Group Campaigns Will Be Needing You
By Jennifer Johnson

Last September, at the “Rio Grande Chapter Retreat,” Chapter activists decided to address five issues in the state as “Group Campaigns.” These issues are Sprawl, Water, Wilderness, and Sand and Gravel Mining.

The National Sierra Club has prepared a guide for developing campaigns and the Chapter used this guide to determine which, among numerous issues proposed, the Chapter would pursue. The following checklist was used for selecting an issue as a campaign:

- The issue relates directly to the Sierra Club’s national conservation priorities and impacts your local community.
- The campaign will result in a concrete and quantifiable improvement in the environment.
- The issue is something a broad range of people will understand and care deeply about.
- The issue is widely and deeply felt in the community at large.
- The organization has the resources (money, people, and connections) necessary to win this campaign.
- The issue will bring people together. It will not be internally divisive and will not alienate outside individuals or organizations that may be needed as allies down the road.
- The issue will strengthen the chapter or group by recruiting new members, energizing current members to a greater level of activism, developing leadership skills, and building coalitions with other like-minded organizations.
- The campaign is winnable — having clear targets, a realistic time frame, and achievable goals.

The issues that were chosen met enough of the above criteria to make them viable campaigns. Of course picking the campaigns is the easy part. It

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News of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

May/June 2001

Of Land and Culture
Justice and Public Lands
Ranching in Northern New Mexico
By Ernest Ardenico

"History will judge green by whether they stand with the world’s pulse." — Tom Tuglowski, social ecologist

This report was commissioned by the Quivira Coalition (which common sense solutions to the rangeland conflict) and the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club to determine and explain the potential consequences of ending public lands ranching in northern New Mexico. It was funded by both organizations with support from the McCure Charitable Foundation. All opinions and conclusions are the author’s, unless otherwise indicated.

This report is not intended as an apology or excuse for those who abuse public lands. There is no argument that irresponsible livestock grazing can have a negative impact, especially in this arid region, on important ecological processes, on erosion, on natural vegetative succession, on watershed health and productivity. There is no argument that some ranchers have not demonstrated new approaches to holistic range management, in the right places at the right times, can be genuinely sustainable.

"New approaches to holistic range management, in the right places at the right times, can be genuinely sustainable."

much success with sustainable management in the past. Serious problems exist and they have to be dealt with. On the other hand, it’s important to recognize the fact that ranchers clearly have a vested interest in conservation and sustainability. It’s also important to recognize the growing evidence that conscientious grazing practices and new approaches to holistic range management, in the right places at the right times, can be genuinely sustainable and even enhance natural habitat and biodiversity.

Background
In the mountainous mesas of northern New

See Land on Page 5

New Mexico’s Vanishing Wildlife
By Jim Bailey

The decline of New Mexico’s wildlife has been a gradual process. Few of us have noticed. Twenty-two species of native fish, amphibians, birds and mammals no longer occur in our state. Can you name half of them? The grizzly bear, northern gray wolf and black-footed ferret come to mind fairly easily; but five other mammals are also gone: mink, otter, lynx, box springs cotton rat and Merrison’s subspecies of elk. In addition, wolves may have been native to our state, but no longer occur here. Also, a few wild bison persist in the Valley Vidal, but none are on native New Mexico range. As for birds, we have lost sharp-tailed grouse and sage grouse. The bison and lowland leopold frog are also gone.

Our native fishes have been most decimated. New Mexico no longer has sturgeon, gar, Colorado River cutthroat trout, cat, bonytail chub, beautiful darters, phoebus minnow, Rio Grande minnow sturgeon, Pecosus pupfish or freshwater drum. In total, almost 3 percent of the 837 native wild vertebrates of New Mexico are gone. This includes 14 percent of the 69 native fishes.

Less of wildlife continues in modern New Mexico. We have 95 wild vertebrates listed as threatened or endangered. Two more, the Chiricahua leopard frog and lesser prairie-chicken are candidates for listing. Endangered species include the Rio Grande silvery minnow, Gila trout, Gila monster, ridgenose rattlesnake, aphonado falco, the aphonado falco, the catfish, southwestern willow flycatcher, pinyon jackrabbit and desert bighorn sheep. Another 27 species of invertebrates—ants, freshwater clams and crustaceans—are also listed as threatened or endangered.

New Mexico’s endangered species program in the Game and Fish Department is small and underfunded. It cannot adequately document the decline of our wildlife, let alone develop recommendations for recovery. Of 118 state-listed threatened and endangered species, at least 27 are not reviewed by any state agency. Some, including the buff-collared nightjar and windmill mantis, may be gone from New Mexico. Others, such as the Mexican gray wolf, lists of endangered species include the following:

- Thick-tailed and Gwamie’s prairie dogs and hooded and hog-nosed skunks.
- Species are not lost without impacts upon other members of New Mexico’s flora and fauna. Loss of prairie dogs has impacted black-footed ferrets, burrowing owls, ferruginous hawks, golden eagles.

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The "Clean Power Act of 2001"

By Dirk Muszkopf, Sierra Club's Environmental Quality Program

We all use electricity in our daily lives, almost without thinking about it — running the lights, listening to the radio, and using computers. If we stopped and learned about the energy we use, we would encounter some shocking realities about the impact of our actions on our planet and on our health.

With all the amazing technological advances over the last century, one thing that has not changed very much is our reliance on fossil fuels, in particular, coal to generate electricity. In the US today, coal is the number one source of electricity produced (45%), followed by nuclear sources (15%), hydropower (15%), natural gas (9%), oil (2%), and other non-renewables (1%).

At the center of the largest share of our nation's energy, coal-fired plants are also some of the dirtiest.

Many older coal-fired power plants have enjoyed a loophole in the Clean Air Act, allowing them to comply with pollution control standards. As a result, as many as 600 existing power plants are between 35-50 years old and are up to 10 times dirtier than new power plants built today.

The Clean Air Act was passed in 1990, which included a mandate to get it passed because of the strong opposition from the coal-fired power plant industry. Congress assumed that these plants would come into compliance with the Clean Air Act standards and that it would be cost-effective and economically feasible.

What you can do:

- Call, e-mail, or write your Representative and two Senators asking them to cosponsor the "Clean Power Act of 2001." More information on contact: dirk.muszkopf@sierraclub.org.
- Conserve in your home and office by:
  - Replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs;
  - Unplugging after the day;
  - Installing low-flow showerheads and faucets;
  - Keeping the furnace and air conditioner working properly;
  - Buying energy-efficient electronics and appliances;
- Call back the phone number of any seniors or businesses that you have read about; and
- Writing, faxing, calling or e-mailing your Senators, Representative, and the President.

Edited by Jennifer Johnson, Chapter Conservation Committee Chair

Zoning Ordinance Unveiled

By Jennifer Johnson

For the past several years, San Diego County has been in the process of re-zoning lands within the county. The County has finally completed the Draft Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. If you live in or near San Diego County this document should interest you. It can be purchased at the County building in San Diego. The cost is $50 for the Ordinance (96 pages) and $5.50 for the colored maps (8.5 x 11 size). Maps include: Agriculture, Buildings, Canals, Cemeteries, La Cuesta, La Jara, La Madera, Pena Blanca, Playitias, Reglins, Rio Rancho and Corrales, and San Ysidro. You can view the them upstairs in the map department.

This is an important document outlining how land in San Diego County will be used in the future. The Board of County Commissioners will be considering the Ordinance at their meeting on May 3, 2001.

What you can do:

- Get a copy of the Draft Ordinance by calling 367-7500. Ask for Sherman in Planning and Zoning. She can also tell you where and where the Board meets.
- Read the document and look over the maps.
- Write a letter to the Planning and Zoning Department and the Board of County Commissioners detailing your views of the proposed County zoning. PO Box 40, Burnsville, NM 87004
- Attend the Board of Commissioners' meeting on May 3, 2001.

Bike-to-Work Day, May 18

By Geil Rhoe, Energy Chair

The year 2001 marks the 45th consecutive year that the League of American Bicyclists has declared May to be National Bike Month. The League is also promoting Bike-to-Work Week from May 13 - 19th and Bike-to-Work Day on Friday, May 18th.

Bicycle advocacy organizations around New Mexico are encouraging local businesses and organizations to promote bicycling for transportation. On May 18th the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque will host a lunch event in front of the UNM Bookstore, and Intel in Rio Rancho will provide morning bike commuters with treats.

New Mexico Alternate Transit in Santa Fe is expected to hold a Bike-to-Work Day event on the Plaza on May 18th, and Santa Fe will also be the site of the Second Annual Santa Fe Bike Festival at the RailYards on Saturday June 2, 2001. Groups in Las Cruces hosted a celebratory bicycle ride for Earth Day on Saturday April 21st. Look for a Bike-to-Work Day event in Grants, as well.

