhood opposition.

**6. Get real.**

The process of deciding whether a town or city's geographic area ought to be expanded must be taken out of the hands of the landowners and developers. The community must be allowed to decide whether to expand the limits of its urban services and must have the power to say "no."

**7. Do the numbers.**

It's time to stop public subsidies of sprawl, which serve to enrich the few, cheat all taxpayers and harm the environment. Fiscal impact and environmental impact statements are needed for any new or expanded water or street project outside existing service boundaries.

**8. Get on track, and on the bus.**

Infill, redevelopment and good planning of new neighborhoods can encourage residents to use their feet, their bicycles, buses and rail to run around town, at less cost and less pollution than using their cars.

**9. Agree on where you're going to grow, where you're not.**

Comprehensive land use and growth management plans, regional in nature with multi-government revenue-sharing, must be drafted and followed.

**10. Develop without growth.**

Emphasize the strength of a community and how it can develop internally, and avoid looking outward for an economic savior.

Community-supported agriculture, revolving loan funds, home improvement programs and Main Street programs all help plug the money leaks that are used to support sprawl.

Resources Oregon has an extensive history of growth management. State and local governments and residents have developed an extensive toolbox of growth management strategies that can be used to redirect public resources to strengthen neighborhoods and save tax money without depriving landowners of their rights to benefit from the value of their land. The Internet is a valuable resource for any public official, planner or citizen to find out what's going on in growth management around the nation and the world. An extensive bibliography of Internet websites is listed. A glossary of terms is also included, defining many of the growth management terms that are used in this document. Most statements used in this report are end-noted in the Resources Section.

### *Letters from previous page*

12 years, and these changes were much greater than those produced by rest from livestock. This is NOT to suggest that we remove kangaroo rats, but to illustrate that there are many grazers in these environments. An excellent article by Wondzell and Ludwig (1995, *Journal of Vegetation Science* 6:377-390) illustrated the roles of landform, soils, and climate in shaping the vegetation dynamics of the Southwest. In their study done at Big Bend National Park in Texas, they observed few changes in vegetation due to rest from livestock grazing. In general, rest from livestock can have some positive effects for some sites, but rest is not an automatic "cure."

### Domestic Livestock

Livestock were introduced to North America about 500 years ago. Rangelands in North America have been grazed by large herbivores for several million years. However, many of our large native herbivores became extinct between 9,000 and 12,000 years ago or so. Some regions were still grazed by large herbivores, especially bison, since the Pleistocene extinctions, but other regions including the southwest U.S. have had minimal grazing by large animals for thousands of

years. During this recent period we have seen the development of new biomes, such as the Chihuahuan Desert, that really have little history of grazing by large herbivores until the introduction of livestock. However, it should be recognized that many of the plant species that characterize the vegetation of the Chihuahuan Desert have been in North America for thousands of years and were exposed to grazing prior to these extinctions. In addition, these current ecosystems are certainly grazed by small native herbivores, especially rabbits. So, grazing is not a particularly exotic disturbance in North America.

It is probably more important to look to the present and the future than to the past for guidance on livestock grazing and its role and its management within our current environment. We are now dealing with tremendously altered environments than those that have existed. In a recent article by Stuart Weiss (1999, *Conservation Biology* 13:1476-1486) livestock grazing is being used to maintain biodiversity within grasslands in the San Francisco Bay area. In this case, modern well-managed grazing is a tool for overcoming the negative effects of air pollution in this region. This may be an extreme example, but Weiss' article illustrates that we have to evaluate prac-

tices based on current conditions. Well-managed practices including well-managed livestock grazing can be constructive and beneficial. We can't just walk away from the need to understand and manage these resources.

Finally, a recent article by Fuhlendorf and Smerns (1999, *Journal of Vegetation Science* 10:731-738) concludes that grazing can have a positive, a negative, or no influence depending upon the scale of observation and what we are observing. It is not appropriate to simply dismiss livestock grazing as an inappropriate practice.

There is certainly a lot that we still need to learn and we need to do a better job of synthesizing what we know. Yet, there is a substantial body of scientific information on effects of livestock grazing which provide a basis for principles of grazing management. Honest, balanced, thorough efforts to synthesize and articulate that knowledge cannot be viewed as propaganda. However, selective, unbalanced, incomplete efforts to oversimplify and damage the cause of promoting good land management could be viewed as ignorant.

Kris Havstad  
Rangeland Scientist  
Jornada Experimental Range





# Water

## (Com)pact with the Devil?

*(Com)pact with the Devil? from Page 1*

water received at 1929 levels and developing sliding 'delivery' schedules on the basis of variations of flow since gauging began in the 1890s. The irrigated farms of southern New Mexico, north west Texas and northern Mexico, supplied since 1916 with the help of storage in Elephant Butte reservoir, would be able to consume about 800,000 acre-feet of mainstem Rio Grande water, and New Mexico's Middle Valley (with Albuquerque at its center) about 400,000. Allocations to all three states would lower 'equitably' in drought periods.

The allocations were entirely to human uses: ideally, according to the Compact mathematics and the prevailing philosophy of the time, all river water would have been 'beneficially used' (i.e. consumed) by the time it reached Fort Quitman ninety miles downstream of El Paso. Not only was the natural environment therefore not a player in this formal carving-up of the river, but, with river allocations frozen, it was to be the sole source of new water for any future water-based development. This would be by 'drainage returns' (tapping offstream supplies) and 'water salvage' (reducing natural evapotranspiration): often, in environmental terms, wetland drainage and canalization.

The 'equitable apportionments' have been closely guarded. Texas was so concerned about increased water depletions resulting from the Middle Valley's rationalization by the new irrigation Conservancy District, MRGCD, that it brought suit against New Mexico in the 1930s (resolved by the Compact), and did so again in the 'Fifties with New Mexico now in substantial Compact 'debt'. New Mexico wriggled out of that by blaming the floods of 1941-42, which it claimed had made the river a less efficient conveyance mechanism, and by claiming successfully that the federal government should also have been named in the suit.

New Mexico's compounded Compact debt and the severe drought of the 'Fifties – when Elephant Butte was reduced to a mere puddle – were preconditions for the aggressive water salvage works undertaken by the Bureau of Reclamation and Corps of Engineers from the late 'Fifties: jetty jacks and levees were built to confine the middle river (stopping most flooding and reducing open-water evaporation), and a seventy-mile Low Flow Channel was dug to divert and efficiently transmit the entire flow of the river from San Acacia to Elephant Butte. Water conveyance efficiency and control, supposedly, were achieved by this major federal project – but at the expense of a functioning ecosystem, a benefit hardly recognized in the mindset of the time.

The Compact, with its corresponding water salvage prerogative, has therefore done few favors for the Rio Grande. But the 'Compact effect' – the draconian requirements of a treaty signed under conditions which have changed radically since – could be about to get worse. For the past three decades the Middle Rio Grande's 'water budget' has been subsidized by San Juan-Chama water, the transmountain diversion of about 100,000 acre-feet per year which, in theoretical water accounting terms, frees up a substantial amount of 'native' water to contribute to Compact deliveries. Half the San Juan-Chama water is owned by Albuquerque, which plans to start diverting its full entitlement (to permit replenishment of its dangerously drawn-down aquifer) in 2004. Serious Compact non-compliance – particularly since irrigation depletions have increased recently through development in the southern Middle Valley – is therefore threatened. On the neighboring Pecos River, New Mexico was found in breach of the compact there by the Supreme Court and has already paid \$25 million to retire water rights in an attempt to make the required deliveries to Texas. Some say that on the Rio Grande, court-enforced delivery for breach of the Compact could be ten times as expensive or more.

Compact non-compliance by Colorado in the 'Fifties and 'Sixties forced state water managers there to bite the bullet and begin managing to meet the Compact. They now make most of their predicted delivery requirement early, in the spring runoff period, if necessary by restricting diversions by San Luis Valley irrigators. New Mexico, though, has no means of managing flows for Compact compliance. We are not even entirely sure what the causes of Compact compliance are.

The assumption has long been that non-compliance is largely the result of 'wasteful' transpiration by natural vegetation and evaporation resulting from the river's natural tendency to braid and broaden. Thus water wastage from the sediment delta at the head of shrunken Elephant Butte was blamed for much of the Compact debt in the 'Fifties. The debt was then turned around just as the Bureau's water salvage and drainage schemes were put in place in the late 'Fifties. Conspicuous amongst these projects was the Socorro Low Flow channel – and it might not be unfair to call this the 'silver bullet' for Compact compliance in the eyes of the water establishment then and now.

With much of the San Juan-Chama bounty about to be tapped by rapidly-growing Albuquerque, re-operating the presently largely-defunct Low Flow Channel is again on the cards. The cost of this drastic surgery – a high-risk bypass operation if ever there

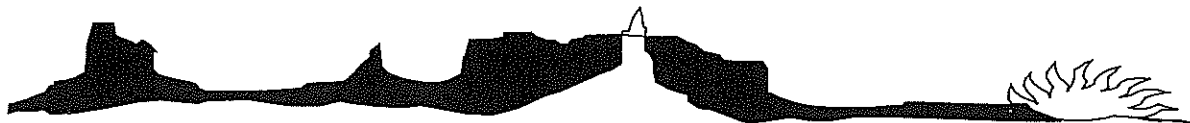
was one – would be further deprivation of the already water-starved Socorro reach and its bosque (incidentally, major refuges for the endangered silvery minnow and willow fly-catcher).

In fact, careful studies suggest there may be other contributors to Compact compliance without an environmental downside. One is lowering evaporations from Elephant Butte itself – which at an average of 180,000 acre-feet a year are greater than the gross annual water consumption of the whole Albuquerque metro area. Since 1948, when the Compact was changed, New Mexico has had to 'pay' for the Elephant Butte losses under a revamped water accounting system. The relative wastefulness of New Mexico's southern reservoirs is widely recognized: from the late 'Seventies, some storage was actually moved upstream from Caballo reservoir to Elephant Butte, under court order, because of the lower lake's extreme shallowness and storage inefficiency.

A glimmer of hope is that Compact storage could now be shifted still further upstream, to reduce the heavy evaporation losses from Elephant Butte. Texas has long favored Abiquiu reservoir for upstream storage, but no space has been available without flooding the Wild & Scenic study reach of the Rio Chama above. However, Albuquerque leases most of the available space in Abiquiu to store its San Juan-Chama water. When it starts to draw this down to supply its large drinking-water project in 2004, space will become available for native water that would not otherwise have been stored. The legal entanglements are mind-numbing, but Albuquerque is under pressure – moral, political, even legal, given the likely impacts of the project – to provide this freed-up space for Rio Grande Compact and Endangered Species Act compliance. Significantly lower evaporations would favor Compact compliance; timely releases earmarked for environmental protection would aid flood cycles and help keep the middle river wet. At a stretch, old enemies could become close, if never wholly comfortable, bedfellows. Though they come from very different philosophical standpoints, there is some common ground between Compact compliance and environmental protection which we now need to identify more precisely and seek to expand.



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## Wildlife

### Pigeonholing A Prairie Chicken

*Prairie Chicken from Page 1*

the listing question at the October meeting of the NM State Game Commission. Twelve Groups supported the appeal including Audubon, Animal Protection of New Mexico, Defenders of Wildlife, New Mexico Sportsmen and Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen.

