

# Rio Grande Sierran

NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

MARCH/APRIL 2002

## Call US Senators About Bingaman's Energy Policy Bill

by Jennifer de Garmo and Gail Ryba

As we go to press, the Bingaman-Daschle Energy bill is about to go to the Senate floor for debate. The Sierra Club has made the energy bill a priority for New Mexico. Senator Bingaman (D-NM) is the chair of the Senate Energy and Resources Committee and played a key roll in drafting the bill.

The House energy bill, HR4, passed the House last summer. The Sierra Club opposes many of the provisions in that bill—particularly the subsidies to the oil and gas industry, the nuclear industry, the coal-mining industry, and the uranium-mining industry. The bill also includes an amendment (cosponsored by Albuquerque Republican Heather Wilson) to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

For these reasons, the Sierra Club has been working hard to create a good, and clean Senate bill. Senators Bingaman and Daschle (D-SD) have been real environmental heroes while

crafting this bill. Although the bill is good, it could be better. The Senate bill will need to be as strong as it can be, if the bill advances to conference committee, to work out the differences between the extremely bad House bill and the Senate bill.

So everyone, get your phone car ready, as the Senate begins debate on the following crucial environmental issues. We will need all the phone calls you can make.

### Fuel Efficiency Standards

The biggest single step we can take to save oil and curb global warming is to raise Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards to 40 miles per gallon (mpg) for both cars and light trucks by 2012.

A responsible energy policy must reduce our dependence on oil. American cars, SUVs and other light trucks now guzzle eight million

barrels of oil every day (mbd). Raising fuel-economy standards for new cars, SUVs and other light trucks to an average of 40 mpg over

(continued on page 4)

## Speak Now— For The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

When the time arrives for debate and the filibuster on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, we will need your help keeping the phone lines hot:

- with calls of support to Senator Bingaman, and
- with calls to Senator Domenici to let him know how New Mexicans feel about keeping the Arctic Refuge free from oil and gas development.

To participate specifically when debate comes up, sign up for our e-mail alert listserve. Contact Jennifer de Garmo ([jennifer.degarmo@sierraclub.org](mailto:jennifer.degarmo@sierraclub.org)).

To get a head start, call your Senators now! Tell them that you support:

- 35-mpg CAFE standards,
- 20% RPS by 2020, and
- no drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

### Senator Bingaman

202/224-5521

[senator\\_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov](mailto:senator_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov)

[www.senate.gov/~bingaman/](http://www.senate.gov/~bingaman/)

### Senator Domenici

202/224-6621

[senator\\_domenici@domenici.senate.gov](mailto:senator_domenici@domenici.senate.gov)

<http://domenici.senate.gov/>

## NM State Legislature Wraps Up Chaotic 2002 Session

by Paul Paryski and Doug Fraser

The 2002 session of the New Mexico Legislature ended with the usual chaos and confusion at 12:00 noon on February 14th, Valentines Day, with broken hearts for some and joyful hearts for others. This session was a "short" (30-day) session that normally is convened to consider budgetary matters. The majority of the bills introduced, however, only nominally addressed budgetary concerns. The Senate introduced 621 bills and memorials and the House 664, resulting in an exceptionally hectic session.

Among the broken-hearted were those who had hoped the session would produce a state budget acceptable to the Governor and those whose legislation was not passed by both houses.

Our priority concern during the session was water and its sustainable management—and in fact, the issue of diminishing water resources was one of the "hot" topics at the session. New Mexico will probably not meet its water flow obligations under the Pecos River Compact—and perhaps even under the Rio Grande Compact—this year or next. These compacts require New Mexico to allow a minimum amount of river flow into Texas. Not meeting these obligations could result in a "priority call" by the State Engineer and costly litigation by Texas. A priority call would mean that some farmers and ranchers would lose their water rights and wells; some domestic wells would also be shut down.

In light of this situation, more than three dozen bills proposing solutions were introduced by legislators in both houses. Most of the bills

included measures to eliminate saltcedar (*Tamarix spp.*) and other phreatophytes along the riverbanks. Phreatophytes not only suck up enormous quantities of water, but also invade and eventually destroy native and endemic riparian ecosystems. Roger Peterson, the Club's Grassland Chair, Letty Belin of the Alliance for the Rio Grande Heritage and David Henderson of the Audubon Society provided very useful information on this issue. The Club therefore supports the elimination of saltcedar and other phreatophytes and the restoration of natural riparian ecosystems. We supported some of

(continued on page 18)



SIERRA  
CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

RIO GRANDE CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB  
P.O. Box 9191  
El Paso, TX 79983

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
El Paso, TX  
Permit No. 2370



## RIO GRANDE CHAPTER DIRECTORY

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<b>Jim Hannan, Chair</b> jhannan505@aol.com	988-5760
<b>John Buchser, Vice-Chair</b> jbuchser@earthlink.net	820-0201
<b>Laurence Gibson, Secretary</b> Lgibson@utep.edu	915/594-7342
<b>Blair Brown, Treasurer</b> bbfairb2@aol.com	259-7190
<b>Barbara Johnson, Council Delegate</b> Lunah3@aol.com	466-4935
<b>Norma McCallan</b> nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005
<b>Ken Hughes</b> blfamily@nets.com	474-0550
<b>Susan Martin</b> smartin31@worldnet.att.net	988-5206
<b>Edward Sullivan</b> sully@nmwild.org	843-8696
<b>Ilse Bleck, Pajarito Group</b> ibleck@yahoo.com	662-2358
<b>Steve Capra, Central Group</b> steve@nmwild.org	843-8696
<b>Doug Fraser, Santa Fe Group</b> 474-7615 or 662-5204	
<b>Ted Mertig, El Paso Group</b> tmertig@earthlink.net	915/852-3011
<b>Margot Wilson, Southern Group</b> margotwilson40@hotmail.com	744-5860