The latest information on New Mexico Bike-to-Work Day events can be found at http://www.shopspokes.org

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Legislative Report

Final Report:
The Sierra Club at the 2001 Session of the New Mexico

By Doug Fraser and Paul Pasyk, Sierra Club Lobbyists

The 2001 Session of the New Mexico State Legislature ended at noon on March 17 with an estimated 84 bills (with one notable exception, the Native American Religious Freedom Act) made into law. The session was marked by a plethora of introduced bills, memorials and resolutions, over 2,000 of which some 200 were related to the environment.

The session was marked by sharp battles between factions of the Democratic Party over its leadership. The loss of the former speaker of the House of Representatives, Representative Raymond Sanchez, who lost his seat during the election, and the removal by a coalition of rebel Democrats and Republicans of the former President of the Senate, Manny Aragon, created ripples of conflict throughout the entire session.

In fact, many Democrats voted as would a Republican and vice versa. This added confusion to the normally confusing and circus-like atmosphere of the Roundhouse (aptly named).

It was difficult and, at times, impossible to follow all the legislation we hoped to. By working closely with other environmental groups, however, we managed to cover almost everything of importance.

Our work was made even more difficult by the feeling among certain legislators, particularly from rural counties and some other groups, that environmentalists are elitists responsible for many of the problems, including wildlife, facing New Mexico, developers and its agricultural communities.

The debates over the silvery harmless and other endangered species, and the animosity felt towards the federal government’s environmental regulations are cases in point.

And lengthy debates about pondering Billy the Kid, adopting a state history textbook and other very low priority issues did not help.

Among the major achievements were:

- The passage of a memorial, House Joint Memorial (HJM99) creating an interim task force under the leadership of Land Commissioner Raymond Powell to write legislation controlling sand and gravel pits and their environmental restoration, sponsored by Rep. Roger Madole (D-Sequatchie); Chief Larsen, the Sierra Club Mining co-Chair, will be the member of the task force.
- Passage of a law (Chapter 66) protecting reptiles and amphibians sponsored by Rep. Ray Beyer (D-Socorro);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 43) giving the State Engineer’s office more power to enforce correct usage of water resources sponsored by Pauline Guthbels (R-Albuquerque);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 101) which permits New Mexico to cooperate with neighboring states in prosecuting violators of wildlife laws sponsored by Rep. Mimi Stewart (D-Albuquerque);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 218) which protects the right to petition government-sponsored by Reps. Patsy Trujillo Kanner (D-Santa Fe) and Pauline Guthbels (R-Albuquerque); please see discussion below;
- Passage of a law (Chapter 151) which creates measures to protect the night sky against light pollution sponsored by Rep. Pauline Guthbels (R-Albuquerque);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 5) delaying the deregulation of the electricity industry sponsored by Senator Michael Sanchez (D-Belen);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 323) voiding use of tax loss to the list of hazardous wastes sponsored by Rep. Brentan (R-Hobbs);
- Passage of a law (Chapter 267) which restricts drilling of new domestic water wells sponsored by Senator Carlos Cisneros (D-Taos);
- Passage of SB83 which establishes an interim committee to restructure the State’s agencies responsible for the management of water resources sponsored by Senator Diane Snyder (R-Albuquerque). The Sierra Club has been asked to join the interim committee; 
- Defeat of HB616, a takings bill sponsored by Rep. Rob Burpo (R-Albuquerque);
- Defeat of SB138 which attacked the endangered species act sponsored by Senator Steve Konrad (R-Carlsbad);
- Defeat of HB77 which adversely amended the State’s Subdivision Act supported by Rep. James Taylor (R-Albuquerque);
- Modification of bills concerning the use of pesticides and herbicides.

A successful effort was made to pass an anti-SLAPP law. This bill protects people from being sued for millions of dollars by unscrupulous developers whose only purpose is to silence public opinion opposing their projects. Such suits have ruined many citizens lives.

At first the trial lawyers association and the BCI opposed the bill, but after careful mediation and negotiation their support was obtained. Guiding this bill through committee after committee was not easy. Anti-SLAPP legislation has been a major priority for the national Sierra Club since the early 1990’s.

Another major effort was made to defeat the Fire Damaged Tree Removal in National Forests Law now incorporated in Chapter 7 of the session’s laws, otherwise known as Senate Bill 1. This law addresses a very serious problem, the risks of more wildfires in New Mexico and the loss there adequate and yet sometimes excessive measures taken in the past by the Federal Government to prevent and combat wildfires.

The bill allows county authorities to unilaterally enter National Forests, using contracted lumber companies, for the purpose of thinning undergrowth and removing fire damaged trees.

The bill is clearly unconstitutional. In addition the Federal Government has already made funding available to address the problem. What is needed is not conflict, but more funding and cooperation. The bill became an issue of state’s rights and of land grant access to Federal lands. The media widely reported our opposition.

Throughout the session we maintained a bill watchlist and informed the executive committee of the latest developments. We held a number of coordination meetings with other environmental lobbyists.

We would like to thank those who responded to our alerts and contacted their representatives and senators.

All Creatures Great and Small

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

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Land from Page 1

Mexico and southern Colorado, a land-based Indo-Hispanic village culture persists against all odds. For over four centuries, these isolated ranching and farming communities survived the rigors of frontier life in the farthest corners of the Spanish kingdom, generations of raiding by nomadic tribes, rebellions, wars and conquest, the vagaries of weather, depopulation of communities lands, and desperate poverty. But they have done more than simply survive. A distinctive culture developed in the region that remains a dynamic and delectable presence today. And after centuries of continuity and adaptation, rural villagers have acquired a powerful sense of belonging, a rooted kingly justice ‘as once was heard in their ‘homenland’ that has become rare in the modern world. Their families have lived here for centuries; their roots are in the land; their hearts and souls are there. ‘The is really mysterious,’ explained Father Bonita O’Cain in that 1970.

Through rich in culture and history, the Indo-Hispanic have not shared in national economic prosperity throughout most of the twentieth century. Even today, while the United States enjoys one of the strongest economies in history, New Mexico remains the poorest state with the highest rate of ‘food insecurity’ in the nation. And the northern counties of Luna, Socorro, San Miguel, and Grant are among the poorest in the state.

Impoverished rural families have come to depend on the meager economic buffer provided by grazing a few cattle or sheep and what is now US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land. This is not to say that economic opportunities in history that makes the northern New Mexico situation unique, is the fact that many of these “public” lands were community land grants that were dismantled and lost over the last hundred and fifty years through the federal and state governments.

It is clear from the research, and obviously obvious to local ranchers, that ending public lands grazing here would have a devastating impact on an already strained local economy, on the social fabric of the region, and on the continuity of a centuries-old cultural tradition. Though not an issue that is normally considered within the realm of environmental justice, a zero-grazing policy would have an impact on a largely rural, Hispanic population that is already impoverished, though not necessarily in a way that is entirely negative as any dissatisfaction with a national or state environmental policy that threatens the health and welfare of disenfranchised populations of people of color in any other context.

Law professor Ellen Goffman frames environmental justice as ‘a challenge that all should be concerned about in a society that is committed to the ethical precept of basic fairness.’ Providing support and economic and social safety nets for those less privileged has long been part of our national ethos, but fall short of recognizing the importance of social and economic justice as integral components of environmental policy.

Environmental Justice

During the last decade of the twentieth century, the environmental movement was forced to recognize the fact that people of color and the poor have been left out of the dialogue about environmental issues and often fall through the cracks of environmental regulations. While we were being worried about the pressing problems of dwindling wildlands, dammed, overcropped and polluted rivers, and biodiversity, poor people got poorer and continued to bear the brunt of toxic industry. Certain environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, responded commendably by broadening their approach to at least consider environmental justice issues. But some people and some issues continue to fall through the cracks.

Discrimination in the implementation and enforcement of environmental policies and public health impacts from environmental conditions or hazardous waste are unquestionably critical problems, but environmental justice is above more than that. It is also about widening the discourse on environmental issues to include the perspectives and concerns of people of color and the poor.

In 1992, then Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Fischer called for a “friendly takeover of the Sierra Club by people of color,” and optimistically declared that “the struggle for environmental justice in this country and around the globe must be a primary goal of the Sierra Club during its second century.”

A anthropologist at a recent conference I attended suggested that there will be no allure to protect unless we address social justice issues to share the world’s resources more equitably. Protecting natural ecosystems will become a zero-sum game, and the people of color are closest to the hole.