The appeal was then rejected at the November meeting of the NMSGC, and Director Jerry Maracchini, who two years earlier had ordered the status review of the lesser prairie chicken, at this point withdrew his recommendation to list the bird. This reversal came shortly after a closed-door annual performance review of Maracchini's work. Activists speculate that Maracchini was under severe pressure to change his tune. The New Mexico Cattle Growers Association is the only group that publicly opposed the listing.

In earlier decades, the lesser prairie chicken was abundant in eastern New Mexico on sand-sage grassland and shinnery oak habitats. Its spring mating dances on the prairie and the booming vocalizations that accompanied these dances were among the most spectacular sights and sounds of the high plains in spring. The mating dances of the prairie chicken are actual contests between males, nowadays with 2 to 8 male birds, and in times past up to 30 males per "lek", as these avian dance groups are called. The lesser prairie chicken was also the chief gamebird of the plains until dwindling numbers forced limited or closed seasons in the five south central states in which it is found.

#### Accelerating Towards Extinction

The decline of the lesser prairie chicken in New Mexico and neighboring states is typical of the pattern that prairie chickens in general follow to extinction. Once remnant and increasingly isolated populations of prairie chickens are reduced to a certain size, they are beset by the usual problems of small populations: inbreeding, greater susceptibility to disease, to predators and to natural stresses such as drought years or hard winters. Prairie chicken populations tend to expand best in the same way as their favored shinnery oak habitat; given the right conditions, they naturally expand outwards from ancestral core populations. To a prairie chicken, the "right conditions" means plenty of food, cover and "dance floors" in an area or region of good habitat large enough to see the birds through natural misfortunes such as weather extremes or the peaks of predator population cycles. Habitat areas must be large enough so that there are enough birds to avoid inbreeding disorders, and large enough so birds that are killed can be replaced by birds from other flocks. Prairie chickens in small

isolated cores of habitat tend to be extirpated. Unfortunately for the birds in New Mexico, the majority of occupied habitat consists of either too-small pockets of good habitat, or of larger areas of mediocre to poor habitat. The trend now is that small populations disappear and are not replaced by other prairie chickens, as there is no surplus of neighboring birds. When local extirpations of this nature become widespread, the end result is extinction. Unfortunately it is difficult to reintroduce prairie chickens to vacated areas artificially. This is the pattern in which the lesser prairie chicken is now locked.

#### Tour De Chicken

The Lesser prairie chicken is not without company on its journey towards extinction. Of the four types (five if you count the sharp-tailed grouse, which is also in trouble, with the New Mexico subspecies extinct), one, the heath hen, is now extinct. The heath hen's extinction followed several hundred years of concern over its diminishing status. Prior to the Revolution heath hens had been so common in New England that servants stipulated in contracts with their employers "not to have the heath hen brought to table oftener than a few times in a week." This period of abundance did not last long, as over-hunting, grazing, predation by introduced rats and cats, and conversion of habitat to farmland or pasture soon conspired against the heath hen. By 1791 a hunting season, with a strict no-take season, was imposed for the benefit of declining heath hens in parts of New York state.

Even with this early start on conservation, the heath hen declined until in the mid-19th century it had been extirpated from the American mainland. By this time its last redoubt was the island of Martha's Vineyard off the coast of Massachusetts, where it slowly declined until by 1908 there remained about 50 birds. In this year a 1,600 acre refuge was established for the heath hen, replete with efforts to combat the feral cats that plagued the population. The reserve was considered a roaring success when by 1915 the birds had reached 2,000 strong. There was again talk of reintroducing the bird to the mainland. The next year a brush fire destroyed much of the breeding area and was followed by a severe winter, and to cap off the misfortune that same winter was a goshawk invasion year, which is significant because the goshawks ate the heath hens. The next year's population totaled only 150 birds. The heath hen did not recover. A disease called blackhead broke out, probably transmitted from domestic turkeys. The heath hen population had become too small and too concentrated to survive the assaults of man and nature. The last heath hens lived

out their days surrounded by tourists, scientists and concerned game managers, to no avail. By 1932 the last prairie chicken of the east had vanished.

Moving farther west, we find the Attwater's prairie chicken of coastal Texas ready to join the Heath Hen. Numbering a million birds at the turn of the century, the Attwater's prairie chicken now numbers between 50 and 70 birds in the wild, and averages about 100 captive birds. Despite intensive federal and private efforts to expand the population, factors have conspired against the bird's return. As with the case of the heath hen, the situation with the Attwater's prairie chicken looks like another case of too-little too late, despite all of the well meaning and intensive emergency care.

The lesser prairie chicken is the "highest and driest" of the prairie chickens, inhabiting the high plains of New Mexico, adjacent Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas as well as a small section of Colorado. It frequents drier habitat and relatively shorter, sparser vegetation than its relatives. It is in trouble throughout most of its remaining range, and certainly in New Mexico its status could be described as an emergency situation.

Jim Bailey, who oversaw the lesser prairie chicken status review, made the following report to the NMSGC on the 15th of October, in regards to the recent misfortunes of the prairie chicken in New Mexico:

Many years of data verify the declining trend of the prairie chicken in New Mexico. These data include harvest estimates from 1983-1993, BLM Caprock surveys from 1971-1999, BLM Carlsbad surveys from 1985-1999, and 1998-1999 Department lek surveys that indicate absence of the species from most of its former range. Additional years of surveys are not needed to provide reliable evidence that the prairie chicken is in trouble in our state. The 1999 data indicate: (1) attempts to locate prairie chickens near Amistad in northeast New Mexico were unsuccessful; (2) prairie chicken numbers were down about 50% on the BLM Caprock Area; (3) surveys of historic leks on the BLM Carlsbad Area found only 2 active leks with 5 birds; (4) surveys along over 200 miles of roads in the Carlsbad Area failed to locate any other leks; (5) only 1 lek was located on 10 new survey routes observed by the Department of Game and Fish; and (6) prairie chicken numbers held steady, compared to 1998, on the mostly ungrazed prairie chicken areas belonging to the Dept. of Game and Fish.

*Continued on next page*



# Wildlife

## Gimme Shelter: Prairie Chickens And Shinnery Oak

All of the four kinds of prairie chickens have (or had) an affinity for oak. In New Mexico the lesser prairie chicken is now limited to shinnery oak stands, the knee high foliage that covers large areas of New Mexico south of Highway 40. Shinnery oak (and the tall bluestem grasses that occur with it) provides year round shelter and food in the form of buds, acorns, and the insects that are attracted to oaks. The roots of shinnery oaks bind the soil of much of the south central plains.

Shinnery oak is poisonous to cattle for part of each spring, and for this reason ranchers have long sought to eradicate it. To eliminate this impediment to cattle and in a misguided effort to replace oak with grasses (which results in soil erosion, in this case), the BLM has sought to reduce shinnery oak on public lands. Since 1981 the BLM treated about 100,000 acres of shinnery with the poison tebuthiuron, then abandoned the program in 1983, although eradication of shinnery still occurs. Of four studies of prairie chickens and tebuthiuron, three studies found that prairie chickens avoided treated sites, even when some oaks were left, and one study found that the birds did not avoid treated areas but were unhealthy compared to birds in untreated areas. Either way, the prairie chicken loses ground.

The eradication of shinnery oak by government agencies is not the only adverse effect that grazing visits upon prairie chickens. Cattle directly decrease and degrade shinnery habitat, eating the oak in both its poisonous and benign stages, as well as decreasing grasses and other vegetative cover. Grasses used for nesting and rearing cover must be the previous year's growth, as prairie chickens nest in the spring before the warm season grasses begin to lengthen. The shinnery oak is usually leafing out before the prairie chickens are finished strutting their display grounds in March and April. As with many grassland birds, grazing causes peril to prairie chickens in the form of exposure to predators, wind, heat and lack of adequate food plants.

Even small areas of good habitat, if surrounded by grazed land may pose a threat to prairie chickens, as predators also flock to the only good hunting ground in the area. While preserving vegetative cover is necessary to prairie chicken survival, there is a law of contrast at work when it comes to avoiding predators. If there are only a few acres of tall grass in a square mile, the predators all know where to look for the prey. Conversely a predator finding itself in many square miles of tall grass has no such advantage. Thus grazing around small enclosures tends to produce a contrast that concentrates predators and prey together, with obvious results. Such areas, with attractive habitat to

which breeding birds flock only to have little or no reproductive success, are called "population sinks" by biologists. In an endangered or threatened species situation, this ecological reality in turn creates a continuous political "solution" whereby instead of increasing habitat area to the point where predation does not threaten an entire population, managers must engage agents of the Animal Damage Control Agency (recently renamed "Wildlife Services"), to kill other wildlife that threatens the endangered species. This is not a workable solution in the long term, and anywhere that it is happening (with the exception of eliminating introduced species such as rats or goats from islands), it means that real solutions are being avoided.

## State Listing And Federal Listing

While the listing of the lesser prairie chicken is mandated by the Wildlife Conservation Act of New Mexico, the listing itself carries no legal weight in terms of actions or prohibitions aimed at saving the listed species. It is simply an admission by the state that it acknowledges scientific findings to the effect that the bird is in trouble. It is important for those concerned about the lesser prairie chicken to realize that being listed doesn't necessarily mean that "the cavalry is coming". Because of this, federal listing is also warranted, and the lesser prairie chicken nationally is categorized as "warranted but precluded" for consideration as a threatened species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the federal Endangered Species Act. This means that the bird merits ESA listing and action, but that the USFWS has such a backlog of severe cases that the lesser prairie chicken must wait until the resource are available, in terms of money and staff time, to deal with it. The USFWS rates cases from 1 to 12. The lesser prairie chicken received a rating of "8 out of 12", with organisms in the "1 to 3" range receiving attention in practice. The lesser prairie chicken may be among the most under-prioritized creatures on the USFWS roster, and activists are pressuring the USFWS to look at new evidence of the decline in this species.

## To Do, Or Not To Do, Enough About The Lesser Prairie Chicken

Listing the lesser prairie chicken is a start. But being officially endangered or officially threatened does not constitute salvation in practice. We should take note of the failures of protection efforts directed at the heath hen and the officially endangered Attwater's prairie chicken. They were awarded small sanctuaries, surrounded or actually invaded by livestock and cultivation, too late to make a real difference. Admitting that there is an emergency, by way of listing, is a step that both the State of New Mexico and the US Fish and Wildlife Service must make. But stop-

ping at this point will not bring the birds to safety. We have a chance now, if we don't wait, to give enough prairie chickens, on enough land, enough protection to keep the species safe for posterity. Politically difficult, yes, ecologically possible, yes, and necessary to the survival of the bird, absolutely. In a few more years it may be too late, not because there will be zero birds left, but because after a few more years the situation will have deteriorated to the point where our only remaining options are half measures. If we don't arrange for some big, cow free habitat very soon, the hunting seasons will close for good and soon after, so will the spring booming grounds.



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# Wildlife

## Sierra Club Active In Wildlife Conflict Resolution Committee

By Helga C. Schimkat  
Wildlife Issue Committee

Since its inception in April I have been a member of the Wildlife Conflict Resolution Committee (WCRC, formerly the Nuisance Wildlife Working Group) for the Sierra Club and am the environmental representative to its steering committee. The WCRC is a consensus group convened by the governor that is charged with exploring issues surrounding "nuisance" wildlife, developing potential solutions, and making recommendations to the Governor through the State Game Commission.

The Group will make its decisions and recommendations based on consensus of its members. The group will reach consensus on an issue when it finally agrees upon a single alternative and each member can honestly say: 1) I believe that other members understand my point of view; 2) I believe I understand other members' points of view; 3) Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it because it was arrived at openly and fairly, and it is the best solution for us at this time. In instances where consensus cannot be reached, the pros and cons of the decision will be presented for the decision makers.

