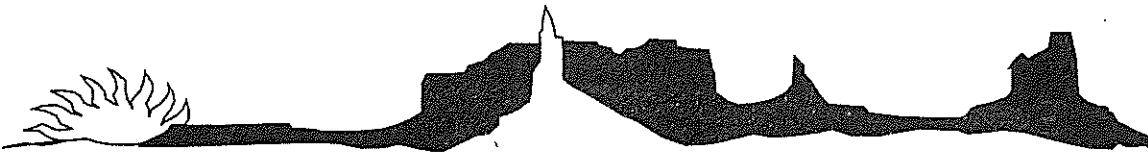


# Rio Grande Sierran



July/August 2001

News of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

## Cabezon Country: New Mexico's Wild Heart

By Steve Capra

New Mexico's Cabezon Country is nestled in the heart of the Rio Puerco watershed about 50 miles northwest of Albuquerque and west of the towns of San Ysidro and Cuba. A focal point of the cultural and natural heritage that helped shape New Mexico, this region is especially important given its close proximity to Albuquerque and Santa Fe. It provides opportunities for many New Mexicans to explore, enjoy and learn about their wild heritage.

Cabezon Peak, the dramatic volcanic formation found in the heart of Cabezon Country, is a well-known landmark in northern New Mexico.

Numerous canyons, arroyos, grasslands, sandstone-capped mesas, and colorful rocky bluffs surround the peak. They are equally impressive in their diversity and wild character. They host a wide array of plants and wildlife, unique geologic features, and a wealth of archeological sites.

### Enjoying this Special Place

From the heavily forested and isolated canyons of Banco Breaks in the south, across the broad Rio Puerco Valley and up into the remote canyons of the La Peña and San Luis areas in the north, the Cabezon region offers great opportunities for a variety of recreational activities such as hunting, horseback riding, birding, backpacking, photography, hiking, climbing, and wildlife viewing.

The unique geology of the region makes it a destination for rockhounding. History buffs can ponder the remnants of ancient cultures and teachers find a superb "outdoor classroom" a couple hours drive from our biggest cities.

### Home for a Wide Array of Plants and Wildlife

The Cabezon Country is a transition zone between the forested slopes of Mount Taylor and the drainages of Arroyo Chico and Rio Puerco. It is where visitors can see glimpses of New Mexico's past. The Cabezon Country is rich in the rem-

See Cabezon on Page 6

## Highway Expansion: Safer or Destructive?

David J. Hall, Hondo, NM

The Federal Highway Administration has issued a "Draft Environmental Impact Statement: US 70: Ruidoso Downs to Riverside; Milepost 264.5 to 301" prepared by the consulting firm of Parsons-Brinkerhoff in Albuquerque. The proposal is available for viewing on the Internet at [www.us70hondovalley.com](http://www.us70hondovalley.com).

The study examines three alternatives to the present highway:

- 1) a minimal widening and improvement,
- 2) a four lane highway with no median, and
- 3) a full blown four lane highway with a median.

The actual proposal, detailed in the EIS study, develops the second alternative.

### The Valley

The valley is, in general, very narrow — less than one half a mile wide. The present highway is on the north side of the river: The river, the highway, and the side of the valley about for at least sixty percent of the valley. (In these areas there is very little room for highway expansion.)

**"Highway 70, from Ruidoso to West Texas, is considered to be one of the most beautiful places on earth."**

The valley is irrigated with a century old system of acequias. Most of the bottomland has been converted to orchards and pasture, and there are large stands of trees. The area is a riparian flyway and is replete with wildlife. The river provides excellent fishing. Highway 70 is considered by Texans, driving to Ruidoso from West Texas, to be "one of the most beautiful places on earth." And, indeed, it has been designated a

See Highway on Page 5

## Congress Rejects Bush Plans to Drill and Mine Wildlands

WASHINGTON: The Sierra Club praised Members of the House of Representatives for voting to protect our National Monuments, coastlines and other special places from destructive oil drilling and mining.

In votes today on the U.S. Interior Department budget, the Members rejected President Bush's plans to open up public lands to destructive development.

"Our national monuments and public wildlands deserve full protection, not energy exploitation for private profit by the oil and mining industries," said Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club.

"Americans don't want oil drills looming off of our beaches or strip mines tearing up our favorite recreation spots. We want our National Monuments and wildlife refuges conserved for their beauty, wildlife and ability to rejuvenate the soul. Because these Members voted to block destruction, our children have a better chance to explore and enjoy America's public lands in their unspoiled glory."

The House approved a series of amendments to the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations bill (H.R. 2217) to safeguard these treasured landscapes from mineral leasing and oil exploration. In addition, the bill passed by the House blocked President Bush's request for funds related to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.


"We applaud those Representatives who stood up for all Americans and blocked efforts to destroy our National Monuments and coastlines. Americans owe a debt of gratitude to Reps. Rahall, Inslee and Jim Davis for leading this battle to protect our treasured landscapes for our families and for our future," continued Pope.

**"Our national monuments and public wildlands deserve full protection, not energy exploitation for private profit by the oil and mining industries."**

Representative Nick Rahall's (D-WV) amendment, which passed by a vote of 242 to 173, protects National Monuments from oil and gas drilling and coal mining. The Bush Administration would open these special places to exploitation, despite public opinion research showing 68% of Americans oppose drilling in our National Monuments.

Representative Jay Inslee (D-WA) introduced an amendment to protect communities from the Conenvironmental threats posed by hardrock

See Congress on Page 5



Rio Grande Chapter  
Sierra Club  
P.O. Box 9191  
El Paso, TX 79983

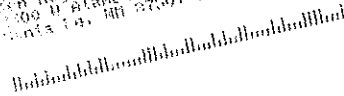
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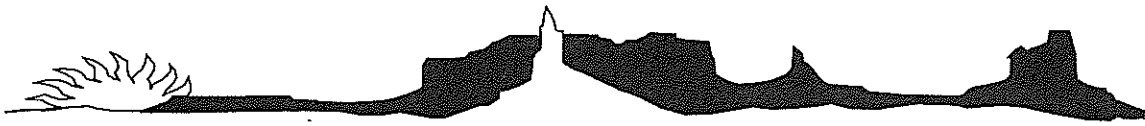
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207 Ricardo Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87502

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## Rio Grande Chapter Directory

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### 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 the salary and expenses for Jennifer and a part-time lobbyist, followed by the printing and mailing of this Newsletter.



[www.riogrande.sierraclub.org](http://www.riogrande.sierraclub.org)

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

<b>Central NM Group</b> PO Box 25342 Albuquerque, NM 87125-5342 260-9857	<b>Southern NM Group</b> P.O. Box 3705 UPB Las Cruces, NM 88003 522-3421
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<b>Santa Fe Group</b> 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, #10 Santa Fe, NM 87501 983-2703	<b>El Paso Group</b> P.O. Box 9191 El Paso, TX 79983 915 594-7342
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------

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<b>Transportation</b>	Ken Hughes	474-0550	b1family@nets.com
<b>Waste Reduction</b>	Jay Morrow	877-3137	jmorrow@mercury.bemco.gov
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<b>Personnel</b>	OPEN		
<b>Political</b>	OPEN		
<b>Webmaster</b>	Blair Brown	259-7190	BBlairB2@aol.com

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<b>Outings</b>	Norma McCallan	471-0005	nmccallan@mindspring.com
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### Inner City

<b>Outings</b>	Ted Mertig	915 852-3011	tmertig@earthlink.net
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### Regional and National Representatives

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

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

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<b>Advertising</b>	OPEN		

*All phone numbers area code 505 unless otherwise noted.*

The Rio Grande Sierran is published six times a year by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club as a benefit for Sierra Club members living in New Mexico and West Texas.

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

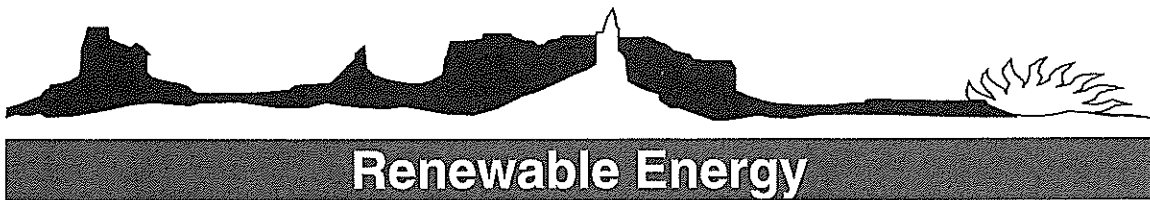
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Contributions are welcome from members. Email contributions preferred. Send to [jbuchser@earthlink.net](mailto:jbuchser@earthlink.net) or mail to John Buchser, 223 N. Guadalupe #419, Santa Fe, NM 87501. All submissions MUST be received by the 10th 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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# Renewable Energy

## Important News Regarding Renewable Energy in New Mexico...

By Gail Ryba, Energy Issues Chair

On May 15th the NM Public Regulation Commission released the following Notice of Intent. Pursuant to the Electric Utility Industry Restructuring Act it solicits comments and proposed rules regarding whether and how utilities shall be required to provide renewable energy. Deadline for comment is August 15th.

The language in this NOI inspires some hope that New Mexico could make a substantial commitment to renewable energy. Hydropower is included in the definition of renewable, and one concern of environmentalists should be to make sure that there is a commitment to things like solar and wind energy. Apparently Arizona requires 50% of the renewable generation to come from solar.

The Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy ([www.cfcae.org](http://www.cfcae.org)) will be providing comments and a proposed rule.

Utilities and industry will undoubtedly work hard to shape these rules in their favor, so citizens are encouraged to provide careful and good comments in favor of renewable energy.

The text is available at:  
<http://www.nmprc.state.nm.us/N13619.pdf>

**BEFORE THE NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION IN THE MATTER OF AN INQUIRY INTO RENEWABLE ENERGY AS A SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY**  
Utility Case No. 36194

### NOTICE OF INQUIRY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission ("Commission") is commencing an inquiry into the subject of renewable energy as a source of electricity. This matter comes before the Commission upon its own Motion. Being fully apprised of the premises,

### THE COMMISSION FINDS AND CONCLUDES:

1. Pursuant to the Electric Utility Industry Restructuring Act of 1999 [§62-3A-1 et seq. NMSA 1978], the Commission adopted Rule 591 concerning Standard Offer Service in Case No. 3109. That rule includes a provision (519.10D) requiring the use of a minimum of 5% renewable energy, subject to certain price restrictions. The implementation of that rule has been postponed for five years by the recent passage of Senate Bill 266 which delays restructuring of the electric utility industry in New Mexico for five years. Only after the beginning of open access, or competition, in the electric industry will Rule 591 come into play. As a result, that Rule's requirement for using renewable energy is also delayed.

2. The Legislature focused on the subject of renewable energy in several sections of the Restructuring Act. In §62-3A-2A(10) the Legislature found that:

"protection of the state's environment and the promotion of renewable energy technologies are sensible endeavors that may be encouraged in the restructured electric industry; yet, after a reasonable period, assessment should be made to deter-

mine the usefulness, acceptability, benefits, including environmental and economic benefits, and the appropriateness of continuing financial promotion of renewable energy..." In §62-3A-3V the Legislature provided the following definition of renewable energy:

"renewable energy" means electrical energy generated by means of a low- or zero-emissions generation technology that has substantial long-term production potential and may include, without limitation, solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, landfill gas, anaerobically digested waste biomass or fuel cells that are not fossil fueled. 'Renewable energy' does not include fossil fuel or nuclear energy..."