Environmental justice is not just, then, unless it recognizes the inescapable global forces of capitalism and corporate control of resources. These are not just environmental justice, but economic justice, labor justice and social justice

Despite many ongoing efforts in northern New Mexico, bridging the persistent gaps between environmental, social, and economic concerns is still a challenge. It struggles and emerges comftable categories and limits the limits of the more strident and dogmatic on both sides of the proverbial fence. For lack of better terms, this is a zero-sum game, that peeling hybrid activism is even occasionally, and unfairly, lumped together with the distinctly anti-environmental “use–use” movement.

Rancher and professional range manager Virgil Trujillo says it well. “The environmental movement has been excellent in the sense that it makes us aware of our environment. But we’ve got to stop the nonsense of wasting all those resources, attracting each other, yelling at each other. Turn the stories to: to start yelling for each other, for each other’s health, to speak.”

Findings

While the abrupt poverty and economic crisis that spawned the New Deal era of the 1930s may be ancient history to most Americans, northern New Mexico still carries that legacy. Any way you spin the statistics, New Mexico ranks as the poorest state, the three northern counties of Luna, Socorro, and Taos are even poorer, and the local Hispanic population is among the poorest of the poor. All socioeconomic indicators paint a consistent picture of chronic poverty and limited access to education and other opportunities. In this context, most local ranchers are just scraping by, supplementing meager incomes from other jobs with the little economic buffer provided by grazing a few cattle on public land.

Northern New Mexico cattle ranching is a small-scale enterprise. The average size of a grazing permit on the Santa Fe National Forest, for instance, is 41 cattle. Only eight percent of all permits on the forest are for herds anywhere near a commercial scale of 100 or more. With the characteristic small operations in this struggling economy, profit margins from ranching are slim to none. Instead, local Hispanic ranchers often view their livelihoods as “hands-on-the-footh” that can be tapped in hard times, used as a backup for emergencies, useful for unpredictable periods of unemployment, or to pay college tuition for their kids. Basic subsistence by way of milk and meat are an important part of that bank account for most families.

“That’s kapt,” says Aparicio Giraldo about the impact to his family ranching operation of ending public lands grazing. A 1994 study found that if public lands grazing were shut down, 28 percent of those surveyed in New Mexico would continue to operate, but on a smaller scale, and 45 percent would not. In a strapped economy, realistic alternatives are few and far between.

While ranchers in northern New Mexico may in fact be economically viable in a purist economic analysis, “the danger of straight and narrow thinking is that it fails to take into account the non-economic, non-quantitative, but no less important, issues of social well-being and cultural vitality. A conventional economic view also usually fails to take into account other tangible but indirect consequences of straight economic decision. Local ranchers say that the grazing might not yet be a worthy pursuit in our modern, technology-based, nanoway economy, but exchanging a rural economic struggle for an urban one, or pushing rural people closer to poverty and welfare, clearly makes to some economically or socially.

Responsibility and respect toward the environment is expressed in numerous and well-documented traditional land-use practices, cultural values, customs, sayings or cliches, and oral history containing parallels of the ethics and morality of caring for the land. No culture on the planet can claim a history of perfect, sustainable natural resource stewardship. Nonetheless, an ethos of restraint is and has been the guiding principle of resource use, or cultural ecology, in northern New Mexico for centuries.

A history of astonishing injustice surrounding the loss of communal land grants is a prevalent theme among local villagers, and particularly relevant to questions about public lands. In a nutshell, “The establishment of national forests in New Mexico also resulted in the abrogation of Spanish-American property rights. Much of the land now included in the National Forest System in northern New Mexico was once part of the many Spanish and Mexican land grants in the region. The inhabitants of the numerous Spanish-American mountain villages located their settlements in valleys and along streams whereas valley floors were large enough for village sites and irrigated farmland plots. The forested mountains, usually part of the village communal lands or ejidos, were used for grazing, hunting, fishing, and ob-

See Land on Page 6
Land from Page 5

“‘These are not people with a narrow anti-environmental, pro-industry agenda. The world is not that black and white in northern New Mexico. They are just reasonable men who care about the land, their communities, and their culture, who are simply trying to make a living like everyone else. Here is some of what they have to say.’

In a common lament, George Muros says that there is a ‘presumption that traditional users have ruined or will ruin these public lands. In general, our riparian areas and forests are relatively healthy.’ Policy and management decisions that affect cultural health are out of local ranchers’ hands, he says. ‘To the extent that our forests’ health has deteriorated, it can largely be attributed to management policies that have been mandated and imposed on us. Policies like indirect incentives for suppression, and prohibitions on timber and firewood removal have left our forests overgrown with little forage for our cattle or wildlife and susceptible to catastrophic fire.’

Another common lament, and something that unifies local villagers, is the way the national environmental agenda often strips local, small-scale, potentially sustainable resource use with multinational, profit-driven, industrial-scale exploitation. As Aparicio Gurulé says, ‘Don’t compare them with Ted Turner and those big kids, you know?’

About policy issues that deal with bio-diversity, Virgil Trujillo says, ‘Well, I think the endangered species protection is critical, but while we get narrow-mind and focused down on an individual species, again—and keep forgetting about how the whole picture ticks to the other—that then causes a big concern for me. If we’re losing our watersheds also to this tree encroachment, and so on and so forth. If it’s affecting the way the river runs and so on and so forth, it concerns me too when we focus and narrow-minded ourselves down to one little issue and spend millions of dollars on it, instead of standing back and looking at the big picture... It’s a complicated issue. I share my environment with all creatures. All have equal rights.’

Conclusion

With threats to the natural resource-based rural economy, draft visions of widespread resort development and subdivisions are not far-fetched in this area, which is fast being discovered, and gentrified, by well-heeled immigrants from the cities. But this is more than a ‘cows versus condos’ argument. It is more than an argument of cows versus the loss of a more lifestyle or profession choice. It is an argument of cows versus the loss of a unique culture and society that have endured in this region for 400 years.

Without access to public lands, it’s clear that an age-old tradition, and an essential local economic pursuit, would probably be lost. Losing legal title to community land grants is one thing, but losing access to centuries-old traditional grazing lands would be the final blow. Not only would this fabric of social, cultural, and economic continuity begin to fray, but local ranchers who are barely staying afloat as it is in a flourishing local economy would find themselves in worse condition, struggling to provide even the basic comforts, food, and education for their families. It would be yet another in the long legacy of injustices to impoverished Hispanic villagers.

Note: If you would like a copy of Arcegale’s full report, contact the Santa Fe Group at 983-2703.

Selection Process for 2002-2004 Executive Committee Underway

Each year, three dedicated members are selected by the Rio Grande Chapter. These members each serve a three-year term.

We are fortunate to have a hard-working executive committee with a wide diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

This group consists of nine elected members and a representative from each group. They determine the priorities for the chapter and thereby influence the Club’s endorsement. As the leading membership-driven group in the area, we can make a difference for the environment.

The following folks have volunteered to help find a suitable slate of candidates. If you know of anyone (you?) who has an interest in being involved in a leadership role with the local Chapter, please have them contact one of the following folks:

Cecily Vix (Central)
Cheryl Blevins (Southern)
Ann Falckner (Fay Jasper)
Mike Jacobson (Tejas)
Doug Fraser (Santa Fe)

The candidates who are selected by the nominating committee will be announced in a future issue of the Rio Grande Sierran. At that time, there will be an opportunity to become a candidate by petition.

Campagna from Page 1

is only that the real work begins.

Next comes the establishment of conservation and organizational goals for the campaign. The conservation goals need to be things that can happen in a particular region and political climate and given the time frame and available resources. A campaign should leave a group larger and stronger than before it was undertaken, and the organizational goals should specify exactly how this will be achieved and give a way of quantifying and measuring success.

Right now individual groups are in the process of planning the campaigns. Nearly every campaign, if in order to be successful, has the recruitment of new activists as one of its first goals. It is hoped they will prove interesting and relevant to our members and will encourage you to get involved.

“A campaign should leave a group larger and stronger than before it was undertaken”

Last year we hired a Staff Person, Jennifer de Garmo, to help the Chapter increase activism and member participation and to help us launch and carry out successful campaigns. Jennifer has been working hard with the groups to plan their campaigns. Her presence has been worthwhile by helping several of our groups recognize and increase member participation.

The Santa Fe Group Sprawl Campaign is working to prevent development around the new bypass and on Santa Fe County open space purchases.

The El Paso Group Water Campaign is acting as Watchdog of the water utility board (PWS), has a Conservation education project in progress, and is looking at the mayoral campaign as an opportunity for change.

The Albuquerque Group Water Campaign has enlisted an eleven member committee of new activists, and is working to see that Conservation efforts slow and reduce West Mesa sprawl.

Cliff Larsen solicited the aid of people from several communities which have been impacted by Saab and Gravel mining. Though their efforts to pass a bill in the legislature failed this year the effort will continue next year and prospects appear good that legislation will be passed that will regulate this overlooked environmental issue.