The WCRC meets on the second Monday of each month at the Albuquerque office of the Department of Game and Fish, usually from noon until 5 p.m. Those meetings are open to the public who are given an opportunity to comment at the end of each meeting. Carl Moore of The Community Store is the facilitator.

The WCRC consists of representatives from the following organizations, agencies or offices: the Lieutenant Governor's office, Council of Outfitters and Guides, Department of Game and Fish, State Land Office, NM Cattle Growers' Association, State Game Commission, US Forest Service, Cooperative Extension Services, BLM, Conservation Officers Association, National Audubon Society, Forest Guardians, Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Animal Protection of New Mexico, Coalition of Sportsmen, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Leeson Ranch, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Lopez Ranch, NM Wildlife Federation, NM Department of Agriculture, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Wildlife Services (formerly ADC), NM Association of Counties, Sierra Club, NM Farm and Livestock Bureau, Jicarilla Game and Fish, Cooperative Extension Services—RITF, NM State Legislature.

The progress report of the WCRC follows. I urge anyone with knowledge of or interest in the issues to attend the group meetings and to contact me at 474-5870.

### Progress Report of the Wildlife Conflict Resolution Committee 11/18/99

#### Introduction

The Wildlife Conflict Resolution Committee grew out of Governor Johnson's forum on nuisance wildlife that was held in January 1999. The purpose of the forum was to convene stakeholders who had an interest in the management of nuisance wildlife issues in New Mexico. After the forum Lt. Governor Bradley formed a steering committee to identify additional stakeholders and invited them to join the Wildlife Conflict Resolution Committee. The task of the Wildlife Conflict Resolution Committee (WCRC) is to recommend to the governor through the New Mexico Game Commission how the state can most effectively address human/wildlife conflicts. The WCRC has made significant headway in the last eight months. The WCRC started as twenty-nine individuals unfamiliar with each other and the issues and has begun to establish trust and a strong working relationship, educated itself about human/wildlife conflicts, identified the salient problems in this area and begun analyzing potential solutions that New Mexico Game and Fish can use. This report chronicles the committee's achievements to date, addressing the committee's progress in four categories: group process, issue identification, group education, and potential solutions.

#### Creating Group Process

The WCRC used the first two meetings to ensure the group would function cohesively and effectively. This was done by 1) establishing ground rules by which meetings and extra-group activities would be conducted, 2) developing representatives' individual roles within the group, 3) developing the role and functions of the steering committee, and 4) structuring the group as a consensus-building body.

#### Issue Identification

During the second meeting, the group reviewed the salient human/wildlife issues that had been identified during the Governor's forum. Using these and their own experience, the group created a priority list that would direct their efforts. The top four priorities chosen, in order of importance, were 1) elk damage, 2) compensation, 3) getting good scientific data to aid in decision making, and 4) balancing individual and private rights with the rights of the public as a whole (for other issues identified, see notes of May 1999 meeting). For their first issue, the WCRC decided to address the issue of elk damage to crops, permanent pastures and fences on private land. They chose to tackle this issue first for several reasons. First, many New Mexicans view elk as a species with a potentially negative impact on people's livelihoods. Second, elk

damage and its solutions affect or involve many other priority issues that the group identified. Third, many solutions to elk dam problems would apply to other human/wildlife conflicts.

#### Education

Because of the complexity and importance of the problems identified, the group decided they needed to educate themselves before delving into solutions. Therefore learning time was built into the group's schedule. The group brought in experts to speak and answer questions about the following topics: 1) the legal meaning of "nuisance wildlife" and "depredation" in New Mexico (June), 2) the current management of elk damage: the extent, severity, and control of elk damage in the state (June and September), 3) options for elk damage mitigation and control: current efforts (August), 4) experiences of landowners affected by elk (August, September and October), 5) elk biology and elk and cattle interactions (September), 6) the feasibility of insurance against wildlife damage (October) and legal constraints on elk damage management (June and November). The group also received ad hoc education from its own members when questions were raised that were within members' areas of expertise. Although the group has spent considerable time educating itself, it has been simultaneously generating and evaluating potential solutions. Many ideas have arisen from presentations from group discussions that followed presentations, making the education an invaluable part of the resolution process.

#### Potential Solutions

The WCRC has developed a thorough though not closed, list of potential solutions to elk damage problems. The group is working hard to select a matrix of the most effective and equitable tools that they will present to the Game Commission for review and approval. The WCRC will determine which of its recommendations require legislative approval and which can be implemented through simpler changes in Game and Fish policy/regulation. This matrix of tools will all be for flexible and case-appropriate problem solving on both a statewide and local level.

On November 17, the group created three subcommittees to focus on aspects of this matrix. One committee will draft a proposed damage prevention and problem-solving mechanism that can be implemented in NM. The other two committees will control the process of collecting ideas for 1) techniques that can be used on the ground to solve depredation problems and 2) funding sources and mechanisms for any proposed program. All three groups will have reports ready for the group before or by the December 13 meeting. The group then plans to have a draft

See *Wildlife* on next page



# Water

## Children's Water Festival

### Water in New Mexico - Yesterday & Tomorrow

By Susan Gorman

On a beautiful blue sky October morning, the grounds of the Energy Training Complex were beginning to warm in the rising sun. The early morning quiet was broken by vehicles as the people who would present the activities for the Children's Water Festival began to arrive. Soon the Complex was filled with activity. Equipment was moved into place, water and power connections were made, costumes were donned, signs were set up, coffee was perked, loads of drinks and snacks were rolled into staging areas, last minute tests were run to ensure that all would be ready. Next, troupes of volunteers began to arrive, grabbed coffee and a bagel, listened to final instructions, asked clarifying questions, then mobilized to their respective places.

#### *Wildlife from previous page*

ommendation packet ready for the State Game Commission by the end of the January meeting. In addition to subcommittee reports at the December meeting, the group will choose the next nuisance wildlife issue to be addressed.

Some may be anxious to see "results" at this point, but this is a stage through which the WCRC is determined not to rush. They do not want to make recommendations to the Game Commission that fail to serve all interests or to address important concerns. For this reason, the group is carefully deliberating the merits of all the proposed tools, both singly and in various combinations. Again, the elk damage problem encompasses many issues of concern in other human/wildlife conflicts. The WCRC is close to having a proposal for the Game Commission that should make great strides toward alleviating not only elk conflicts, but also problems with other wildlife species.



Just as all was prepared, set up and in place the first bus arrived. As the students filed from the bus excited voices filled the air. More buses arrived to unload more students who were met by a Guide and each group headed to the first activity. The first Water Festival for the Middle Rio Grande area had begun!

The vision for the Water Festival originated more than two years ago. Some of us wondered, "How in the world can we help everyone understand the true value of water?" We decided that reaching out to our children was a good approach and resolved to put on a Water Festival for kids. We contacted the Groundwater Foundation in Lincoln, Nebraska which has been having Water Festivals to educate students about groundwater for a decade and asked for their help. From that first meeting in June, 1997, we planned, talked to teachers, gathered materials and found water experts to help. We created a partnership of 28 sponsors and supporters who contributed money, time, and talent to make the Festival a reality. Fifty volunteers and members of the Steering Committee were enlisted to provide invaluable assistance and logistical support.

The Festival was held on October 15, 1999, day before Dia del Rio, at the Department of Energy's Energy Training Complex. Nearly 800 students from 17 schools attended the Festival, accompanied by more than a 100 teachers and parents. Each group of 20 to 30 students attended either the morning or afternoon session during which they participated in three 30 minute activities.

Twenty different activities were presented by a total of 50 people including students from Wilson Middle School, Albuquerque Academy and Bernalillo County 4-H. The activities on the program covered a wide range of water topics and were presented by representatives from many organizations. The students conversed with the Water Wizard and the Xeric City Scarecrow about saving water. They helped create a mini-river, viewed the tiniest water insects and met a noble hunter of the river, a raptor. They purified water from the Rio Grande, built aquifers from edible ingredients, made garbage pizzas, and competed in lively games of Water Jeopardy and Dripal Pursuit.

In order to help teachers prepare students before the BIG DAY and to enable them to continue the water education that started at the Festival, we held teacher workshops. Teachers received previews of several of the Festival activities as well as information on the philosophy of the Festival and the importance of water education and guidance on integration of the Festival education elements into the core curriculum. In addition, each teacher received a Resource Kit of educational materials.

The Festival organizers contracted with a film crew from KNME Channel 5 in Albuquerque to document the Festival activities and produce a 30 minute documentary that will be used to demonstrate the importance of water education and the effectiveness of the Festival as a powerful water education delivery method. It is anticipated that it will be aired on KNME, the local Public Television channel.

Another film crew from City of Albuquerque Media Resources also documented the Festival with the specific objective of spotlighting the water education programs for the City Departments that had participated in the Festival. This program will be aired on Government Channel 16 later this year.

Today's ten year olds will be the water scientists, engineers and managers of tomorrow. As one wise student once said, "We are the future and we have to find a better way!" But we can't expect them to "find a better way" unless they have the facts, concepts, values and critical thinking skills they'll need to do that. The Water Festival was designed to provide them with a jump start.

As tomorrow's decision makers headed back to their classrooms from the First Water Festival, perhaps the seeds for solutions had already been sown, and learning about water will never be ordinary again!

[Note: The organizers of Water festival '99 are committed to making this an annual event and have begun planning for Water Festival 2000. If you would like to contribute time, ideas, resources or money to this initiative, contact: Susan Gorman, 2226B Wyoming NE, # 272, Albuquerque, NM 87112, 265-3231, FAX 256-0373, bblairb@aol.com]





# Energy

## You Say You Want A Revolution

By Ken Hughes

Energy Chair

and Charles Bensinger

Alternative energy consultant

1. **BAD NEWS: LOOKS LIKE WE NEED AN ENERGY REVOLUTION.** According to a Science magazine article this week, the accelerating decline of Arctic ice over the past 46 years is most likely the result of human activity, rather than normal climate cycles. Based on the most advanced computer models available, the authors put the chance that the 46-year trend could be entirely due to natural fluctuations at less than 0.1%. Not only is the ice area declining, the remaining ice is thinning rapidly, according to another article. Since ice does not absorb solar energy as efficiently as open water, there is a strong positive feedback.

2. **GOOD NEWS: WE MAY BE ON THE THRESHOLD OF AN ENERGY REVOLUTION.** A report released on Capitol Hill yesterday by the Northeast- Midwest Institute argues that utility deregulation, combined with replacement of aging power generators, provides a unique chance to convert to more efficient technologies and reduce greenhouse emissions. Lacking incentive to increase efficiency, regulated monopolies rely heavily on highly centralized steam turbines with fuel efficiency of only about 30%. Combined cycle gas turbines (CCGTs) can double efficiency with far lower emissions. CCGTs now supply a mere 3% of U.S. demand, but they account for 88% of planned power plants. However, the full benefit will not be realized if centralized gigawatt power plants are simply replaced with CCGTs, for which the optimum size is only about 100 megawatts. Energy in the form of natural gas is about three times cheaper to transport than electrical energy. Rather than focusing on a particular technology, however, the report calls for incentives to be built into deregulation that will encourage innovation in generation and distribution.

