

Rio Grande Sierran

January / February 2001

News of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

River Ways

by Steve Harris

Think of the Rio Grande as a water user, the original water user, the most prior appropriator of water. The work the river does with water is at least as useful to the life of the valley as our much-vaunted "beneficial uses" like growing profitable, sprawling cities or food for cattle.

The river uses its water in subtle, complex ways, supporting all of life. Sorting the gravels for the trout from the sands for the minnows, providing magic in the form of underground water, maintaining the great fluttering cottonwoods and their sympathetic migrant birds.

The river is superb engineer carving and maintaining a channel to carry away the floods, while grading off annual increments of silt, sand and stone. Left to its own devices, the river would store some water all over the valley; it would let this water out again. It would periodically spread out minerals and nutrients it had collected to revive the valley's fertility.

See *River Ways* on Page 3

Supply and Demand in the Long Term: Solving The Water Problem

by Lindsey Grant

This may be an opportune time to take a long view of the problem of rising demand and limited water resources in Santa Fe. Mayor Delgado on August 22nd called for top priority to be given to the water shortage. Shortly thereafter, UNM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) completed projections of population and water demand in Los Alamos, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe counties, for the Jemez y Sangre Water Planning Council (WPC). And Duke Engineering & Services has prepared a model of water availability for the WPC and the Sangre de Cristo Water Company. We have been through a dry and harrowing summer, and water demand continues its relentless rise. We have more than adequate evidence of the seriousness

See *Solving Water Problem* on Page 4

Gravel Mines Make Bad Neighbors

by Cliff Larsen

The Rio Grande Chapter is beginning a project to create a new Mining Act. This time our goal is to regulate sand and gravel mining on a statewide basis.

Unless you live in an urban center or on a rocky hilltop, you can be surprised to find that the land nearest you is sold to a gravel operator. Throughout New Mexico, nearby gravel mines brings noise, dust storms, speeding trucks and plummeting property values. Reclamation is rare so viewscapes often become unsightly scars.

We want to build a network of individuals and neighborhood organizations that will help us contact the legislators and other essential persons in government when the time is right. We also want to build case histories of those who have had experiences with gravel mining or crushing in the past. You might even have a chance to testify at one of the hearings or speak to Governor Johnson.

The last mining act took three years to pass and two more to write the rules. This one may be even more difficult.

If you know anyone interested in this project, please contact Cliff Larsen, Chapter Mining Co-Chair either by e-mail ziti1@juno.com or standard mail (22 Calle Alexia; Santa Fe 87505).

Election Results & Chapter Happenings

The successful candidates from the recent executive committee election were Laurence Gibson, Edward Sullivan, and John Buchser.

Gwen Wardwell has resigned from her official responsibilities in the Chapter. We can't thank her enough for the time she has volunteered.

In addition to the new focus on regulation of gravel mines, the Chapter continues its focus on the often inter-related set of issues: sprawl, water, and wilderness. If you are interested in helping, the contacts are listed on the next page.

Election Results

by Jim Hannan

The November general election produced the following results for our endorsed candidates.

Incumbent US Senator Jeff Bingaman won reelection to a fourth term, defeating Bill Redmond and winning 62% of the vote.

For US Congress, Tom Udall won a second term, winning 67% of the vote against state legislator Lisa Lutz. John Kelly lost to incumbent Heather Wilson, but earned 43% of the vote total. A Green Party candidate, Dan Kerlinsky, received 6% of the vote.

In the state Senate races, incumbents Carlos Cisneros, Dede Feldman, Cisco

See *Election Results* on Page 5

Achieving Sustainable Water Use In New Mexico: Is It Possible?

New Mexico Water Dialogue Statewide Meeting

When: Thursday, January 11, 2001

Where: Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Time: 8:30 to 4:30

Cost: \$15.00 which includes lunch

See *Water Dialog* on Page 3

2001 Legislative Issues: Utility Deregulation and Renewable Energy

by Gail Ryba, Energy Chair, and
Mikki Anaya,
Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club is an active member of the Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, (CCAEE), which is addressing the issue of deregulation of New Mexico's electric utility industry from the perspective of environmental and consumer protection, and also sees deregulation as an opportunity to promote greater use of energy conservation measures and renewable energy.

See *Energy* on Page 3

Volunteers Needed!

The Rio Grande Chapter is fortunate to have active volunteers, as well as old hands willing to help newcomers get rolling. One of the continuing challenges is to keep from 'burning out' our existing volunteers. Through sharing of responsibilities, we can all help protect the environment.

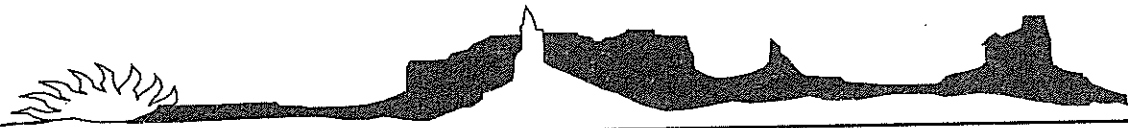
Current urgent needs are for a fundraising committee, a political chair, and an advertising director. Please contact any member of the executive committee if you have any interest in these positions.



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Rio Grande Chapter Directory

Executive Committee

Edward Sullivan, Chair
255-5966 x 106 sully@nmwild.org

Jennifer Johnson, Conservation Chair
289-9183 yomi@nm.net

Laurence Gibson, Secretary
915 594 7342 lgibson@mail.utep.edu

Blair Brown, Central Group, Treasurer
265-3231 BBlairB2@aol.com

Barbara Johnson, Council Delegate
466-4935 Lunah3@aol.com

John Buchser
820-0201 jbuchser@earthlink.net

Jim Hannan
988-5760 jhannan505@aol.com

Norma McCallan
471-0005 nmccallan@mindspring.com

Cecily Vix
cecivix@aol.com

Doug Fraser, Santa Fe Group
474-7615 or 662-5204

Fred Hartline, Pajarito Group
661-9031 rbhartl@fastpoint.com

Ted Mertig, El Paso Group
915 852-3011 TMertig@earthlink.net

Margot Wilson, Southern Group
744-5860 margotwilson40@hotmail.com

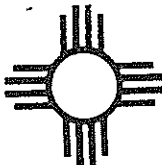
Staff

Jennifer de Garmo, Conservation Organizer
243-7767 nmex.field1@prodigy.net
243-7771 fax
202 Central SE, Suite 101
Albuquerque, NM 87102

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 largest part of the Chapter's budget goes to the salary and expenses for Jennifer and a part-time lobbyist, followed by the printing and mailing of this Newsletter.



www.riogrande.sierraclub.org

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
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Southern NM Group P.O. Box 3705 UPB Las Cruces, NM 88003 522-3421	El Paso Group P.O. Box 9191 El Paso, TX 79983 915 594-7342
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Sierra Club National 85 Second St., 2nd Floor San Francisco, CA 94105 415 977-5500	Southwest Regional Office 516 E. Portland St. Phoenix, AZ 85004 602 254-9330 FAX: 258-6533
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Campaign Chairs

Sand & Gravel	Cliff Larsen	466-2128	clarsen@ix.netcomm.com
Sprawl Issues	Edward Archuleta	820-7452	edarchuleta@aol.com
	Susan Martin	988-5206	rmartin31@earthlink.net
Water	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@earthlink.net
Wilderness	Martin Heinrich	232-7151	mtheinrich@aol.com
	Edward Sullivan	255-5966 x 106	sully@nmwild.org

Conservation Issue Chairs

Energy	Gail Ryba		gnryba@nmia.com
Military Issues	Marianne Thaeler	522-3421	marianne.thaeler@sierraclub.org
Mining	Abe Jacobson	672-9579	abe.jacobson@worldnet.att.net
	Cliff Larsen	466-2128	clarsen@ix.netcomm.com
National Parks	Courtney White	982-5502	wldwst@rt66.com
Rangelands	Barbara Johnson	466-4935	Lunah3@aol.com
Trade	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Transportation	Ken Hughes	474-0550	b1family@nets.com
Waste Reduction	Jay Morrow	877-3137	jmorrow@mercury.bermco.gov
Wildlife	Liz Walsh	915 747-5421	EWalsh@utep.edu
	Roger Peterson	983-7559	rogpete@aol.com

Activism

Fundraising	OPEN		
Listservers	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@earthlink.net
Legal	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Membership	Ted Mertig	915 852-3011	tmertig@earthlink.net
Personnel	OPEN		
Political	OPEN		
Webmaster	Blair Brown	265-3231	BBlairB2@aol.com

Outings

Outings	Norma McCallan	471-0005	nmccallan@mindspring.com
Inner City Outings	Ted Mertig	915 852-3011	tmertig@earthlink.net

Regional and National Representatives

Southwest Region Conservation Committee (SWRCC)
Ted Mertig, Jennifer Johnson

Council of Club Leaders Delegate
Barbara Johnson; Norma McCallan (alternate)

Sierran

Editor	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@earthlink.net
	223 N. Guadalupe #419, Santa Fe, NM	87501	(email preferred!!)
Advertising	OPEN		

All phone numbers area code 505 unless otherwise noted.

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

Non-member subscriptions at \$10.00 per year are available. Send checks to Blair Brown, Treasurer; 2226B Wyoming NE, PMB 272, Albuquerque, NM 87112. Please allow 8 weeks for processing.