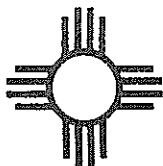
### STAFF

**Jennifer de Garmo, Conservation Organizer**  
nmex.field1@prodigy.net 243-7767  
110 Second St. SW, Suite 615 fax 243-7771  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

### SIERRA CLUB STRUCTURE

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

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



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

**Central NM Group** P.O. Box 25342 • Albuquerque, NM 87125-5342  
**El Paso Group** P.O. Box 9191 • El Paso, TX 79983 • 915/594-7342  
**Pajarito Group** P.O. Box 945 • Los Alamos, NM 87544  
**Santa Fe Group** 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, #10 Santa Fe, NM 87501 • 505/983-2703  
**Southern NM Group** P.O. Box 3705 UPB Las Cruces, NM 88003 • 505/522-3421  
**Southwest Regional Office** 812 N. 3rd Street • Phoenix, AZ 85004 • 602/254-9330, fax 602/258-6533  
**Sierra Club National** 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor • San Francisco, CA 94105 • 415/977-5500

### CAMPAIGN CHAIRS

<b>Sand &amp; Gravel Sprawl Issues</b>	Cliff Larsen Edward Archuleta Susan Martin	466-2128 820-7452 988-5206	clarsen1@ix.netcomm.com edarchuleta@aol.com smartin31@worldnet.att.net
<b>Water</b>	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@earthlink.net
<b>Wilderness</b>	Martin Heinrich Edward Sullivan	232-7151 843-8696	mtheinrich@aol.com sully@nmwild.org

### CONSERVATION ISSUE CHAIRS

<b>Energy</b>	Gail Ryba	955-9578	guryba@cybermesa.com
<b>Military Issues</b>	Marianne Thaeler	522-3421	marianne.thaeler@sierraclub.org
<b>Mining</b>	Abe Jacobson Cliff Larsen	672-9579 466-2128	abe.jacobson@worldnet.att.net clarsen@ix.netcomm.com
<b>National Parks</b>	Courtney White	982-5502	wldwst@rt66.com
<b>Rangelands</b>	Barbara Johnson	466-4935	Lunah3@aol.com
<b>Trade</b>	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
<b>Transportation</b>	Ken Hughes	474-0550	blfamily@nets.com
<b>Waste Reduction</b>	Jay Morrow	877-3137	jmmorrow@mercury.beraco.gov
<b>Wildlife</b>	Liz Walsh Roger Peterson	915/747-5421 983-7559	ewalsh@utep.edu rogpete@aol.com

### ACTIVISM

<b>Fundraising</b>	OPEN		
<b>Listserver</b>	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@earthlink.net
<b>Legal</b>	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
<b>Membership</b>	Ted Mertig	915/852-3011	tmertig@earthlink.net
<b>Personnel</b>	Jennifer Johnson	289-9183	yomi@nm.net
<b>Political</b>	OPEN		
<b>Sierra Student Coalition</b>	Aluxa Lalicker	473-6823	aluxa@starmail.com
<b>Webmaster</b>	Blair Brown	259-7190	bbfairb2@aol.com

### OUTINGS

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

### NATIONAL & REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

<b>Southwest Region Conservation Committee (SWRCC)</b>	Ted Mertig, Susan Martin
<b>Council of Club Leaders Delegate</b>	Barbara Johnson; Norma McCallan (alternate)

### SIERRAN

<b>Managing Editor</b>	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@earthlink.net
	223 N. Guadalupe #419 • Santa Fe, NM 87501		(e-mail preferred!!)
<b>Editor/Layout</b>	Marty Peale	581-9103	mpeale@newmexico.com
<b>Advertising</b>	OPEN		

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. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Rio Grande Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Articles may be freely reprinted for non-profit purposes, provided that credit is given to the author and the Rio Grande Sierran (Please let us know if you reprint.) Products and services advertised in the Rio Grande Sierran are not endorsed by the Sierra Club.

Contributions are welcome from members. E-mail contributions preferred. Contributors' names and e-mail address will be included in the article, as a source of more information, unless the contributor specifies otherwise. Send to jbuchser@earthlink.net • 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.

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

The Rio Grande Sierran runs paid advertisements. Contact the editor for advertising policy and rates. Make address changes by contacting Membership Services (415/977-5649 or address.changes@sierraclub.org).

Non-member subscriptions at \$10/year are available. Send checks to Blair Brown, Treasurer • 2226B Wyoming NE, PMB 272 • Albuquerque, NM 87112. Please allow 8 weeks for processing.

Send address changes to Membership Services (415/977-5649, address.changes@sierraclub.org).

All phone numbers are area code 505 unless otherwise noted.

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste newsprint by Printworld in El Paso.



## WATER

# Water Issues Must Become a Priority— For the Legislature and For Us All

by Representative Joe M. Stell

*This article first appeared as an Op/Ed piece, "Water Fight Looms on State's Horizon" in the 8 February 2002 issue of The Albuquerque Journal.*

**W**ater is probably the biggest problem facing New Mexico. You wouldn't think so, given that it rarely makes the front pages of the newspapers or the evening TV news. And since the water always flows when we turn on the tap or the irrigation gate, most of us take it for granted that it will always be that way. But the major threats to our water supply looming on the horizon may shake up the economy of the state, and soon we may all be wondering and worrying about the quality and quantity and cost of our water.

The challenges to our water supply are multi-fold. One major threat looming on the horizon directly affects the southeast part of the State, but ultimately could affect us all. New Mexico got into a fight with Texas over Pecos River water, and the Supreme Court decreed that New Mexico must comply with the Pecos River Compact by delivering the specified amount of water to the Texas border every year. For the past several years, we have barely managed to make the delivery, but each year the threat of drought increases the likelihood that we will not have enough water. When that happens, the State Engineer will be forced to initiate a "priority call", taking water from existing water-rights holders in municipalities and in agricultural production.