IMPCO Technologies, Inc. announced the development of an important automotive injector and pressure regulator technology, which will provide exceptional gaseous fuel control for fuel cell and internal combustion engines. The fuel metering is fully compatible for CNG, Hydrogen and other gaseous fuels. It can also be modified to handle Methanol. IMPCO's gaseous fuel injector beats all other competitors hands down and features low cost, long life and durability. A simple design to provide freedom from frictional wear and freedom from sticking allows for extreme durability. Designed to

achieve three (3) times life or 1.2 billion cycles while maintaining a lower price than current available technology makes the IMPCO Gaseous Fuel Injector the clear winner.

The IMPCO gaseous fuel injector is designed to work with natural gas, propane, alcohol fuels and is adaptable to hydrogen fuels with modification. Coupling proven electromagnetic technology with an innovative fuel metering design yields the first automotive type fuel injector capable of handling the high flow rate fuel delivery requirements of 300+ HP V8 engines. Sequential multi-point fuel injection systems for natural gas and/or propane engines require fuel pressure reduction from system storage pressure to a working level typical of automotive, gasoline based fuel systems. Previous systems were designed to operate at very low pressures and typically had excessive pressure loss, poor input pressure rejection, or both, resulting in poor vehicle performance.

Proton Energy Systems announced a breakthrough in the development of systems to generate high-pressure hydrogen that can significantly accelerate the creation of a hydrogen infrastructure for fuel cell vehicles. Proton has successfully demonstrated that its proprietary technology produces hydrogen directly at pressure exceeding 2000 psi from electricity and water without mechanical compression. This high-pressure hydrogen generation technology is based on an advanced Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) water electrolyzer design. This process can greatly simplify today's truck and compression based hydrogen delivery method and is less expensive than existing high pressure electrolyzers. Upon commercialization, Proton's high pressure electrolysis technology will enable on site production of high pressure, high purity hydrogen suitable for fuel cell vehicle refueling or industrial cylinder filling. As fuel cell markets develop for transportation and stationary power, Proton's high-pressure hydrogen production technology can provide a ready source of fuel cell grade hydrogen.

Hydrogen is an essential fuel to allow fuel cells to operate efficiently and with zero emissions. One of the factors constraining the emerging fuel cell market is the absence of a cost-effective means to deliver hydrogen to this fundamentally distributed market. Proton's advancement enables this need to be met with the existing water and electricity infrastructure.



## Executive Committee Report

By Gwen Wardwell

Chapter Chair

The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Rio Grande Chapter met at the Sevilleta Research Center on December 11 and 12, 1999. All members were present except Marianne Thaler, the Southern New Mexico Group representative. Jamie Newlin was present as the El Paso Group representative on December 11, 1999.

The first part of the meeting was devoted to motions made by the Chapter Conservation Chair on behalf of the Conservation Committee (ConsCom), all of which were passed. These included -

1. A motion to join Forest Guardians in filing an "intent to sue" on adverse effects of the National Flood Insurance Program, contingent on approval by Chapter and National legal officials.
2. A motion to make Wildlife issues a major Chapter campaign in addition to Sprawl and Water.

The Chair reported on the following ExCom approved appointments:

1. Jim Hannan to the ExCom, to replace Bryan Bird who resigned and moved to Florida.
2. Norma McCallan as Secretary, to replace Bryan Bird.
3. Helga Schimkat as Wildlife Co-Chair to replace Bryan Bird.

In March, 1999, the ExCom approved hiring a staff person. Although advertisements have been placed twice and one round of conference call interviews was conducted, no one has been hired because top candidates had accepted other positions. The position was structured as a Chapter/Regional position because the Chapter could not fully fund it. The sense of the ExCom was to move forward on hiring a full-time staff person, funded entirely by the Chapter using carry-over funds from 1999 in addition to 2000 funds.

The ExCom directed the Chair to investigate sponsoring cross-cultural training sessions, in collaboration with other groups, to be held in 2000.

The ExCom approved hiring Helga Schimkat as the Chapter lobbyist for the 2000 legislative session. Jim Hannon, Chapter Political Chair, and Gwen Wardwell, Chapter Chair, will organize an activist list by legislative district and designate issue contacts. Priority issues for this session will include water and wildlife issues, opposition to a road through the Petroglyphs, and campaign finance reform.

Barbara Johnson, Norma McCallan, and Cecily Vix were elected to the ExCom. Gwen Wardwell, Jennifer Johnson, and Blair Brown were re-elected as Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer, and Cecily Vix was elected as Secretary. David Bouquin resigned as Conservation Chair, and Jennifer Johnson was named to replace him.

# Wilderness

## Bisti Saved, Thanks to All of You!

By Martin Heinrich

Wilderness Issue Committee

The Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area in northwestern New Mexico has been the center of conflict for several years now. Regular readers of the Sierran know that the Speerex company has been pushing to either desecrate the wilderness with oil and gas wells or receive enormously inflated compensation not to drill for fossil fuels that most geologists believe don't even exist. This whole mess developed when the company was allowed to lease oil and gas rights for the area while the BLM was simultaneously evaluating the area for wilderness protection.

When the Speerex proposal was finally put before the public for comment, Sierra Club members and wilderness advocates from around the nation rallied in the defense of wilderness. Of the approximately 500 comments received at hearings and through the mail in excess of 99% objected to any plan that would allow oil and gas drilling in the wilderness area. This overwhelming support for the Bisti showed the BLM that the public would not allow the sacrifice of this unique resource. It also showed Speerex that they were in for the fight of their life if they proceeded along their current course!

Fortunately, Speerex reconsidered their options and returned to the negotiating table with the BLM. As a result a deal was struck where Speerex was compensated at a fair rate for their leases, rather than at the inflated level they had sought. Far more importantly, the deal protects the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area for future generations of Americans to enjoy.

A sincere "THANK YOU" goes to all the Sierra Club members who spoke out at hearings and wrote letters on behalf of the amazing Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area. Our success in saving the Bisti demonstrates what we can accomplish when we speak out together for wilderness.

## Wilderness Activists Rally for Forest Roadless Areas

By Martin Heinrich

Wilderness Issue Committee

Wilderness activists turned out in large numbers last month to the Albuquerque Convention Center for the first in a series of national hearings to submit public comment on the Clinton Administration plan to protect our remaining Forest Service roadless areas from fragmentation. President Clinton's plan is one of the most important administrative initiatives in decades for forested wildlands in New Mexico. It has the potential to protect over 2.5 million acres of roadless forests in New Mexico alone!

Places like the Peloncillos Mountains in New Mexico's bootheel, the Ryan Hill roadless area in the Magdalenas, Eagle Peak in the Gila, and roadless areas adjacent to the Pecos Wilderness will all be affected by this plan. As a result Sierra Club members, college activists, police, hunters, fishermen, the leadership of Republicans for Environmental Protection, a representative for the mayor of Albuquerque and many others attended the hearing to rally in support of forest roadless areas. With supporters of the plan donning Sierra Club hats that said "Save our Wild Forests", the hearing room was a sea of green. Only a handful of off road vehicle enthusiasts spoke against the plan and even they were forced to admit that new roads in our national forests are unnecessary. The comments favoring strong roadless area protections dominated the hearing at a ratio of about 9 to 1!

This hearing was not only a victory for protection of our forest wildlands, but it was testament to the growing strength of the wilderness movement in New Mexico. Thanks to all of you who attended.

## Arctic Quest Bike Tour

El Paso & Las Cruces

Members - Take Note!

By Alex Tapia

Film maker Jeff Barrie (along with film maker Alex Tapia driving the support vehicle) will be crossing the United States with a bike, advocating the wilderness protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Our route is planned but now we need help setting up the shows. If you are from these areas, or know someone from them, let me know ASAP so we can set up a show. (Itinerary below.)

The one-hour documentary Arctic Quest: Our Search For Truth, chronicles the adventures of five teenagers as they explore Alaska on their quest to learn about the controversial oil development planned for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This pristine wilderness area has been threatened by oil development for more than two decades and has spurred one of the hardest fought environmental battles in American history. The controversy is complicated further by the plight of the Gwich' Aoin people, whose subsistence lifestyle in the Arctic is threatened by the proposed development. The film objectively presents all sides of this debate but makes a convincing case for permanently protecting the land as wilderness.

This is how the basic Arctic Quest event takes place:

Film makers Jeff Barrie and Alex Tapia briefly introduce the film and the Arctic Quest tour.

The entire 56-minute film is shown. (shorter presentations can be arranged) Tapia and Barrie lead the discussion and a letter-writing activity (voluntary). Pens, paper, envelopes and addresses for Congress are provided. This activity has resulted in hundreds of letters written to Congress. Literature and informational brochures are available to interested audience members.

Note: This film and the tour are self-funded. During the event, Barrie and Tapia will encourage donations to support the tour.

If you would like more information or would like to help contact us at:

Alex: (513) 851-0243 Cincinnati

alexapia@shoutmail.com

Jeff: (310) 327-1187 Los Angeles

jeffreymb@shoutmail.com

Tour begins with a press conference at the Santa Monica Pier on 2/13, and ends with a press conference on Capitol Hill on 6/13.

See Arctic Itinerary on next page

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Protect Wilderness -- New Mexico's Natural Heritage



# Urban Planning

## Planning to Protect Community

Michael G. Smith

Conservation Committee Chair  
Pajarito Group

Communities nationwide are just beginning to confront the realities of suburban growth, over-development and sprawl. Media attention has focused on major cities, including Atlanta, Denver, Phoenix and Albuquerque, and their growth-related problems such as traffic congestion, air pollution, and increasing crime rates and the reduced ability of local governments to pay for services. Recently the focus has shifted to the causes of growth, including the congruence of unrelated federal, state and local policies that result in unplanned growth and taxpayer subsidization of urban development.

Large urban growth problems, and solutions, are not being lost on the residents of small communities. In fact, the war on sprawl will probably be won by the determined efforts of such citizens. Los Alamos County is an excellent case in point. In addition to the usual suite of quality of life issues, ecological and cultural factors are also being discussed. These issues include open space preservation, habitat protection for rare and endangered species, water and other natural resource conservation, and cultural artifact protection.

Los Alamos County is currently updating its comprehensive plan, an exercise that occurs every ten years. The update is supposed to represent the vision of the community for the future. The draft update, released several months ago, is slanted towards growth with little in the way of environmental protections. Housing developments have been proposed for Rendija Canyon and the horse stables on North Mesa. A highway has been proposed through Bayo Canyon from North Mesa to the White Rock Y. Neighborhood playgrounds, called tot lots, are slated for removal.

The draft plan also lacks responsible planning, and the Existing Conditions report lacks detail and, in many cases, is wrong. The draft does not include plans to protect open space, habitat or cultural artifacts, water is treated as if the supply can meet any demand of unlimited size (Los Alamos depends on an aquifer), and alternative transportation is proposed to be studied, not implemented.

The Pajarito Group, along with the Los Alamos Pathways Association (LAPA), have proposed major changes to the plan. Our proposal starts with the fact that accurate assessments of natural and cultural resources should be done before any planning occurs. The assessments should identify how much development can be supported while protecting and enhancing the integrity of core re-

sources. The proposal advocates many best land use, best environmental, best transportation and best housing practices, with land use being based on an open space and greenway wildlife corridor system. We also propose that the plan adopt measurable indicators to monitor progress, and that it create an Environmental Protection Commissioner and Commission within County Government.