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Contributions are welcome from members. Email contributions preferred. Send to jbuchser@earthlink.net or mail to John Buchser, 223 N. Guadalupe #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.

Editorial practices as developed by the Grand Canyon Chapter and adopted by the Rio Grande Chapter will be used in production of the Rio Grande Sierran. Letters to the editor over 500 words will be edited for length or returned to the author for editing. Submissions of Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence over other submissions.

Content of Group pages are the responsibility of the editor for that group and any policies that are in place from the applicable Group.

Contact editor for advertising policy and rates.

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Water & Energy

A Celebration of Water Education

by Susan Gorman

The Festival Guides stood expectantly at the Albuquerque Convention Center entrance, each one holding a large sign with the name of a school and teacher on it. Then school buses began to roll up and as the students stepped off the buses, they were welcomed by the Water Wizard. They then joined their Guide and marched inside. Children's Water Festival 2000 had begun!

The area's second Children's Water Festival was held on Thursday and Friday, November 2 and 3 at the Albuquerque Convention Center. Each day, more than 450 4th grade students from schools in Los Lunas, Rio Rancho and Albuquerque gathered to celebrate water.

The students spent the day participating in fun, hands-on learning activities about water science, history, geography, drama and our water future. Students created a mini-river, purified water from the Rio Grande and built aquifers from edible ingredients. They used a computer model to make projections of water use into the future and a groundwater model to "see" how water moves underground. They made pizzas from garbage and analyzed water samples; they pretended to be algae, fish and raptors to understand how toxins can travel through the food chain. They conversed with Dorothy and the Xeric City Scarecrow about saving water and tested their water knowledge in lively games of Water Jeopardy and Dripal Pursuit.

But why a Water Festival? According to Susan Gorman, Festival Coordinator, "We learned during this long, dry summer how difficult it is to make decisions about allocating our scarce water resources. Today's 4th grade students will be the decision makers of the future and they will be making some very difficult choices. Perhaps the students who came to this event will think of the great ideas that ensure us a sustainable water supply."

Jean Arya, the Water Wizard who knows all there is to know about water, reported that teachers loved the activities. "They were impressed by the amount of education hidden in the fun activities. One teacher said she would give anything to see the level of learning continue throughout the ordinary classroom time."

The Water Festival lead donors included New Mexico Environment Department, Surface Water Quality Bureau; US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6; US Bureau of Reclamation; and the City of Albuquerque, Public Works / Water Resources. More than 3 dozen other organizations including the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter donated time, resources and money to make the Water Festival possible.

The Water Festival Steering Committee will begin planning Water Festival 2001 in January. If you want to join the Committee, or tap into more Festival news by subscribing to the waterfest e-mail list, contact Susan Gorman, waterwiz@pioneerwest.net, 259-7190.

The Water Festival web site is coming soon - go to www.pioneerwest.net to check it out!

River Ways from Page 1

The river has always done these things and, in contrast to the people, when the river has done its work it generously sends the water down the line to bless the next set of users. We late-arriving Euro-Americans have decided that the water is ours and, in our arrogance, that we must improve on the river's ways. Imagine: three hundred thousand jetty jacks to fool the river into a straighter, narrower and deeper course! Trapezoidal concrete ditches to hurry the water away! What are we thinking?

One single-purpose engineering project has led to another and then another, and nothing one could properly call "improvement" is yet in sight. Straining against reason, we have convinced ourselves that we are masters of the valley and that no self-restraint at all is required of us, no honoring of the vital power beyond our mortal selves.

Eventually, the dry truth begins to intrude on our delusions: there are limits to the river's generosity. It now seems possible that the great creator of this valley might be made by us to fail. Is it not therefore wrong, shortsighted and wrong, to drain this river of its water and its energy, to compromise the river's integrity and diminish its critical capacity to do what rivers do?

How shall we who are alive today respond to the fix in which we find ourselves? Will it be we who bear the consequences of refusing to safeguard the blessings given us by the river? Or will that sad discovery be left to our posterity? Will we ever realize the futility of believing the river to be other than ourselves?

Consider this: we may not always be able to engineer or litigate our way out of the future our recent actions seem to prophesy. Observing the wondrous ways in which the river patiently breaks down all resistance and builds up life itself ought to give us new ideas. Shouldn't we now accept the work of returning ourselves to harmony with the master of the landscape we inhabit?

Water Dialogue from Page 1

Everyone is invited to attend the New Mexico Water Dialogue's 2001 Statewide Meeting which will focus on "Achieving Sustainable Water Use in New Mexico: Is it Possible?" What does sustainable use actually mean in New Mexico? Are there conflicting definitions? Can we reconcile them? How is sustainable water use affected by private property rights and public welfare? What communities are moving toward sustainable use? The meeting will include speaker presentations and ample opportunities to discuss this important issue.

The \$15.00 charge will help cover expenses for a Southwest Buffet lunch for all participants.

We also need volunteer facilitators for small group discussions.

For more information, contact Sharon Hausaum at water_dialogue@hotmail.com or at 726-7811.

Energy from Page 1

CCAIE is focusing on three initiatives. They are:

1. Public Outreach. The purpose of this work is to inform as many of New Mexico's citizens and key stakeholders as possible about deregulation and the opportunities for conservation and renewables which can result from competition in the electric utility industry;

2. Technical and expert testimony for policy makers. CCAIE is providing information to legislative and regulatory bodies and monitoring the deregulation legislation. CCAIE is working to assure the passage of: a) the "Disclosure Rule", a rule requiring labeling of energy sources and emissions and health and environmental impacts; b) A "Renewable Portfolio Standard", requiring that a percentage of electricity sold in New Mexico come from renewable energy sources; and c) the "System Benefits Fund" which provides money for renewable energy projects in New Mexico's public schools and the lesser electrified rural areas of New Mexico. Because there is a possibility that deregulation in New Mexico may not go forward in the 2001 Legislative Session (due to concerns about the problems California is facing because of deregulation), CCAIE is also engaging in efforts to sever the System Benefits Fund from the deregulation legislation to assure that the Fund goes forward independent of deregulation; and


3. A Wind Power project. CCAIE would like to see the implementation of large scale, New Mexico based wind power project to provide green generated electricity to New Mexico's citizens.

At present CCAIE is preparing for the debate during the 2001 legislative session regarding the deregulation of New Mexico's electric utility industry. Given the recent high costs of natural gas and electricity (which has been as high as 36 cents/kWh on the peak spot markets) and threats of brown-outs in California, the issues surrounding deregulation are sure to become more pressing in the coming months.

Citizens who want clean power need to get informed and let their legislators know that they want old power plants cleaned up and that they want increased opportunities for renewable power. Many people don't know that power plants in New Mexico built before the 1990 Clean Air Act are exempt from the emissions requirements of the Act. However, other states (New York and Massachusetts) have removed this loophole for their states.

Gail Ryba recently replaced Ken Hughes as the Sierra Club's Energy Chair and representative to CCAIE. Additional member organizations which comprise the Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy are: the New Mexico Citizens for Clean Air & Water, New Mexico Conservation Voters Alliance, New Mexico Public Interest Research Group, New Mexico Solar Energy Association, the Southwest Research and Information Center, the National Parks and Conservation Association, and the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies.

For further information regarding CCAIE and the work done by the Coalition, visit the CCAIE web site at www.cfcae.org. Their mailing address is The Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, P.O. Box 31683, Santa Fe, NM 87594-1683. Staffperson Mikki Anaya can be reached at 757-2520.



Water Along the Rio

Solving Water Problem from Page 1

of the water issue and a good description of its nature. If ever there is an appropriate time for decisions, this is it.

SANITY COMES TO CITY HALL. The mayor on August 22nd announced a four point program: "1. Fast-track the San Juan-Chama Diversion Project", "2. Ongoing Water Conservation", "3. Annual Budget for New Growth", and "4. Long Range Regional Water Planning".

All are good proposals. The most important is #3, because in it the mayor explicitly suggests that Santa Fe's growth must be constrained by water availability. "We must pace our annual growth... to avoid projected supply and demand conflicts foreseeable in the near term." He asked the city staff to come up with recommendations that also consider the community's economic well-being and "our need for affordable housing and new job creation."

It took courage to raise the issue. Resolving the supply/demand conflicts within that framework will be monumentally difficult. It will almost certainly pit growth advocates against resource realities, in the bitterest political battle the city has seen.

THE SOBER SHORT TERM. The water company delivered about 11,233 acre-feet in 1999, plus 893 of the 900 acre-feet it is obligated to deliver to Las Campanas. The water company has calculated its take from the river in different weather scenarios, plus the supply from its wells. Supply covers the 1999 demand in a year of median river flow. But be warned, the "median" is for the past two decades; the preceding three decades were dryer.

The dry summer of 2000 was not an anomaly. In a dry year (once in four years), the supply just matches current demand. In a "1950s type" drought, it would fall 22 percent short.

With the existing sources, the company expects demand to exceed supply by 2010 in a median year if just 300 new dwelling units are brought on line per year. If 600 new dwelling units are added annually, the supply will be exceeded by 2004. But last year, 853 new customers came on line, including a few outside the city limits. And "median" means that nearly half the time the supply will be less than that. The summer shortages of 1996 and 2000 will become regular events.