The economic impact of this—estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars—will be catastrophic for that part of the state, but the rest of the state will be seriously affected as well when the tax revenues that support education, transportation and other vital state government services drop dramatically. This is not an idle threat—the Supreme Court has left New Mexico no choice but to do this. And the fallout will not only be loss of water for critical needs; it will initiate a deluge of litigation because the "junior" water rights, which legally should be the first called, are generally not for surface water, which is used by the agricultural industry and is what would need to be left in the river for delivery to Texas.

The solution to the Pecos delivery problem must be multifaceted, and the Legislature is currently considering a number of bills to address the issue. The State Engineer's Office asked me to carry a bill that would allow limits on domestic wells—both the number [of wells] and the quantity of water that could be pumped from new wells. A report by the State Engineer's Office estimates that domestic wells use less than 1% of available water in New Mexico, but at some point we will need to limit the "straws" going into our aquifer which can affect the amount of groundwater in our streams and rivers. This proposal was tabled due to opposition from various development interests, but it is an issue that will need to be addressed in the future.

Several of us have also introduced bills to fund phreatophyte removal along the Pecos and other waterways in the state. Phreatophytes are

non-native plants, primarily *tamarix* (salt-cedar), which have invaded our waterways and are using our precious water. On the Pecos, it is estimated that phreatophyte removal could make enough water available to meet our delivery to Texas. It will, however, require millions of dollars for the initial removal program as well as substantial funds to prevent regrowth—all of which must come from the state's coffers.

The Pecos water delivery issue is the most pressing, but we are facing similar situations on the Rio Grande and the San Juan River. While neither is yet under a court decree, we need to act now to avoid that costly (and probably unwinnable) fight—which means finding funds for similar programs in those areas.

We also need to rethink how we manage our entire watersheds, restoring them so that what little rain we get doesn't run off but, instead,

goes to replenish our aquifers and keep our streams flowing. And all of our communities probably need to reconsider whether our water resources can support additional development. Water conservation needs to become not just a "feel good" issue, but one that every citizen of the state takes very seriously.

Fortunately, the Pecos crisis is forcing renewed and expanded interest in water planning. Regional water plans are being developed, as is a state plan to protect and defend our water resources. The Legislature has charged the State Engineer's Office with developing an accurate inventory of our water resources and current uses, and we need to continue to resolve disputes about water rights. Our conservation districts are looking at ways to improve distribution systems and improve watersheds. Our economic development organizations are beginning to understand that water planning is a priority, perhaps the priority for the next decade.

(continued on page 18)

## Notice of Public Information Meetings for Upper Rio Grande Water OPS Input

**D**o you suspect that future reservoir operations will continue to degrade river conditions? Do you believe there is a better way of doing the Rio Grande's water business? Want to be on solid ethical grounds when you're ready to challenge one aspect or another of the old plumbing system? Just want to know "what the hell?"

If so, plan to attend one of the following public meetings. Better yet, plan to attend two. If you come to Pilar on May 15, Steve Harris will treat you to BBQ.

For more information, contact Steve Harris of Rio Grande Restoration in Pilar, NM (505/751-1269; cell 505/770-2502; [unclegr@laplaza.org](mailto:unclegr@laplaza.org)). To arrange carpools from Santa Fe to Española, Pilar or Abiquiú meetings, contact John Buchser (820-0201; [jbuchser@earthlink.net](mailto:jbuchser@earthlink.net)).

**T**he US Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and Interstate Stream Commission are holding public information meetings to develop a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations. Meetings will be held:

- to describe draft alternatives, and
- to get feedback from the public before the alternatives are finalized.

The draft alternatives are being developed in an iterative process, which is why input from the public is so important. The meetings will begin with a presentation that describes the current operations, which is the draft "No Action Alternative." The public will be provided an opportunity to comment on the draft alternatives identified, using an informal open house. All meetings are 7:00-8:30 pm.

Albuquerque, NM • Tuesday, March 19—US Army Corps of Engineers, 4101 Jefferson Place NE

Santa Fe, NM • Wednesday, March 20—NM Dept. of Game & Fish, 1 Wildlife Lane

Española, NM • Tuesday, April 16—Rio Arriba County Complex, 1122 Industrial Road

Abiquiú, NM • Wednesday, April 17—Abiquiú Elem. School, US Highway 84, Gate #21342

Alamosa, CO • Tuesday, May 14—USBR Alamosa Field Div., 10900 Highway 160 E.

Pilar, NM • Wednesday, May 15—BLM Visitors Center, Highway 68

(Meetings in Las Cruces, Truth or Consequences and Socorro, NM, and El Paso, TX took place in January and February 2002.)

For more information, contact Gail Stockton, US Army Corps of Engineers (505/342-3348; fax 342-3195; [gail.r.stockton@spa02.usace.army.mil](mailto:gail.r.stockton@spa02.usace.army.mil)); Steve Kolk, Bureau of Reclamation (505/248-5383; fax 248-5308; [skolk@uc.usbr.gov](mailto:skolk@uc.usbr.gov)); and Rhea Graham, Interstate Stream Commission (505/841-9494 ext. 128; fax 841-9484; [rgraham@osc.state.nm.us](mailto:rgraham@osc.state.nm.us)).

the next ten years will save nearly two million barrels/day in 2012 and nearly four million barrels/day by 2020—more oil per day than we import from the Persian Gulf and could extract from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, combined. This responsible step will save consumers billions of dollars at the gas pump and slash heat-trapping CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that cause global warming.