And in §62-3A-19A(8) the Legislature directed the Commission to examine "the advisability and desirability of requiring renewable energy portfolio standards in supply service offered to customers in the state..."

3. Notwithstanding the delay in restructuring, the Commission considers the encouragement of the use of renewable energy desirable. The extreme increase in natural gas prices over the past year and the heavy reliance on that fuel in new electric generation projects in recent years provide a reminder of the importance of fuel diversity for an adequate, reliable and reasonably priced supply of electricity. The continued importance of that supply to New Mexico's economy is made painfully clear by events over the past year in California, and the effect of those events on the wholesale price (and availability) of electricity from New Mexico to Washington State.

4. New Mexico is well-positioned to take advantage of solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and other forms of renewable energy. In doing so, New Mexico can increase rather than decrease its fuel diversity. The Commission requests that Utility Division Staff and interested parties provide specific suggestions for encouraging the development of renewable energy in New Mexico. These suggestions could take the form of proposed renewable projects and methods to encourage renewable energy development. Staff is required, and interested parties may file a proposed renewable energy rule by August 15, 2001. Staff should and parties may file an analysis of the Commission's legal authority to encourage or require renewable energy.

5. For the reasons explained above, the Commission should begin an inquiry into the subject of renewable sources of electricity. This inquiry should proceed as set out in this Notice.

6. The Commission will take written comments on the topics mentioned in this Notice. Any person wishing to respond to comments or proposed rules may do so by submitting written re-

sponse comments no later than September 14, 2001. Comments proposing a rule shall state and discuss the particular reasons for the proposed rule. All comments and pleadings shall bear the caption and docket number contained at the top of this Notice.

7. Comments and proposed rules submitted in this case shall be sent to:

Maria Brito  
New Mexico Public Regulation Commission  
P.O. Box 1269  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1269  
Telephone: (505) 827-6940

### IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

A. An inquiry into the subject of renewable energy as a source of electricity is hereby commenced as provided by this Notice.

B. Interested persons and Utility Division Staff shall file their written comments and proposed rules as provided in this Notice.

Notice of Inquiry  
Utility Case No. 36194

C. Staff shall cause this Notice to be published in three newspapers of general circulation and in the *New Mexico Register*, and shall provide the Notice by e-mail or by facsimile transmission to those persons who have been notified.

D. This Notice is effective immediately.

ISSUED under the Seal of the Commission at Santa Fe, New Mexico, this 15th day of May, 2001.

### NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

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RORY McMINN, COMMISSIONER  
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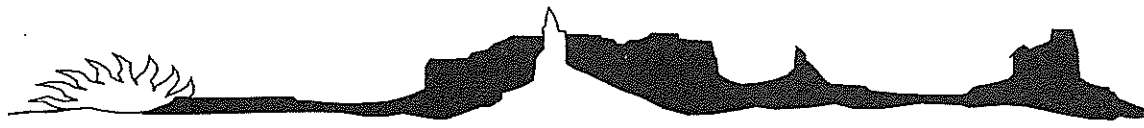
## REP Opens Educational Foundation

Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP) opened the office of the REP Environmental Educational Foundation (REEF). REEF is the partner organization of REP America, the national grassroots organization of Republicans for environmental protection. REEF seeks to educate, organize and mobilize conservatives, Independents, and Republicans who value environmental protection. Thanks to a generous contribution from the Wyss Foundation, REEF is in the process of preparing an educational outreach campaign, including its first publication, to be entitled "Conservation is Conservative."

Contact information follows:

The REP Environmental Educational Foundation, 3200 Carlisle NE, Suite 219, Albuquerque, NM 87110, voice: 505-889-4576, fax: 505-889-4598, e-mail: [repenviro@thuntek.net](mailto:repenviro@thuntek.net)





# Whales and Whalewatching

## For the Love of Humpback Whales

By Gayle Lawrence, Ohio Sierra Club

What began as a once-in-a-lifetime transformational experience for me has now turned into an annual pilgrimage to the Silver Banks, Dominican Republic to the winter birthing and mating grounds for the Atlantic humpback whales.

This experience is truly life-changing because the opportunity usually presents itself for we humans to slip into the water and float beside one of the largest and most magnificent creatures on the planet—humpback whales.

The Silver Banks, an area dotted with protective coral reefs, 85 miles off the coast of Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, provides a safe and secure place free of sharks, perfect for giving birth to baby humpbacks.

December through early April the Silver Banks hosts the largest community of humpback whales in the world that migrate south from their northern feeding grounds to spend the winter.

Cows with newborn calves and groups of rowdy males competing for the favors of the females make for constant and dramatic action. By special permit issued by the Dominican Republic government a small group of people are able to spend 6 days aboard a boat right in the middle of the Silver Banks area surrounded by humpback whales.

The above water action is incredible and awe-inspiring but the real thrill is the opportunity to have soft in-water encounters with the whales. There is a strict protocol and there is never any action taken that would, in any way, interfere with their normal behavior.

But to our amazement and delight, they do seem to enjoy and welcome the in-water human interaction.

My first encounter 3 years ago touched me on such a deep level that it is now my mission to share this with as many other people as I can. After spending time with these incredible giants of the sea, many people feel a commitment to speak out, not only for the humpbacks, but for all of the other great whales, who man is still slaughtering into extinction.

This year's trip, which I was privileged to share with other Sierra Club members from around the country, was not only thrilling but also enhanced by the presence and expertise of Carol Carlson, a conservation biologist who earned her PhD in Marine Ecology and Animal Behavior focusing mainly on humpback and fin whales.

Carol's work with the whales in the Silver Banks allowed her to track and identify over 900 individual humpbacks and her doctoral studies focused on 127 individual whales.

Carol's work has been with the Center for Coastal Studies and she now works with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), traveling around the world, lecturing and lobbying for protection for all of the great whales of the seas. Through evening lecture and slide presentations, Carol updated us to the current plight of the world's whales, deepening my commitment to do what I can to support their survival.

Carol told us the most endangered whale is the northern right whale, the rarest large whale in the world. Their coastal habitat on the Eastern Seaboard is from Savannah, Georgia to Port

Canaveral, Florida. This area is heavily congested with large shipping and fishing vessels and collisions with ships account for half of all known northern right whale deaths. With as few as 300 northern right whales left, every effort must be made to safeguard their survival.

Through pressure from people like Carol Carlson and IFAW augmented by public support, in June 1999, the US government launched a Mandatory Ship Reporting System requiring ships entering critical habitat areas to report to the Coast Guard. They then receive alerts on right whale sightings and collision avoidance procedures with the whales.

**"Despite a Worldwide ban in 1986 on whaling, whales are still being slaughtered."**

Humpback whales are also designated as an endangered species and the current global population is estimated at about 15,000 which is less than 10% of their pre-whaling population. Humpbacks are most noted for their eerie and haunting songs which occur most notably during their winter mating season. Recordings of humpback whales were sent out on Voyager I and II spacecraft as samples of sounds from earth in the event that there was "first contact." In choosing the song of the humpback as a greeting from earth to other planetary life forms...how can we possibly allow these magnificent beings to become extinct?

Despite a worldwide ban in 1986 on whaling, whales are still being slaughtered. Commercial whaling has so depleted populations of the larger whales that focus is now on the minke whales, previously considered too small to be worth hunting. During the past 2 years Japan has killed over 1,000 minke whales under the pretense of "scientific" research. Norway also, in direct defiance of the ban, slaughtered 589 minke whales during their last season. Recently Japan's attempts to establish the first international commercial trade of beluga whale meat from Russia was thwarted by media exposure from the world press.

Independent research by the University of Auckland indicates there is still an illegal international market for whale products from the whales on the endangered species list. Hunts of the same species of whales and dolphins that are protected in US waters are done right in front of tourists in non-US waters.

Last year an endangered Humpback whale calf and its mother were slaughtered by fishermen from St. Vincent and the Grenadines islands in full view of tourists. The slaughters were reported by the international media.

So far the practice of killing whales and dolphins on these islands has not drawn tourist industry protests from such multimillion dollar resorts as Club Med, Sandals, Hyatt and the Hilton who market the ecotourism attractions of the region. Perhaps they need to feel some public pressure on this issue and make their powerful voices heard in support of "whale watching" rather than "whale killing?"

Please speak out. Listed below are organizations actively involved in protecting whales and other marine life. Please contact them and give them your support.

♦ *International Fund for Animal Welfare*  
http://www.ifaw.com

♦ *Allied Whale—College of the Atlantic*  
http://www.coa.edu/alliedwhale/

♦ *Whaleman*  
http://www.whaleman.com

♦ *Green Peace*  
http://www.greenpeace.org.au/globalwhalesanctuary/petition.html

For my fourth year in a row I will once again be going to the Silver Banks Humpback Whale Sanctuary, Dominican Republic next Feb. 2002. If you would like information regarding this trip, I would be happy to give you complete details. Please contact Gayle Lawrence, 1-419-281-2887 or email 7sisters@bright.net.

## All Creatures Great and Small




Photo by Gary Braasch

*"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense."—John Muir*

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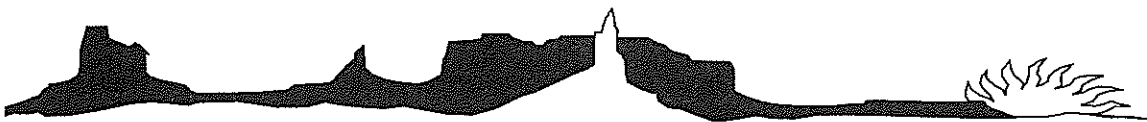
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P.O. Box 52968  
Boulder, CO 80322-2968



# The Hondo Valley and the Highway

## Highway from Page 1

scenic highway by The State of New Mexico.

### The Valley Community

The land is still mostly owned by families who settled in the 1860s. No one is sure how many people live in the valley, but a fair estimate is six hundred. The population is 71% Hispanic; the rest are Anglo ranchers and newcomers — mostly artists. A significant percentage of the population is over 60 (30-40 percent) and, in many cases, sons and daughters and grand children live with the grandparents on the same homestead.

The Hispanic and Anglo community is well integrated: the Hispanic and Anglo ranchers and farmers do business with one another, their families intermarry, and both participate actively in community social events.

The main focal points for social activities are the stores, located in Hondo, Glencoe, and Tinnie, the post offices (Picacho, Tinnie, Hondo, San Patricio, and Glencoe), the Hondo Public School, the local clinic, the two local churches, and the Senior Citizens center.

In general, residents of the valley behave like members of any other small farming community: they take their children to the school bus stops, drive back and forth to visit each other, make daily trips to the post office, go to the store for provisions, and drive around for supplies. Many senior citizens make daily visits to the senior citizens center in San Patricio.

Historically, highway 70 was integral to this community interaction. It was a small country road used by local farmers and ranchers to go back and forth within the valley community. Today, even on the side roads, there is a surprising amount of local traffic: in one three hour period a small side road that connects twelve houses had a count of 34 cars.

The published income level of the valley is very low by national standards. This is probably deceptive since many residents own their own homes, raise their own food, heat their homes with wood, and barter. Locals do not have a lot of expendable capital resources, but in the valley community large amounts of cash are not necessary.

Example: One of our employee's children was recently killed by a speeding truck. She had no money for funeral expenses. We loaned her \$1800.00 for the funeral (the local graveyard is free for locals, having been donated by a local family). The community held two car washes and put up donation bottles at the local stores and at the funeral service. Our employee paid us back, in full, the day after the funeral.