The Individual Groups should be keeping their members informed about the progress of their campaign. So watch the pages of the upcoming issues of the Sierran and be prepared to help out when the campaign calls for volunteers.
Valles Caldera

Managing the Valles Caldera National Preserve
By Jennifer Johnson

The remarkable and historic legislation, drafted by New Mexico Congressional delegates, and the final Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton, authorizing acquisition of the Valles Caldera, makes plain the vision and intent of its drafters. First, that because the Valles Caldera constitutes a unique land mass, its scientific, scenic, historic, cultural and natural resources, including rivers and ecosystems and archaeological, geological and cultural resources, should be protected and preserved for future generations. Second, that it could provide public recreation opportunities for hiking, fishing, camping, cross-country skiing, and hunting. Third, that certain features that have historical and religious significance to Native Americans should be protected and preserved. Fourth, that through operation of the Preserve as a working ranch under a management regime that would protect the land and resource values of the property and surrounding ecosystem, it can serve as a model for sustainable land development.

The Rio Grande Chapter (RGC) of the Sierra Club advocates careful stewardship of the Preserve and believes the best management scenario should be based on the principle that the best return to the public comes from emphasizing aspects of the Preserve not commonly found anywhere else in the Southwest or the nation.

We feel that many of the Preserve’s attributes are either rare or of unusually high quality. These attributes, in their combination, create a unique, scenic, and management situation, such that they account for the most important values the property has to offer. These attributes include the Preserve’s pristine appearance, which makes it seem to be a place of ancient origin and whose beauty could potentially be shared with little risk of being bothered by others; scenic quality, with an exceptional mix of broad valleys, forested mountains, expansive views, and changing seasonal diversity of flora and fauna; volcanic features, which are famous among the world’s calderas and of great scientific value; and wildlife diversity, which ranges from the secretive Jemez mountain salamander, to the ubiquitous herd of elk.

At the numerous public meetings of the Board of Trustees, a very vocal and spirited constituency of activists have been advocating against road closures and for trails in the Preserve being opened to off-road vehicle use.

Forest Service data show that forest roads cause landscape fragmentation, soil erosion, and erosion 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 four reaches of the Preserve, within quality viewpoints, 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 values. We also recommend that noise-producing off-road vehicle traffic (including ATVs, motorbikes, motorcycles and snowmobiles) be limited 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.

For More Information:
• Visit the Valles Caldera Preserve and the Board of Trustees’ web page on the Santa Fe National Forest web site at http://www.fs.fed.us/39646/

San Juan Power Plant Polluting Four Corners Area
By Jennifer Johnson

Constructed in the 1970s and located 15 miles northwest of Farmington, New Mexico, the San Juan power plant has a cumulative electric generating capacity of 1,600 megawatts. It essentially operates all the time at the highest rate sustainable, burning approximately six million tons of coal per year. The coal that fuels the plant comes from two nearby strip mines. The coal from these mines is high in sulfur by western standards, containing an average of 1.6 lbs. sulfur dioxide per million BTU.

Because the San Juan plant is so old, it has sub-standard technology for controlling sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, and nitrogen oxide emissions. Between 1991 and 1997, the plant’s consumption of coal increased 39% yielding a 55% increase in nitrogen oxide emissions, and a 63% increase in sulfur dioxide emissions. It is probable that a similar increase in particulate matter emissions occurred because there was no change in particulate matter control technology or operation.

"A yellow-brown haze hangs over the Four Corners area. Many area residents are concerned about the air pollution."

San Juan’s 1998 operating permit states the facility emits into the atmosphere: 25,815 tons of sulfur dioxide—roughly equal to the entire sulfur dioxide release from all sources in Los Angeles, 5,046 tons of particulate matter—equivalent to the cumulative annual tail-pipe emissions from 3,750,000 late model cars, 35,816 tons of nitrogen oxides per year—equivalent to the cumulative annual tail-pipe emissions from 2 million late model cars, and 14 million tons of CO2 every year equivalent to cutting down approximately 376 million trees every year.

Each unit at San Juan has a different set of owners but overall the plant is owned by PNMR, Tucson Electric, So. Calif. Public Power Authority (SCPPA), Tri-State G&T. N.M. Public Power Agency, City of Farmington, Los Alamos County, City of Albuquerque, and Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS).

A yellow-brown haze hangs over the Four Corners area. Many area residents are concerned about the air pollution resulting from the plant’s emissions and alarmed by the increase in respiratory illness. Some residents suspect the plant was situated where it is so that emissions would escape to Utah or Colorado thereby making enforcement difficult.

What You Can Do:
• Write a letter to the Editor of your local newspaper.
• Talk to friends and neighbors about local illnesses they suspect are related to plant discharges. Then, confront your local politicians about the problem and urge them to seek a solution.

Trail Maintenance in the Pecos, July 14-15
By Linda Buchler

See ancient bristlecone pines in New Mexico! Look a peregrine in the eye from twelve feet away! View shepherders’ tree carvings from the early 19th century! Climb over 1,400 feet in less than two miles.

And clear out the Dominguez Trail, which was constructed by local and national Sierra Club members and which 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 Trinidad Trail.

Parts of the trail coincide with a former shepherders’ route where the aspen display runs 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 ("minery whips"), Pulaskis, 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 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.

We 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 Buchler at 820-0201 by noon Thursday July 12, we need this information in order to coordinate with the Forest Service.

Additional trips are planned for the weekends of August 4/5 and 29/30 to continue the work.
Legislature Awash In Water Bills
By John Buchanan Water Issues Chair

The legislature this year continued with the trend we have observed the last several years: about 25% of the bills have something to do with water. The painful reality is that we cannot possibly analyze this many bills.

As a result, the Club works with other organizations that recognize the importance of improving our ability to deal with the complex issues of water law in New Mexico.

Our strategy this session was to focus on bills that were particularly important, that were not otherwise being covered by other organizations' lobbyists, and that had a chance of being signed by the Governor.

The New Mexico Aquaculture Association was successful in getting a memorial passed that is quite important to the traditional farmers in northern New Mexico, but it is also important to those of us in the cities. This memorial restricts surface water rights transfers across the Rio Grande between Santa Fe and Los Alamos. Although this memorial does not have the force of law, it strengthens the hand of the State Engineer, who has not approved any surface water transfers from north of this gauge at this time.

It is important in helping growing communities like Santa Fe County realize that there is only a finite amount of water available, and we must recognize these limits as our human population grows. [Debbie Rodella, HUM]

One version of a water-right notification bill was signed by the governor. Although this bill was not as strong as other notification bills that were presented to the governor, it does take a step in the right direction.

This bill helps to insure that the affected public is notified in a local newspaper of applications for subsurface water rights. [Joe Szel, HB133]

Additional monies were approved for completion of regional water planning. Thousand Friends of New Mexico was the principal organization helping to insure that this $1.5 million appropriation survived a second opportunity to the Governor's desk. The Governor should be thanked for not taking this appropriation hostage. [Max Cull, HB197]

The City of Santa Fe was successful in getting legal recognition of a policy it established several years ago. The City Council recognized that City residents putting in private wells to avoid drought period water restrictions was detrimental to the water table, as well as unfair to those taking short showers! However, the City's policy of restricting new wells within 300 feet of existing water lines was not backed by State law. Now it is. [Carlos Cisneros, SB62]

The Club's major success was the survival of State Engineer Enforcement Authority. Upto now, if water-wasters were using far more than their rightful quantity of water, the only thing the State Engineer could do is take them to court. The actual court proceeding could be years later. In the meantime the waste could continue, with no real downsides for the irrevocable water users. Now, a procedure is in place for the State Engineer to have a public administrative hearing, and to charge up to $100 a day for the wasteful use. [Pauline Gebel, H443]

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SANTA FE GROUP MEETINGS

DOUBLE FEATURE II Tuesday, May 15, 7 PM

Public Lands Ranching in Northern New Mexico

Ernest Atencio, local anthropologist, writer, activist, and author of a Joint Report by the Quiviw Coalition and the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club entitled Of Land and Culture: Environmental Justice and Public Lands Ranching in Northern New Mexico, will discuss that report and its conclusions about the social, cultural, and economic consequences of ending the 400-year-old tradition of public lands ranching in Northern New Mexico.

This free report has been lying off our shelves and has generated discussion on KUNM, in High Country News and the Santa Fe Reporter. It influenced adoption of the current Sierra Club Grazing Policy, opening a dialogue on environmental justice and public lands issues.

We hope you will join us for an interesting discussion.