There are already about 7700 new dwelling units authorized in the city and an undetermined number in the rest of the county. The city will have to space out building permits into the indefinite future to absorb the present overhang, even if no more developments are approved. Indeed, prudence — if not politics — suggests that the "annual budget for new growth" should be zero. The city's Planning Policy Commission recently recommended that "no more than 250 acre feet of annual increase in water consumption" be approved; that is 435 new residential and commercial connections. A start, perhaps, but that puts the water company in deep trouble by 2006.

The supply is already inadequate for very dry years — like the one just closing. We face the uncertainties of global warming and a more unstable climate, and this summer's forest fires have made us suddenly aware of the need for a margin of safety. Such fires in the watershed could interrupt or diminish the city's surface water supplies any year.

The mayor's Point 2 was conservation. There are some gains to be made, but not many unless the city is to declare a permanent emergency. Even before the current Phase 3 controls, Santa Fe was a remarkably conserving city, with per capita household consumption already in line with the target figures that other cities are trying to reach.

THE UNCERTAIN AQUIFER. Four years ago, the water company anticipated that demand would pass normal supplies during the '90s. How did they get by? by imposing stringent progressive penalties on water use and by pumping the groundwater faster, as cities usually do when the water runs short. In the city, wells have been restored and new ones added, and their pumping capacity, coupled with the Buckman well field, is at a record high. The company has only temporary permission from the State Engineer to use the new Northwest well, though it hopes for permanent permission.

Most growth is occurring in the county outside the city, and it does not have the city's water resources. When the wells suck air, there will be more and deeper wells. It is already happening. All those city and county tubes are going to draw the aquifers down. They have already started.

THE SAN JUAN-CHAMA NON-BONANZA. The Mayor's first priority was to press ahead with the Chama diversion. Certainly, we need that water, but San Juan-Chama is only a temporary solution in the face of rising demand, and the city is already using nearly half its allowance. Of the 5605 acre-feet to which the city and county are entitled annually, 46 percent was used in 1999 to offset the heavy pumping of the Buckman well field. The city hopes to raise its water entitlement by pumping treated effluent back to the Rio Grande, but that awaits the resolution of competing uses for that effluent, an application to the State Engineer, his approval, and the construction of a return pipeline.

There are many "ifs" in the current Chama diversion project. It requires a permanent commitment from the San Ildefonso Pueblo, which they may not be willing to give. The intake is above the famous Otowi Gauge, on which New Mexico's water treaties with Texas and Mexico are based. The city has not yet applied to or heard from the State Engineer as to whether such a diversion across the gauge is legally possible. Years ago, the State Engineer reportedly warned Albuquerque against considering such a diversion.

Even if those issues are promptly resolved, the system to pipe Chama diversion water to the city is perhaps six years away, any water recycling bonus is probably farther off, and the demand clock keeps ticking.

DEMAND: THE VIEW AHEAD. The general wisdom is that the San Juan-Chama diversion will rescue us from our water shortage. In fact, it is a limited bonus. Where do we get more water if we use it up? How much more will we need? The question arises: "What comes after the San Juan-Chama diversion?" Life will go on, and probably population growth. The BBER projections for Santa Fe are sobering. From about 128 thousand people now, the "most likely" population projection rises to 226 thousand in 2030 and triples to 362 thousand by 2060 — assuming that there is enough water.

Recent population and economic growth rates (and the government policies that permit

them) would lead to a much higher projection: about 700,000 people by 2060. Water shortages will almost certainly prevent such growth, but Las Vegas, NV, reminds us not to be too sure that it can't happen here.

BBER projected the "most likely" future demand for commercial and domestic water needs, assuming present patterns of use. Santa Fe's needs will triple from 18,238 acre-feet per year now to 56,570 in 2060.

THE SUPPLY SIDE. The WPC has just begun to meld the demand and supply studies in order to answer the question: how much demand growth will the available water support? I would urge caution on the WPC and the Water Company.

There are problems with models. The new model tentatively suggests that pumping is sustainable at the present rate, but the model may be wrong. Models are only as reliable as the data they use — and hydrologists' estimates of the capacity of the Santa Fe aquifer have varied wildly. The water company spokesman has said in the past that pumping is already mining the aquifer.

The WPC and the water company are estimating a residual. That is a particularly difficult task, because precipitation, runoff, evaporation, and particularly seepage are very hard to determine accurately, and very small errors can create a major percentage error in the residual number for domestic availability. One can make only a rough guess of the underground seepage into and particularly out of aquifers. (The Los Alamos laboratory learned the hard way about the unpredictability of subterranean water flows in its geothermal energy experiment a generation ago.) And there will be intense pressures to tweak the model to overestimate the water supply in order to justify present pumping levels and to provide a rationale for continued growth.

RESOLVING THE WATER PROBLEM. Let me suggest the terms on which our long term water problem could be solved.

1. Rethink plans for the Chama diversion. I have described the uncertainties in the present project at San Ildefonso. A diversion from the river at Buckman would be simpler, cheaper, faster, and less likely to be derailed. The San Ildefonso project has just one problematical advantage: it MAY permit use of the water without treatment. The rethinking needs some tough leadership and immediate decisions.

2. Check the water tables. The supply model badly needs external confirmation. Changes in the water table will not show how much water is in the aquifers, but they are the simplest, swiftest and least ambiguous signal if we are overdrawing them. If water tables decline, we must stop further growth until we can find water elsewhere. Albuquerque set up such a monitoring program and has just received shocking news of the rate at which the table is dropping. One element of a sound water policy is missing from current planning: a joint City/County or regional program to improve the monitoring of the region's water tables.

3. Err on the side of caution. Incorporate a safety factor in reading the model. We will be pleasantly surprised if there is more water than you expected, and we won't face a supply disaster if there is less. Until we get a better reading on water tables, the City and County should hold new building permits as close to zero as political reality allows.

Continued on next page

Water Along the Rio

Solving Water Problem from Page 4

4. Face the realities about water supply. There is much talk right now of regional cooperation, but I doubt our neighbors will be interested in cooperation beyond selling Santa Fe any water they don't need, at a price reflecting its growing scarcity. Would we be more generous, in their position?

Water is a serious issue from the Denver metropolitan area, through Albuquerque, to El Paso and Ciudad Juarez and beyond — indeed, throughout the West and increasingly along both coasts. Cities can outbid instream uses and bosques and agriculture for water — and thereby create a desert — but Santa Fe is a very small player indeed in the competition for the available supplies, and it does not have the deep pockets of the big cities. It may lose out.

Optimists hope to buy ever more distant water, but more and more of it is spoken for. Canada has already taken steps to forbid the bulk export of water. Our Great Lakes states are following suit.

"Desalinization" is the last desperate slogan of those who do not want growth to stop. Indeed, it is the final resort. Brackish water from nearby salty aquifers is a temporary and unsatisfactory source, because of the problem of disposing of the brine. The sea can supply domestic water for coastal cities, at a very high price. But the sea, is 800 miles from Santa Fe, and 7000 feet down. In an era of rising energy prices, pumping it here would make it a luxury product in Santa Fe.

5. Address the demand side. This is the most difficult area of all, and the most important. We can temporize for perhaps several decades by running the aquifers down, but in the long term supply is bound to lose the race against rising demand. There are things we can do about demand, collectively or individually. They need to be discussed.

THE END OF GROWTH. The economist Kenneth Boulding said that "anybody who believes in perpetual growth in a finite space is either a madman or an economist." Perpetual growth is a mathematical absurdity. The real questions are: how long can growth continue? what human population can this region support, and how will growth be stopped? We will have a better answer when the WPC exercise is completed, but here are some preliminary thoughts.

Only three variables determine population growth. Nobody wants mortality to rise, so the two accessible variables are migration and fertility. Migration. Over 70% of Santa Fe's growth in the '90s was the result of domestic and international migration. Will that continue? The Census Bureau thinks there has been a recent slowdown, but housing sales in Santa Fe have been at record levels and rising prices since 1998, which suggests otherwise.

We are in a worldwide Age of Migrations from the poor to the rich countries. The United States is the leading destination, and that has led to a remarkable transplantation of populations within the country. The Los Angeles area gained more than 1.5 million foreign migrants in the early and mid-1990s, and lost 1.5 million residents. Santa Fe has been seen as a small but attractive destination for Americans abandoning urban congestion. If Santa Fe begins to look less attractive or if American immigration policy should grow less permissive, the forces driving Santa Fe's growth may diminish.

If that should happen slowly, it could lead to a relatively soft landing from our present over-heated growth. If it happens in a crisis atmosphere, the crisis could be a rouser, with jobs evaporating and mortgages larger than the resale value of the property they are based on. We would do better to think ahead and forestall the crisis. Migration may slow down as word gets around of Santa Fe's water problems, or if Congress changes its present policies favoring high immigration. We cannot wait to see. Our local governments should use the current studies to decide how much immigration Santa Fe can take, and from that develop the zoning, building permit and jobs policies to influence the flow.

Right now, immigration to the United States runs over one million

annually; and the New Mexican Congressional delegation has regularly supported raising the numbers. Maybe we should ask them to rethink those numbers.