There is a relatively high unemployment rate in the area. This is partly a function of the fact that many of the locals take jobs that are seasonal (Ruidoso has a very seasonal tourist industry) and many locals choose not to work at "real" jobs year around.

In summary, the Hondo Valley is an integrated Hispanic farming and ranching community with a long history, where people maintain strong social and economic ties, where the existing side roads and the highway play an important role in the daily interactions of the residents, and where access to local meeting places provides locals with important opportunities for interaction.

### Physical Dangers

There is a danger that much of this commu-

nity cohesion will be jeopardized by the new, four-lane highway as presently planned. The new highway proposal makes very few concessions to the safety needs of local residents and shows no understanding or analysis of either the quality of life or local movement within the area. (In fact, a case could be made that Parsons-Brinkerhoff made no attempt to look at any "side road" data about the community living away from the Highway.)

People in the Hondo Valley are no strangers to death. The present road is the most dangerous highway in New Mexico because of the ever increasing truck traffic, lack of police patrol cars, high speeds, and lack of weigh stations along the highway, making it an attractive alternate route for truckers traveling through the state.

The present proposal is outspoken in its intention to attract more truck traffic. Design speeds are increased significantly. Truckers presently speed through the valley at 75 miles per hour. With a four-lane highway, as presently designed, they could well travel at speeds up to 80 mph.

**"People in the Hondo Valley are no strangers to death. The present road is the most dangerous highway in New Mexico."**

All of us are afraid of trucks. In our factory, Victoria Baca's mother was killed by a speeding truck five years ago when she was turning across the highway, and most recently Maria's son was killed by a truck when the van he was in turned across the highway.

Last year five Alamogordo residents were rear ended and killed by a truck as they were turning off the highway. An elderly couple was killed by a truck that rear ended them as they were turning into the local graveyard. Turning off the highway when trucks are around is something we take quite seriously.

A new highway would be acceptable if it were safer. But it is not. Here are some ways in which the highway will not be safer:

- ◆ The new Highway will make driving to the Post Offices in Hondo and San Patricio extremely dangerous. The speed limits in these areas will be 65 miles per hour with local drivers expected to turn across oncoming traffic from the inside lane of a four-lane highway into narrow side road entrances. (65 cars a day at the Hondo Post Office, 30 cars a day at the San Patricio Post Office.) No turning lanes are provided.

- ◆ Senior citizens visiting the Senior Citizen center in San Patricio (25 meals served daily) will be expected to take the same hazardous course. No turning lanes are provided.

- ◆ Parishioners at the San Patricio church (100 cars, two services on weekends, up to 300 cars at funerals) will also be in jeopardy. No turning lanes are provided.

- ◆ Valley residents turning into the side roads at mile marker 284 (34 cars in three hours) will face similar dangerous conditions. It should be noted that the present turning lane provided onto the side road at MM 284.5 will be eliminated.

- ◆ Children and pedestrians walking in the area

of the Hondo School, through the town of Hondo, will be in jeopardy because of a 45-mile speed limit instead of 30 mph.

- ◆ Curbs and gutters will be placed alongside the highway through the town of Hondo. This will make it impossible for locals traveling west to move off to the side of the road before turning across the line of traffic into the store. (300 cars a day, including tourists.) At this location, the present turning lane will be eliminated.

- ◆ Residents of the small towns of Tinnie and Arabella (60 people) will also have to stop on the inside lane and wait for opposing traffic before turning across the highway. No turning lanes are provided.

### Economic Considerations for the Improved Highway

The EIS study claims that the "improved highway" will benefit the community by providing better jobs and better access to jobs in the sur-

See Highway on Page 7

### Congress from Page 1

mining.

The Bush administration has proposed eliminating a regulation that protects drinking water from arsenic, cyanide and mercury pollution caused by mining; gives land management agencies the power to deny permits for irresponsible activities; and forces mining companies to pay to clean up their pollution, rather than shifting their costs to taxpayers. The Inslee amendment, which ensures that these critical taxpayer and environmental safeguards are kept in place, passed by a vote of 216 to 194.

Representative Jim Davis (D-FL) introduced an amendment to protect Florida's coasts from offshore oil drilling. The Bush Administration is moving forward with the controversial leasing program off the Gulf Coasts known as Lease Sale 181 but Rep. Davis' amendment prohibits unpopular and potentially damaging oil and gas drilling in this area. It passed by a vote of 247 to 164.

## Albuquerque Mayor Named an "Eco-Hero" in Sierra Magazine

The Mayor of Albuquerque, Jim Baca, was profiled as one of eleven "eco-heroes" in the July/August edition of *Sierra Magazine*.

In the story, Baca explained that he became environmentally active as a television anchorman when reporting on the Apollo spaceflights.

"As they flew over, they commented on how the southwestern United States around New Mexico looked like it was under a haze," stated Baca in the *Sierra* article.

Following up on these reports, Baca produced a series of stories on the Four Corners Power Plant, eventually leading to the implementation of state-of-the-art scrubbers.

Since that time, Baca has been active in numerous environmental issues. He also served as President Clinton's head of the Bureau of Land Management. He resigned that position when he disagreed with administration policies regarding wildlands grazing.



# Cabezon Country, Valles Caldera

## *Cabezon from Page 1*

nants of past cultures and people that called this place home centuries ago.

Literally thousands of ruins and historic sites including prehistoric Pueblo sites, petroglyphs, and kivas can be found, as can remnants of the Spanish settlers who entered the valley before the eighteenth century.

The area is home to sacred and religious sites of the Jemez, Zia and Santa Ana Pueblos. Nowhere else can you find such an incredible overlay of cultures that are unique to the American West.

Fossil remains of ancient plant and animal life are abundant. Ojito Wilderness Study Area is famous for the discovery of one of the largest dinosaur skeletons ever found: a 120 foot-long, 100 ton Seismosaurus! The Cabezon Country is an area rich in evidence of its natural and cultural history.

## *Growing Pressures on the Cabezon Country*

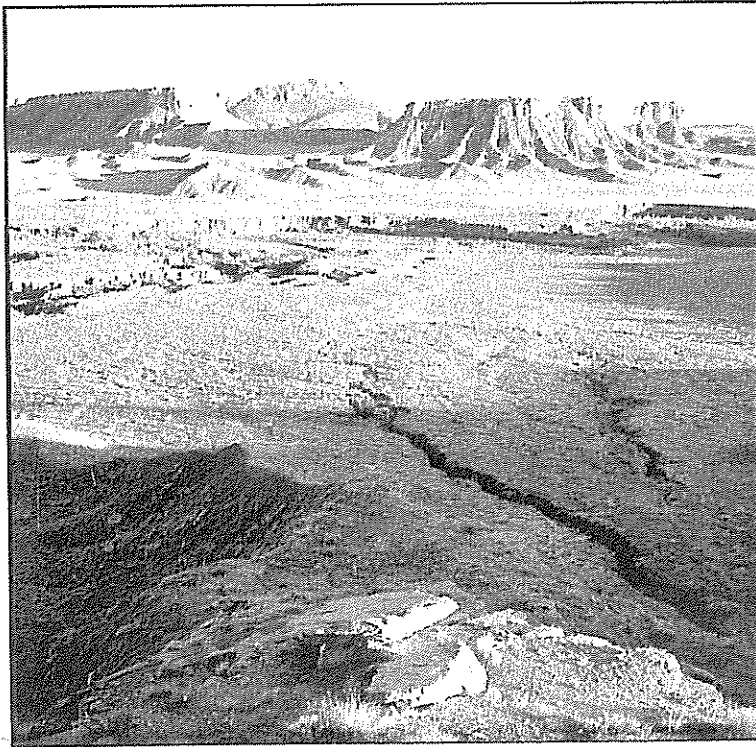
While the Cabezon Country is still a largely wild landscape, pressures from an increasing population and expanding urban centers are putting the region at risk.

Irresponsible dirt bike and other off-road vehicle use, poaching, and vandalism of historic sites threaten the area. Potential oil and gas exploration in the region could cause irreparable harm to the wild areas that make up the Cabezon Country.

## *Help Protect New Mexico's Cabezon Country*

The Cabezon Country is made up of a complex of wilderness study areas and other public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. These public lands belong to all of us. By working to protect these special areas now, we can preserve them so future generations of New Mexicans can use and enjoy them for years to come.

You can help protect the special natural and cultural values of this region by contacting your Representative and Senators and urging them to support Wilderness protection for New Mexico's Cabezon Country.



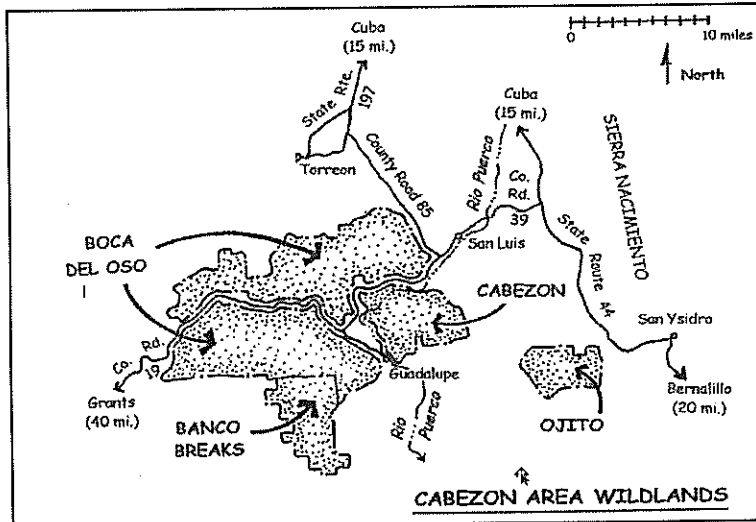
## Valles Caldera National Preserve

*Jennifer Johnson, Chapter Conservation Committee Chair*

As noted in the last issue of the Rio Grande Sierran, a very vocal and inspired contingency of activists have been advocating against road closures, and for trails in the Valles Caldera National Preserve being opened to off-road vehicle use.

Forest Service data show that forest roads cause landscape fragmentation, soil erosion resulting in sedimentation and pollution of streams and springs, destruction of wildlife habitat and disruption of elk herds, and air, noise, and visual pollution. The RGC therefore recommends adoption of a very limited public-road network that excludes motorized use in the far reaches of the Preserve, within quality viewsheds, and between dusk and dawn.

Much of the adjacent Santa Fe National Forest is open to off-road vehicle use and such use is incompatible with the Preserve's more important



*Note: This map is for reference only. It does not show all inventoried routes or final boundary recommendations.*

values which include the Preserve's; pristine appearance, scenic quality, volcanic features, and wildlife diversity. It is important that the Valles Caldera Board of Trustees continue to get the message that noise-producing off-road vehicle traffic (including ATVs, motorbikes, motorcycles and snowmobiles) not be allowed within the boundaries of the Preserve. Low flying aircraft should also be excluded within the boundaries of the Valles Caldera.

## *What You Can Do*

Write, or call the Board of Trustees, or attend a public meeting and voice your desire for a limited road network and exclusion of off-road vehicle use in the Preserve.

The Valles Caldera Preserve and the Board of Trustees maintains a web page on the Santa Fe National Forest web site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/>



# Highway and Economic Destruction

## Highway from Page 5

rounding area. The high unemployment rate in the area is cited as a factor in considering the overall economic benefits to the valley, factors that outweigh any disadvantages. Under close scrutiny, this utilitarian argument, does not, and will not hold up.