Los Alamos County is an ecological transition zone between the Rio Grande Valley and the Jemez Mountains. The community sits atop the Pajarito Plateau, a solidified volcanic ash flow one million years old. Erosion and weathering have created many deep canyons that generally run west to east. The north-south aspect of the canyon walls combined with a large change in elevation has produced several ecological zones, from high desert typical of the Rio Grande valley to the sub-alpine of the Jemez Mountains. The canyons provide habitat for several rare, threatened or endangered species, including spotted owls, peregrine falcons, the Jemez Mountain salamander, and eagles. The canyons also provide habitat for mountain lions, bobcats, bears, elk, and many other species. In the future White Rock Canyon may be habitat for bighorn sheep.

The Draft Comprehensive Plan proposes development that could seriously disrupt the ecology of several canyons. To protect the canyons the Pajarito Group and LAPA have proposed that the plan create a large regional wilderness park called the Canyon Reserve System. We have also proposed the remediation and re-development of an abandoned waste water treatment facility on the rim of Pueblo Canyon into the Los Alamos Natural History Center. The center would be the focal point of the Canyon Reserve System, and would function as an ecological, educational and cultural center.

The Canyon Reserve and site for the Natural History Center were featured during the Los Alamos Tour de Sprawl, which was covered by the local newspaper. Sierra Club and LAPA members currently are developing site plans. Fundraising and political strategy are also being planned.

Communities can reduce sprawl and influence ecologically-friendly development. The keys are to understand the ecology of threatened lands, develop creative solutions that have public appeal, and work with the local media and other interested community groups to disseminate the goals and plans to a wider audience. The environmental community of Los Alamos is doing all of this to protect the gateway to the Jemez.

### Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee and Conservation Committee

#### Meeting Schedule -- 2000

March 18/19  
Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

June 10/11  
Location to be determined

September 9/10  
Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

December 9/10  
Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

*Members are always welcome!*

#### Artic Itinerary from previous page

\* indicates locations where we would like to do shows

ARIZONA 2/22 \*Yuma, AZ 2/23 \*Yuma, AZ 2/24 Dateland, AZ 2/25 Gila Bend, AZ 2/26 \*Phoenix, AZ 2/27 \*Phoenix 2/28 Casa Grande, AZ 2/29 Florence, AZ 3/1 \*Tucson, AZ (U. of AZ) 3/2 \*Tucson 3/3 \*Tucson 3/4 Benson, AZ 3/5 Bowie, AZ

NEW MEXICO 3/6 Lordsburg, NM 3/7 Deming, NM 3/8 \*Las Cruces, NM (NM St. U) 3/9 \*Las Cruces 3/10

TEXAS 3/11 \*El Paso, TX 3/12 Cornudas, TX 3/13 Pine Springs, TX 3/14 Orla, TX 3/15 Kermit, TX 3/16 \*Odessa, TX (U. TX of Permian Basin) 3/17 \*Odessa 3/18 \*Midland, TX (Permian Basin Pet. Mus.) 3/19 Sterling City, TX 3/20 \*San Angelo, TX 3/21 \*San Angelo 3/22 \*San Angelo 3/23 Eden, TX 3/24 Mason, TX 3/25 Fredericksburgh, TX 3/26 Boerne, TX 3/27 \*San Antonio, TX 3/28 \*San Antonio 3/29 \*San Antonio 3/30 \*Seguin, TX (TX Lutheran College) 3/31 \*San Marcos (TX St. U.) 4/1 \*Austin, TX 4/2 \*Austin 4/3 \*Austin 4/4 \*La Grange, TX (Kreische Brewery) 4/5 Altair, TX 4/6 Rosenberg, TX 4/7 \*Houston, TX 4/8 \*Houston 4/9 \*Houston 4/10 \*Houston 4/11 \*Galveston, TX (TX A&M) 4/12 High Island, TX (NWR) 4/13 \*Port Arthur, TX (Sabine NWR)  
EARTH DAY



# Water

## Environmentalists Seek Long-term Solutions To Regional Water Problems Or: Has The Last Nail Been Put In The Coffin for the River?

By Kevin Bixby

Out of crisis sometimes comes opportunity. Such is the case with our regional water situation.

In the quest to find a replacement for rapidly dwindling underground water supplies, we have an unprecedented opportunity to help the beleaguered Rio Grande -- a river greatly in need of ecological restoration -- while achieving a truly sustainable solution to our region's water problems.

The Sustainable Water Project is an initiative of the New Mexico/Texas Water Commission aimed at helping El Paso and other communities harness the river to meet future urban water needs.

The Project could be a boon to the river ecosystem or the final nail in its coffin, depending upon decisions the Commission must make in the near future. The Project affords many opportunities to help restore the river. To name just one, wetlands and native vegetation could be cost-effectively established at the same time that new diversions and treatment plants are built at the river. Environmentalists have proposed a package of environmental measures which -- if accepted by the Commission -- would ensure these opportunities were not lost. A recent *El Paso Times* article focused on the cost of our plan, but lacked details about its contents or why we think it is actually a bargain.

Our plan would not solve all the river's problems, but it would go a long way toward restoring the river. It includes a variety of measures aimed at recreating conditions that would be found along a healthier Rio Grande, such as cottonwood bosques and meanders. It also includes measures, such as the establishment of a watershed council, that would lay the foundation for a more comprehensive and sustained restoration effort long after the project is built. Finally, it proposes to meet the river's single greatest need by buying rights from willing sellers to a modest amount of water -- about 3 percent of the river's annual flow -- to leave in the river and keep it flowing year-round.

The estimated \$50 million price tag of our plan sounds high but equals less than 15 percent of total project construction costs. It should be noted that El Paso ratepayers will have plenty of help in paying for the Project. Much, if not most, of the cost is expected to be shouldered by other U.S. taxpayers courtesy of Congressional appropriations, with or without our proposals included.

Additionally, our plan would benefit the project by making it more attractive to certain funding sources, such as EPA, BECC and NADBANK, that are on the short list of those likely to be approached by the Com-

mission. It would also open up whole new funding sources. We have identified literally millions of dollars that are available from a variety of governmental and private sources for the kinds of river restoration measures we are proposing.

Congress itself can be quite generous when it comes to environmental restoration projects. The Everglades restoration initiative received \$45 million this year, and comparable amounts have been appropriated for similar efforts, such as the San Francisco Bay Delta. We are committed to helping the Commission wring every available dollar from all of these funding sources.

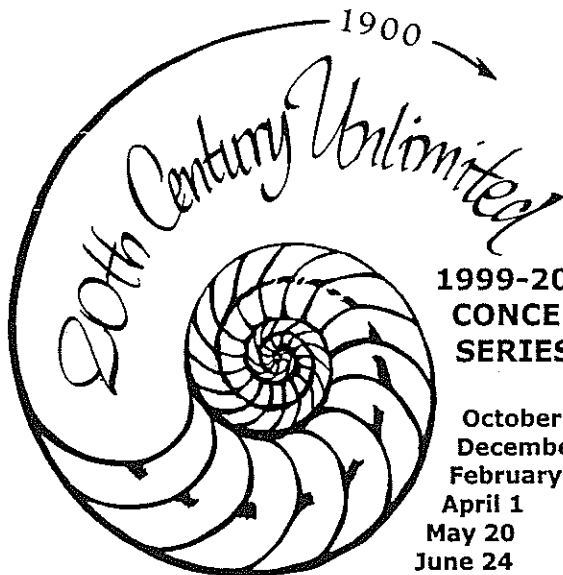
Of all the possible water allocation scenarios in our future, stealing the last drop from the river in a futile effort to accommodate endless growth is surely the wrong choice. Sustainability cannot be achieved by ignoring the needs of the very ecosystem upon which our water future depends. Our plan would ensure the Sustainable Water Project lives up to its name and meets the long-term

needs of all regional water users, including the Rio Grande.

[Kevin Bixby is executive director of the Las Cruces-based Southwest Environmental Center. Other groups involved in developing the proposal are World Wildlife Fund, Trans-Pecos Audubon Society, Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Basin Coalition, Rio Grande Restoration, and Texas Center for Policy Studies. For current information, call SWEC at 522-5552.]

[Editor's notes: This article was originally presented for publication in the *El Paso Times* prior to the December meeting of the New Mexico/Texas Water Commission. It was thought that they would at least consider negotiating the 15% of the total project construction costs towards keeping the river alive, however they only approved 2%, and chastised the environmentalists for "not raising the money" to keep the river alive. It looks like river restoration tactics may need to change, and like the Rio Grande just took a major blow.]

### FOURTH GREAT SEASON



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# Water & Sprawl

## Urban Planners Should Dive In

By John Buchser  
Water Issues Chair

The availability of water is essential to urban growth. The Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments' proposed Focus 2050 regional growth plan has totally missed the boat. No substantive mention is made of the limits that water availability puts on urban growth.

A key element of a healthy community is a healthy environment in which we desire to live. We are fortunate to have both a flowing river and many citizens who are interested in keeping the Rio Grande and the surrounding Bosque alive. The river and the

farms up and down to the valley are a wonderful blessing.

If we desire to bring good-paying jobs to the metro area, essential services such as water need to be provided to both homes and businesses. This growth should not be to the detriment of our river and our farms. We should expect our planners to understand this. Our surface water can be used in the good times, the groundwater during the dry times, but without planning, our river will die.

The Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments' plan should carefully examine and consider how to get our citizens, the City, and the County to work with the numerous

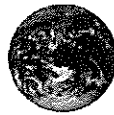
agencies responsible for different aspects of water management. Over the last several years, it has been wonderful to see many different organizations coming together and planning for the future of the river. The urban planners need to be involved too.

"Healthy communities and a healthy environment aren't expressly considered in our great legal system. And so it is up to us to determine what shall become of them." Let us follow Steve Harris' advice.

[This article was originally published in the letters to the editor of the *Albuquerque Journal*. Reprinted with author's permission.]



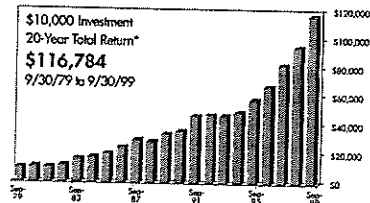
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**Social Commitment:** The Fund managers seek out banks and institutions that have good environmental records and that are community-based providers of services.

\*Figures include reinvested dividends, capital gains distributions, and changes in principal value and represent past performance, which is no guarantee of future results. For more complete information, including charges and expenses, please call 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 top 10% of the funds in a category receive 5 stars; the next 22.5% receive 4 stars. Pax World Fund was rated among 3,210, 2,010, and 751 Domestic Equity Funds for the 3-year, 5-year, and 10-year periods, respectively.

## Group Directory

### Pajarito Group of the Sierran Club

#### Executive Committee

Abe Jacobson, Chair	672-3579
Miriam Oudejeans, Vice-Chair	672-0414
Bev Hartline	
Fred Hartline	
Carole Jacobson	672-9579
Michael Smith	662-2380
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 Mountain Issues	
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

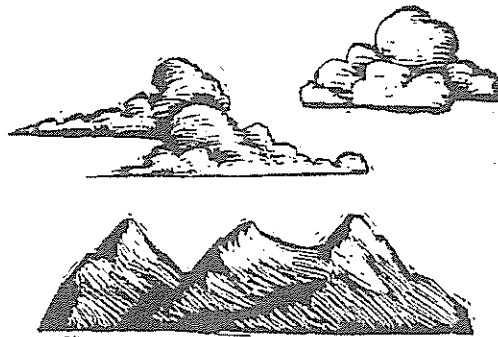
## General Meetings

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

**Wednesday, January 5, 2000** Noted local mountaineer Mario Schillaci will give a slide show on last summer's trip to the Cordillera Blanca of Peru.