Fertility. In New Mexico, Anglo women's average fertility is 1.38 children, lower than the U.S. average of 1.7 and similar to the average in Europe; it is much below replacement level. Hispanic fertility is twice as high — about what it is in Mexico — and that leads to continued growth. Fertility is declining among all groups in New Mexico, but much more slowly for Hispanics than the others. Of Santa Fe's growth in the 1990s, nearly 30 percent resulted from natural increase. That would reverse if Hispanic fertility should decline substantially toward the non-Hispanic U.S. average. More dramatic declines have been happening worldwide, particularly in places like Spain, Italy and Quebec. Fertility reduction was hardly an object of governmental or church policy in those places — and it is unlikely to become policy in New Mexico, barring a dramatic change in the Vatican's position — but women on their own addressed the trade-offs involved in large families. Here, too, women may ask themselves: if we are raising more children than the region can support, must we watch them go elsewhere to seek jobs? and where? It is a crowded world. Perhaps the current fertility decline is a harbinger of changing attitudes that will help bring the region's water problem to a peaceful resolution.

Grant is a former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Environment and Population. His most recent book is Ingersoll: Growth on a Finite Planet.

Election Results from Page 1

McSorley, Shannon Robinson, Leonard Tsosie, Nancy Rodriguez and Roman Maes were all reelected. The two other Club endorsed candidates, Brad Hays and Janice Paster, both lost. Hays was running for the seat currently held by Pauline Eisenstadt, while Paster was running against incumbent Ramsey Gorham. Thus, the Club now has 7 endorsed state senators out of a total of 42.

In the state House races, incumbents winning reelection were Fred Luna, Rick Miera, Miguel Garcia, Gail Beam, Sheryl Williams Stapleton, Mimi Stewart, Danice Picraux, Pauline Gubbels, J. Paul Taylor, Nick Salazar, Max Coll, James Madalena and W. Ken Martinez. Patty Lundstrom was elected to the Gallup seat currently held by David Pederson. House Speaker Raymond Sanchez lost his seat by 206 votes. Other losing endorsed candidates were Inez Moncada, Jeni Flores Alexander and James Moran. The Club now has 14 endorsed state representatives out of a total of 70.

In the Santa Fe County Commissioner races, both Paul Campos and Jack Sullivan were elected.

Club volunteers were very active this year. The main focus was the Al Gore campaign. It appears that Gore carried New Mexico by fewer than 500 votes. Club members were also quite active in the John Kelly and Raymond Sanchez campaigns. Many thanks to all those who helped.

**Q: Are Green Republicans
an endangered species?**

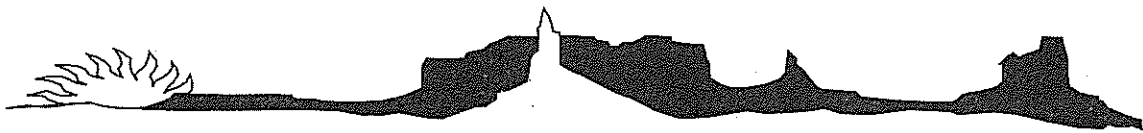
**A: Not if we have anything
to say about it!**



The national grassroots organization of
Republicans for Environmental Protection

If you're a conservation-minded Republican,
contact us!

www.repamerica.org
P. O. Box 7073
Deerfield IL 60015
847-940-0320



SANTA FE GROUP MEETINGS

FLYING HIGH WITH THE WILD ANGELS

Tuesday, January 16, 7 PM

To start our New Year off on the right foot, our long-time friend Michael Stewart, president of Wild Angels, an environmental group based in Santa Fe, will give us a tour of his latest adventures.

Wild Angels designs and leads environmental campaigns and uses flight to support this work. The group has led efforts to clean up an Arizona copper smelter, convinced the government of Belize to create a 104,000 acre tropical rain forest national park, and has worked to educate the public about the World Trade Organization. They are currently working to restore salmon to rivers of the Pacific Northwest and to establish a wildlife reserve for jaguars in northern Mexico.

*Membership 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.*

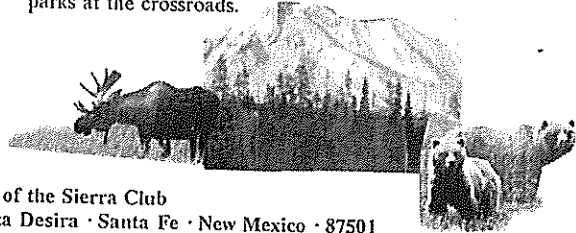
ALASKA NATIONAL PARKS AT THE CROSSROADS

Tuesday, February 20, 7 PM

Alaska! Forty-ton humpback whales leap from Glacier Bay. Grizzlies devour up to 20 salmon in a hour at Katmai. Migratory birds fly from South America to nest at Gates of the Arctic. Mt. McKinley (Denali, "The High One") towers at 20,320 feet above the continent. This is just a snapshot of the wildlife and wonders of Alaska National Parks.

But all is not well, even here in Alaska's frontier national parks. Visitors and bears alike are jeopardized by plans to crowd wildlife viewing areas at Katmai. A 90-mile road or rail line could cut through the wilderness heart of Denali. The roar, pollution and annoyance of motors threaten to reach into the most pristine areas.

Join us for a slide presentation by John Rosapepe, National Parks Conservation Association Alaska Campaign Outreach Coordinator, and a discussion of your national parks at the crossroads.



Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club
621 Old Santa Fe Trail · Suite 10 · Plaza Desira · Santa Fe · New Mexico · 87501
505 · 983-2703

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Doug Fraser

The Santa Fe Group is gearing up for the New Year with an ambitious schedule of conservation work. We encourage anyone who is interested in our plans to contact our Conservation Chair Cliff Larsen and get involved. We need all the help we can get!

First up, the Quivira Coalition is publishing the report, *Of Land and Culture: Environmental Justice and Public Lands Ranching in Northern New Mexico*, by Ernest Atencio, which the Santa Fe Group co-commissioned and co-funded with the Quivira Coalition, the McCune Foundation, and the Santa Fe Community Foundation. We hope to have a press conference to announce the publication in mid-January. The report will be available, free, to all Sierra Club members.

As a companion piece, the Santa Fe Group has commissioned a second report from Ernie on Environmental Justice and Logging in Northern New Mexico. We hope that it will be ready for publication in the spring.

Next, the Group is joining the Rio Grande Chapter in two of its priority campaigns — on Growth Issues and on Sand and Gravel Mining. The Growth Campaign is designed to fight unplanned or poorly planned development and to promote smart growth. Its goals are to:

1. Establish a statewide framework for managing growth by passing legislation requiring county comprehensive plans.
2. Educate the public on infill projects, starting with our fellow environmentalists.
3. Monitor the Five Year State Improvement Transportation Plan.

Among the plans is to create "How-Tos" for Sierra Club and community activists fighting highway projects and to create a

transit coalition to address transportation problems. We also hope to sponsor a growth/planning reception and lobby day during the upcoming State Legislature.

We are concerned that the victims in the rapid development that Santa Fe and other areas across the state are experiencing are New Mexico's beautiful landscape and distinctive culture.

In the other campaign, we hope to enact legislation to regulate sand and gravel mining in New Mexico, as companion legislation to the Mining Act of 1993 that regulates hardrock mining. We wish to minimize the impact of sand and gravel mining on both individuals and properties and to ensure restoration of sand and gravel sites following use.

There is some draft legislation being proposed by the State Land Office. It needs to be evaluated and redrafted so that it will regulate the off-site effects (noise, traffic, light, water, fugitive dust, viewscape interference) of sand and gravel mining as well as post-mining reclamation. The Santa Fe Group was instrumental in the passage of the 1993 Act. We plan to use our expertise from that experience, as well as the knowledge and energy of our Mining Chair Cliff Larsen, to work toward a bill that can, hopefully, be passed in the next long session in 2003.

We have been following closely the proposed designation of Tent Rocks west of Cochiti Pueblo as a National Monument. Cliff and his wife Marcia, as well as other environmental representatives, attended Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt's visit there a couple of weeks ago. It would be a great New Year's conservation present from the departing Clinton Administration to protect this fragile and increasingly used area.

We hope to see all of you at one or another of our meetings and that you will consider getting involved in these important conservation efforts. Happy New Year!

♦ ♦ SANTA FE GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ♦ ♦

Chair — Doug Fraser *
Vice-Chair — Barbara Johnson *
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Soracco

474-7615 / 662-4104 fax
466-4935 lunah3@aol.com
983-6715

Gwen Wardwell *
Political Committee — Susan Martin *
Membership — Norma McCallan *
Newsletter/Publicity — Kay Carlson
Phone Tree — Dee Sands
Chapter Rep — Doug Fraser *
Outings — Norbert Sperlich
— Tobin Oruch

438-3060 edenland@earthlink.net
988-5206 smartin@lanl.gov
471-0005 nmccallan@mindspring.com
982-3926 kcarlsonwp@earthlink.net
455-3005
474-7615
983-1962
820-2844 oruch@lanl.gov

Conservation — Cliff Larsen *
Mining — Cliff Larsen *
Water/John Buchser *
National Parks-Courtney White *
Rangelands-Roger Peterson
Sustainability-Barbara Johnson *
SF National Forest-Greg Pollak
Carson Nat'l Forest-George Grossman
Activist Outings-Norma McCallan *
Growth-Eleanor Eisenmenger *

466-2128 clarsen1@ix.netcom.com
466-2128
820-0201 jbuchser@earthlink.net
982-5502 whlwt@rl66.com
983-7559 rospete@aol.com
466-4935 lunah3@aol.com
988-7650
982-1024
471-0005 nmccallan@mindspring.com
820-6401

* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

Santa Fe Group News

SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

Santa Fe Group News

Sat Sun January 2001 HAPPY NEW YEAR !!