PAUL CAMPOS - Santa Fe County Commissioner

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERNOW OPENfor 2002

Newly elected in November 2000, County Commissioner for District 4, Paul Campos, has lead experience and previously served as Santa Fe County Attorney. Based on his responses to our questionnaire and a personal interview in which he expressed his views on sprawl, open space and water, the Sierra Club endorsed

SANTA FE GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB

621 Old Santa Fe Trail - Suite 10 - Plaza Desira - Santa Fe - New Mexico - 87501
988-983-2763

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

On April 23rd, I had the honor to speak to Ms. Rebecca Wolfe's fifth grade class at the Rio Grande School on Camino Charra, near St. John's College. On its own initiative, the class developed a community service learning project to help organize an event of their choosing and they chose the Sierra Club for the project. Following a small presentation on John Muir and his love of the nature surrounding us, they presented to me, on behalf of the Class, a check for just under $300. The class had raised the money through the sale of handmade pillows and many other items.

This wonderful occasion caused me to ponder for a moment on the reasons why — and all of us — have kept on doing this type of work — to protect and enjoy the natural environment. Looking into the eyes of those nine-year-olds, with their wonder and love of nature and "critters" — I felt renewed. Following a very tiring, but successful, legislative session (see the Legislative Report on front page), I needed that reminder. Additionally, I want to personally thank our newest Group ExCom member, Paul Paski, for all of his comradeship and endurance during this 2001 Session.

After some time for reflection, I would like to give you some of my thoughts on why we, as a community, took so much "heart" during the legislative session on two issues: First, last summer's forest fires, i.e. we allowed the accumulation and build-up of forest fuels; and second, endangered species, i.e. we care more about animals than people. But the talk to the fifth graders reminded me that the Club is concerned about both — about humans and nature as an integral whole. We must protect our young people's wonder in what God created.

CERRILLOS HILLS PARK TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Join the Cerrillos Hills Coalition on Saturday May 19, Sunday June 10, and Sunday June 23 to help construct a trail for this new county park. Meet at 8:30 at the parking lot on Gravel Pit Road. Call Paul Cassamano (988-6936-wk) or Glen Wickle (466-8692) or visit the CHC website at www.cerrilloshills.org for further information and updates. This is not a Sierra sponsored event, but it is being published as a service to the Coalition and for interested members.

SKY BASIN EXPANSION PROPOSAL

Hearing Before the Santa Fe County Commission

Tuesday, May 8, 5 PM

The Sierra Club will hold a public hearing on May 8th at 5 PM in the Commission Chambers of the Santa Fe County Commission Building to consider the request of the Santa Fe Ski Company for variances associated with their proposed construction of a 5000' triple chairlift and associated new ski runs, as well as increased snowmaking capabilities. The proposed lift is to be constructed at tree line on Deception Peak, about 2000' below the top, and will require the clear cutting of about 25 acres of thick, old growth spruce/fir forest. Although the community "saved" The Big Tesuque Basin several years ago after a contentious battle over the ski company's expansion plans, these and a number of other developments remained in the final plan approved by the Forest Service.

Deception Peak (often called the False Peak of Lake Peak) has been a popular hiking and snowshoeing destination for many years and has remained surprisingly pristine, considering that it is adjacent to all the existing construction and hubbub of the Ski Basin. In summer it is decorated in a or carpet of alpine flowers, including the tiny blue alpine forget-me-not. Once construction and the clear cutting start, the peak will become a visual nightmare and bear a large permanent scar. The steep slopes below the peak will likely suffer severe erosion once cut. The ski company maintains it needs new facilities to ease current crowding and congestion, but in the face of likely extreme of weather due to global warming and cyclical climate change, how many Santa Fe winters will even have significant snow? If you are concerned about the increasing sprawl and degradation on our mountains, please come to the hearing at the Santa Fe County Office Building at the corner of Grant and Sandoval Streets and/or send comments to the County Land Use Administrator, PO Box 276, SF 87504. For more information on this issue, call Page Powell (988-2753) or Scott Carson (962-4810), SF Ski Basin Containment Coalition.

GREEN THE EARTH AND PREPARE

Third Annual Peace Day Presented by Cranes for Peace

August 6 - In Santa Fe

Peacemakers who love children and would like to help with education and other peacemaking activities please call NetWorks Productions (989-4682) www.networksearth.org
SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS

Sat Sun May
5 Strewnau Trail on La Luz Trail as far as trail conditions permit. Call leader for details and reservations. Stephen Markowitz (983-2829)
6 Easy Hike on Chamisa Trail. 5 miles RT, 1240' elevation gain. Leave 8:30 AM. Jeff Jesse (665-2380)

Saturday, May 11, thru Sunday, May 20
A Week in Eololomts Country Two moderate, exploresy 3-day backpacking trips in the little visited north end of the Eololomts drainage, off the Burr Trail Horse/Whorlweaver Canyons and Upper Quicks. Also several day hikes, depending on time available. Dogs okay. Norma McCallum (471-6005)

13 Moderate Hike to Sierra Pelada. 5 AM. Call leader for reservation. Ned Sudborough (474-4055)
14 Moderate Hike in high country. Call leader for details and reservations. John Jasper (983-4613, 263-5466 cell)

19 Moderate Hike Call leader, Lionel Sorece (983-6715)
20 Moderate Hike on Dockwiler Trail. 8 miles RT, 1700' elevation gain. Carpool from Santa Fe at 9 AM, or meet leader at north end of Glorieta passway 1/2 at 9:30 AM. Call for reservations. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)
22 Easy Birding Walk in or near Santa Fe. Beginners, non-hikers, and experienced birders all welcome. Bring binoculars. Leave 8:30 AM. Ron Duffy (982-2890)

27 Strewnau Hike to Cerro Pedernal. 9 miles RT, 1300' elevation gain. Some rock scrambling, some off-trail hiking. Call leader for details. Michael DiRossi (665-6465)

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 June
1 Strewnau Trail to Puerto Nambro on Winzer trail, about 11 miles, 2000' gain. Leave 8 AM. Lionel Sorece (983-6715)
7 Easy Hike to Glorieta's ghost hotel, 6.5 miles, 850' gain, people and dogs by reservations. Tobie Orzech (820-2844)
8 Very Strewnau Trail to Lake Katherine and beyond, 15-20 miles, 500-4900' gain, leave 7:30 AM. Jeff Jones (66-2389)

Saturday, July 14 and Sunday, July 15
Strewnau Trail Maintenance Backpack on Dominguez Trail near Santa Barbara Canyon. Leave 7 AM Sunday. Call by noon Thursday 7-12 to confirm attendance. See separate article for details. John & Linda Becker (820-2021)
15 Moderate Hike on Aspen Vista trail to Tenque Peak, 12 miles, 2000' gain. Leave 8 AM, call for reservations. Ned Sudborough (474-4055)
18 Moderate Hike in high country, 9-10 miles, leave 8 AM. Art Judil (982-3213)
21 Easy Bird-watching Walk in or near town, leave 8 AM. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
22 Strewnau Hike in the Jemez. Leave 7 AM. Norbert Sperlich (982-1990)
28 Moderate Hike to Grass Mountain in Pecos, dogs okay. Leave at 8 AM. John Jasper (1-505-263-5465)
29 Moderate Hike to Nambe Lake off Winzer Trail, 7 miles, 2100' gain. Call for reservations. David Bryant (1-505-757-3477)

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* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES
Group Executive Committee: Group Conservation Committee:
Tuesday, June 4, 6:00 PM Tuesday, May 22, 7 PM
Tuesday, July 2, 6:00 PM Tuesday, June 26, 7 PM
Water Pot-Luck (John Becker's house): Monday, May 14, 6:30 PM
No June Water Pot-Luck

Rio Grande Sierran—Page 10
Drink the Rio Grande... What's Next?
By Steve Gormley

On April 30, 2001, over 150 people gathered at a Town Hall, "The Water, Our Future, Our Next Challenge: Using Our San Juan-Chama Waters." This day-long event, the next installment in the City of Albuquerque's ongoing public involvement program, provided an opportunity for participants to hear about the Drinking Water Project and to discuss the issues that are raised by this project.

As we have reported (January/February 2001, Sierra), in just 4 years we will all be drinking recycled river water and it will come right from our faucets. This project is the centerpiece of the New Mexico Water Resources Management Strategy (Strategic Water Resources Management 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 Town Hall program included presentations by John Stump, Water Resources Manager, City of Albuquerque and Michael Bitter, Project Director, CHIM Group, followed by a panel discussion with questions from the participants.

During lunch, Water Managers from Tucson and El Paso spoke about the experiences of their communities as they made the conversion from ground water to surface water resources.

This experience broke into small groups to discuss the preferred method for diverting water from the Rio Grande, a moveable dam that can be raised and lowered as necessary. Water quality, the need for maximum conservation and the links between water supply and growth management were discussed.

A report will be issued by Shared Vision, the sponsoring organization so that folks who could not attend can read about the results and conclusions.