**Raising fuel-economy standards for new cars, SUVs and other light trucks to an average of 40 mpg over the next 10 years will save nearly two million barrels/day in 2012 and nearly four million barrels/day by 2020—more oil per day than we import from the Persian Gulf and could extract from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, combined.**

#### The History of Fuel Efficiency Standards

In 1975, Congress passed and President Ford signed the law establishing Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. CAFE standards set the minimum average fuel economy that a manufacturer's fleet of cars must meet. Congress required cars to ramp up from 13.8 mpg to 27.5 mpg by the late 1980s. Twenty-five years later, however, despite dramatic advances in technology, that standard is still in place. Congress asked the Department of Transportation to set light truck fuel economy. Light truck standards inched up to 20.7 mpg, but have virtually stagnated for 20 years.

#### The Most Obvious Benefits

Raising CAFE standards will improve our energy security—We import 52% of our oil. Our cars, SUVs and other light trucks guzzle 40% of the oil used in the United States every day. Current CAFE standards for autos save three million barrels/day compared to rates of consumption before 1989. Raising CAFE standards for new cars, SUVs and other light trucks to 40 mpg is the biggest single step we can take to curb our oil dependence.

Raising CAFE standards will save consumers money, stimulate our economy and create jobs—CAFE standards already save consumers money at the gas pump. Because fuel economy for cars doubled between 1975 and the late 1980s, a new car purchaser saves thousands of dollars at the gas pump over the lifetime of the car. Now, it is time for Detroit to pass on savings to SUV owners. Increasing the Ford Explorer's efficiency, for instance, from 19 mpg to 34 mpg would cost \$935 in technology—but would save the owner \$790/year on gas. Raising CAFE standards for new cars, SUVs and other light trucks to 40 mpg over the next 10 years will save consumers \$16 billion annually by 2012.

Consumers would spend this money at home, rather than sending it overseas to oil-producing nations, thus stimulating our economy, improving wages and creating jobs. A 1997 report by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy concluded that raising CAFE standards would translate into a net increase of 244,000 jobs nationwide, with 47,000 of these in the auto industry.

Raising CAFE standards will protect the environment—Raising CAFE standards would curb global warming. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from our cars and trucks add to the CO<sub>2</sub> blanket around the earth, which prevents

heat from leaving the atmosphere, causing global warming. America's cars and trucks alone emit more CO<sub>2</sub> than all but four countries in the world—the United States as a whole, China, Russia and Japan. Each gallon of gasoline burned pumps 28 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. Thus, the more efficient the vehicle, the lower the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Raising

CAFE standards to 40 mpg would slash our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions—greatly reducing our contribution to global warming.

#### Technology Advances and Safety

The technology exists to provide Americans with safe, efficient vehicles that curb global warming pollution. More efficient engines and transmissions, and better aerodynamics could dramatically increase the fuel economy of our cars. Hybrid gas-electric engines offer even better gas mileage. So far, only Japanese manufacturers are using this technology. Three hybrids are currently in production—the Toyota Prius, Honda Insight, and Honda Civic Hybrid—all of which get more than 50 mpg.

While CAFE standards doubled fuel economy from 1975-1989, the highway fatality rate dropped by 50%. Modern technologies can bring us even safer and more fuel efficient vehicles today.

There are currently two senate proposals for CAFE standards—Senator Kerry (D-MA) has proposed a 35-mpg standard, Senator McCain (R-AZ) 36 mpg. Both proposals contain problematic CO<sub>2</sub> trading—Kerry's within the auto industry, McCain's globally. Trading CO<sub>2</sub> credits defeats the purpose of CAFE standards and does not accomplish significant reductions of the gases causing climate change.

Senator Bingaman has said he will support Senator Kerry's proposal for a 35-mpg CAFE standard, which will be proposed as an amendment to the bill. There are indications that there will not be enough votes to pass a strong CAFE standard, and there are threats of a filibuster if a strong CAFE standard is included in the bill.

#### **20% By 2020—Electricity Generated By Renewable Sources**

A Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) is a market-based mechanism that requires utilities to gradually increase the portion of electricity produced from renewable resources such as wind, biomass, geothermal and solar energy. Sierra Club supports a national RPS to provide 20% of US electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

Twenty percent by 2020 is achievable. A recent study by the Union of Concerned Scientists confirms that renewable energy can supply 20% of US electricity by 2020. Renewable energy sources are already providing thousands of megawatts of power around the country, and they have immense potential for becoming a major source of energy in the near future.

We estimate that the states of South Dakota, North Dakota and Texas alone have enough wind to provide electricity for the entire country. The price of wind power has decreased 90% in the past 20 years, is currently very competitive with other types of energy and is becoming even cheaper. Solar power is already used by 200,000 homes in the United States. We have installed geothermal generating capacity of about 2,700 megawatts—the equivalent of approximately 58 million barrels of oil—that provides enough electricity for 3.7 million people. By 2010, biomass power (converting carbon from organic matter into energy) could provide an additional 3,000 megawatts of electric capacity in the United States—enough electricity for more than 13 million people.

#### A 20% RPS Has Environmental and Economic Benefits

Electricity generation from power plants accounts for over 40% of total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions—the principal global warming pollutant. Because an RPS of 20% by 2020 could eliminate the need for 272 of these dirty plants, it has the potential to stabilize US CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from electricity generation at Year 2000 levels. Eliminating all these power plants would also significantly reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and mercury, which are linked to acid rain, smog, respiratory illness and water contamination.

A recent study by the US Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration shows that an RPS of 20% by 2020 would cost energy consumers almost nothing. When combined with energy-efficiency improvements, costs to consumers would decline by hundreds of billions of dollars.

One system that converts solar energy into heat—and is used to heat the buildings of Ford, General Motors and Federal Express—is already saving approximately \$400,000/year in avoided fuel costs, and reducing annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 10 million pounds.

The current Bingaman-Daschle bill includes a 10% RPS by 2020. Senator Jeffords (I-VT) will introduce an amendment to raise RPS to 20% by 2020. While Senator Bingaman remains unconvinced that we can do better than 10%, he remains strong on the 10% goal and says that this is one of the Senate initiatives that senators in conference committee should insist be included in a final energy bill.