- 6 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Moderate X-C Ski Trip if there is snow, otherwise moderate hike. Leave 8 AM.
- 7 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Moderate Hike into Dome Wilderness, trail conditions permitting. Rough terrain. Call for reservation. Leave 8:30 AM.
- 13 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Moderate X-C Ski Trip if snow is good, otherwise moderate hike. Leave 8 AM.
- 14 Tobin Oruch (820-2844) Moderate Hike near La Bajada. Dogs allowed. Leave 9 AM. Call for reservation.
- 14 Cerrillos Hills Coalition County Park Service Day (see article)
- 20 Bob McKee (672-3426) Moderate Hike on mesa top south of White Rock. 8 miles RT. Dogs OK. Meet leader 9 AM White Rock Smith's Supermarket or carpool from Santa Fe at 8 AM.
- 21 Norma McCallan (471-0005) Easy/Moderate Hike. Dogs allowed. Call for details. Leave 9:30 AM.
- 27 Stephen Markowitz (983-2829) Moderate Hike in Bandelier. Leave 8 AM. Call leader for update on trail conditions.
- 27 Gordon Spencer (672-3707) X-C Ski Workshop for skiers with limited experience who want to improve their techniques, including downhill, speed control, and confidence in back-country touring. Call by January 25 for reservation. Time permitting, lessons will be followed by a short ski tour.
- 28 David Bryant (1-505-757-3477) Moderate Hike on Rail Trail. Leave 9 AM.

CERRILLOS HILLS TRAIL WORKERS NEEDED

Sundays — 9:30 AM to 1 PM

January 14 • February 11 • March 11

The Cerrillos Hills Coalition is sponsoring three half days of work reconstructing an informal 3-mile loop trail in the newly acquired County Park land in the Cerrillos Hills. Meet at the What Not Shop near the center of the town of Cerrillos. Call Paul Cusumano (988-6093) or Glenn Winkle (466-8692) for more information.

Sat Sun March

- 3 Stephen Markowitz (983-2829) Moderately Difficult Climb up Queen Mary Mesa near Los Alamos. Less than 5 miles distance, but vertical hand-and-foot rock climbing and exposure to falling, and a lot of off-trail. Please call before 9 PM, Thursday, March 1. More info: docmark@atiglobal.net
- 4 Bob McKee (672-3426) Moderate Hike, 8 miles, no significant elevation gain, Galisteo Dam to Waldo and back, dogs allowed, meet at 8:30 AM. If no answer try 471-0005.
- 10 Norma McCallan (471-0005) Easy Hike around the new County park in Cerrillos Hills, with guest leader Bill Baxter from the Cerrillos Hills Coalition, which helped gain Open Space funding for a significant addition to this popular destination and is now putting in a loop trail. Meet Sierra office 9 AM, or at "The Plaza" in the town of Cerrillos, across from the What Not Shop, at 9:30 AM. Dogs OK.
- 11 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Intermediate XC Ski Trip to wherever the snow is good. Leave 8 AM. Call for reservation.
- 11 Jeff Jones (466-2389) Easy-Moderate Hike Diablo Canyon, 6 miles, 400' gain, kids welcome. Leave 8:30 AM.
- 11 Cerrillos Hills Coalition County Park Service Day (see article)
- 17 Victor Atyas (438-9434) Easy Hike on Falls Trail to Rio Grande in Bandelier, 800-900' elevation gain. Leave 9 AM.
- 18 Ron Duffy (982-2890) Easy Birding Walk in or near Santa Fe. Beginners, non-birders and experienced birders are all welcome. Bring binoculars. Leave 8:30 AM.
- 18 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Strenuous Hike to Bandelier area backcountry, trail conditions permitting. Call for reservation.
- 24 Michael Di Rosa (663-0648) Moderate-Strenuous One-Way Hike from Aneho Canyon to Frijoles Canyon, ending at Bandelier HQ (car shuttle back to White Rock). About nine miles, some rough trail. Meet 8 AM at Santa Fe office or meet leader at 9 AM, White Rock in Smith's parking lot. Call hike leader after March 12 for details.
- 25 David Bryant (1-505-757-3477) Easy Hike to Glorieta Ghost Hotel. 6.5 miles, 850' gain. Leave Club office at 9 AM or meet leader at north end of Glorieta overpass on I-25 at 9:30 AM. Must call for reservation.
- 31 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Intermediate XC Ski Trip to wherever the snow is good. Leave 8 AM. Call for reservation.

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

Sat Sun February HAPPY NEW YEAR !!

- 3 Tom Petencin (505-255-1497 or tompeten@juno.com) BALL RANCH FIELD TRIP. The BLM is considering a land exchange on this little-known acreage east of I-25 and north of the San Felipe Casino. Tom and Rick Hurley (rickhurley2@aol.com) are leading a joint Santa Fe/Abq trip to show participants the colorful and sculpted rock formations, petrified wood, old mining artifacts and archeological sites on these BLM lands. Call by Jan. 29 for a reservation so that a private rancher whose lands will be crossed can have a list of participants, and for meeting place and time.
- 4 Stephen Markowitz (983-2829) Moderate Hike to Ojito Wilderness Study Area southwest of San Ysidro on NM44. 10 miles maximum, minimal elevation gain, but all off-trail. Cancelled if recent rain. Early start, 2 hours drive. Please call before 7 PM, Feb. 3. More info: docmark@atiglobal.net
- 4 Jeff Jones (466-2389) Easy Hike up Los Alamos Canyon. Two to three miles, kids welcome. Leave 9 AM.
- 10 Wilderness First Aid Course Part I (see article)
- 11 Bob McKee (672-3426) Moderate Hike Cerrillos Hills, off-trail, exploratory, may climb a peak or two. Dogs allowed. Meet at 8:30 AM. If no answer, try Norma McCallan (471-0005).
- 11 Cerrillos Hills Coalition County Park Service Day (see article)
- 17 Wilderness First Aid Course Part II (see article)
- 18 Norbert Sperlich (983-1962) Strenuous Hike Bandelier area backcountry, trail conditions permitting. Call for reservation.
- 24 Ron Duffy (982-2890) Easy Birding Walk in or near Santa Fe. Beginners, non-birders and experienced birders are all welcome. Bring binoculars. Leave 8:30 AM.
- 24 Lionel Soracco (983-6715) Intermediate XC Ski Trip to wherever the snow is good. Leave 8 AM. Call for reservation.
- 25 David Bryant (1-505-757-3477) Moderate Hike Otowi Ruins and Bayo Canyon near Los Alamos. Mostly off-trail, some rough terrain, 8 miles, 900' gain. Leave 9 AM. Must call.

WILDERNESS FIRST AID CLASS TO BE OFFERED

Saturdays - February 10 • February 17

The Commons, 2300 West Alameda

This Wilderness First Aid (WFA) course is sponsored by the Santa Fe Group and will be presented by Donald J. Mason, with Wilderness Medical Associates, who taught a WFA class for us several years ago. Each Saturday will have 8 hours of instruction, with a lunch break, making a total of 16 hours of training. There is a limit of 20 people, so reserve a spot early. Current and potential outing leaders have first priority, but any Sierra member is welcome to attend. The instruction will include hands-on activities and will concentrate on those situations most likely to occur in the mountains and desert near Santa Fe. Cost will be between \$52 and \$70 for the 16-hour training. Call Tobin Oruch (820-2844) or Norma McCallan (471-0005) for more information or to reserve a slot. Don will have the WMA Field Guide Book (waterproof paper) available for an additional \$20.

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Executive Committee:	Group Conservation Committee:
Tuesday, February 6, 6:30 PM	Tuesday, January 23, 7 PM
Tuesday, March 6, 6:30 PM	Tuesday, February 27, 7 PM
Water Pot-Luck (John Buelcher's house):	
Monday, February 12, 6:30 PM	
Monday, March 12, 6:30 PM	

Please see article about Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla and the award of recognition given to them at the Holiday party in December (page 12).

Outings Notes - Unless otherwise noted, all outings leave from the Sierra office, 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, "Plaza Desira," just south of Kaune's Grocery at the corner of Old SF Trail and Paseo de Peralta. 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.

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.



Letter from the Chair

Thanks to all who worked to make 2000 a great year for the El Paso Regional Group! Two major accomplishments head the list of many: A final "goodbye" to the Environmental Center, now in the capable hands of Habitat for Humanity, and the establishment of our great web site, www.sierraclub.org/chapters/tx/el Paso. Thanks John and Terry! As I look over the past year's work I see quality everywhere: in this newsletter, in our meeting programs, in our outings. The only thing missing is you! Won't you join us January 10th at Jaxon's, or January 31st at the Centennial Museum, or on an outing?
Laurence Gibson

January General Meeting
Wednesday, January 31, 7:30 PM
UTEP Centennial Museum
VIDEO NIGHT

What better way to kick off the new year than to review past accomplishments and present challenges? Featured will be the new video based on John Sproul's slides of the Castner Range. Those who missed Terry Sunday's hike up to the B-36 wreckage in the Franklins will not want to miss a replay of Life Member Nick Miller's "On the Road" piece covering this great trip. Bring along your own short clips in case time permits! Join us early for conversation and refreshments.