The next step in the process is the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), as required by the New Mexico Environmental Policy Act (NEMPA). The DEIS will consider three possible diversion alternatives:

- Aggregate Diversion - water would be diverted at the Agua Fria Dam, located 5 miles north of Berrendo, and conveyed to the water purification facility via the existing Albuquerque Mato Cuad and Albuquerque Diversion Dams and a new pipeline to be built in the North Diversion Channel right of way.
- New Surface Diversion - a dam would be built across the river just north of Pescadero on the river. When the dam is filled, water would be conveyed to the purification facility.
- Subsurface Collector - perforated pipes would be placed below the river bed just north and south of Pescadero. Water would then be conveyed to the purification facility in order to collect usable water, set of collector structures and pumps, each with 11 collector pipes would be needed.

So, let's make a promise to the DEIS process, to build the drinking water purification facility and divert the San Juan-Chama water from the river with careful management.

Let's increase conservation and get serious about growth management.
And most important, let's be an Involved and Caring Community and do this right!
Electric Deregulation, PNM and our Need to Stay Vigilant

By Steve Capin

This past winter we have all been witness to the pitfalls of electric deregulation. Not a sight to be seen as three recent events speak of New Mexico’s electric woes. Slipped into every report is the message that says we need more power, more plants, more transmission lines and less regulation to upgrade the building of this new generation of electricity. What remains unspoken is that it is as good as with the environment. What prize will it take the environment? And what ever happened to conservation and alternative energy?

To begin to understand the issues we see in heading towards, we must turn to our own Public Service Company of New Mexico or PNM. Back in 1992, Congress ruled that all utilities must have the same rate for all power customers, including their companies that want to export power into the grid of one percent of the country so that it can be purchased and resold in a fair and equitable manner. This is the idea of competition. This implies that a state power was not passed on to consumers or to customers or private business, but now took notice that nothing prohibited the states from doing so. By 1996, New Hampshire had taken the lead and was dismantled. New states twenty-one states are dismantled and the need for a power plan not to grow. Although remote areas in Colorado have made many legislators retire and some states are slower or reversing course. Much of this information for this article came from a recent policy paper prepared by John H. Coates 22 October 2002 issue, authored by Allen Weisman. Mr. Weisman laid out in great detail PNM, deregulation and some of the previous environmental consequences that may be taken.

In the new world of deregulation, there is a language that refers to the needs of a world of power generation. Increasingly companies are merged, the competition that once unannealed lines are scarce and as you might imagine, the distribution of the market. PNM is in the midst of this, but only at least in Arizona, a concern. For it here that PNM wants to connect power transmission lines from the Palo Verde Nuclear Plant (our nation’s largest operating nuclear power plant at 2,355 megawatts) in Texas to New Mexico. As PNM points out, only one time line and should, by industry standards, have a hump, in addition the company claims eager to create a connection of power transmission lines that is much too small and the U.S. currently energize, in fact making the country in power not just trade. This concept comes keeping with NAFTA and the opening of free trade between nation. In reality, this connection appears to be good for New Mexico, with more to contribute and with the need for less environmental regulation and considerable savings, with power being shipped north to the rich California. It is thought that current the U.S. is not targeting to expand power plants, President Bush and his son il official act as President Bush before and on behalf of the electric industry to change Mexico laws and allow plants to be built in its Southern States to power California. Getting a sufficient power supply is rare, as the transportation companies in between Mexico and Utah as the new first step. Recordings of the 1 billion 658 billion 95% of our power, perhaps solving the transmission and power plants PNM could derive from this transmission.

As part of the plan is also an expansion of the Palo Verde Nuclear Plant, site of the nation’s largest nuclear power plants. The Palm Wash Electric Plant power in Phoenix. For all the PNM, the potential plant is Phoenix.

This new plant will serve as a reminder of the need for more plants and more power lines for a largely urbanized industry in the future consumers. It’s 2003 energy is to be offered to 1000 customers who placed solar panels on their roof and reduced their consumption. Furthermore the federal and state government had underwritten this program with tax credits, many more people would make solar energy a part of their personal power grid. Once done, the need for new plants and transmission lines would be financially reduced, at least to the extent the construction of a new or new plant. In north of New Mexico we are blessed with 300 plus days a year, we need solar part of the equation. Making our present power plants and less expensive for us to reduce our state’s residents in water and air pollution problems for capturing and dumping the wildcard of our landscape steaks hits us directly for New Mexico.

As this cold winter comes to a close one thing remains clear, the electric power industry and our state in federal government are tough and well financed opponents. Their lobbying efforts have included the creation of liberal and conservative groups in one state, sending millions of dollars to fight any action or bills designed to stunt deregulation. Here in 2003, we continue to pay for the pain that the industries invested major political programs of the 70s. Part of that bill includes "staggered savings" to recover PNM’s 10% share of Palo Verde and its enormous cost overtimes. Yet once again we are put in a "veto" and told that the answer to is build more and conserve, while well intentioned is not realistic.

The true answer is that we must let our elected officials know that building more is not the solution. We want the rejection of all the industries, such as Senate bill 7, sponsored by Republican Ron John of District 19, which gives tax breaks for companies using alternative energy sources to power operations. But bills such as these should be designed to find working families and other than the same. As President Bush said in his State of the Union address "the answer to the energy crisis in our nation’s capital. So far, tax credits, etc.

Outings

Wednesday, May 10th – Tsankawi Stargazing Hike
Meet at 6:45 PM (exact time, Franklin Plaza (Juan Tabo & Central). We’ll camp out at Tsankawi Trail (short trail on the east side). This hike is easy, make sure equipment (weather permit it), plus the sun goes down (around 600-700). Proceeding material with a "hike" or "book" tail, a picnic area, requires no head of the greens or less. A considerable reduction. Procurement plastic is our second most environmentally degrading industry next to the chemical industry. The less head, the less translation material. Dines is for meateat.

We have some of the highest waste generation costs in the country. Our decent facilities are now real and local. It’s also the reason Why we have a high price of our energy. It is cheaper to buy a new one and the electricity, it is a fact. And what do we do? Most of our energy is made by coal and now we can’t afford the coal we don’t need. What we have in place is this system that turns this into a necessity. We are going to pollute more because we must pollute less. Let’s put it this way. Reuse them when we can. If we can’t be made to think about how much we throw away, we will not be able to think about how much we conserve.

The New Mexico Recycling Coalition is aware of this and is trying to bring state in the system in respect to waste diversion. Give us a call 205-982-4700.

Page 12—Rio Grande Sierran
A Note from the Chair

Resist the Proposed PSB Land Sale

by Lawrence Gibson

Now is the time to watch carefully for the next step in the city’s sale of 1,326 acres of prime real estate sought under Franklin Mountains State Park, south of Transmountain Road. When the PSB announced its intent to sell as January of this year, it spoke of building our tax base and using the money to build down water rates.

The El Paso Times recommended caution that the sale of huge area not become a liability and asked, “Will the $12 million to be realized by the PSB be offset or overwhelmed by water demands of second settlement?”

We feel this sale, which may be a done deal by the time you read this, is a textbook example of the kind of urban sprawl that even cities with plenty of water are beginning to avoid. As for holding the line on water prices, that is absurdly wrong approach. The earth’s most precious resource has been a “throw-away” commodity here for way too long. We tried to voice things accordingly to how much we pay for them.

We urge you to watch carefully for imminent action on the PSB’s agenda at www.epwpw.org. Meetings are usually at 8:00 AM every other Wednesday morning. When this deal does go down, it’s going to happen fast!

Get yourself over to the state-of-art meeting room at EPWP action from Cielo Vista Mall and let the board know you care! The sale would then show up on the City Council Agenda for the following Tuesday morning posted at www.ci.ep-passco.wt. When it comes up, call or meet with your City Council rep at their weekly breakfast meeting. Then be there to support them on D-Day!

New Mexico’s Vanishing Wildlife

by Jim Bailey

The decline of New Mexico’s wildlife has been a gradual process. Slowly but surely, the backdrop for our lives. Twenty-two species of native fish, amphibians, birds and mammals now no longer occur here. Almost 3% of the 800 native vertebrates of New Mexico are gone. This includes 14% of the 67 native fishes.

The grizzly bear, northern gray wolf and black-footed ferret came to world early on. Others include mink, otter, lynx, but springs cotton tail and Mearns quail are also gone. Wallabies may have been native to our state, but no longer occur here. A few wild Tristan bustard in the Valles Vidal, native to the ancient range. As for birds, we have lost sharp-tailed grouse and sage grouse. The boreal owl and lowland leopard frog are also gone.

Our native fishes have been most decimated. starry, week, Colorado River cutthroat trout, cut, barbital gourami, beautiful shrimp, clown, Rio Grande blunthead shrimp, Palomino popfish or freshwater drum.