#### **No Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge!**

Senator Bingaman and Senator Daschle remain firm in supporting the preservation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. They will actively oppose proposals to include drilling in the Arctic in the Senate Energy bill. It is anticipated that an amendment to drill in the Arctic will be brought to the floor by Alaska Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK). There are currently not enough votes in the Senate to keep the amendment from passing. Senators Kerry (D-MA) and Lieberman (D-CT) are planning to filibuster during the debate on the amendment. Senator Bingaman supports the filibuster and is planning to participate by speaking on behalf of the Arctic during the filibuster.

For more information, contact Chapter Conservation Organizer Jennifer de Garmo ([jennifer.degarmo@sierraclub.org](mailto:jennifer.degarmo@sierraclub.org)) and Chapter Energy Chair Gail Ryba ([garyba@cybermesa.com](mailto:garyba@cybermesa.com)).

One membership—  
a lifetime of results.



When you become a Sierra Club Life Member, you create a living legacy. A legacy of wildlife. A legacy of wildlands. A legacy for all of our children to breathe clean air, drink fresh water, and savor the majesty of Earth's natural environment.

From the very first day of your membership, your dues go to work to support the Sierra Club conservation programs that have proven so effective in protecting our natural heritage. So enroll on your annual renewal form today. And join the indispensable group of honored members who are dedicated to preserving our Earth. For life.



SIERRA CLUB

Life Member Program

85 Second Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

www.sierraclub.org

## Hannan, Hughes, Brown on ExComm

by Jim Hannan

In December 2001, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club elected Jim Hannan, Ken Hughes and Blair Brown to serve on the Chapter Executive Committee for the next three years.

Jim Hannan, current Chapter chair, works at the Santa Fe Community Housing Trust, a non-profit affordable housing provider in Santa Fe. He has been active in green building issues, particularly energy efficiency and water conservation. Jim has also served as Chapter Political chair, helping out with candidate endorsements and state lobbyist oversight.

Ken Hughes works at the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration, in

the Local Government Division. Ken previously served as the Chapter Energy chair, and currently serves as the Transportation chair. Ken has also been active in sprawl issues, helping to produce our award winning sprawl report. He is also the author of a DFA report on the costs of growth.

Blair Brown recently retired from the Museum of New Mexico Foundation. Blair has served as the Chapter treasurer for many years. He has been active in Albuquerque water and sustainability campaigns.

The Rio Grande Chapter thanks George Grossman, Ranier Bleck and Carolyn Sigstedt for serving on the Election Committee.

## Join Us for Chapter Conservation and Executive Committee Meetings

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club invites all Club members to attend our next quarterly meetings. The meetings are a great way to meet Chapter activists—and we welcome your input. We will be meeting at the Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge on 16-17 March 2002. The Refuge is located about an hour south of Albuquerque.

The Conservation Committee meeting will start at 9:00 am on Saturday. Current conservation items include:

- wildlife issues,
- Pecos River water rights, and
- Clovis dairy farms.

The Wildlife Committee will:

- present a proposal to join the newly formed Wildlife Alliance;
- discuss current Game and Fish Department issues, including the expanded cougar hunt;

- discuss how the Club can be an effective part of the Pecos River water rights debate, which was a major part of the 2001 State Legislative session;

- hear an update from Clovis resident Paul Elders on the Clovis dairy farms, which have become a major issue for the Club.

In addition, the Conservation Committee will receive updates from our four conservation campaigns—wilderness, water, sand and gravel mining, and sprawl.

The Executive Committee will meet on Sunday, beginning at 8:00am. The Excom will:

- review the lobbying effort at this year's legislative session, and
- consider several political endorsements in federal and state races.

Overnight arrangements at the Refuge are limited. If you are interested in staying overnight on Friday or Saturday, please contact Jim Hannan (505/988-5760; jlhannan505@aol.com).

## NM Sierra Student Coalition Offers Environmental Training for NM High-School Students

by Aluxa Lalicker

New Mexico's Sierra Student Coalition is offering a Student Environmental Training Academy (SETA) for high-school students in New Mexico. The SETA is a week-end activist training on skills essential to effecting environmental and social change. Some of the best trainers from around the country will come together to train students here how to develop strong and effective groups. The SETA will focus on basic activist essentials:

- how to start and run an effective group at your school;
- methods of recruitment;
- how to train leaders who can carry on the torch, once you and others have graduated;
- how to say what you mean, with confidence and persuasion (be it to the media, fellow group members, or the public);

- how to plan and run a campaign to effect real environmental change;
- lobbying;
- working with media;
- learning about national and local environmental issues with which your group can get involved.

Of course, the SETAs are *not* all-work-and-no-play. No Sir! No m'am! The weekend is filled with:

- hanging out with good folks,
- meeting activists from all over the State,
- hearing from experienced guest speakers from the environmental movement,
- relishing good food,
- enjoying the breathtaking landscape of New Mexico, and

- relaxing to live music performed by students from the College of Santa Fe.

Who is invited? One or two representative from your high school.

Where will it take place? Nestled in the foothills, in fully furnished adobe huts on the Sevilleta Reserve.

How do I register? Contact the Student Coalition State Coordinator (see below). Registration before March 8 is \$15/person; after March 8, it is \$20. Registration covers lodging, food, campaign materials and a membership with the Sierra Student Coalition. Space is limited!

For more information, contact New Mexico's first-ever Sierra Student Coalition State Coordinator, Aluxa Lalicker (505/473-6823; aluxa@starnail.com).