The most likely place to find jobs in the "surrounding area" is Ruidoso, which lies at the beginning of the proposed highway, around mile marker 260. Jobs in Ruidoso are primarily seasonal, low paying service-related jobs.

There is no reason to believe that an improved highway will change the "seasonality" of the Ruidoso employment patterns at the major employment centers: the motels, gift shops, casino, restaurants, or race track. Nor will an improved highway likely effect the minimum wage standard of pay in the area.

Parsons-Brinkerhoff relies on unemployment figures in the area to make an economic argument for benefits of the highway. These figures, as we know, are based on those people in the area who apply for unemployment benefits.

Parsons-Brinkerhoff's report does not indicate what percentage of those collecting unemployment benefits live in the valley. Moreover, in the Hondo valley, those fortunate enough to collect unemployment do so because they have taken seasonal jobs and are laid off at the end of the season. This is probably also the case with other residents of the county.

Additionally, there is no reason to believe that people would travel out of the valley even if there were better jobs available in Ruidoso. Because we live in a small, close-knit community, most people who live here can name the people who are looking for jobs, and we can easily assemble a list of people who travel to Ruidoso or other areas for work.

We know that several people in the valley regularly find summer employment at the Ruidoso Downs race track; we know who works at the casino and at Wal-Mart and the grocery stores, and we know the people who work in construction and in restaurants.

It is patently not the case that local valley residents are seeking employment in surrounding areas because of the economic disadvantages of living in the country. In fact, a relatively small number of people travel out of the valley for work or wish to do so.

Parsons-Brinkerhoff would be hard pressed to find anyone to testify that they would travel to surrounding areas to work, were there a better, safer highway.

In addition to the local ranches and farms, there are two employers in the Hondo Valley where jobs are almost always available: our factory and the Hondo store. We each employ six to eight people.

The Hondo store, pays minimum wage, but provides exceptional working conditions. It is a friendly, collegial atmosphere where the employees see their friends in the community and work reasonable hours under safe conditions. We pay our workers an average of nine dollars an hour plus benefits, and our working conditions are pleasant.

Almost everyone in the valley who is seeking employment comes to either or both of our locations. We both have difficulty finding employees,

not because locals don't want to work, but because they are busy with their own farms and ranches.

## Economic Destruction

Nowhere does the proposal state that the expanded highway will improve businesses in the valley. On the contrary, the proposal does real damage to the small businesses that already exist in the community.

◆ Three of the seven roadside businesses owned by local Hispanics in the valley will be put out of business because of highway acquisition (Two fruit stands and one hand made quilt store).

◆ Additionally, three of the remaining businesses face ruin because the highway will eliminate their frontage: the Hondo Valley Station and General Store in Tinnie, the Chavez gas station in Hondo, and The Burrito Express in Hondo.

◆ Access to the Hurd Gallery in San Patricio will be made more difficult and visitors will have to access the frontage road by stopping in the middle of a four-lane highway and wait to cross traffic. Again, no turning lane is provided.

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"Nowhere does the proposal state that the expanded highway will improve businesses in the valley. On the contrary, the proposal does real damage to the small businesses that already exist in the community."

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## Environmental Destruction

If the proposed plan is accepted, the environment will be at risk in several important ways:

◆ The proposed plan allows for accidental dumping of petroleum products and wastes into the Rio Bonito during bridge reconstruction. No provision is made for added safeguards to protect the river, e.g., a person charged with environmental oversight and supervision. The river is extremely fragile, with Bald Eagles, Black Hawks, and other endangered species inhabiting the region. (The endangered and non-endangered species in the area are documented in the report.)

◆ The proposal says little about the shallow water table in the valley (less than 17 feet) and the impact of the widened highway on water quality.

◆ The proposed plan provides no real solutions to mitigate the impact of the Highway on wildlife migration: no underpasses, no deer fences etc. It also takes a callous view toward the "de-nesting" of endangered birds.

◆ No noise abatement procedures are suggested as viable.

◆ There is a minimal attempt to maintain the aesthetic qualities of the existing roadway: No aesthetic restoration, no overlooks, no restoration of historic markers.

## Inadequate Access to Information

I have notified Parsons-Brinkerhoff that only nine people in the entire valley, including one Hispanic, have access to the internet. Yesterday, Israel Miranda tried to go to the school and read the report. The school had misplaced it.

I have interviewed the postmasters of the San Patricio and Hondo Post offices. They indicate that, at most, one half of all the boxes received letters announcing the date of the public meetings to be held at the Hondo School on June 6. Parsons-Brinkerhoff indicated in writing that they are "only notifying residents who live along the highway." (Hardly a sign they respect or acknowledge the existence of a community.)

In the body of the EIS study, Parsons-Brinkerhoff indicate that a vote was taken on the four-lane highway at a previous public meeting and that there was minimal opposition to the construction proposal. The "vote" was taken in the guise of a "questionnaire" without informing the participants that the questionnaire was a "vote."

In addition, on the hunch that it was a vote, I tried to take copies of the survey out to the community and was told, 1) I couldn't take them out of the room and 2) if I did, they wouldn't count. (A reporter from the *Ruidoso News* was present at this conversation, though it was not reported.)

## Data Gathering

Much of the data provided above is "soft," based on surveys conducted by local citizens. The postmistress in Hondo is keeping a daily count of post office traffic, during the hours she is at the post office. However, the post office is open after hours for residents to visit their post office boxes.

A count of cars was taken at three church services in San Patricio, a count was taken in a three-hour period at mile marker 284, and a count of daily visitors at the Senior citizen's center was taken from the number of meals served. Residents of Tinnie and Arabella were asked to estimate the number of residents living in those areas.

There are some known facts: the number of post office boxes at the various post offices, the number of daily transactions at the Hondo store.

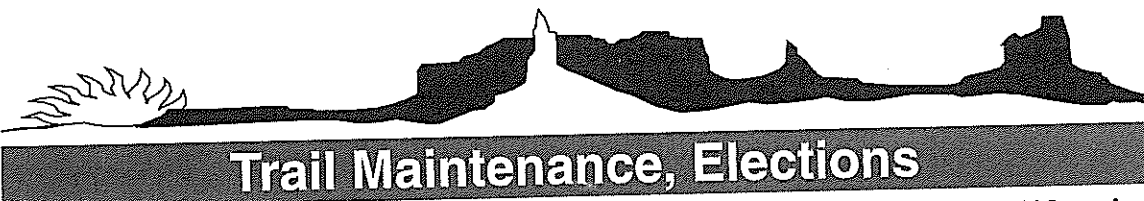
There are presently petitions posted at the San Patricio church and the Hondo Post Office. The petitions ask for demographic data including the number of persons over 60 and the number of daily trips to various locations.

Parsons-Brinkerhoff put their refusal to send me copies of the report in writing. They also indicated in writing that they are only notifying residents who live along the highway.

## Conclusion

I don't know whether calling for the inclusion of turning lanes, the posting of lower speed limits, the elimination of curbs, or the protection of existing businesses, falls under the rubric of "environmental justice." Nor do I know whether such issues can be litigated. I do, however, know that these issues are of tremendous import to the citizens of our small community. If they are not resolved in our favor, the highway will become a wall that constricts our quality of life, keeps us in constant fear, and inhibits us from interacting with our neighbors. And, God Forbid, some of us might even die.





# Trail Maintenance, Elections

## Trail Maintenance in the Pecos: Saturday and Sunday, July 14-15 and August 3-4, 25-26

By Linda Buchser

See ancient bristlecone pines in New Mexico! Look a peregrine in the eye from twelve feet away! View shepherd's tree carvings from the early twentieth century. Climb over 1,400 feet in less than two miles, and clear out the Dominguez Trail

The Dominguez Trail was constructed by local and national Sierra Club members. It was a significant factor in the Club receiving a "Take Pride in New Mexico" award.

The Dominguez Trail begins about 5.5 miles up the West Fork of Santa Barbara Creek, and proceeds over an 11,200 foot ridge to drop down to the Trampas Trail. Parts of the trail coincide with a former shepherders' route where the aspens display names and dates from the early 1900's. This connection expands the hiking possibilities in the popular north Pecos Wilderness area, providing a spectacular view of the Truchas Peaks basin and north into Colorado. The ridge between the high point of the Dominguez and the North Truchas Peak, off trail but fairly easy walking, will lead you to a scattering of bristlecone pines.

The last time we visited, a peregrine landed on a snag to give us a careful inspection.

Our work will focus on clearing out trees downed by an avalanche several winters ago. Two-person crosscut saws ("misery whips"), Pulaski's, and hard hats will be provided.

In addition to the usual backpacking gear and food, you will need to bring long pants, leather boots, leather work gloves, rain gear, and enthusiasm.

If you're full of enthusiasm but doubt your ability with the tools, never fear! Those chopping and sawing will need others to haul the trees and brush off-trail.

The first trip will leave from the Santa Fe Sierra Club Office at 7:00 a.m. Saturday July 14, and return to town approximately 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 15.

Reserve a place on this work trip by calling John or Linda Buchser at 820-0201 by Tuesday July 10, we need this information in order to coordinate with the Forest Service.

For the August 4/5 trip, please let us know if you are going by Tuesday, July 31.

For the August 25/26 trip, please let us know if you are going by Tuesday, August 21.

## Calling All Candidates! Nominating Committee Constituted

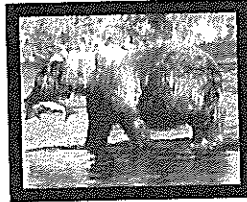
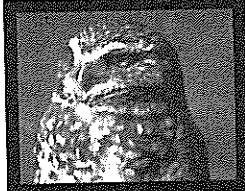
The ExCom has announced the Nominating Committee for the 2002 ExCom Election:

- ◆ Cherill Blevins of the Southern New Mexico Group, 524-4861 or spotblex@greatwhite.com
- ◆ Ana Falknor of the El Paso Group, 915-833-9162 or afalknor@prodigy.net
- ◆ Doug Fraser of the Santa Fe Group, 474-7615
- ◆ Abe Jacobson of the Pajarito Group, 672-9579
- ◆ Cecily Vix of the Central New Mexico Group, 855-9140 or cecvix@aol.com.

There will be three seats open on the Executive Committee of the Rio Grande Chapter. Each term is three years. Anyone interested in running for a seat on the ExCom, which oversees the activities of the Rio Grande Chapter, should contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee soon.

You may also run for the ExCom by petition. You would need signatures from 100 members of the Chapter in good standing.

*Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the Rio Grande Chapter's Annual Appeal. Your generosity is much appreciated and will be put to good use in our efforts to protect special places in New Mexico and West Texas.*



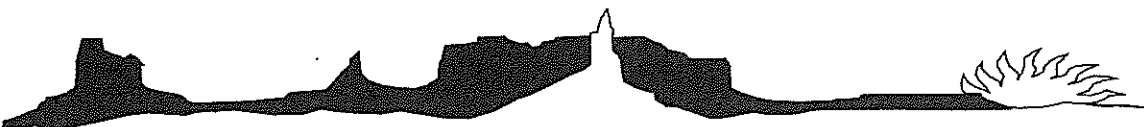
# Thank You

**For Remembering!**

Your financial contribution means a lot to us. By supporting this Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your own back yard. This makes you an important part of our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Thank you.