Loss of wildlife continues in modern New Mexico. We have 92 wild vertebrates listed as threatened or endangered. The Chiricahua leopard frog and lesser prairie chicken are candidates for listing. Endangered species include the Rio Grande silvery minnow, Gila trout, Gila monster, ridgway’s railsnake, splendida falcon, porcupine, southwestern willow flycatcher, pine martin and desert lighthorse. Another 27 species of invertebrates – such as freshwater clams and crustaceans – are also listed as threatened or endangered.

New Mexico’s endangered species program in the Game and Fish Department is small and underfunded. It cannot adequately document the decline of our wildlife, let alone develop recommendations for recovery. Of 118 state-listed threatened and endangered species, at least 27 need reviews of their status, distribution, life histories or taxonomy. Some, including the ballet-colored mormon and white-tailed jackrabbitt, are gone from New Mexico. Many species need taxonomic review, using modern methods of genetics.

Worse yet, a 1998 Game and Fish Department memo indicated that at least 54 native species are of concern and need study for possible listing as threatened or endangered in New Mexico. These include 23 invertebrates, 12 fishes, 2 frogs, 7 birds and 16 mammals. Among these are the Rio Grande sucker, blue catfish, Chiricahua leopard frog, black swift, burrowing owl, black-tailed and Gunnison’s prairie dogs and hooded and long-nosed salamanders.

The loss of species impacts other members of New Mexico’s flora and fauna. Loss of prairie dogs has impacted black-footed ferrets, burrowing owls, fermination hawks, golden eagles, mountain plovers, rattlesnakes and salamanders that frequent prairie dog towns. Declining marmots and skunks may seem unimportant, but they are the prey that gants fish depend upon. Long-nosed bats are important pollinators of night-flying plants. In fact, most intensities of our flora and fauna are unknown. The gradual loss of species results in a slow unraveling of native biotic communities. As these communities become degraded and simplified, their abilities to withstand perturbations such as drought, forest fires or insect outbreaks are impaired. The ability of the native community of plants and animals to provide products and services for mankind is reduced.

Gila Trout Ready for Downlisting, Limited Fishing

by Jim Bailey

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considering a recommendation to downlist Gila trout from endangered to threatened, and to allow limited fishing of certain populations of the species. The Gila Trout Recovery Team, a committee of biologists, drafted the recommendation. For more than a decade, the Team has overseen cooperative efforts of state and federal agencies to renovate streams and reintroduce Gila trout.

Gila trout were federally listed as endangered in 1967. Historically, it had occurred in the headwaters of the Gila River in southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona. In the 1970s, only five populations were known, all in the alluvial headwater streams. Today, Gila trout exist in 14 streams. Additional fish are maintained in hatchery-based stock. The 1995 Recovery Plan stated that downlisting to threatened status would require replication of each known genetic lineage of Gila trout in streams sufficiently far apart that the annual events, such as forest fire in a watershed, could not eliminate a lineage. Each genetically pure indigenous lineage now occurs in at least two streams. Conditions for downlisting have been met. However, the Recovery Team and state and federal agencies continue to restore Gila trout to additional streams. The goal is to reestablish a sufficient number of populations to allow defining the species and removing it from management by Arizona and New Mexico.

Limited fishing of Gila trout would occur under a special rule, which is permitted for threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Gila trout is also listed as threatened in New Mexico, but the state Wildlife Conservation Act does not restrict harvest of threatened species. Fishing would be regulated by the Game and Fish Department. However, violation of state law for the taking of Gila trout would still constitute a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

At first, fishing would be limited to a few streams with populations large enough to withstand the expected level of angling. Catch-and-release may be required. Most streams, with self-recovering populations, would not be fished. It may also be possible to establish a Gila trout fishery in Snow Lake, using mass production of Gila trout from hatcheries. In order to retain sufficient genetic diversity for transplants to newly restored streams, hatcheries must spawn at least 25 pairs of Gila trout. These pairs produce about 40,000 fry, with some offspring from each pair used for transplanting. However, it is not practical to transplant more than 5,000 fish. The excess fish could be stocked in Snow Lake or other suitable waters.

Most opposition to Gila trout recovery has come from anglers who objected to eliminating rainbow trout fisheries and replacing them with Gila trout in streams that may not be fished so long as Gila trout are listed as endangered. Downlisting Gila trout to threatened and opening some Gila trout streams to fishing would defuse this opposition without jeopardizing recovery of the species. Developing a unique Gila trout fishery would attract anglers, with their wallets, from New Mexico and other states, providing recreation, and economic benefits for Cotton and Grant counties.

Jim Bailey taught wildlife biology at the University of Montana and at Colorado State University. Above recently, he was head of the endangered species program at the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, retiring in 1999.
May 6: Hillsboro Peak Day Hike  
Place: Aldo Leopold Wilderness near Kingston, New Mexico  
Class: Moderate  
Length: 10 miles  
Elevation gain: 1,800 feet  
Leader: Caroline Greenfield  594-7342 (H)  
Josie is among the best hikes. This will be our group’s first trip of the season to this 10,800-foot peak on the crest of the Black Range. Snow will still cover a short stretch of the trail. In the old days, the Forest Service maintained a wide string of fire towers along the ridge stretching northward toward Socorro. You can still scramble up the tower here or visit with the friendly staff in the cabin below if they are not too busy spotting smoke.

May 12: Dripping Springs Day Hike  
Place: Organ Mountains East of Las Cruces  
Class: Easy  
Length: 6 miles  
Elevation gain: Minimal  
Leader: Ann Fainor  833-8162 (H)  
The Organ holds many treasures. Dripping Springs is one of the rarest of these. Not long ago, this little paradise was "saved" for our enjoyment by The Nature Conservancy. The easy trail leads up Ice Canyon to the sink and the springs themselves. The area is administered by the BLM, so there is a $3 per vehicle fee.

May 20: Patrillo Mountains Day Hike  
Place: Northwest of Sunland Park, New Mexico  
Class: Easy to Moderate  
Length: 4 miles  
Elevation gain: 200 feet  
Leader: Scott Culver  747-6688 (W)  
Join UTEP Centennial Museum Curator Scott Culver for a leisurely walk through the millennia-old sites here. These include bedrock plateaus, pottery sherds, and an occasional arrow point. After we've seen enough, we can walk up the trail between two of the area's volcanic cones: Mount Cox and Mount Wiley. Call for meeting place and time. It's a bit tricky to find this one on your own!

May 25-28: Continental Divide-Diamond Creek Memorial Weekend Backpack  
Place: Aldo Leopold Wilderness near Winston, New Mexico  
Class: Moderate to Moderately Strenuous  
Length: 22 miles  
Elevation gain: 2,200 feet  
Leader: Rollin Wickenden  rwicigla@aol.com  
Come climb one of the highest peaks in the Black Range and enjoy a long weekend in a remote part of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. We will depart El Paso Friday afternoon for our campsite spot in the Black Range. Saturday we'll drive to the trail head and hike the Continental Divide Trail to the crest of the Northern Black Range, descending Fisherman Canyon to our campsite on Diamond Creek. Sunday evening will offer an optional climb of Diamond Peak, after which we will pack up and move downstream to James Breithar's Spring and homestead. We'll spend Sunday night in a beautiful setting. Monday we will walk up the trail past a waterfall to the rim of the canyon, returning to our vehicles.

May 25-28: Mogollon Range Memorial Weekend Backpack  
Place: Gila Wilderness  
Class: Strenuous  
Length: 35 miles  
Elevation gain: 7,400-10,700 feet  
Leader: Mike Epstein  594-932 (H)  
This backpack starts at 7,920 feet and ends at 9,132 feet. Beginning at Willow Creek and ending at Sandy Point, this is a scenic loop through the heart of the Gila Wilderness high country. Our route will take us from the canyon bottoms of Iron Creek, Turkeyfoot Creek, White Creek, and the West Fork of the Gila River. It goes up and into the high peaks of the Mogollon Range, Mogollon Baldy at 10,770 ft., Carrier Baldy at 10,530 ft., and Whiskey River Baldy at 10,895 ft. We will spend three nights in the backcountry near water sources. Participants should be experienced backpackers in good physical condition able to adapt to a variety of terrain and possibly adverse weather conditions. Call for more details and reservations.

NOTE: The route is subject to change, according to snow pack and backcountry spring conditions.