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



## Outings

**January 29, Cabezon Peak Wilderness Study Area.** Cabezon is located west off Highway 44, northwest of San Ysidro. This area is best visited in the dry season, but given New Mexico's seasons it is difficult to know when which one will be dry. Therefore, we will attempt a "dry-winter" trip. Meet on New Mexico 279 at its junction with Highway 44 about 20 miles northwest of San Ysidro (a green highway sign labeled "San Luis" and "Cabezon" marks the turnoff) at 10AM. If we make it to the peak we will attempt to do the easy/beginners climb to the 2,000' peak. The rock is loose so sturdy footwear and helmet or hard hat are recommended. Also, bring lunch, liquids, and be prepared for the ever changing New Mexico weather. Call the leader first to be sure the trip isn't cancelled. Jennifer Johnson (505) 289-9183.



## Group Directory

207 San Pedro NE  
Albuquerque NM 87108

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

### 1999 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<b>Cecily Vix</b>	855-9140	Cecvix@aol.com
<b>Blair Brown</b> <i>Secretary</i>	265-3231	bblairb@aol.com
<b>Martin Heinrich</b> <i>Vice-chair</i>	232-7151	mtheinrich@aol.com
<b>Petra Hegger</b>	890-0331	pfmh@laughingdesert.com
<b>Jeremy Kruger</b> <i>Chair</i>	242-8022	kruger7@aol.com
<b>Ed Sullivan</b>	259-5966	nmwa@earthlink.net
<b>Mike Norte</b>	844-0935	norte@earthlink.net
<b>Gary Simpson</b> <i>Treasurer</i>	898-6249	garyksimpson@juno.com
<b>David Ther</b>	260-1553	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

<b>Petra Hegger</b> <i>Administrative Asst.</i>	890-0331	pfmh@laughingdesert.com
<b>Blair Brown</b> <i>Information Technology</i>	265-3231	bblairb@aol.com
<b>David Ther</b> <i>Outings</i>	260-1553	grelbik@worldnet.att.net

### CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN TEAM LEADERS

<b>Mike Norte</b> <i>Conservation Chair</i>	844-0935	norte@earthlink.net
<b>East Mountain</b>	OPEN	
<b>Susan Gorman</b> <i>Sustainable Albuquerque</i>	265-3231	bblairb@aol.com
<b>Barbara Leonard</b> <i>Western New Mexico</i>	862-7915	
<b>Martin Heinrich</b> <i>Wilderness/Wildlife</i>	232-7151	mtheinrich@aol.com



## OUTINGS

**January 16: White Mesa Hike.** Meet at 9:00 am at Bank of America, San Mateo & Academy. Hike will be ~7 miles RT through badlands near San Ysidro. Travertine springs, nice hogbacks and cave-like formations to explore. A little scrambling. Bring hiking shoes, water, lunch. Dress for weather. Elevation: ~800 ft., not all at once. Driving distance: 120 miles round trip. Weather may cause plans to change, so contact Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com) for last-minute info.

**February 19: Sandstone Bluffs.** Meet at 8:30 am at Smiths (Carlisle and Menaul). Hike will be ~6 miles RT along an arch-filled sandstone bluff in Malpais National Monument. Leader may change hike if he finds something more interesting or weather is bad. Call/email the week prior for changes. Bring hiking shoes, water, lunch. Dress for weather. Elevation: ~500 ft. Driving distance: ~180 miles round trip. Contact: Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com).

### Jan. 9, 23 and Feb. 6, 20: Sunday Desert Hikes

Let's explore some of the beautiful desert places within a day's drive from Albuquerque. Most, if not all, outings will be exploratory in nature and a trail will be a rare sight. The walking distance will vary between 5 and 7 miles and elevation change will be less than 1000'. Driving will vary from 20 to 120 miles one-way. Smiths at Carlisle and Menaul will be the meeting place and the meeting time will vary from 8:30AM to 10:00AM, so be sure to call leader by previous night for meeting time. Tom Petencin 255-1497 (tompeten@juno.com)

### Joint with Outdoor Adventures For Singles



## CALENDAR

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

<b>Jan. 10</b>	Group Excom Meeting, 7:00PM
<b>Jan. 17</b>	General Membership Meeting, 7:30PM (see below)
<b>Feb. 14</b>	Group Excom Meeting, 7:00PM
<b>Feb. 21</b>	General Membership Meeting, 7:30PM (program TBA, call 265-5506 for info)

## New ExCom Members

As of last month, we are pleased to add two new faces to our Group ExCom. **Cecily Vix** and **Edward Sullivan** will be adding their energy and experience to help us work for protection of all New Mexico's public lands & rivers, and for a healthy and sustainable environment. Along with **Blair Brown**, who will be returning for another term, they will be welcomed gladly—and put to work almost immediately!! (Sorry, guys.)

Also a thank-you to Jon Maaske, who is leaving us after serving on the ExCom since 1998, and to Richard Barish, long-time ExCom-er, who will be lending his considerable talents and experience to working on fair-trade and other issues. They'll be missed, and we wish them well!

### Baca Ranch Slideshow & Presentation

Learn everything there is to know about the forthcoming public acquisition of the Baca Ranch. Enjoy unique slides of the ranch and find out how you can help protect it. Call Sierra Club (265-5506) or the National Parks and Conservation Association (247-1221) for more info.

January 17, 7:30pm – UNM Law School, Rm. 2403

## Conference on Climate Change:

### Volunteers Needed!

Albuquerque will be the location for a statewide conference on climate change in September 2000. The conference is sponsored by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA and the New Mexico Conference of Churches (NMCC).

This conference will offer an opportunity for people from many diverse organizations to share information and to initiate broad conversations and dialogue about the possible impacts of climate change and how we can take steps to prevent it!

The Conference Planning Committee is looking for interested people representing community organizations to join them. They are also seeking qualified conference speakers from interested organizations including environmental organizations. If you'd like to offer your assistance, call Will Hoffman, NMCC Eco-Justice Working Group, TEL: 505-761-8174, [whoffman@cabq.gov](mailto:whoffman@cabq.gov).



### Rio Grande Nature Center State Park presents:

#### **A Bosque Symposium: Disturbance Ecology of the Rio Grande Bosque**

Disturbance ecology is a system of events that disrupt and alter nature, reshaping wild populations and their surroundings.

**Thursday, January 13, 7:00 PM** - Bill DeBuys talks about disturbance ecology of the Rio Grande Bosque.

**Saturday, January 15, 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM** - Jane Aubele, Lisa Ellis, Nancy Umbreit, Cliff Crawford talk about specific topics in disturbance ecology of the Bosque.

2:30 PM - Showing of "Pulsing the Bosque", a video.

For more information and to make reservations, call 344-7240.

One day's exposure to mountains is better than cartloads of books. See how willingly Nature poses herself upon photographers' plates. No earthly chemicals are so sensitive as those of the human soul.

I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in.

--John Muir



## **Tour de Sprawl Hits the Road**

On Saturday Dec. 4 the Central Group sponsored our very own **Tour de Sprawl**, in conjunction with the publication of the Rio Grande Chapter's **Sprawl Costs/Sprawl Solutions for New Mexico and El Paso.**

Ned Farquhar of 1000 Friends of New Mexico was our tour guide and master-of-ceremonies as we visited sites in and around Albuquerque, representing both the kind of growth we would like to see--infill, reclaimed lots/buildings in the Downtown area and along Central, pedestrian and transit-oriented development--and the kind we have all too much of--strip malls along Menaul, older neighborhoods impacted by too much traffic, 10-lane intersections, deserts of concrete. The sensation of moving from a more human-scale environment to one built to be seen from a speeding automobile was almost palpable; the sense of physical & psychological distance and disengagement was obvious. Together with Ned's insightful commentary, it made for an eye-opening experience for everyone.

Joining us were Julie Hicks, representing Mayor Jim Baca; John Wertheim & Bob Perls, candidates for the First Congressional District seat; and other community activists and interested folks. We hope that they too gained some insight into what makes a community or neighborhood viable, affordable and safe, and that they will carry that vision into their own work & policies.

Copies of the report will be available to the public for \$10. There is a wealth of information contained in articles, resource lists & tables. To get a copy please call the office at 265-5506.

### Some telling statistics: \*

Amount of acreage lost, every hour of every day, of America's highest quality farmlands to subdivisions, shopping centers, strip malls and roadways (46)

Percent less land that compact growth consumes versus sprawl (40)

Percent increase in the poverty rate in cities from 1970 to 1990 (50)

Number of Americans killed annually from smog and chronic air pollution (15,000)

Rank of New Mexico among fastest-growing states over the next 20 years (2)

Rank of New Mexico among states in poverty rate (1)

Annual capital investment in public transportation in the US, in billions (10)

Annual spending on advertising of cars in the US, in billions (10)

\*from **Sprawl Costs/Sprawl Solutions**

# SANTA FE GROUP MEETINGS IN THE YEAR 2000

## THE RIO GRANDE SILVERY MINNOW CONTROVERSY

Tuesday, January 18, 7 PM

The Sierra Club and the Audubon Society will jointly host a panel discussion on the silvery minnow, its need for protection and the impact of this protection on the use of the Rio Grande River. Panelists include:

- Dennis Coleman - Biologist, US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Sterling Grogan - Middle Rio Grande Conservancy Dist.
- Steve Harris - Rio Grande Restoration

Lawsuits or threats of lawsuits have been raised on this issue by such diverse groups as the Forest Guardians, the Farm Bureau and the City of Albuquerque. Is there a solution? Who is competing for the water? Does the silvery minnow have rights that exceed those of all other users? Come, listen and express your point of view.

The moderator, Bernie Foy, President of the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society, will help frame the debate. It is our hope that in the end you will have a deeper understanding of this critical issue.



## MEXICAN SPOTTED OWLS & NORTHERN GOSHAWKS

Tuesday, February 15, 7 PM

Providing improved habitat for Mexican spotted owls and northern goshawks is the primary emphasis of the current standards and guidelines for planning and managing our national forests in the Southwest Region.

Present for an interactive panel discussion on the influence of Mexican spotted owls and northern goshawks on national forest management will be Art Morrison and Leon Fisher, from the US Forest Service Region 3, Santa Fe National Forest; Regis Cassidy from the Santa Fe National Forest; and David Henderson from the National Audubon Society.

All of these people were involved in developing these guidelines and will explain the science and rationale for the policies.

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

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

## Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club

621 Old Santa Fe Trail · Suite 10 · Plaza Desira · Santa Fe · New Mexico · 87501  
505 · 983-2703 · [www.santafescene.com](http://www.santafescene.com)

## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Doug Fraser

Another good year!

See below for the water "fronts" efforts of John Buchser.

Cliff Larsen is working diligently on mining issues. Stay tuned for what the EPA does with possible Superfund designation of the MolyCorp mine outside the village of Questa.

The Sprawl report for the chapter was issued on December 4<sup>th</sup>, primarily through the efforts of local group members. Thanks to Ken Hughes, Ed Morano and Barbara Johnson.

The new Fifth Edition of *Day Hikes in The Santa Fe Area* will be introduced at the January 2000 meeting and, as a bonus, will be available to members at the meeting for \$12. This edition has updated all existing hikes and added eight new ones. It will retail for \$14.95. Look for a forthcoming announcement for a book signing at a local bookstore. Thanks to Lionel Soracco, Norma McCallan and all of the book committee for a great effort.