## The Nature Conservancy Signs Agreement to Buy the 97,000-Acre Baca Ranch

by Jim Petterson

The Nature Conservancy announced in late January 2002 that it had signed an agreement to purchase the Baca Ranch, approximately 97,000 acres—and associated water rights—bordering the Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve in the San Luis Valley, in southcentral Colorado. At \$31.28 million, this is The Conservancy's most expensive acquisition ever in the Rocky Mountain West. The agreement was made possible through interim financing provided by a unique consortium of private, state and federal partners.

"This project represents conservation and partnership at a truly heroic scale," said Steve McCormick, The Nature Conservancy's President and CEO. "Not only will the protection of the Baca Ranch create a protected area large enough to sustain the area's natural diversity for the long term, but it brought together an unprecedented coalition of local, state and federal partners, all aligned with the same goal in mind—the conservation of this awe-inspiring place.

"This agreement was more than five years in the making," affirmed Nature Conservancy President and CEO Steve McCormick, "[and it] would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support of many of Colorado's leaders, including Governor Bill Owens, Senator Wayne Allard, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Representative Scott McInnis."

The law creating the new national park—the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Act of 2000—was coauthored by Senator Allard and Representative McInnis and enacted in November 2000.

### The Ecosystem

At just over 151 square miles, the Baca Ranch—also known as the Luis Maria Baca Grant No. 4, an 1824 Mexican land grant—is one of the largest, unfragmented landscapes in the State of Colorado. It harbors important wildlife, including many rare and at-risk plant and animal species. The elevation ranges from 7,500 feet on the valley floor to 14,165 feet at the top of Kit Carson Peak.

The purchase of the ranch and its water rights will protect the very existence of the Great Sand Dunes. A significant portion of the dunes occur within the boundaries of the ranch. Streams and wetlands on the ranch play an important role in the creation and preservation of the dunes themselves. Additionally, acquisition of the water rights ensures that the ranch's water will remain available to sustain the dune ecosystem.

The San Luis Valley, roughly the size of Connecticut, is one of Colorado's most biologically significant regions and provides habitat for more than 70 species of rare plants and animals. The Conservancy's 100,000-acre Medano-Zapata Ranch, adjacent to the Baca Ranch and the Great Sand Dunes National Monument, is home to nearly 2,000 bison, large herds of elk and significant bird populations. Several plant and animal species found at Great Sand Dunes National Monument and on the Baca and Medano-Zapata ranches—including the Great

Sand Dunes tiger beetle—are found nowhere else in the world.

"The acquisition of the Baca Ranch was the centerpiece of our effort to preserve the Great Sand Dunes ecosystem in its totality," said Congressman Scott McInnis. "With the Baca, the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve will be second to none in natural beauty and ecological diversity. Equally important, the purchase puts an end to the San Luis Valley's water wars once and for all."

"The Nature Conservancy has been working with local communities for years to preserve the magnificent natural wonders of the San Luis

Valley," said Mark Burget, The Conservancy's Colorado State Director. "Preservation of the Baca Ranch has long been the community's most important goal.... We are honored to be able to play a role in the establishment of a new national park for Colorado, especially with the bipartisan support of so many people in the San Luis Valley and across the State."

resolution of outstanding litigation involving the current owners.

Great Sand Dunes National Monument can be redesignated as a national park once the federal government acquires the Baca Ranch and the Secretary of the Interior takes action. Approximately \$21 million in federal appropriations to complete the transfer are expected to come from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. These funds must be secured by the end of 2005. Until the federal appropriation is secured, the ranch will be held jointly by The Nature Conservancy, the US Department of the Interior and the Colorado State Land Board.

**"The Baca Ranch purchase is the largest land preservation effort in our State's history.**

**But, in fact, this represents much more than land preservation.**

**This finally ends speculation over the transfer of San Luis Valley water to the front range.**

**The acquisition represents the permanent preservation of the history, culture and way of life of the entire San Luis Valley."**

—Colorado Governor Bill Owens

### Collaborative Funding

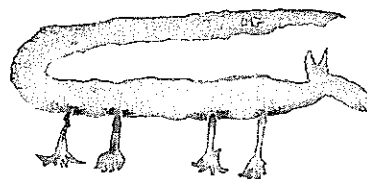
The Conservancy's financing includes:

- an existing \$10.2-million appropriation from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund,
- a \$7-million low-interest loan from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation,
- a \$5-million partial purchase by the Colorado State Land Board,
- a \$3-million loan from the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund,
- and private fundraising by The Nature Conservancy.

Through the efforts of Senator Allard, additional funds to support acquisition of land for the new park are expected from Yale University. Yale is one of the principal investors in the partnership that currently owns the ranch.

### National Park Status Hinges on Securing \$21 Million by 2005

The signing of the purchase agreement to acquire the Baca Ranch is the first of a complex set of transactions that, by 2005, is expected to result in the establishment of the Great Sand Dunes National Park, the creation of a new national wildlife refuge, and significant additions to the Rio Grande National Forest. Completion of the sale is contingent upon the



Mountain lion petroglyph (by Marty Peale)

## The 89,000-Acre Valles Caldera National Preserve—An Experiment in Public Lands as a Working Ranch

by Kay Matthews and Mark Schiller

This article first appeared in the February 2002 issue of *La Jicarita News*. It is reprinted with permission of the authors and *La Jicarita News* (news@Lajicarita.org; www.Lajicarita.org).

Many New Mexicans have been following the recent news reports regarding the Valles Caldera National Preserve, the 89,000-acre tract of land in the Jemez Mountains purchased by the federal government in 2000. The Preserve is managed by a Board of Trustees, comprised of representatives from Santa Fe National Forest, Bandelier National Monument, environmental groups, ranching organizations, and various other interests. The board is responsible for hiring management staff and setting management policy, but the concept of the Preserve as a "corporation" or "working ranch" was the brainchild of Republican Senator Pete Domenici, who made it clear from the outset that he would not back purchase of the Preserve unless it was managed to eventually become self-sustaining.