**Group Directory**  
**Pajarito Group of the Sierran Club**

Ilse Bleck Chair	662-2358 <a href="mailto:ibleck@yahoo.com">ibleck@yahoo.com</a>
Matt Heavner Vice Chair	829-3645 <a href="mailto:heavner@jemez.com">heavner@jemez.com</a>
Carole Jacobson Sec./Treasurer	672-9579 <a href="mailto:abe.jacobson@worldnet.att.net">abe.jacobson@worldnet.att.net</a>
Chuck Pergler Conservation	661-6169 <a href="mailto:perNEPA@gateway.net">perNEPA@gateway.net</a>
Fred Hartline	661-9031 <a href="mailto:fbhartl@earthlink.net">fbhartl@earthlink.net</a>
Sallie McNulty	661-7174 <a href="mailto:mmcnulty@swcp.com">mmcnulty@swcp.com</a>
Ilse Bleck Chapter Representative	662-2358 <a href="mailto:ibleck@yahoo.com">ibleck@yahoo.com</a>



**General Meetings**

*There will be no general meetings in July and August.*  
 All general meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month at Mesa Public Library, at 7 PM and are open to the public.

**Other Meetings:**

Conservation Committee meetings are on the second Wednesday and Executive Committee meetings are on the third Wednesday of the month. All meetings are at Mesa Public Library, at 7 PM and are open to the public.

**Outings**

**Wednesday, July 18**

Sierra Club Picnic and Bat Walk. Bring your favorite dish for a potluck picnic to the Bandelier picnic grounds. Meet at 6:30. Chris Judson will lead us on a bat walk around 8 or 8:30.

*Please call Ilse Bleck, 662-2368*

**Saturday, August 4**

Frijoles Canyon Hike and Bike Trip. Meet at the Ponderosa Campground at 8:30 and carpool to the Bandelier Visitor Center. Hike Frijoles Canyon and return to the campground via Upper Crossing. Those interested can bicycle back to their cars at the Visitor Center. Easy to moderate, hiking distance approximately 7 miles.

*Call Reiner & Ilse Bleck, 662-2368*

**The Log--So.New Mexico Group News**

**Group Directory**  
 Southern N.M. Group  
 Executive Committee  
 P.O. Box 3705 UPB  
 Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

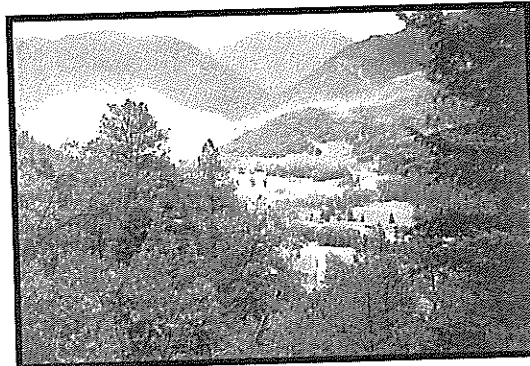
Don Dearholt Chair	522-3035 <a href="mailto:dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu">dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu</a>
Margo Wilson Vice Chair, Chapter Rep.	744-5860 <a href="mailto:margotwilson40@hotmail.com">margotwilson40@hotmail.com</a>
Cheryll Bleyins Treasurer/Secretary	524-4861 <a href="mailto:spotblev@earthlink.net">spotblev@earthlink.net</a>
David Farrell Legislative Issues	895-3352 <a href="mailto:dafarrelli@hotmail.com">dafarrelli@hotmail.com</a>

**General Meetings**

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.

**Outings**

The outings group does not have any scheduled outings until the Fall. Outings questions: Call Barbara Coon at 522-1576 or Ron Gordon at 522-4527.





# SANTA FE GROUP NEWS

## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Doug Frazer

Before I turn over this space to the Vice Chair of Conservation, Paul Paryski, for a discussion of the Group's important work on one of the Club's priorities - *SPRAWL* - let me publicly say thanks for a \$5,000 grant given to our group. This gift, our biggest ever, was made on behalf of the Beatrice and Dan Fligelman Philanthropic Fund in honor of Dr. Fen Sartorius, all of Florida, who loved Santa Fe. This, you'll remember, follows on the gift we received last month from Ms. Rebecca Wolle's fifth grade class at Rio Grande School. We must be doing some right things. It is great to have this generous support.

Now for Paul's report on sprawl:

### Sprawl Issues And the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club

With the assistance of Jennifer de Garmo, the Conservation Organizer of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Club, the Santa Fe Sprawl Committee, chaired by Eleanor Eisenmenger, drew up a complete Sprawl Campaign in early 2001. This plan focuses on stopping suburban and urban sprawl and protecting open space in Santa Fe County.

The specific goals of the plan include:

- **Short term:** stopping development along Veterans Memorial Highway 599 to preserve its open space character by supporting an ordinance to use Transferred Development Rights (TDOs) as a tool.
- **Interim:** advocate the passage of a strong plan for the protection of Route 599.
- **Lobby** the County Commission to allocate funds for the



Paul Paryski

establishment of management plans and a management team for the open space purchased by the County under the approved Open Space acquisition bond program.

Members of the Committee attended meetings of the County Commission, the Extra Territorial Zoning Authority and the Regional Planning Authority to express the Club position on these issues. The campaign met with considerable success.

The County Commission passed an ordinance approving the use of TDRs, which are already being negotiated with landowners. Doug Fraser, Group Chair, eloquently supported the TDR program at the crucial meeting of the County Commission.

Susan Martin, Sprawl Committee member, Group Political Chair, and Chapter ExCom member, represents the Sierra Club on the COLTPAC (County Open Land and Trails Planning Committee), which advises on and approves land purchases or easement purchases. She closely follows all developments.

Paul Paryski, also a member of the Santa Fe Group ExCom, is one of the four volunteer advisors that assist the County on developing a management program for the Open Space lands already acquired.

The Sprawl Committee worked closely with the Ski Area Containment Coalition against the expansion of the Santa Fe Ski Basin to pressure the County Commission to deny the building of a new lift on Deception Peak, a beautiful and unique hiking destination. The Commission did, in fact, deny permission, but a legal jurisdiction conflict with the BLM remains. The denial was, in any case, a superb moral victory.

The next major activity planned by the Sprawl Committee is a Sierra Club-sponsored slide presentation of the Open Space Program early this autumn.

The committee feels justifiably proud at having accomplished so much with so few people and resources.

## SKI AREA UPDATE

### Ski Company Sues County Commission

During the public hearing that started in the afternoon of May 16 and continued past midnight, the Santa Fe County Commission voted unanimously *against* the request of the Santa Fe Ski Company to grant variances for the construction of a chairlift to Deception Peak and the cutting of 1,748 trees.

Before the vote, a good number of opponents spoke out against the desecration of Deception Peak. Among them were Tesuque Governor Charlie Dorame, Steven Sugarman from the Ski Area Containment Coalition (SACC), Susan Martin as representative of the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club, hike leaders Steve Markowitz and Phil Somervell, and many others. Every one of you that came to the public hearings, sent letters to the papers and county commissioners, those who supported SACC, made a big difference. Thank you all for helping.

On June 22, the Ski Company responded to the vote by filing a lawsuit in federal district court against the Santa Fe County Commission, asking a judge to determine whether the county has jurisdiction over the Santa Fe Ski Area, which is on federal land. As of June 26, a court date had not been set. Please stay involved in this important issue. The Ski Area Containment Coalition will need your help again!

## CALLING ALL CANDIDATES!

### Nominating Committee Constituted

The ExCom has announced the Nominating Committee for the Santa Fe Group 2002 ExCom Election: George Grossman (982-1024), Lionel Soracco (983-6715) and Barbara Johnson (466-4935 / lunah3@aol.com). There are four 2-year term seats open on the Executive Committee of the Santa Fe Group.

Anyone interested in running for a seat on the ExCom, which oversees the activities of the Santa Fe Group, should contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee soon. You may also run for the ExCom by petition. You would need signatures from 60 members of the Group in good standing.

## YARD SALE FUNDRAISER

Saturday, October 6

9 AM to 3 PM

Mark your calendars now for our annual yard sale. Carole Owens has graciously allowed us the use of her garage and driveway on the south side of town.

Please start saving saleable items, and if you know anyone who is moving, encourage them to donate unwanted items to us. Please, no computers.

Space will be available before the sale for storage of large items at Carole's garage, and small items can be dropped off at the Sierra office. We prefer not to collect items until the month before the sale, but if it is critical to get materials to us prior to that, call and arrangements will be made.

We need volunteers to make this sale a success! Help is needed with:

- 1 - Picking up items that donors can't bring in (does anyone have a pickup truck?)
- 2 - Pricing items the day before the sale
- 3 - Setting up and manning tables the day of the sale - two-hour shifts can be arranged, if that is better for you
- 4 - Cleanup at the end

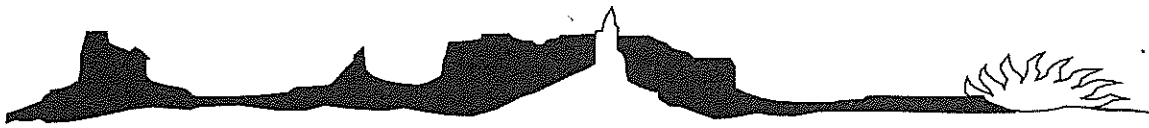
Please call Barbara Johnson (466-4935), Kathy Fraser (662-5204) or Norma McCallan (471-0005) if you can volunteer for any of the tasks.



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

Santa Fe Group News

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



## SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

### Sat Sun July

- 1 **Strenuous Hike** to Puerto Nambé on Winsor trail, about 11 miles, 2000' gain. Leave 8 AM. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 7 **Easy Hike** to Glorieta's ghost hotel, 6.5 miles, 850' gain, people and dogs by reservation. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 7 Opening of Dale Ball Trail - see article this page.
- 8 **Very Strenuous Hike** to Lake Katherine and beyond, 15-20 miles, 3300-4400' gain, leave 7:30 AM. Jeff Jones (466-2389)

### Saturday, July 14 and Sunday, July 15

- Strenuous Trail Maintenance Backpack** on Dominguez Trail near Santa Barbara Canyon. Leaves 7 AM Saturday. *Call by noon Thursday 7-12 to confirm attendance.* See separate article for details. John & Linda Buchser (820-0201)
- 14 **Strenuous Hike** on Aspen Vista trail to Tesuque Peak, 12 miles, 2000' gain. Leave 8 AM, call for reservations. Ned Sudborough (474-4055)
- 15 **Moderate Hike** in high country, 7-10 miles, leave 8 AM. Art Judd (982-3212)
- 21 **Easy Bird-Watching Walk** in or near town, leave 8 AM. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 22 **Strenuous Hike** in the Jemez. Leave 7 AM. Norbert Sperlich (983-1962)
- 28 **Moderate Hike** to Grass Mountain in Pecos, dogs okay. Leave at 8 AM. John Jasper (1-505-263-5466)
- 29 **Moderate Hike** to Nambé Lake off Winsor Trail, 7 miles, 2100' gain. Call for reservations. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)

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

For additional outings in northern New Mexico, please check the Pajarito Group page(s) in this newsletter.