For next year, we will be emphasizing wildlife — alongside of our existing efforts on water and sprawl.

Finally, on Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, we had a festive and well attended Christmas party at Ken Hughes' and Ellen Kemper's home at the Commons on West Alameda.

Thanks to everyone for your help this past year, particularly the Santa Fe Group Executive Committee. Here's wishing you a happy new year and glorious new millennium!



## DO WE LIVE IN A DESERT?

Beginning Tuesday, January 11, 2000

Our water in the Southwest is rather limited. Along the Middle Rio Grande, we use all the "wet water," but many planners have yet to recognize this. The first thing that is likely to happen is that our rivers will dry up, and the next is that cities will steal all the water from the farmers.

Obviously, strategies need to be developed to save our rivers and farms. Since Tuesdays are already *Santa Fe Group Sierra Club meeting* mania, Linda and I are hosting a standing second Tuesday of the month pot-luck water meeting beginning Tuesday, January 11, 2000, at our house, 606 Alto Street (corner of Closson and Alto, about 5 blocks from the Santa Fe Plaza). It starts at 6:30 and goes till 9ish. Bring something to munch on and discuss water strategies with other concerned citizens!

## CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Cliff Larsen

On January 18, 2000, we will sponsor a joint presentation with the Audubon Society focusing on the controversy surrounding efforts to protect the endangered silvery minnow. The conflict is exacerbated by the lack of an in-stream flow law in New Mexico (the only Western state that refuses to recognize that a stream has the right to have water in it). Three knowledgeable individuals will participate in what should be a spirited discussion.

On February 23, 2000, in conjunction with the Quivira Coalition, "An Evening with Sid Goodloe" will be presented. One of the issues of which you should be aware is a growing hostility toward allowing grazing on public land. I think of this as a NIYBY issue ("not in your backyard"). The idea seems to be that, if you don't own a cow, nobody should own a cow. I understand second-hand smoke, but second-hand mooing seems like a stretch. In any case, Sid will be talking about some of those issues, as well as his efforts to promote conservation easements that protect land from population sprawl. It should be an interesting evening.

We are still looking for some more volunteer help. The most pressing need is in publicity. If you have some experience or interest in advertising or public relations, give me a call (466-2128). Earth Day 2000 is April 22. We could use some help.

The Conservation Committee meets at 7 PM on the fourth Tuesday of the month at our headquarters on Old Santa Fe Trail. It is a good chance for all members to learn about our active projects.

## AN EVENING WITH SID GOODLOE, RANCHER

Wednesday, February 23, 7 to 9 PM  
Unitarian Church

Open space protection . . . wildlife habitat restoration . . . ecologically sensitive ranch management . . . conservation easements . . . Sid has done it all.

Sid's Carrizo Valley Ranch, located near Capitan, New Mexico, has been a model of progressive ranch management and an inspiration to thousands since he began operating it back in the 1960s. Sid was one of the first ranchers in the United States to demonstrate that ecologically-sensitive management and robust economics can coexist.

The missing piece of the puzzle, however, was a guarantee of long-term protection. To remedy this, Sid established the Southern Rockies Agricultural Land Trust in 1998 to protect farm and ranch land in perpetuity through the use of conservation easements.

Come learn from one of the most charismatic speakers in the state how good land stewardship and land trusts help protect the environment.

Co-sponsored by the Quivira Coalition.

Courtney White (982-5502)



## SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

Sat Sun January 2000 Ready or not, Y2K is here!!

- 1 Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Moderate Hike up Rio en Medio Trail to the waterfalls. Dogs okay. Leave 10 AM. Alternative hike if weather/snow prohibits.
- 8 Bob McKee (672-3426) Moderate Snowshoe Trek to Ghost Hotel (near Glorieta Baptist Center). Leave 9 AM. Alternative hike if insufficient snow.
- 9 Victor Atyas (438-9434) Easy Hike in the Cerrillos Hills, where open space advocates hope to establish a 40,000 acre park. Leave from Walgreens in Villa Linda Mall at 9:15 AM.
- 15 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Moderate Cross Country Ski Trek. Leave 8 AM. Call for destination and further information.
- 16 Norma McCallan (471-0005) Easy Hike Frey Canyon and ruins, Bandelier National Monument. Leave Santa Fe office 9 AM or meet at main Bandelier turnoff on Route 4 beyond White Rock at 10 AM.
- 22 Gordon Spencer (672-3707) Cross Country Ski Workshop for skiers with limited experience who want to improve their techniques, including downhill, speed control and confidence in backcountry touring. Call by January 20 for reservations. Time permitting, lessons will be followed by a short ski tour.
- 23 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Moderate Hike to the Santa Fe River Canyon. Petroglyphs likely. Leave 8:30 AM.
- 29 Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) Easy Hike along Santa Fe Rail Trail. Meet at the intersection of Old Las Vegas Hwy and 9 Mile Road/Route 60. (From town, take Old Pecos Trail to Old Las Vegas Hwy, turn left - 9 Mile is the 3rd road coming into the highway from the right.) Leave 9 AM. No hike if there is a lot of snow!!
- 30 Phil Somervell (473-4797) Strenuous Snowshoe Trek up Ravens Ridge to Deception Peak. Must call for reservations.

Sat Sun February 2000

- 5 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Moderate X-Country Ski Trip or Hike (depending on snow) Dogs allowed on hike, but not ski trip. Leave 8 AM.
- 6 Norma McCallan (471-0005) Moderate Hike from Galisteo Dam to Waldo and back. Dogs allowed. Leave 9 AM.
- 12 Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Moderate Hike to Window Rock. 8 miles RT, 1000' elevation gain. Dogs allowed. Leave 8:30 AM.
- 13 Victor Atyas (438-9434) Easy Hike on Frey Trail (Bandelier). Leave 9 AM.
- 19 Bob McKee (672-3426) Moderate Hike on DOE land south of White Rock. Carpool from Santa Fe at 8 AM. Meet leader at Smith's Supermarket in White Rock at 9 AM.
- 20 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Moderate/Strenuous Hike from Diablo Canyon to Sagebrush Flats and rim of White Rock Canyon. 9 miles RT, 900' elevation gain. Mostly off-trail, some rough terrain. Leave 8 AM.
- 26 Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla (982-9570) Easy Hike on Rail Trail. Wear hiking boots. Meet at Sam's Club on Rodeo Road, at far rear of parking lot. Leave 9 AM.  
No hike if there is a lot of snow!
- 27 Jeff Jones (466-2389) Easy Hike to mesa top near Los Alamos. Kids welcome. Leave 9:30 AM.
- 27 Stephen Markowitz (983-2829) Moderate Hike to Eagle Traps (Bandelier). 7 miles RT, 1100' elevation gain. Some off-trail hiking. Leave 8:30 AM.

How can we run  
out of water,  
the Earth is  
covered with it!



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

Most especially call the leader for X-country ski or snowshoe outings, not only to find out about snow conditions, but to be sure that you have the proper equipment and conditioning.

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.

**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.



VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY



Remember the article titled "Simplify Your Life" (September-October Rio Grande Sierran)? The Northwest Earth Institute has developed a discussion course called "Voluntary Simplicity," which can be taken by a group of 6 to 12 in your home, workplace, church, or other setting for seven sessions. Each participant pays only \$15 for the course book. To find out more about how to reduce the complexity of your life, call Judy Fitzgerald (820-1462).

### ♦ ♦ SANTA FE GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ♦ ♦

Chair — Doug Fraser \* 474-7615 / 662-4104 fax  
Vice-Chair — Barbara Johnson \* 466-4935  
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Soracco \* 983-6715  
  
Conservation — Cliff Larsen \*, Mining 466-2128  
Water-John Buchser 820-0201  
National Parks-Courtney White \* 982-5502  
Rangelands-Roger Peterson 983-7559  
Sustainability-Barbara Johnson \* 466-4935  
SF National Forest-Greg Pollak 988-7650  
Carson Nat'l Forest-George Grossman 982-1024  
Activist Outings-Norma McCallan \* 471-0005

Newsletter/Publicity — Kay Carlson 982-3926  
Phone Tree — Jean Winterfelt 989-9224  
Chapter Rep — Doug Fraser \* 474-7615  
Outings — Norbert Sperlich 983-1962  
— Norma McCallan \* 471-0005  
Political Committee—Susan Martin \* 988-5206  
Membership — George Grossman \* 982-1024  
Eleanor Eisenmenger \* 820-6401  
Gwen Wardwell \* 438-3060

\* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

### GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Conservation Committee meets:  
Tuesday, January 25, 7 PM  
Tuesday, February 22, 7 PM  
Group Executive Committee meets:  
Tuesday, January 4, 7 PM  
Tuesday, February 1, 7 PM  
Water Pot-Luck (John Buchser's house)  
Tuesday, January 11, 6:30 PM  
Tuesday, February 8, 6:30 PM  
Tuesday, March 14, 6:30 PM

Santa Fe Group News

## 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

Jan. 8, Saturday	Day Hike or Cross Country Skiing weekend in Cloudcroft--depending on snow available. Call Barbara 522-1576.
Jan. 22, Saturday	Cooke's Peak north of Deming. Day hike rated strenuous. Call Barbara 522-1576.
Jan. 29, Saturday	Bishop's Cap in the Organ Mountains. Day hike; call Ron for details, 522-4527.

Executive Committee meetings are typically the first Wednesday of the month--all members are welcome to attend. Call Cheryll at 524-4861 for time and place.

## CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

Outings leaders are hoping for snow by January or February which would allow for some X-Country Skiing outings; either day and overnight trips. If you are interested, please contact Barbara Coon at 522-1576 or Ron Gordon at 522-4527 for updated information. Everyone and all levels welcome!

**SPECIAL PROGRAM** Wednesday, February 16

## NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS DON'T MISS THIS ONE!!

7:30 p.m., Village at Northrise, 2880 North Roadrunner Parkway

You are invited to the unveiling of the new Multi-media Slide show presentation put on by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. The vast Chihuahuan Desert, diverse Sky Islands, and the ancient badlands of New Mexico come alive on the screen as Edward Sullivan and Martin Heinrich discuss the new effort to protect Wilderness areas throughout New Mexico. The show features images by photographer Tom Till and others, and a professional soundtrack with Stewart Udall, Dave Foreman, Bill DeBuys and many other. Call 524-4861 for more information.

## Tour De Sprawl Las Cruces Style

A 9 a.m. wake up call brought together a small band of Las Cruces seeking understanding of the urban sprawl which affects our community. Six individuals, led by Dr. Robert Czerniak of NMSU and reported on by "Sun News" staff Karen Va Splaun, toured the local environs in search of appropriate and inappropriate development. We found both.

Our tour started at Old Mesilla plaza with an overview by Dr. Czerniak of development in the area. Much of our discussion was enlightened by experts Dr. Czerniak and Peggy Shinn, a local realtor knowledgeable in local development issues. Mesilla illustrates the quasi-successful attempt to guide growth at the periphery by regulating lot size to five acres resulting in the development of the "gentleman farmer" with his million dollar set among the pecan trees. The effect of this style of sprawl may be to hasten the departure of commercially viable agriculture in the Mesilla valley.

The tour also carried us to the east side of Las Cruces where we explored the ambiance of the "faculty ghetto" south of the NMSU golf course to sprawl north of U.S. Highway 70 beyond L. Golinas. In some places suburban development has resulted in very attractive upscale residences nestled among the desert arroyos. Yet lacking parks, shops, and neighborhood schools, they are essentially creative of the automobile without a recognizable social community.