Donations are encouraged.

fellow LMC staffers Lucy Baxter and Laura Nuñez. As Lucy drove, the Inner City Outings (ICO) group listened to Richard read about the "Headless Bodies" and other stories from W.C. Jameson's *Tales of the Guadalupe Mountains* to get into the pre-Halloween spirit.

Laura helped the children find items on a scavenger hunt list, including the "windmill farm" in the Delaware Mountains. Just before climbing up Guadalupe Pass, the group stopped briefly to appreciate the dry salt lake near Salt Flats. On the trail the group didn't spot any lost gold mines or headless bodies, but the sighting of a Western Diamondback Rattlesnake and a deer skeleton stirred considerable excitement.

ICO teamed up with Director Keith Hall and eight children served by the Missouri Street Recreation Center plus eight children from LMC to do some late afternoon bird watching at Feather Lake under the guidance of Audubon docent Bob Johnson on November 22. The group enjoyed spectacular weather for this first-time visit to the urban wildlife sanctuary. Taking turns peering through spotting scopes elicited many "Oohs" and "Aahs" while others shared binoculars lent for the occasion.

Twenty-one participants - including five family groups - braved the early morning cold to make another ICO/LMC trip to Feather Lake on December 2. For most, this trip was their first visit. Robert R. had the pleasure of acting as the experienced visitor as he shared the sights with his mother, who expressed amazement that there was such a resource right here in El Paso. Led by Richard Rheder, the LMC staffers included Florence Fowler, Laura Nuñez, and Silby Long. Kudos also go to new volunteer Cathy Richter and Audubon docent Flo Pittard. The group broke up into several distinct subgroups by family units - each following the self-guided nature trail at its own comfortable pace and taking its cues from the enthusiasm and curiosity of the younger participants. Among the more exciting discoveries for one set of children were freshwater mollusk shells along the south embankment of the river; they were not listed in the refuge's brochure. Just goes to show what wealth waits to be discovered in our own backyard.

ICO News

by Mary Lou Parker

ICO Hikes in the Guadalupe Mountains and Introduces Families to Urban Wildlife Refuge

Four children from Life Management Center's (LMC) ChAMP'S unit explored Devil's Hall and Hiker's Staircase in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park on October 14, led by Richard Rheder and

Volunteers Welcome

Any person who would like to help ICO bring the pleasures of outdoor activities to those who do not have access to them is invited to call Ted Mertig, chair, at (915) 852-3011.

The Lorax - El Paso Group

Sierra Club - El Paso Regional Group Directory (Area Code 915)

Executive Committee

Chair

Laurence Gibson: 594-7342
lgibson@utep.edu

Vice Chair

Jamie Newlin: 584-1471
chaetura@juno.com

Secretary

Ann Falknor: 833-9162
afalknor@prodigy.net

LORAX Editor

Sally S. Savage: 833-6899
mountain_spirit@hotmail.com

Members

Ted Mertig: 852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net
Shirley Phillips: 72-6503
sphillip@elp.rr.com
Liz Walsh: 584-1471
ewalsh@utep.edu

Administration

Treasurer

Kathy Sunday: 584-9301
sundayt@zianet.com

Chapter Rep

Ted Mertig: 852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net

Project Chairs

Endangered Species/ Habitat

Liz Walsh: 584-1471
ewalsh@utep.edu

Energy

Sally S. Savage: 833-6899

Forest Organizer

Jamie Newlin: 584-1471
chaetura@juno.com

Franklin Mountains

John Sproul: 545-5157
jsproul@utep.edu

Grazing

Ted Mertig: 852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net

Inner City Outings

Ted Mertig: 852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net

Membership

Ted Mertig: 852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net

MUIR Mailing List

Laurence Gibson: 594-7342
lgibson@utep.edu
Ted Mertig: 852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net

Outings

Laurence Gibson: 594-7342
lgibson@utep.edu
Rollin Wickenden: 532-9645
(leave message)

Programs

Open

Web Master

Terry Sunday: 584-9301
sundayt@zianet.com

Outings (Area Code 915)

Jan 12-15: Smokey Creek and Pine Canyon Backpack and Day Hike

Place: Big Bend National Park
 Class: Moderate-Strenuous
 Length: 15 miles
 Elevation gain: 1,200 feet
 Leader: Wesley Leonard: 747-6649 (W)

This outing, scheduled for the 3-day Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, will consist of an overnight exploratory backpack in the Sierra Quemada and a day hike/car camp in Pine Canyon. Although the backpack will begin Saturday morning, the 13th, most participants will want to make the long drive on Friday and car camp in the Park. The backpack, on which all water must be carried, will begin at the west end of the Dodson Trail and proceed to the junction with the primitive Smokey Creek Trail. At this point, we will hike south on the Smokey Creek Trail, on which we can anticipate considerable route finding challenges. We will dry camp on Smokey Creek approximately 7.5 miles from our starting point. On the second day (Sunday), we will continue about 4 miles along Smokey Creek to the junction with the Mule Ears Trail, on which we will then hike another 3.5 miles to our ending point at the Mule Ears Overlook. For those wishing to stay for a third day, we will do a 4 mile round trip hike into Pine Canyon to the base of a massive pouroff. Our return to El Paso should start approximately at noon on Monday. The outing will be limited to 10 experienced hikers with reservations and leader approval required. No reservation will be accepted after Dec 29, 2000.

Jan 20: Rio Grande Levee Mountain Bike Ride

Place: El Paso's Upper Valley
 Class: Easy-Moderate
 Length: 15 miles
 Elevation gain: none
 Leader: Richard Rheder: 544-5659 (H)

Get out your trusty mountain bike for an invigorating ride on a beautiful Saturday morning. Longtime El Paso Group and Inner Cities Outings leader Richard Rheder will shepherd your group through a pastoral stretch of our Rio Grande Valley.

Jan 21: Baylor Pass (from the west) Day Hike

Place: Organ Mountains NE of Las Cruces
 Class: Moderate
 Length: 6 miles
 Elevation gain: 1,500 feet
 Leader: Jim Owen: 598-9332 (H)

Winter's crisp, clear air enhances this hike because the vistas allow you to see a "fur piece". Climbing through several climate zones, views develop of the Rio Grande Valley, Organ summits, and Las Cruces urban sprawl. This hike will be easier than the one in 1861, when Union Major Lynde's troops were captured by an inferior force of Johnny Rebs under General Baylor, while trying to get to Fort Stanton via San Augustine Springs.

Jan 27-28: Big Hatchet Car Camp and Day Hike

Place: Big Hatchet WSA in the NM Bootheel
 Class: Easy-Moderate+
 Length: 0-6 miles
 Elevation gain: 0-3,000 feet
 Leader: Wesley Leonard: 747-6649 (W)

This will be a joint El Paso Regional Group and New Mexico Wilderness Alliance outing to one of the most rugged, remote, and scenic areas in southern New Mexico. We will depart El Paso early Saturday morning. The last 15 miles are on rough dirt roads that require high clearance or 4x4 vehicles. It will probably be possible for those with passenger cars to park at the end of the pavement and share rides for the last segment with participants who have high clearance vehicles. On Saturday afternoon, there will be opportunities for relaxing or for going on short day hikes to learn more about the area and the NMWA proposal for its designation as a 91,000-acre wilderness. There will be an optional strenuous hike to the summit of Big Hatchet Peak Sunday morning. Those not climbing the peak will have additional opportunities for relaxing and short day hikes from camp. Our return to El Paso should start mid-afternoon Sunday. There will be a limit of 15 for the car camp and 8 for the climb with reservations and leader approval required. No reservations will be accepted after Jan 13, 2001.

Call outing leaders early to get further information and to sign up.
 Most backpacks have a limit of 12.

Jan 28: Hondo Pass Doggie Day Hike

Place: Franklin Mountains, east side
 Class: Easy
 Length: 3 miles
 Elevation gain: 200 feet
 Leader: Laurence Gibson: 594-7342 (H)

Load up Rover and meet at the corner of Hondo Pass and Magnetic in NE El Paso for a short walk up the canyon. The trail ranges from a bulldozer track to a proper foot trail. We'll walk as far as we can and still be back for lunch. Dogs not required!



The deadline for the February LORAX is February 7.
 Submit your Outings listings to Laurence Gibson: (915) 594-7342
 and your article ideas to Sally Savage: (915) 833-6899.

2000 Outings Honor Roll

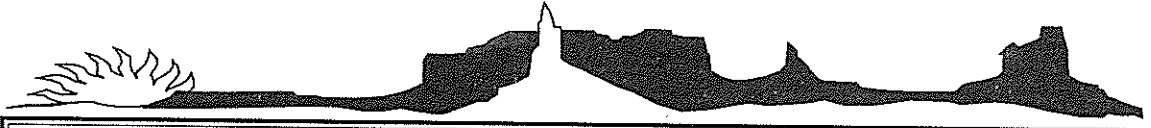
In 2000, 18 individuals offered 67 outings sponsored by the El Paso Regional Group of the Sierra Club. Outings ranged from easy hikes to grueling backpacks to car camps.

We're proud of the dedication of our members who voluntarily share their time to help others enjoy our magnificent Southwest.

Thanks for providing an outstanding Outings Program!

Jim Bell	Wesley Leonard
Claus Christensen	Carol Morrison
Todd Dougherty	John Sproul
Mike Episcopo	Terry Sunday
Ann Falknor	Liz Walsh
Betty Fisbeck	John Walton
Weldon Fisbeck	Sue Watts
Laurence Gibson	Rollin Wickenden
Carolina Greenfield	Gary Williams

The Lorax - El Paso Group



CENTRAL NEW MEXICO GROUP NEWS

Central New Mexico Group News

Drink the Rio Grande..?