### Sat Sun September

- 1 **Moderate Hike** in high country. Ned Sudborough (474-4055)
- 2 **Strenuous Hike** to Gold Hill, north of Taos. 10 miles RT, 3411' elevation gain. Early start, long day. Call for details. Steve Markowitz (983-2829) or Norbert Sperlich (983-1962)
- 8 **Moderate Hike** up Rio Frijoles (near Cundiyo). Many stream crossings - you will get your feet wet! Dogs allowed. Leave 8:30 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
- 9 **Strenuous, Moderately Paced Hike** Bandelier. 12-15 miles RT, ±2500' elevation gain. Call for details. Bob McKee (672-3426)
- 15 **Moderate Hike** to Nambé Lake, 7 miles RT, 2100' elevation gain. Dogs allowed. Leave 8 AM. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 16 **Moderate Hike** to La Vega. 7 miles RT, 1500' elevation gain. Leave 9 AM. Call leader. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)
- 22 **Strenuous Hike** to Caballo Peak (Jemez). 14 miles RT, 3300' elevation gain. Some off-trail hiking likely. Call leader. Michael DiRosa (663-0648)
- 23 **Moderate Hike** in high country. Dogs allowed. Call leader. Tobin Oruch (820-2844)
- 29 **Easy Bird-Watching Walk** in or near town. Beginners welcome. Bring binoculars. Leave 8 AM. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 29 **Moderate Hike** in Jemez Mountains. Call for details. Norbert Sperlich (983-1962)
- 30 **Strenuous Hike** to Santa Fe Baldy. Leave 7:30 AM. Call for reservation. Jeff Jones (466-2389)

Green The Earth And Prosper  
Third Annual Peace Day Presented by Cranes for Peace  
August 6 - in Santa Fe  
Networks Productions (989-4482)  
www.networkearth.org



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

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

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

474-7615 / 662-4104 fax  
466-4935 lunah3@aol.com  
983-6715  
988-5206 smartin@lanl.gov  
471-0005 nmccallan@mindspring.com  
982-3926 kearlsonwp@earthlink.net  
455-3005  
474-7615  
983-1962  
820-2844 oruch@lanl.gov

### Sat Sun August

#### Saturday and Sunday, August 4 and 5

- Strenuous Trail Maintenance Backpack** on Dominguez Trail near Santa Barbara Canyon. Leave 7 AM Saturday. *Make Reservation by Tuesday, July 31.* John/Linda Buchser (820-0201)
  - 4 **Easy/Moderate Hike** up the Rio en Medio and discussion of Open Space issues. Edward Archuleta, Santa Fe Director of 1000 Friends, will describe how the County purchased a section of private land at the beginning of the trail with Open Space bond monies. Beautiful waterfalls and tall ponderosa enhance this nearby trail. Numerous stream crossings - you may have wet feet. Dogs OK. Leave 8 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
  - 5 **Strenuous Hike** at a moderate pace. Ski Basin to La Vega, return by way of "Elevator Shaft." 9 miles RT, 2500' elevation gain. Dogs allowed. Call leaders for details. Bob McKee (672-3426) and Norma McCallan (471-0005)
  - 11 **Strenuous Hike** in high country. Call leader for details. Ned Sudborough (474-4055)
  - 12 **Moderate Hike** in high country. Leave 8 AM. Call leader for details. Art Judd (982-3212)
  - 18 **Easy Bird-Watching Walk** in or near town. Beginners welcome. Bring binoculars. Leave 8 AM. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
  - 19 **Moderate Hike** to Hamilton Mesa. Meet leader 9 AM at north end of Glorieta overpass on I-25 or carpool from Santa Fe at 8:30. Call for reservation. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)
- Saturday and Sunday, August 25 and 26
- Strenuous Trail Maintenance Backpack** Dominguez Trail, near Santa Barbara Canyon. Leave 7 AM Saturday. *Make reservation by Tuesday, August 21.* John and Linda Buchser (820-0201)
  - 25 **Easy Hike** from Big Tesuque Campground to Aspen Vista. Dogs allowed. Leave 9 AM. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
  - 26 **Strenuous Hike** to Horsethief Meadow. 12 miles RT, 2300' elevation gain. Dogs allowed. Tobin Oruch (820-2844)

**Outings Notes** - Unless otherwise noted, all outings leave from the Sierra office, 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, "Plaza Dasira," just south of Kaune's Grocery at the corner of Old SE Trail and Paseo de Parícuti. Carpooling will be arranged. Each hiker should come prepared to pay \$6 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.

#### GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Executive Committee: Tuesday, August 7, 6:30 PM  
Tuesday, September 4, 6:30 PM  
Water Pot-Luck (John Buchser's house):  
Monday, July 9, 6:30 PM  
Monday, August 6, 6:30 PM



#### DALE BALL TRAILS TO OPEN

On Saturday, July 7, the north section of the Dale Ball Trails will open. Come for the celebration between 7 AM and 7 PM and hike on some of the 7 miles already completed. By fall the entire trail system of over 15 miles will be ready. The trails are built for hikers and bicyclists - no motorized vehicles are allowed - but dogs on leashes are welcome. Begin your hike at the 40-car parking lot serving the trails, on the east side of Hyde Park Road at the junction with Sierra del Norte.

Resolutions by the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County named the trails after Dale Ball, who conceived of the trails, secured funding and followed through with the trail construction.

Santa Fe Group News



Conservation — Cliff Larsen \* 466-2128 clarsen1@ix.netcom.com  
Mining — Cliff Larsen \* 466-2128  
Water-John Buchser \* 820-0201 jbuchser@earthlink.net  
National Parks-Courtney White \* 982-5502 wldwt@r66.com  
Rangelands-Roger Peterson 983-7559 rospete@aol.com  
Carson Nat'l Forest-George Grossman 982-1024  
Activist Outings-Norma McCallan \* 471-0005 nmccallan@mindspring.com  
Growth-Eleanor Eisenmenger \* 820-6401  
Paul Paryski \* 992-1984 pparyski@aol.com  
\* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee



# CENTRAL NM GROUP NEWS

## America's Energy Crisis:

By Howard Stephens, Virginia Stephens and Jim Cochran

Central New Mexico Group News

Two dollars a gallon for gas, soaring home heating bills, rolling blackouts in California—what's next? Why are we in an energy crisis? Does anybody know what our energy future is? And, what's on the horizon to solve our energy problems—Wind? Solar? Clean Coal? More nuclear? Why does it seem that America is again running on empty?

We sought the answer to these and many other questions as we researched America's energy crisis for the public radio series, *Running on Empty*, that aired in May on Albuquerque's KUNM, 89.9 FM. The series was distributed to public radio stations nationwide in June.

Our goal was to provide well-balanced, complete, understandable, and timely information on energy in America as background for public discussion and debate on energy issues. We sought to:

- Trace recent history to the roots of America's current energy crisis;
- Take stock of our energy resources, consumption patterns, aging energy infrastructure, and the environmental consequences of our energy appetite;
- Give an in-depth examination of energy policy, to see how public and national interests, environmental concerns, and market forces are balanced; and
- Look ahead to how energy technology is likely to evolve, and how policy and new technology can solve our energy crisis.

We sought answers from many experts—including political leaders, energy R&D experts, political scientists, economists, and representatives of consumer and environmental groups.

This is not the first time America has seen an energy crisis. We would be much farther ahead if we'd read the lessons of the past. As philosopher George Santayana wrote: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

The cheap, seemingly abundant energy of the last two decades has lulled public interest in energy issues, and our politicians have been asleep at the wheel.

Today's energy crisis is even worse than that of the 1970s:

- We're even more hooked on oil and gas, now importing over 50% of our oil (compared with 35% prior to the October 1973 oil embargo) and 16% of our natural gas.
- America is prepared to go to war over imported oil, as we demonstrated in 1991, during the brief conflict with Iraq to defend Kuwait's oil fields.
- The Persian Gulf and other regional sources of our imported oil supply,

- continue to be political powder kegs.
- And our politicians still offer palliatives to the American public, like a tax cut, instead of using hard-earned public capital to address the real issues.

Since the 1970s, a generation has grown up without experiencing lines at the pump or shortages of home heating fuel. Even our political leaders have failed to study the lessons of the past. We can say that for certain, because we've examined the Bush/Cheney energy plan and have found it wanting, as many others have. Bush's plan:

- Provides no vision for an environmentally sound energy future.
- Focuses on our most scarce energy resources, especially oil.
- Disdains conservation efforts that can have significant and immediate payoffs.
- Ignores alternatives to oil for our transportation fuel supply.
- Slashes research and development budgets for programs that could provide an environmentally sound, economically viable energy options for future generations.
- Makes no attempt to couple energy and environmental policy.
- Pays lip service to global climate change issues.

More seriously faulted than the plan itself, is the exclusionary process for development of the plan. It was born behind closed doors, to the exclusion of environmentalists and many other significant energy policy stakeholders. In fact, the names of the real consultants and contributors to the plan have not been released.

America does have numerous technological options for solving the energy crisis. Although technology provides the options, the path forward must be a result of public consensus. It is not enough to protest the weaknesses of a proposal on the table, as others and we have done with the Bush energy plan. We must set alternative goals, and propose socially, economically, and environmentally acceptable plans to achieve our goals. If we do not, we will fail to win converts.

It is only by the public involvement and open discussion of energy issues, as in the Rio Grande Chapter's panel discussion on energy in June (see related article), that consensus on goals and the path forward will be achieved. And, without consensus there will be little viable progress on energy issues.

(A two compact disc set of the four-part energy documentary *Running on Empty* is available for a nominal charge from Vision Trust, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt organization chartered for educational and public interest projects. Call (505) 898-06988 or email visiontrust@worldnet.att.net.)

### General Meeting Programs

Monday, July 16th at 7:30PM  
SLIDE SHOW ON THE CABEZON WILDERNESS AREA

Join Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness member Garrick Delzell to view his new slide presentation on the proposed Cabezon Wilderness area, Northwest of Albuquerque. See related article on the next page.

Where: The Unitarian Church at 3701 Carlisle NE, at the corner of Commanche, in the Social Hall.

Monday, August 20th at 7:30PM  
RIO GRANDE ISSUES FORUM

Will we as a community choose to keep the Rio Grande as a living river with it's glorious cottonwood bosque or let it become a concrete lined channel? Join us for a panel discussion of experts on the issues we face.

Where: The Unitarian Church at 3701 Carlisle NE, at the corner of Commanche, in the Social Hall.

### Drink the Rio Grande..? What's Next ?

We have reported in recent Sierrans, on the progress of the City of Albuquerque's plan to divert water from the Rio Grande, treat the water at a new treatment plant and provide it to all of us through the City's water system. This project is the centerpiece of the City's Water Resources Management Strategy (Strategy) which outlines the steps that we will take to decrease Albuquerque's reliance on the aquifer, establish a drought reserve, and use renewable surface water from the San Juan-Chama Project.

The next step in the process is the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which will consider the possible diversion alternatives.

We have just learned that the planned release date for the DEIS is late August. The release should be announced in area newspapers, on the City's website ([www.cabq.gov](http://www.cabq.gov)) So, let's reaffirm our promise to participate in the DEIS process, and let the city know that we want construction of the drinking water purification facility and diversion of the San Juan-Chama water from the river to be done with careful management. Let's be an Involved and Caring Community and do this right!

## Central New Mexico Group

PO Box 25342  
Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87125-5342

### Executive Committee (area code 505)

Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
Steve Capra	843-8696	scapra@nmwild.org
Kellie Goudreau	232-3721	catomt@aol.com
Martin Heinrich	232-7151	mtheinrich@aol.com
Edward Sullivan	259-5966	sully@nmwild.org

The Executive Committee normally meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM. We meet at various locations, so please contact one of us for the meeting location, or if you have issues you would like to discuss. The meetings are free and open to all members.