Although the Preserve remains subject to federal lands-management acts like NEPA and the Endangered Species Act, the board has a much freer hand in determining policy than if it were a national forest or monument. Of course, this freer hand also means that special interest groups will be jockeying for position in management decisions. These include ranchers and loggers, recreationists, conservationists, Indian pueblo and land grant members, and hunters and fishermen. The battle lines are already being drawn.

Recreationists are unhappy that, instead of immediately opening up the Preserve to recreation, the board is preparing to issue grazing permits as soon as this summer. They claim that recreation fees could actually help support Preserve management, while grazing has always been a subsidized use of public lands.

Grazers, including both Native American and Hispano land-grant heirs, claim that traditional uses must be incorporated into management policy to ensure access to land-based people. They would like to see the Preserve also used as a grassbank, a concept that is being successfully employed on both the Carson and Santa Fe national forests.

New Mexico hunters are concerned that the permitting process, to be implemented this fall, not discriminate against local hunters if opened up to the highest bidder. Managers intend to initially issue 90 elk permits by lottery at \$25 a pop. Winners—either in-state or out-of-state—would then have to purchase a New Mexico hunting license.

Logging is also on the horizon. Although, under the previous ownership of the Dunigan family, the Preserve was heavily logged, small-diameter thinning projects aimed at restoration may be made available to local loggers like the Jemez Pueblo forestry crew. Some conservationists think that until greater attention is given to developing a management program based more on science and less on politics, activities like logging should be held in abeyance.

A group called the Valles Caldera Coalition is attempting to bring these diverse interests to the

table. Members include the Quivira Coalition, National Audubon Society, Truchas Trout Unlimited, Amigos Bravos, The Wilderness Society, Winter Sports Group, The Nature Conservancy and the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps.

*La Jicarita* has asked Ernie Atencio, coordinator of the Coalition, to write an article for the March 2002 issue, describing the work his group is doing. Meanwhile, we think it is important for readers to learn the strange history of how the Valles Caldera passed from the public domain into private hands and back into the public domain.

An account of the Baca Location No. 1 as a private land grant was written by Malcolm Ebright for the Sesquicentennial Symposium of 1848-1998 sponsored by the Doña Ana County Historical Society. An excerpt [in the February 2002 issue of *La Jicarita News*] is part of a longer article that Ebright wrote to demonstrate

how the application of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to land grants in New Mexico led to five different outcomes:

- 1) valid grants were rejected entirely;
- 2) some valid grants were partially rejected;
- 3) some valid grants were confirmed to the wrong people;
- 4) some valid grants were confirmed to the right people; and
- 5) some invalid grants were confirmed.

According to Ebright, the Baca Location No. 1 is the "most flagrant example" of this last category. In future issues, we will continue to cover management decisions regarding the Preserve and offer a forum for the various interests to voice their concerns.

If you would like to contact the Valles Caldera National Preserve Trust to add your voice to the cacophony, you may write them (Valles Caldera National Preserve Trust, P.O. Box 1689, Santa Fe, NM 87504), or e-mail the newly hired director, Gary Ziehe (gziehe@fs.fed.us).

## Youth in Wilderness Project Expands to New Mexico

by David Cook

The Sierra Club and The Sierra Club Foundation are pleased to announce the expansion of the Youth in Wilderness Project to New Mexico. This Project funds schools, after-school programs, outdoor schools and other nonprofit organizations to provide outdoor-learning and wilderness opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth.

The Youth in Wilderness Project began its grant-making effort in California in 2000. The program met with great success and expanded to Arizona and Colorado in 2001. In 2002, the Youth in Wilderness Project will give children in New Mexico greater opportunity to experience nature and wilderness first hand.

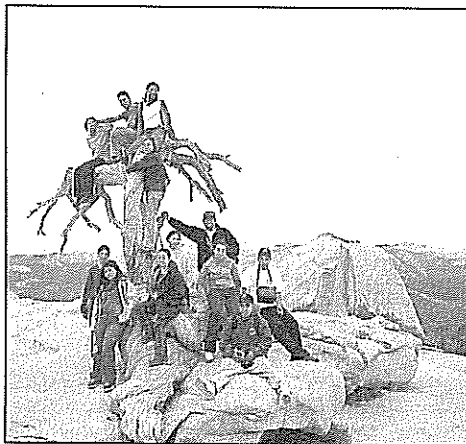
The Youth in Wilderness web site offers summaries of funded projects; proposal-writing tips; and photos, drawings and letters from some of the thousands of youth who have participated in a quality outdoor education program funded by the Youth in Wilderness Project.

Applications for the first round of funding were due 1 March 2002; applicants will be notified in writing on 24 May 2002. Applications for the second round of funding are due 26 September 2002; notification will be sent on 19 December 2002.

The Youth in Wilderness Program has also begun accepting transportation mini-grant applications from public schools in New

Mexico. These proposals for transportation costs of \$1,000 or less are accepted on an ongoing basis with no fixed deadline for submission. Mini-grant applicants are notified in writing within six to eight weeks.

For more information, see the Youth in Wilderness web site (www.sierraclub.org/youthinwilderness), or contact Program Officer David Cook (415/977-5721; youth-in-wilderness@sierraclub.org).



Students from John C. Fremont High School in Los Angeles, CA visit Yosemite National Park in October 2001. A Youth in Wilderness mini-grant subsidized transportation costs (photo courtesy of Fremont High School).





## CENTRAL GROUP NEWS

# CENTRAL NEW MEXICO GROUP NEWS

### Otero Mesa - New Mexico's Wildest Grassland

By Stephen Capra

Located in the South-central portion of New Mexico on the Texas border lies one of the wildest parts of our state. Just look on a road map east of the Macgregor Range, between Las Cruces and Carlsbad, and you will find the largest empty spot on the New Mexico state map - the rolling hills, mountains and grassland flats that comprise the Greater Otero Mesa Area.