By Susan Gorman and Blair Brown

Can you imagine sipping a tall glass of water from.....the Rio Grande?

In just 4 years we will all be drinking treated river water and it will come right from our faucets. This should come as no surprise to regular Sierran readers since the City of Albuquerque's plans to switch from aquifer to river water have been reported in the Sierran before and in the local newspapers and on TV:

Back in 1997, Vickie Gabin reported that we are depleting our aquifer 'at an alarming rate' and if we continued draining our aquifer, we would be faced with increased costs to pump and purify the deeper water, possible land subsidence and eventual exhaustion of the aquifer.

In response to this impending problem, the City developed it's Water Resources Management Strategy (Strategy) which described the steps that we would take to decrease Albuquerque's reliance on the aquifer, establish a ten-year drought reserve, and use a sustainable supply of surface water from the San Juan Chama Project that originates in the San Juan Basin in Colorado, is piped to New Mexico, diverted into the Chama River, and from there runs to the Rio Grande and down to Albuquerque.

In 1997, the Central New Mexico Group signed off on the implementation of the Strategy but we have continued to remind the City that we consider the health of the river and its bosque and the survival of the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow to be of paramount importance.

At that time the CNM Group advocated that any plan to implement the Strategy must meet the following requirements:

- protecting the Bosque, Rio Grande and Rio Chama ecosystems and flow regimes from construction activities and alterations in flows
- ensuring that the city pay more than lip service to "sustainable development," and recognizing that there will be a limit to the population we can sustain
- preserving the open space and irrigated agriculture which contribute to a large percentage of aquifer recharge in the middle valley
- encouraging greater conservation efforts and, in the face of inevitable rate increases, examining the current rate structure for fairness and conservation values
- promoting education about Albuquerque's water needs, the current water supply situation, and principles of sustainable development as they relate to water

Since 1997, the City has proceeded with the process of selecting the site for the water purification facility and refining the alternatives for diversion of water from the river. The City's position on this project is quite clear and was outlined in a letter from John Stomp, Manager of the City's Water Resources Department in the November/December 2000 Sierran.

Now, the City is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The DEIS will consider three possible diversion alternatives:

Angostura Diversion - water would be diverted at the Angostura Dam, located 5 miles north of Bernalillo, and conveyed to the water purification facility via the existing Albuquerque Main Canal and Albuquerque Riverside Drain and a new pipeline to be built in the North Diversion Channel right-of-way.

New Surface Diversion - a dam would be built across the river just north of Paseo del Norte that could be raised or lowered depending on river flow. When the dam is raised, water is diverted into a diversion channel and pumped to the water purification facility.

(Continued on Next Page)

Programs

Thursday, January 25th * special date *

DAVE FOREMAN TO SPEAK ON THE SKY ISLANDS WILDLANDS CONSERVATION PLAN.

Dave Foreman is one of America's foremost environmental figures. He is former Sierra Club Director, the founder of Earth First! and has been the chairman of The Wildlands Project, an international effort to bridge conservation science and advocacy, since 1991. He is also the cofounder and publisher of WILD EARTH, a leading journal of Wilderness protection and biodiversity conservation movements.

His talk will certainly include a liberal amount of Dave Foreman wit and rabble-rousing.
Keller Hall on the UNM Campus

Monday, February 19th at 7:30PM

SLIDE PRESENTATION ON ALASKA NATIONAL PARKS

John Rosapepe, of the National Parks and Conservation Association will present a spectacular slide show on 'Alaska National Parks at the Crossroads'.

Please check our website www.sierra.nm.org for location info.

Monday, March 19th at 7:30PM

JAGUAR SLIDE PRESENTATION

Check the March / April Sierran for more info.

Central New Mexico Group

PO Box 25342

Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87125-5342

Phone: 505-265-5506

Executive Committee (area code 505)

Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
Steve Capra	843-8696	scapra@nmwild.org
Kellie Goudreau		kellie@unm.edu
Martin Heinrich	232-7151	mtheinrich@aol.com
Jay Morrow		jmorrow@mercury.bernco.gov
Edward Sullivan	259-5966	sully@nmwild.org
Cecily Vix	855-9140	cecvix@aol.com

The Executive Committee normally meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM at the Club Office listed below. The meetings are free and open to all members. Contact any of us if you have issues to discuss.

Rio Grande Chapter Conservation Organizer

Jennifer DeGarmo

202 Central SW, Suite 101

Albuquerque, NM 87102

Phone: 505-243-7767 Fax: 505-243-7771

nmex.field1@prodigy.net

The Central New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club depends on the efforts of volunteers. To get involved, call any of us.



New Members of the Executive Committee

The results of the election are approved and we are pleased to announce that Steve Capra, Kellie Goudreau, and Jay Morrow are the new members of the Executive Committee. We welcome them and look forward to a productive year.

We've Moved !

After MANY years at 207 San Pedro NE, we have reluctantly chosen to move. Why, you might ask ! The answer is simple - the new owner of our office building wouldn't renew our lease with the right to rent the parking lot spaces during the State Fair, so without this income source, we could no longer afford to stay.

This means we will no longer be running our 'Parking Lot' fundraiser during the State Fair in September. This is probably good as it took a lot of effort to organize and the income had diminished significantly in the past few years.

Instead we will direct our efforts toward the work the Sierra Club is known for, with the expectation we will be very busy protecting our special places under the new administration.

Office Volunteer Needed - Someone who can spare a couple of hours a week to retrieve our phone messages and open the mail and direct it to the proper person. We will train you on what to do. It's not hard and you can work on your own schedule.

Outings

Sunday, January 7 and Saturdays, January 20 and 27 and February 17 and 24 - Desert Exploratory Hikes

Visit some of New Mexico's most incredible and beautiful landscapes hidden in it's desert places. Strangely eroded and colorful rocks, badlands, precipitous cliffs, outstanding vistas, mysterious narrow and winding canyons, archeological sites, petrified forests and other fossils, historic inscriptions, stone tools, pottery, pictographs and petroglyphs are some of the discoveries we have made on the Desert Exploratory Hikes in the past.

These hikes are not physically difficult, but will require a sense of adventure on the part of participants. There will rarely be a trail and the route will be very rocky and uneven at times. Sometimes we scramble over rock surfaces (non-technical climbing) and walk narrow ledges, but this is quite often optional. Typical distance traveled is between 4 and 8 miles and we usually gain less than 1000 ft. of elevation.

Contact leader as early as previous Wednesday for info on specific hike location and meeting time. Meeting time will vary from 8:30AM to 10AM.

Meeting place will always be Smith's at Carlisle and Menaul, nearest to Carlisle.

Contact Tom Petencin 255-1497 tompeten@juno.com

Saturday, January 13th - Malpais National Monument Exploration

Weather permitting, we will be exploring the area on the east side of the Malpais (Cebolla WSA), most likely looking for ruins or petroglyphs (Lobo Canyon). Hike: 8 miles?, off trail likely. Elevation: Less than 1000'. Drive: 180 miles RT. Dress for weather. Bring sturdy boots, water, lunch.

Contact Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com) for meeting time/place.

Sunday, January 28th - "Albuquerque" Hike

Hike: 4-8 miles, slow pace. Elevation: Varies. Drive: 40 miles RT maximum. Hike is local (near Albuquerque), aimed at a half day. Possibilities include the "Eye of Carnuel", Juan Tabo or Del Agua Canyons (in the Sandias), Petroglyph NM or the Volcanos. Sleep in, meet late and grab a bite afterwards.

Contact Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com) for meeting time/place.

Drink the Rio Grande (con't)

Subsurface Collectors - perforated pipes would be placed below the river bed just north and south of Paseo del Norte. Water would seep through the perforations, into the pipes and then to a collecting structure to be pumped to the purification facility. In order to collect enough water, 3 sets of collector structures and pumps, each with 11 collector pipes would be needed.

The first opportunities for public review and comment on the alternatives will be occurring very soon. There will be a series of 8-10 neighborhood meetings in late January and early February to acquaint all of us with the City's plans. These will be followed by a Town Hall on the project in March. The DEIS will be released for review shortly thereafter. Each of us should make a New Year's resolution to attend these meetings and participate. We all must be ready to urge the City to consider our requirements at every point in order to minimize the impacts on the river and the bosque.

For more details about the Sierra Club's position and to participate along with other members of the Central New Mexico Group, contact Susan Gorman and Blair Brown at 505-259-7190, sbginabq@aol.com and visit the Rio Grande Chapter web page at www.sierra.nm.org. You can also share your thoughts and concerns through the City's Water Resources Information Line at 768-2562 or through the City's web page at www.cabq.gov/waterresources.

Author's Note: At press time, only two of the public meetings are firmly scheduled; West Mesa Community Center on January 24th and

Mountain View Elementary on January 30th, both at 6:30 PM. Watch the newspapers or check the City's website or phone number above for up-to-date information.