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

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Ted Metcalf  852-3011  tmertig@earthlink.net
Group Directory

Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club

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- Bev Hartline, Vice-Chair: 681-9031
- Carol Jacobson, Secretary/Treasurer: 672-9579
- Fred Hartline: 661-9031
- Miriam Oudelians: 672-0414
- Michael Smith: 550-2880
- Gordon Spangler: 682-9481

Conservation Committee
- Michael Smith, Chair: 662-2380
- Janet Gerwin, Co-Chair: 662-9568
- Sandy Bonson: 602-4782
- Jan Gerwin: 662-9568
- Abe Jacobson: 672-9579
- Carole Jacobson: 672-9579
- Jennifer Johnson: 289-9183
- Chuck Perlger: 681-6169
- Michael Smith: 662-2380
- Gordon Spangler: 682-9481
- DOE Land Transfer: 662-2380
- Forests: 662-2380

Administration
- David Bouquin, Newsletter: 662-3741
- Fred Hartline, Publicity Rep.: 661-9031
- Miriam Oudelians, Newsletter: 672-0414
- Ruth Miller, Membership: 662-5545
- Warren Steckle, Outings: 672-0414

General Meetings

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

Sunday, May 6th

Saturday May 19th

Saturday June 16th
- Obsidian Ridge mountain bike ride. Meet at 8:30 AM at the parking lot at Sullivan Field (across from Los Alamos High School). Although the ride is less than 10 miles, there are a few very rocky sections to keep it challenging. We will stop at the end of the trail for a quick snack before heading back uphill to the start of the ride. Leader: Warren Steckle or Miriam Oudelians at 672-0414 for further information.

Pajarito Group News

The Log--So. New Mexico Group News

New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program
by Marianne Theeber

The New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program allows ANYONE interested in New Mexico's wildlife and natural habitats to purchase for $6 a Habitat Stamp. Since 1986, licensed anglers, hunters and trappers on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands are required to purchase these stamps to validate their licenses. But one need not be a sportsman to support the habitat program.

Habitat Stamps can be purchased at New Mexico Game and Fish offices in Las Cruces at 546 N. Telshor Blvd. (Telshor northern extension), in Roswell at 1913 W. Second St. and from licensed vendors, which include any WalMart or K-Mart. Store in New Mexico, usually in their sporting goods departments.

Habitat Stamp funds are specifically dedicated to habitat conservation and rehabilitation projects. Approximately 150 project proposals are submitted annually, originating from agency planning documents and public proposals number of stamps purchased annually.

This is so easy, and it does so much good. Join me in getting a Habitat Stamp. I am not a hunter or angler or trapper, but I care very much about wildlife and preserving their habitat. Buy a NEW MEXICO HABITAT STAMP when next you go to the store, put on your list!!
Outing Outlook

by Norma McCallan

Despite some heavy winds and flurries of snow & hail, spring is definitely here, with fruit trees in full blossom, flowers popping up everywhere, and days getting noticeably longer. It’s a great time for trying a Sierra Club hike! Below are listed some of our Group outings. Be sure and check each of the Group's pages for more details on these, and additional hikes. Always call leader to confirm time and meeting place. All phone numbers 505 except as noted.

- Sat May 5 LA LUGE TRAIL, SANDIAS. Steve Markowitz 983-2829. Will go up this popular trail as far as snow permits.
- Sun May 6 HILLSBORO PEAK, ALDO LEOPOLD WILDERNESS. Caroline Greenfield 915-594-7542. Moderate, 16 miles, 1600' elevation gain hike to the fire tower of this prominent peak on the wild Block Range.
- Sun May 6 ANCHO CANYON LOOP HIKE, near Bandelier. Rainer Bleck 662-2368. Offtrail loop hike down Ancho from S.R. 4, along the Rio, up an unnamed canyon between Ancho & Water Canyon.
- Sat May 12 - Sun May 20 ESCALANTE COUNTRY WEEK. Norma McCallan 471-8003. Explore the little visited north side of the Escalante drainage off the Burr trail via 2 three day backpacks (Horse & Wolverine Canyons, then Upper Goul). And several day hikes. Dogs ok.
- Fri May 25 - Tues May 29 MEGOLLON RANGE BACKPACK, GILA WILDERNESS. Mike Epstein 915-584-3432. Strenuous 4 day, 35 mile loop beginning at Willow Creek and ending at Sandy Point in the heart of the Gila high country.
- Fri May 25 - Mon May 28 CONTINENTAL DIVIDE/DIAMOND CREEK BACKPACK. Rollin Wickenheiser 562-5216. Moderate/ strenuous 3 days. 22 mile trip in the remote Aldo Leopold Wilderness.
- Sat June 16 OBSIDIAN RIDGE MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDE, Warren Stockard/Mark Skelton 672-0414. 10 mile trek through the ponderosa on this little used route near Bandelier F.P.
- Sun June 17 EAST FORK OF T&F JEMEZ BOX CANYON. Norbert Sperlich 983-1902. Moderate/strenuous 3 mile hike, 800' gain, some walking in the river.
- Sat June 23 - Tues June 26 PECOS WILDERNESS BACKPACK. Bob Kieser 672-3436. Moderately paced 4 day loop on the Western side of the Pecos, starting at the Ski Basin, 32 miles.
- Sat June 30 DECEPTION PEAK DAYHIKE. Norma McCallan 471-0005. If the Santa Fe Ski Company has its way, this 202' peak covered with unique wildflowers will soon see a ski lift and associated ski area, requiring the cutting of 25 acres of heavy aspen/copyright forest at tree line. Moderate hike, close to 2000' elevation gain, dogs ok.
- Sat/Sun July 14/15 TRAIL MAINTENANCE BACKPACK. DOMINGUEZ TRAIL. John & Linda Bucher 828-0211. Two day work trip, mostly cutting downed trees along this little known trail which crosses the ridge from Santa Barbara to Trampas Canyon. Call by 7/12 for reservations.

Other News:
- BACKPACKING CLASS - Neil Bryant 757-6654 will repeat last year’s backpacking class in Santa Fe. Contact Neil at 757-6654 or email for info.
- VALLEYS CALDERA - the Forest Service & the new management team are still working out administrative details of this new protected National Preserve. It is likely yours will not be available until fall. Stay tuned.
- OUTINGS WORKSHOPS - on Saturday April 7 at the Sevilleta. 4 new Albuquerque bike leaders (Richard Rigar, Doris Campbell, Lawra Koezy, Ann Marie Cole) received basic leadership training with Norbert Sperlich, David Ther, and Norma McCallan. On Sunday April 8, representatives from all 5 Groups (Horse Block, Pajarito, Norbert Sperlich, Norma McCallan, Santa Fe; David Ther, Central; Laurence Ghinno, El Pato, and Ben Zerbe, Southern) gathered there to review outings policies, and discuss ways of strengthening our outings programs. By the next issue the text of the new standardized waiver for all outing participants should be finalized, and implementation underway.
- INPUT WANTED - if any of members have suggestions for our outings programs or ideas of outings related items they would like to see in the Sierra, please let me know, nmccallain@minespring.com

Stay Informed: Get E-mail on the Latest Happenings

To get the latest messages on any changes coming, please send a message to listserv@lists.sierranet.org. With the subject line:

Your 8 digit member number (on any Club mailing label)
With the contents:

SUB RIO- ISSUES YourFirst Name YourLast Name
SUB RIO-NORTH- ISSUES YourFirst Name YourLast Name
SUB RIO-CENTRAL- ISSUES YourFirst Name YourLast Name
SUB RIO-SOUTH- ISSUES YourFirst Name YourLast Name
SUB RIO-ELBASO- ISSUES YourFirst Name YourLast Name
SUB RIO-PAJARITO- ISSUES YourFirst Name YourLast Name

S R I ER NA
The New Ranch Handbook: A Guide to Restoring Western Rangelands by Dr. Nathan F. Sayre Published by The Quivira Coalition

Can livestock ranching and conservation values be compatible? Can ranchers and environmentalists work together to benefit rangelands? The answer is yes, and the proof can be found on the ground, where it counts. On New Ranches in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and elsewhere, livestock have been managed in innovative, progressive ways, and the land has responded: vegetation is more diverse and productive, soils are more stable, streams and springs have come back to life. Wildlife, waterbirds, livestock and ranchers have all benefited.

The New Ranch Handbook: A Guide to Restoring Western Rangelands situates the practices of these ranches in relation to recent models and knowledge in range science and ecology. The tremendous diversity and variability of arid and semi-arid rangelands defy many assumptions of classical ecology. Basic processes of energy flow, nutrient and water cycling, and plant growth can be described, however, and management tailored to promote them. The New Ranches profiled here demonstrate, further, that this can be done. Praise for the Quivira Coalition: "The goal of the Quivira Coalition is to put ranching and conservation, economics and ecology into the same thought. All ranchers and conservationists ought to appreciate this effort, and they ought to support it." -- Wendell Berry

To Order:
Send a check for $13.50 ($10 + $3.50 for shipping & handling)

The Quivira Coalition
551 Cordova Road, #423
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
www.quiviracoalition.org

6 The New Ranch is a service mark of the Quivira Coalition.