### Project Leaders (area code 505)

Conservation Chair		
Steve Capra	843-8696	scapra@nmwild.org
Membership	Open	
River Issues		
Richard Barish	232-3013	rbarish@aol.com
Outings		
David Ther	260-1533	grelbik@att.worldnet.net
Programs	Open	
Water	Open	

*The Central New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club depends on the efforts of volunteers. To join us, give any of us a call.*



## Energy Forum

by Blair Brown

On Monday, June 18th, the Central NM Group presented a panel of experts to talk about energy issues, including the Bush Energy Plan and deregulation of the electric utility in New Mexico. The panelist were:

David Sommer, Nuclear Engineer at PNM

Julie Grey, Public Relations Dept and Wholesale Power at PNM

Marlene Brown, Electrical Engineer in Photovoltaics research at Sandia National Laboratories

Ben Lucc, Ph. D., Physicist and President of the New Mexico Solar Energy Association

Jennifer Taylor, Energy Specialist with NM Public Interest Research Group

Lynne Thomas, Global Energy Consultant, writer and energy consultant

The program was ably moderated by Gail Ryba, Chemist, fuel cell specialist, and Energy Issues Chair of the Rio Grande Chapter

David Sommers provided details about the excellent operational record of Palo Verde Nuclear plant, which provides about 20 percent of New Mexico's electricity. PNM owns about 10 percent of the plant, and six other utilities own the rest. Having been built in 1986 it still has 24 years of operation under its current standard 40-year permit.

Julie Grey indicated that PNM gets 57% of its electricity from coal, about 20% from nuclear, and the rest from gas and oil. She acknowledged that they are missing renewable energy, and they are looking for opportunities to build renewables, most likely wind, which is very affordable, although it does have some environmental issues. She also highlighted the growth in the western United States, pointing out that Nevada had grown 66% in the last 20 years, with the resulting need for power to meet his growth. In comparison, New Mexico grew 20% over the last 20 years.

Marlene Brown talked about the improvements in photovoltaics over the last 50 years, and mentioned that photovoltaic panels now come with 20-year warranties. She also mentioned the fact that they can be part of a decentralized power system, where each individual has their own power plant. She noted that with power costs rising, investment in photovoltaics becomes more and more financially advantageous.

Ben Luce listed many of the issues surrounding climate change, and also itemized a number of reasons that he is opposed to nuclear power, some of which are non-technical. He posed the question, "What if the world had had all of these nuclear reactors during each of the World Wars?," and highlighted concerns about security around nuclear power in a potentially

unstable world. He finally returned to the need for conservation and the immense opportunity for power generation from solar and wind sources that we have in the Southwest.

Jennifer Taylor talked about the pollutants that are a part of coal-fired power plants, especially soot, carbon dioxide and mercury and the potential impact on human health. She mentioned her concerns with new coal plants being proposed in southwestern Colorado.

Lynne Thomas gave an overview of the deregulation process in New Mexico, and called on members of the audience to make their views known to the Public Regulation Commission (PRC), which is the elected body that regulates energy issues here in NM. In her view, the PRC especially needs to hear that we want them to include renewable sources in any energy plans for the future.

A lively question and answer session followed and members of the audience were naturally interested in a wide variety of issues.

There was an attempt to sort out the true cost of electricity from the Palo Verde nuclear plant, when operation, maintenance and construction costs were included. Without construction costs the costs are low, but construction costs are complicated by the fact that PNM had to write-off a large portion of the cost. This led to a tangential discussion of subsidies given to the various types of power. Ben Luce stated that renewables get only a fraction of what the nuclear and fossil fuel industries have received. Others voiced their objections to nuclear energy, while others asked where else we would turn when fossil fuels began to run out.

Audience members were also specifically interested in the costs associated with retro-fitting existing homes with renewable energy. Many people emphasized that conservation is the most cost-effective way to save energy in existing homes, including improved insulation and tightening air leaks in the home.

Many voiced on their concerns with the Bush 'Energy Plan', with comments ranging from objections to drilling in ANWR, the absence of conservation in the plan, lack of incentives for renewables, to the excess profits being earned by energy suppliers at the expense of citizens in California and elsewhere.

Conversations continued after the meeting formally ended and out into the parking lot. All agreed that we must continue to publicize the issues before us and make our views known to our elected officials.

Central New Mexico Group News

### Children's Water Festival Volunteers Needed!

On November 8 & 9, 2001, 1000 4th grade students from throughout the Middle Rio Grande area will gather at the Albuquerque Convention Center to spend a wonderful day learning all about water!

Water Wonders! is the 2001 Festival theme. Students will test their water knowledge in lively games of Dipdip Pursuit and Water Jeopardy. They'll create a mini-river, use a groundwater model to 'see' how water moves underground and a computer model to make projections of water use into the future. They'll look for 'bugs' in the water to determine its purity, purify water from the Rio Grande and build aquifers from edible ingredients. They'll converse with the Water Wizard who 'knows all there is to know about H<sub>2</sub>O'.

With so many students gathering, we'll need plenty of help! We are seeking volunteers to be guides for student groups, assistants for activity presenters, runners to deliver extra supplies wherever needed, photographers, snack servers.... you're probably getting the picture, here! If you'd like to help send a note to [waterwiz@pioneerwest.net](mailto:waterwiz@pioneerwest.net)

*Editor's Note: The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club is a financial contributor to the Children's Water Festival.*

### July General Meeting

#### Cabezon Country, The Wild Heart of New Mexico

On Monday July 16<sup>th</sup>, Garrick Delzell of the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness will present a slide show on Cabezon Country, one of New Mexico's signature wildlands. The Coalition, which includes 54 member organizations and businesses (including the Sierra Club), is putting together a proposal to protect over 160,000 acres of wildlands in and around Cabezon as Wilderness. This area, including high desert plains, Douglas fir and spruce forests, and sandstone canyons as well perennial streams provides habitat for many different species of wildlife including Elk and Black bear.

These sacred lands are being threatened by the pressures of growth from Albuquerque, in the form of irresponsible Off-Road Vehicle use. In addition to this, these lands are also being eyed by the Bush administration for potential oil and gas leasing.

Please join us for this evening of slides to celebrate Cabezon Country, and to find out how you can help.

### Central NM Group Volunteer Opportunities

**Programs Organizer** - Someone who could help us organize our monthly General Membership meetings. The more interesting tasks are finding interesting programs and coordinating with presenters, but you can also help writing the radio announcements and providing them to the radio stations, and preparing and mailing the postcard we send our members. No experience is necessary and we'll help you get going.

**Office Helper** - Folks who can spare a couple of hours a week to retrieve our phone messages or pickup our mail and direct it to the proper people. We will show you what to do. It's not hard and you can work on your own schedule. Great way to learn about the Club and the issues we're all working on.

Contact Kellie Goudreau, 232-3721, [catomt@aol.com](mailto:catomt@aol.com) or

Blair Brown, 259-7190, [bblairb2@aol.com](mailto:bblairb2@aol.com)

### Outings

#### Sunday, July 15 - Manzano Crest Trail Hike and Brush Clearing

We will continue our quest to have the Manzano Mountains Crest Trail cleared of brush from end to end. Actual location will be determined as the date approaches. Everyone can work at their own pace and we'll probably finish clearing by 2 to 3 in the afternoon. Should be some nice views, wherever we choose to go. Bring plenty of cold water (2 liters min.), lunch, and work gloves, if you have them. Leaders will provide cold drinks, when we return to the cars.

Meet at 8 AM at Franklin Plaza at Juan Tabo and Central, but RSVP by previous Wednesday, so we know how many to expect.

Contact Tom Petencin 271-9928 [tompeten@juno.com](mailto:tompeten@juno.com) or

Rick Hurley 299-8401 [rickhurley@aol.com](mailto:rickhurley@aol.com)

#### Sunday, July 22 - Spruce Spring - Red Canyon Loop Hike

Manzano Mountain Wilderness. Moderate hike to the crest of the Manzano Mountains. Great stands of ponderosa, pinon, and juniper. Alpine meadows at crest with great views. 7 miles round trip, 1200 ft. elevation gain. Leisurely pace. Call David Ther 260-1553.

#### Wednesday, August 22 - Piedra Lisa Viewpoint Hike

Hike to a wonderful rock formation at ridge on South Piedra Lisa Trail, west side of the Sandias. Trail is somewhat steep, but the views all the way up and down are worth it. 7 miles round trip, 1200 ft. elevation gain, moderate pace. Call Doris Campbell at 884-4809.

A Note from the Chair

**A Fresh Start**

A new mayor, a fresh start, another opportunity to improve our quality of life here in El Paso! The people have spoken. We hope it's only the beginning of a new populist movement here. The idea of a politician winning office with the help of many small gifts from the people, as opposed to the old model of huge contributions from developers and other special interests, is truly exciting!

You and I must now follow through. Our new mayor is only human. Those voices he hears will influence him. It is hard for us with our "real" jobs to compete with those who are being paid, directly or indirectly, to influence him. Of course he will be listening to your City Council Person. Go to your representative's weekly breakfast meeting when you can.

Mayor Caballero is considering a move toward the City Manager form of government. Trained professionals are usually very efficient and have a wider perspective than politicians. We can learn from other cities' successes and failures, particularly in planning for controlled growth, or no growth! At this point El Paso's only growth plan is to stay within the city limits!

Immediate overhaul of the antiquated Public Service Board is needed! Here is arguably the most important governing body in the city, controlling thousands of acres of our prime real estate! They are nice people, but without professional training in civil engineering. We suspect El Paso Water Utilities likes it better that way! And where are the environmentalists? Well, lately we've been sitting in the audience. We even sat in the audience at Congressman Reyes' recent all-day Water Summit where it took eight hours before the words "population growth" were uttered! (Thanks, Moderator Suzanne Michaels!)

Don't get me wrong about professionals. We all have professions where we do what we've been trained to do. If you go to a surgeon, he'll probably cut. If you consult the Army Corps of Engineers, you'll probably get a dam. If you ask me to play at your wedding you'll get a violin! So who is going to stand up for the river, or the earth? That, my friend, is where you and I, the amateurs, come in. You and I, the "lovers", unencumbered by the "reality" of the professionals, can dream big ... about returning the Rio Grande to its former glory, about restoring our lands to their pristine conditions!

So, let's continue our work! See you Tuesday mornings at City Council. Call your Ex Com member for more ideas!

Laurence Gibson,  
Chair El Paso Regional Group Sierra Club



El Paso Mayor Ray Caballero

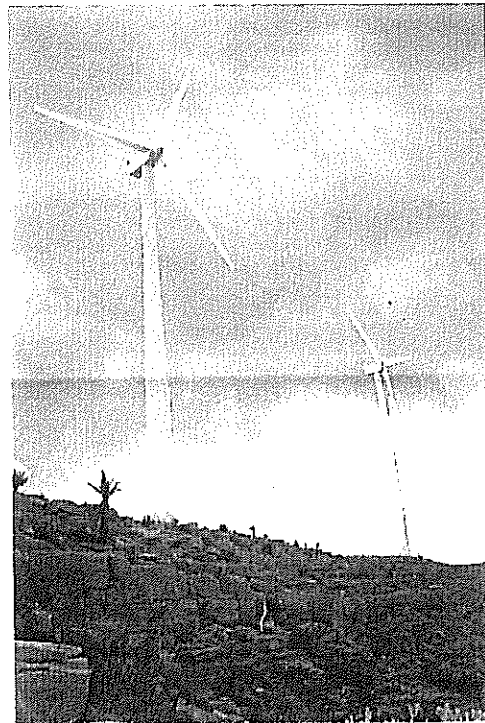
**El Paso Electric Selling Wind Power**

El Paso Electric (EPE) has two new wind turbines that supply electricity to its customers.