In other spots the less financially secure have created their scaled down versions of suburbia with their quarter acre lots and mobile homes. This is opposite in the sprawl that is leaping up to the foothills of the Organ and San Andres Mountains. Will this eventually enclose the Lyndon Johnson Test Facility, which is presently six miles removed from the development along U.S. 70? Good news was found along Telshor Drive where Dr. Czerniak complemented the in-filling that took place after the initial development. What this represents a positive example of development it seems not to be reflective of the city at large. Those of us who went on the Tour De Sprawl concluded our experience with a desire to work further on this problem. While six is not an impressive I would say as Flick did in the animated Disney movie A Bug's Life, "See this stone, pretend it's a seed...."

## ICO Ends Successful Year With \$500 Donation From Bicycle Club

by Mary Lou Parker

The El Paso Bicycle Club generously gave \$500 to the Inner City Outings (ICO) El Paso group of the Sierra Club. The money was part of the proceeds from the club's annual Chife Pepper Challenge century (100 miles) event. The bicycle club has been donating money, expertise, and storage space to ICO for three years. Richard Rheder, ICO event coordinator, noted that the bicycle club has been a "wonderful resource to help underprivileged youths experience the outdoors in a safe manner." He added that bicycling is a "non-polluting method of transportation as well as a fun and safe form of recreation."

This past year ICO has been giving free helmets to all participants on its bicycle rides. The helmets came through a program from the Texas Department of Transportation, which was facilitated by bicycle club members, notably Wyona Turner. Another star volunteer, Ed MacBeth, donates both time and training to beginning bicyclists. MacBeth is a certified instructor with the League of American Bicyclists and also a member of the bicycle club.

Most participants in ICO events in 1999 were at-risk youths from Life Management Center (led by Rheder) and Magoffin Middle School (led by Mary Lou Parker) and zoo youth volunteers with the El Paso Zoo (led by Dave Zucconi). One fun activity that combined all three groups was learning how to climb boulders (without ropes) at Hueco Tanks State Park. Although the youths did well, certain adult volunteers who will remain anonymous rediscovered a fear of heights.

Besides bouldering and bicycling, youths climbed all over the Franklin Mountains by El Paso and twice traipsed to the highest point in Texas - Guadalupe Peak in Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The last event for the year was cutting Christmas trees in the Sacramento Mountains in Cloudcroft, NM. As Ted Mertig, ICO chair, commented, "It's really a thrill for El Paso children, who live in a desert environment, to find snow and tall trees. There's always a good snowball fight."

## Outings (Area Code 915)

### Jan 1: New Millennium Day Hike to Cottonwood Springs

Place: Franklin Mtns State Park  
Class: Easy  
Approximate length: 2 miles  
Elevation gain: 500 feet  
Leader: Liz Walsh: 747-5421 (W)

### Jan 8 and 16: Rio Bosque Tours

Place: Lower Valley  
Class: Easy  
Approximate length: 2 miles  
Elevation gain: none  
Leader: John Sproul: 747-8663 (W)

### Jan 8-9: Big Hatchet Peak Car Camp and Day Hike

Place: New Mexico's southwest boot heel  
Class: Easy - strenuous  
Approximate length: 0-10 miles  
Elevation gain: 0-3,000 feet  
Leader: John Walton: 833-8448 (H) or 747-5057 (W)  
Drive to a beautiful camp at Mescal Canyon just below the limestone cliffs and hanging valleys of Big Hatchet. Saturday and Sunday explore the seldom-visited forested areas, minor peaks, and caves on the north side of the peak. Optionally hike to the top of the peak from the north side. This is a New Mexico state game refuge with no hunting allowed. Moderately high clearance vehicles (or two-mile hike) needed to reach camp spot. Participants must bring all water.

### Jan 15-17: Big Bend Ranch Service Trip and Car Camp

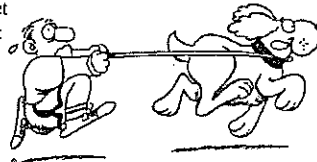
Place: Big Bend Ranch State Park  
Class: Moderate - Strenuous  
Leader: Gary Williams: 593-3624 (H)  
The job is to remove a large dead cottonwood tree that's laying across the trail in the upper part of the park. We'll camp near the work site. Big Bend Ranch State Park is northeast of Presidio, Texas and due west of Big Bend National Park.

### Jan 22-23: Mount Riley Car Camp & Hike

Place: Potrillo Mountains, NM  
Class: Easy  
Leaders: Betty and Weldon Fisbeck: 581-0174  
We will leave from the West side of El Paso at 1:00 PM on Saturday afternoon for our approximate 40 mile drive to our campsite. We will camp on the playa which in former times was an Indian campground. We will spend a leisurely afternoon at the campsite and enjoy the desert night around a nice campfire (assuming we can gather enough wood). We will return to El Paso sometime around noon Sunday. Limit 20 people: reservations required.

### Jan 30: Doggie Hike

Place: Hondo Pass Area  
Class: Easy  
Approximate length: 3 miles  
Elevation gain: 500 feet  
Leader: Laurence Gibson: 594-7342 (H)



### Feb 5-6: Middle Fork of the Gila Winter Backpack

Place: Gila National Forest  
Class: Moderate  
Approximate length: 1 mile  
Elevation gain: 100 feet  
Leader: Rollin Wickenden: 532-9645 (leave message)  
Come enjoy the beauty and solitude of the Gila in winter. We will depart El Paso early Saturday morning and drive to our trailhead near the Gila Visitor Center. We'll hike Trail 157 up the Middle Fork of the Gila River to our campsite in the vicinity of some riverside hot springs. The hike involves two river crossings in each direction. Participants should be experienced backpackers, well prepared for winter weather and below-freezing temperatures. Bring a towel to dry off after the river crossings, and optional bathing in the hot springs.

### Mission Possible

The League of Women Voters 4th Annual Paso Del Norte Mission Possible Environmental Conference will take place on Jan 22 at the Tomás Rivera Conference Center at UTEP. Its goal is to heighten environmental awareness, bring recognition for environmental efforts and achievements in our Paso del Norte region, and to encourage further efforts to protect our environment.

To meet this goal, it will once again honor businesses, organizations, government, educators, and individuals who have implemented programs with a positive impact on our land, air, and water - affecting our health and quality of life.

Preceding the conference, an Environmental Fair for children will be held on Friday, January 21 to honor the winners of a poster contest open to local students in grades K-8. Posters will demonstrate the relationship of environment and health. Cash prizes will be awarded to the winners. The children's fair will also be held at UTEP's Tomás Rivera Conference Center.

Info: Inga Groff, 755-2957.

The Lorax - El Paso Group

## Outings Notes

By Norma McCallan

### Outings Chair

Winter has definitely arrived, thermometer down to the single digits, though little snow has fallen. A good time to get out of the cold and check out the southern end of our Chapter, especially the BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's), so little known and each so unique. Below are listed some good winter outings, guaranteed to keep you from turning into a couch potato. Be sure to call leader for latest plans and appropriate meeting place. Area codes 505, except as noted.

**Fri-Sun/Jan 7-9 Potrillo Mountains Wilderness Inventory Weekend.** Join the NM Wilderness Alliance field work in this WSA just west of Las Cruces. Camp out two nights, explore and inventory two days. Call Edward Sullivan 255-5966, ext. 106 for details.

**Sat/Sun Jan 8/9 Big Hatchets WSA.** Join John Walton 915-833-8448 for a car camp and easy to strenuous day hiking in this remote desert mountain terrain in the boot heel of NM.

**Sat-Mon/Jan 15-17 Rancheritos Service Trip, Big Bend State Park.** Gary Williams 915-593-3624. Moderate to strenuous hiking.

**Sat Jan 22 Cooke's Peak WSA.** Barbara Coon 522-1576. Strenuous hike the easy way up this prominent peak north of Deming.

**Sat/Sun Jan 22/23 Mount Riley, Potrillo Mountains WSA.** Weldon and Betty Fisbeck 915-581-0174. Car camp and easy to moderate day hikes.

**Sat Jan 29 Cabezon Peak WSA.** Jennifer Johnson 289-9183. A dry winter trip to this prominent landmark northwest of San Ysidro, and attempt at the easy/beginners climb up the 2000' peak. Loose rock and scrambling.

**Sat Jan 29 Bishop's Cap** (southern end of Organ Mountains). Ron Gordon 522 4527. Moderate hike.

**Fri-Mon/Feb 18-21 Guadalupe Escarpment Wilderness Inventory Weekend.** Join the NM Wilderness Alliance exploration of this unique landscape between Guadalupe Mountains and Carlsbad Caverns National Parks. Edward Sullivan 255-5966, ext. 106.

**Sat Mar 18 Cerrillos Hills.** Carolyn Keskulla 982-9570. One of the first private properties to be purchased by the Santa Fe County Open Space bonds, the acreage combined with existing BLM and State land will form a new County Park. Easy hike.

**Fri-Sun/Mar 24-26. Big Hatchets Wsa Wilderness Inventory Weekend.** Join the NM Wilderness Alliance in their mapping of this starkly beautiful desert massif. Car camping. Edward Sullivan 255-5996, ext. 106.

### Wanted : Volunteer To 'Man' Forest Service Lookout In The Pecos!

The Pecos Ranger District is looking for an individual or couple to man the Barallas Peak Lookout Tower, 15 miles east of the town of Pecos from May 1 through the end of July, or later. Forest Service will provide transportation in and out of the bumpy dirt road, as needed. What a great way to spend a couple of months in the Wilderness! Call Victor Morfin 757-6121 for more information.

## Sierran Deadline Alert!

The editor has been very flexible last year with *Rio Grande Sierran* deadlines. However, we now have a volunteer interested in proofreading, which adds a few days to the process. Also, some personal and work deadlines make the flexibility that has been offered to contributors a thing of the last millenium.

The deadlines for the coming year are as follows. Submissions are due the 10th of the month preceeding publication.

March/April	February 10
May/June	April 10
July/August	June 10
September/October	August 10
November/December	October 10
January/February	December 10

If time-sensitive, late material will not be printed, otherwise, late material will be considered for publication in the next issue.

Send contributions (songs, poems, pictures, drawings, and the usual enviro-stuff) to jbuchser@ni.net

And thanks to the great contributions over the last year!

**Saltamontes on Grasshopper Hill**  
Retreat Lodging for Artists, Writers & Explorers.  
In PECOS, 26 miles N.E. from Santa Fe, on the Mora - Taos Hwy. 581 Loop, bordering Santa Fe National Forest. Mountain views of Pecos Baldy.

**Intimate & Informal:**  
hot tub under the stars, bird watching, hiking, X-country skiing, fishing, backpacking, mountain biking.

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## Africa Womens Safari

I am an Ohio Sierra Club member who has always dreamed of a unique "non-tourist" safari in Africa. I am looking for other women to make up a small group, 6 to 8, so that we could have our own personal safari experience next September 2000. If you would be interested please contact me: Gayle Lawrence, 1-419-281-2887, email: sevensisters@cplx.com



As threats to the Grizzly Bear have increased, so has the need to protect them. The last remnants of bear habitat in the Greater Yellowstone area are threatened by timber cutting and road building, oil and gas drilling, and private land development.

What can you do? Join the Sierra Club and help protect the bear's habitat, and pressure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service not to delist the Grizzly Bear from the Endangered Species Act

Join today and receive a FREE  
Sierra Club Member's Cap!



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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.



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