Saturday, February 3rd - BLM / San Felipe Land Exchange Tour
The BLM is proposing a land exchange involving 15 to 20 thousand acres of public land located near San Felipe Casino Hollywood, East of I-25. After a year's worth of study, we continue to find many surprises in this seldom visited area, so close to both Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

Interesting sites include colorful exposures of sedimentary and volcanic Rock strata (revealing a full geologic history of the area dating back to the Cretaceous, or Last Dinosaur period), petrified wood, artistically sculpted rock formations, and other geologic oddities. The area also contains artifacts revealing much about local human history, such as rustic mines and mining implements, homesteads, inscriptions dating back before 1900, and Native American archeological sites.

Our goal is to give interested parties the opportunity to view this land and understand the what is being proposed. We will visit areas involved in the exchange, along with areas the BLM plans on retaining. Information will be available for those interested in commenting on the BLM's upcoming DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement), scheduled for sometime this Spring.

If bad weather should cancel the outing, we will reschedule it within a few weeks to beat BLM's deadline for commenting on their DEIS. Contact Tom Petencin, 255-1497, tompeten@juno.com or Rick Hurley 299-8401, rickhurley@aol.com (both in ABQ) as early as possible or by 1/29, so that we can get names on a permit to cross private property.

Saturday, February 10th - Lybrook Badlands Hike

An impressive badlands filled with photogenic hoodoos and colorful rock formations. Hike: 4-8 miles?, off trail, some exploratory. Long drive, but well worth it. Count on early start, full day and dinner in Cuba. Elevation: Less than 1000'. Drive: 240 miles RT maximum. Dress for weather. Bring sturdy boots, water, lunch.

Contact Rick Hurley (299-8401, RickHurley@aol.com) for meeting time/place.

Outings E-mail List:

Each list member receives notification of "impromptu" hikes that did not make the newsletter. A great way for members to stay in touch. Be advised that events not published in the newsletter will, by chapter policy, be considered non-sanctioned events (ie. an informal "meeting of friends?"). Contact: RickHurley@aol.com (299-8401) to be added.



Outing Outlook

by Norma McCallan

The new year, however uncharted the political scene in Washington and Santa Fe, promises to be rich in outings activity across our broad Chapter. Below are listed some of the more unusual, unexpected, and rewarding trips. Always call leader ahead for time & meeting place; all phone numbers are 505 except as noted.

Sun Jan 7 (also Sat 1/20, 1/27, 2/17, 2/24) **Exploratory Desert Hikes.** Tom Petencin 255-1497, tompeten@juno.com. Visit some of New Mexico's most stunning landscapes, tucked away in little visited BLM lands, some of which are Wilderness Study Areas [WSA's]. Stragely eroded rocks, colorful badlands, narrow canyons, fossils, archeological sites, petrified wood, and more. All off trail, some rock scrambling, 4 - 8 miles in length.

Sat Jan 13 **Cross Country Ski, Sacramento Mountains, 526-7811.** Beginners welcome on this ski tour in these beautiful mountains near Alamogordo.

Sat Jan 13 **El Malpais National Monument.** Rick Hurley 299-8401, rickhurley@aol.com. Moderate, exploratory, off-trail hike in the Cebolla WSA, just east of the Malpais.

Sat Jan 27 **Cross Country Ski Workshop.** Gordon Spencer 672-3707. Help for skiers with limited experience who want to improve their techniques. Lessons will be followed by a short ski tour. Reserve by 1/25.

Sat/Sun Jan 27-28 **Big Hatchet Carcamp/Day Hike.** Wesley Leonard 915-747-6649 (w). Joint trip with NM Wilderness Alliance to one of the most rugged, remote, and scenic areas in southern NM. Must reserve spot by 1/13.

Sat Feb 3 **BALL RANCH FIELD TRIP.** Tom Petencin 255-1497/Rick Hurley rickhurley@aol.com. The BLM is planning a land exchange in this little visited, but very scenic area east of I-25 between Albq. and Santa Fe. Colorful volcanic & sedimentary rocks, sculpted formations, homesteads and old mines, archaeological sites, and petrified wood.

Sat Feb 10 **Wilderness First Aid Training, Santa Fe, Part 1.** Don Mason, instructor; Norma McCallan, contact, 471-0005. Practical, hands on lessons, limit of 20 people, leaders first priority, but open to any member.

Sat Feb 10 **Cross Country Ski, Brazos Overlook.** John Pijawka 747-3878. Easy/moderate full day tour in beautiful terrain, near Chama.

Sat Feb 10 **Lybrook Badlands.** Rick Hurley rickhurley@aol.com. Moderate, off trail exploration of an impressive badlands, full of hoodoos and colorful rock formations, off Hiway 44 northwest of Cuba.

Sat Feb 17 **Wilderness First Aid Training, Part 2.** See above.

Sat Feb 17 **Rabbit Ears Plateau.** 522-4527. Strenuous 8 mile hike in the Organ Mountains, 3000' elevation gain, spectacular views at the top of one of the rabbit ears.

Sun Feb 18 **Bandelier National Monument.** Norbert Sperlich 983-1962. Strenuous hike in the backcountry.

Sun-Sat Feb 25-Mar 3 **Seveilleta Wildlife Refuge National Service Trip.** Susan Estes. Group will reconfigure fences to make them more deer & antelope friendly, working out of the UNM Research Station. The Seveilleta, normally closed to visitors, is the 7th largest NWR in the lower 48, and contains 4 distinct ecological biomes. Cost \$450. See website www.sierraclub.org/outings.

Sat Mar 3 **Queen Mary Mesa.** Steven Markowitz 983-2829. Off trail, moderate scramble up this prominent volcanic tuff mesa near Los Alamos.

Sat Mar 10 **Robledo Peak.** 526-7811. Moderate hike, rough terrain, in a WSA, with a beautiful vista of the Mesilla Valley from the summit.

Sun Mar 11 **Cerrillos Hills County Park.** Bill Baxter, Cerrillos Hills Coalition, guest leader, Norma McCallan contact 471-0005. Easy hike to check out this brand new Park bought with open space bonds.

Coming Sat/Sun April 7/8 **Outing Leaders Workshop, Seveilleta National Wildlife Refuge.** Norma McCallan 471-0005. Get together for all Group outing chairs. Outing leaders and potential leaders very welcome. Note, this chapter workshop is in lieu of the Outing leaders training set up by the National S/C mentioned in previous newsletter. Another locale was chosen for the spring session; hopefully the Training Committee will come to NM in a year or so.

Non Sierra Club Activities Of Interest

Sat Jan 13 **Sabinosa WSA.** Jim Scarantino 843-8696. Join the NM Wilderness Alliance (NMWA) in an exploratory hike in one of the least accessible and most easterly Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs).

Fri-Mon Feb 16-19 **Guadalupe Escarpment.** Michael Scialdone 843-8696. NMWA inventory weekend in this potential WSA or Park land between Carlsbad Caverns & the Guadalupe Mountains.

Fri-Mon Mar 9-11 **Bootheel Or Blue Range.** Michael Scialdone 843-8696. NMWA inventory weekend.

Arnold & Carolyn Keskulla Receive Tribute

The Santa Fe Group honored Carolyn and Arnold Keskulla at our December 16 Holiday Party with a certificate of appreciation and half a cord of wood to heat their home.

For many years Carolyn was an elected

member of the Santa Fe Executive Committee, serving in a variety of capacities, including organizing a recycling drive (long before we had curbside recycling), creating an educational



slide show that she and other volunteers took out to school classes, and tending our office space. Arnold became an outings leader shortly after their arrival in Santa Fe in 1976 and served for a long time as the Outings Co-Chair with Norma McCallan. Unfortunately, Arnold contracted macular degeneration in his eyes and has been able to see less and less. However, Carolyn and he continued to lead hikes until this past summer, often taking participants to little-known and sometimes trail-less places that they had scouted out. They contributed some of the hikes in our *Day Hikes in Santa Fe* guide.

We wish them a mellow and fulfilling retirement.

Pajarito Group of the Sierran Club

Outings

Saturday, January 6- Abe Jacobson will be leading a x/c ski trip. The location & departure time will depend on snow conditions.

Call Abe at 672-9579 for further details.

Saturday, January 27-

Join Warren and Miriam for a cross-country outing at Pajarito Ski Hill and ski out to the Cañada Bonita and possibly to the top end of the Pipeline (Guaje Ridge Trail). An easy/moderate outing with beautiful vistas from an alpine meadow. Meet at the base of Pajarito at 9:00 a.m. *Call Warren Steckle (672-0414) for details, especially if there's little snow.*

Saturday, February 10-

Brazo's Overlook (near Chama) cross-country ski trip. An easy to moderate full-day outing through beautiful terrain. *Call John Pijawka for details. 747-3878*

Saturday, February 17-

Join us for a hike through the woods on snowshoes. Place and time to be announced, depending on snow conditions. *Call Rainer & Ilse Bleck at 662-2368*

General Meetings

There will be no January General Meeting of the Pajarito Group, because the first Wednesday falls during the schools' winter vacation.

ExCom Election Results

At the December General Meeting, the Pajarito Group announced the results of its annual executive committee elections. Matt Heavner, Sallie McNulty, and Chuck Pergler were each elected to 2-year terms, starting January 2001. This December the terms of Abe Jacobson (group Chair), Gordon Spingler, and Miriam Oudejans draw to a close. We thank them for their leadership and service, and they plan to work informally with and for the Group in the year ahead.

Check out our Group Web Site!

To learn about conservation and other issues of interest to the Group & Chapter, Check out our Website at www.rlogrande.sierraclub.org/pajarito/