EPE's Hueco Mountain Wind Ranch, near the Huaco Mountains east of Horizon City, is about 35 miles from downtown El Paso. The EPE Wind Ranch has two 660-kilowatt V-47 Vestas wind turbines with 77-foot-long rotor blades (154 foot diameter) mounted on 213-foot towers. They are expected to generate about 3,000,000 kWh of electricity a year. This is enough to power approximately 500 average El Paso households.

The electric company also offers its customers the opportunity to invest in renewable energy on a voluntary basis. The Renewable Energy Program enables customers to contribute to the development of renewable energy by purchasing blocks of 100 kWh.

For more info, see EPE's web site: [www.epelectric.com/internet/site/www\\_epe/site.nsf/home](http://www.epelectric.com/internet/site/www_epe/site.nsf/home).



**ICO Summer Activities Hit Full Swing**

**Getting Ready for Chile Pepper Challenge**

Now that students and teachers are out of school, Inner-City Outings (ICO) is bicycling and hiking on an accelerated schedule. Each Monday morning, adults and children from Life Management Center (LMC) are training on road bikes and mountain bikes to increase their stamina and skill. The ultimate goal is to participate in the El Paso Bicycle Club's Chile Pepper Challenge at the end of September. The Chile Pepper Challenge is the club's annual fund raiser which benefits a number of different charities. Last year the club donated \$750 to the ICO program to support its cycling activities with children. Cyclists are encouraged to ride between 25 to 100 miles. Helping in the effort are bicycle experts Ed MacBeth and James Herrera. James is a new member of the LMC staff. He teaches bicycling and kick boxing.

As the first venture in this continuing series James, leader Richard Rheder, and LMC staff Lisa Tomaka trained two teenage volunteers on May 28 who will help with other young participants. Volunteers

Mary Herrera and Mary Lou Parker rounded out the team. On June 4 Ed MacBeth helped with bicycle safety tips as five students bicycled down the levee.

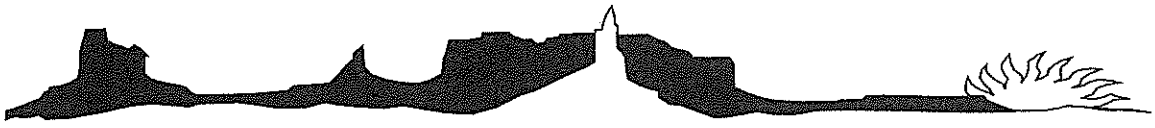
**Bicycle 101**

LMC is also doing a "Bicycle 101" course for beginners two Wednesday mornings each month this summer. Lucy Baxter, James, and Richard helped three youngsters learn the basics of how to maneuver on a bicycle. One extra attraction is that every participant in any bicycling event receives a free helmet from a Texas Department of Health grant.

**Going Batty**

Six young participants from LMC also hiked to Aztec Caves in the Franklin Mountains with Lucy, Richard, and Silbie Long. One creative participant enticed stragglers to get to the cave for lunch by pretending to see bats in the cave. His "oohing" and "aahing" resulted in several participants "seeing" these missing mammals. The boundless energy of some participants led to new and exciting ways

"ICO" continued on next page



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to go downhill on slippery slopes — jumping, sliding, and "rear end" techniques were demonstrated.

**Starting Out Young**

The El Paso ICO group has taken delivery of about \$1,200 worth of equipment to enable families with younger children to enjoy hiking. This includes four papoose-style carriers and a big wheel stroller ordered through a grant from REI. These will come in handy with the hikes proposed for Family Service of El Paso's Post-Adoption Services Program, which tends to involve younger children. During the March hike to Dripping Springs, several families had to literally carry "lap" children all the way.

**July 7-8 Volunteer Training**

For this great program, refer to the Outings listing below.

**Steering Committee Meeting July 11**

ICO will have a meeting on July 11 at 7 PM (following Sierra Club's Executive Committee meeting) at Jaxon's on the east side. Any interested parties are invited to attend.

**Outings**

**Jul 7-8: ICO Car Camp & Leader Training Retreat**

Place: East Canyon, Gila National Forest  
Class: Easy with optional day hike  
Length: 0-3 miles  
Elevation gain: 0-200 feet  
Leader: Ted Mertig: 852-3011 (H)

Join our award-winning ICO leaders for an educational and recreational car camp to beautiful East Canyon in the ponderosas. Just off McKnight Road on the back way to Lake Roberts, this undeveloped spot will give plenty of space for the group to learn some leadership skills while picnicking, hiking, and winding down from city life.

The weekend will feature first aid training by Dr. Kathy Ritger and hands-on situation training for potential difficulties. All Sierra Club personnel are invited. A must if you'd like to become an ICO leader, but not limited to ICO folks!

**Jul 21: Hueco Tanks Walk**

Place: Hueco Tanks State Park east of El Paso  
Class: Easy  
Length: 3 miles  
Elevation gain: None  
Leader: Jamie Newlin: 581-1471 (H)

While you can arrange a tour of this state park on your own with a phone call, this will be our first group tour in two years. There is a \$4 per person admission charge payable to the park. Jamie will arrange with the park for a guide, hopefully one of our certified El Paso Group members. We'll try to start early to catch the fresh desert morning at this historic oasis. Hallowed ground for the Tiguas, Hueco Tanks features world-class rock art and climbing walls surrounding its life-sustaining water holes.

**August 3-5: Redstone Park Backpack (Rescheduled from June)**

Place: Western Gila Wilderness, New Mexico  
Class: Moderate  
Length: 10 miles  
Elevation gain: 1,200 feet  
Leader: Rollin Wickenden: rwickgila@aol.com

Come enjoy a pleasant weekend trip to one of our favorite destinations in the Gila. We will depart El Paso on Friday night and drive via Silver City and Glenwood to our campsite on Whitewater Mesa. On Saturday morning, we'll drive the Bursum Road through Mogollon and on to our trail head near the Silver Creek Divide. The hike follows trail #206 over a ridge with views of the canyon of Whitewater Creek. The trail then contours down to our campsite at Redstone Park (elevation about 8,000 feet) on Whitewater Creek. Be prepared for cool nights and cold mornings. After exploring the area, swimming in the creek, and spending Saturday night at Redstone Park, we will pack up and retrace our steps to the cars.

The Lorax - El Paso Group

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

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## Outing Outlook

by Norma McCallan

The summer solstice is just behind us. Indian paint brush, yellow pea, and penstemon dot the woodlands. Tiny blue forget me nots appear on the tundra as the last of the winter's snows melt. What a time to enjoy the outdoors! Below are listed a potpourri of hikes from our Groups to whet your appetite. Be sure and check each of the Group pages for more details on these and additional hikes. Always call the leader to confirm time and meeting place. All phone numbers are area code 505, except as otherwise noted.

♦ **July 7/8 ICO LEADER TRAINING RETREAT, EAST CANYON GILA NATIONAL FOREST.** TED MERTIG 915-852-3011. If you have had any thoughts about becoming an Inner City Outing leader, this trip is the time to check it out and learn leadership skills in the ponderosas.

♦ **Sat/Sun July 14/15 TRAIL MAINTENANCE BACKPACK, DOMINGUEZ TRAIL.** John & Linda Buchser 820-0201. The little known Dominguez Trail starts 5.5 miles up the West Fork of Santa Barbara Creek and proceeds over an 11,200' ridge to drop down to the Trampas Trail. Parts of it were formerly a shepherder's route, and the aspen show names and dates from the early 1900s. Trail work will focus on clearing out trees downed by an avalanche several winters ago. Reserve a place by July 10. We will also run August 4/5 and Aug 25/26, reservations needed 4 days prior (by July 31 and August 21 respectively).

♦ **Sun July 22 SPRUCE SPRING/RED CANYON LOOP HIKE, MANZANO MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS.** David Ther 260-1553. Moderate, 7 miles r.t. loop to the alpine meadows and spectacular views on the Manzano Crest.

♦ **Sat July 28 GRASS MOUNTAIN HIKE.** John Jasper 263-5466. Moderate hike to this flat mountain near Pecos. Great views. Dogs ok.

♦ **Fri Aug 3-Sun Aug 5. REDSTONE PARK BACKPACK.** Rollin Wickenden rwickgila@aol.com. Moderate backpack, 10 miles r.t. into the remote Western Gila Wilderness.

♦ **Sat Aug 4 FRIJOLES HIKE & BIKE TRIP.** Ilse & Rainer Bleck 662-2368. Hike up Frijoles Canyon in Bandelier N.P. to Ponderosa Campground, return to Visitor center by bike, if interested.

♦ **Sun Aug 19 HAMILTON MESA HIKE.** Dave Bryant 757-3477. Moderate hike to this broad mesa in the Pecos Wilderness. Many wildflowers.

♦ **Wed Aug 22 PIEDRA LISA VIEWPOINT HIKE.** Doris Campbell 884-4809. Hike to a wonderful rock formation on the west side of the Sandias. 7 miles r.t.

♦ **Sun Aug 26 LA JUNTA, PECOS WILDERNESS.** Tobin Oruch 820-2844. Strenuous loop hike through a variety of meadows, streams and forest. Dogs ok.

♦ **Sun Sept 2 GOLD HILL or WHEELER PEAK HIKE.** Steve Markowitz 983-2829 (or 983-1962). All day, strenuous hike to the very high country. Gold Hill is 12,711, Wheeler 13,161.

### Other Non-Sierra Club Events

♦ **Sat July 7 GRAND OPENING FOOTHILLS TRAILS.** Our hats off to Dale Ball, director of the Foothills Trails Trust and former Director of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, who has obtained approval and funding for a master system of trails on the east side of Santa Fe. The first 2 in this system will be open for public use on this date. See article in SF pages.

♦ **Fri Aug 31-Mon Sep 3 NEW MEXICO WILDERNESS ALLIANCE GILA BOX/BLUE RANGE INVENTORY OUTING.** Michel Scialdone 843-8696. Car camp trip, day hikes, and inventory of wilderness potential, near the Arizona border.

**OUTINGS CENTENNIAL—2001** marks the centennial of the outings program in the Sierra Club. Eight years after the birth of the Sierra Club, John Muir reasoned "if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish." Well, it hasn't been that easy, but starting with an annual summer outing in the Sierras that grew to some 200 participants, the Club has broadened its outings to include hundreds of national and international trips and thousands of local Group and Chapter outings each year. Many individuals, once introduced to the wilderness have gone on to become Sierra activists fighting the many threats to their favorite landscapes.

**INPUT WANTED:** Articles/photos about hiking/backpacking/biking/cross-country skiing; equipment commentaries; threatened or endangered areas; trip information you would like to share with the Rio Grande Chapter membership. Let's get some more outings content in the Sierran! Contact me, nmccallan@mindspring.com, or our editor John Buchser jbuchser@earthlink.net.

## Stay Informed

### Get E-mail on the Latest Happenings

To Receive and Post Messages on current happenings of environmental interest in the Rio Grande Chapter: This list is open to anyone interested. Send a message to [listserv@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:listserv@lists.sierraclub.org) With the contents: SUB RIO-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

To receive alerts only on issues that have been determined by your group or chapter's leadership to be especially important (which is a much lower volume of email):

Send a message to [Listguard@sierraclub.org](mailto:Listguard@sierraclub.org)

With the subject line:

Your 8 digit member number (on any Club mailing label)

With the contents, depending on which group you are in:

SUB RIO-NORTH-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

SUB RIO-CENTRAL-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

SUB RIO-SOUTH-ISSUES YourFirstName YourLastName

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LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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