Long used by a handful of independent cattle ranches, this is the land of the pronghorn, the mountain lion, mule deer, elk, raptors and countless species of migratory songbirds. Many threatened or endangered species such as Baird's Sparrow, Lark Bunting, Cassin's Sparrow and Burrowing Owls are drawn to this remote grassland. Many southern species from South America and Mexico look to this area for refuge. In recent years, the Aplomado Falcon, once thought gone from New Mexico, was seen in this country.

This past summer The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance conducted a survey to evaluate the Wilderness potential of the area. Several months of fieldwork lead to the realization that over 460,000 acres of the Greater Otero Mesa Area qualify for Wilderness designation. This area remains some of the finest remnant Chihuahuan Desert grassland in the state. In recent months a coalition of Sportsman and Conservation groups have joined forces to help protect this special part of New Mexico's Conservation Heritage. The fight will not be an easy one as industry has had several years to influence ranchers, politicians and many neighboring communities.

Like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, this is a landscape on a grand scale. Sadly, like the Arctic Refuge, Otero Mesa is a very threatened landscape - threatened by oil drilling.

This is a wild landscape in need of our help. America has only 3% of the world's reserves of oil and gas. In contrast Middle-Eastern countries have roughly 64% - so it is clear we can never drill our way to energy independence. Hence, there is no reason to destroy wild places such as Otero Mesa for the short-term profit of a handful of oil and gas companies.

The Bureau of Land Management will soon release its Final Environmental Impact Statement relating to the Greater Otero Mesa Area. Originally, there were three alternatives offered which would have opened anywhere from 97% to 83% of the area to oil and gas development. Now a fourth alternative has been added that would allow drilling with little or no restriction, which if approved would leave Otero Mesa a landscape dramatically fragmented by roads, pipelines, power lines and toxic waste holding ponds. The effects on wildlife could likely be severe.

The BLM is looking to publish a record of decision on the Greater Otero Mesa Area by June 1. In order to protect this wild New Mexico Grassland, citizens are encouraged to write our Senators and the Las Cruces office of the BLM. Ask our Senators to delay the implementation of the BLM's Final Environmental Impact Statement. Also ask that the BLM undertake a new and comprehensive Wilderness review of Otero Mesa. The addresses are:

Senator Jeff Bingaman, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 or email to Senator\_Bingaman@Bingaman.Senate.Gov

Senator Pete Domenici, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 or email to Senator\_Domenici@Domenici.Senate.Gov

Ms. Amy Luders, Bureau of Land Management, Las Cruces Field Office, 1800 Marquess, Las Cruces, NM 88005

*(Our General Meeting on March 18th will be a slideshow on Otero Mesa. See the listing on the next page.)*

### Central Group Folks Meet with Club President Jennifer Ferenstein

By Blair Brown

Back on January 24th, members of the Central Group were pleased to meet with Jennifer Ferenstein, Sierra Club President, on her visit to New Mexico. Ferenstein was in New Mexico to attend the Workshop on Population and Global Warming put on by the Club in Albuquerque on Saturday, January 26th.

The Central Group folks briefed Ferenstein on the critical local issues we are facing - protection of Petroglyph National Monument, Water issues in the Middle Rio Grande Region, protection of the Rio Grande, and Sprawl and the opportunity we have for Smart Growth.

Ferenstein told us of the Club's 'Care for America the Beautiful' campaign, which urges President Bush to match his commitment to safeguard our borders against terrorism with a renewed effort to protect our homeland - and the wild places that make it so special - against pollution, drilling and other development by the energy, mining, and logging industries. She referenced Club Executive Director Carl Pope's comments, "Now, more than ever, Americans want to defend the land that shapes our character, nourishes our spirit, and needs our protection. We call on the President, as Chief Steward, to care about and care for America, to show leadership and independence in protecting this unique heritage - for our families, for our future."

We thanked Ferenstein for her visit and invited her to return to New Mexico, our special place, whenever she could.

### Central New Mexico Group

PO Box 25342

Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87125-5342

#### Executive Committee (area code 505)

Jean Brocklebank		jeanbean@nmia.com
Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
Steve Capra	843-8696 x103	scapra@nmwild.org
Marilyn Cooper	294-2987	
Richard Johnson		rshcham@unm.edu
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 x103	scapra@nmwild.org
Membership	Open	
River Issues		
Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Outings		
David Ther	260-1553	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.*



### Waste Diversion in New Mexico Needs YOUR Help

by Jay Morrow, President of the New Mexico Recycling Coalition

The latest reports out from the EPA on waste generation show that over all, the national average of waste generated per person per day is falling slightly from 4.5 pounds per person per day to 4.3. This includes everybody. Me, you, baby brother, grandma, everybody. This figure is derived from annual tonnage of all landfills divided by population (2000 census). Every one should realize that there is always an opportunity to skew numbers so they give you statistics favorable to your cause, but generally this is what we in the Solid Waste field use to gauge our progress.

The Solid Waste Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department's annual report shows that last year New Mexico topped out at over 9 (NINE!) pounds per person per day making us the most wasteful state. As usual there are plenty of targets for that blame but laying blame does not get things done. The cartoon character Pogo, dressed for battle with his iron pot helmet and wooden sword, made a startling discovery one day. He had finally found the enemy! Dressed in battle gear he had peered into the pond and had seen a reflection of himself. Ultimately I can only blame myself and maybe you.

The waste diversion effort has been beaten down to a state of complacency. Most entities who champion landfilling as the best method of waste management had hoped that this recycling nonsense would die out by Y2K. Most governmental decision-makers will not put pressure on the business community to reduce or divert if they protest. Residential collection is perceived as not cost effective. In New Mexico we can always go out and buy cheap "worthless" desert land and build cheap landfills, so somebody can stand up and say "SEE! It is cheaper and less complicated to just bury the stuff". Private landfills, which are most common, make their money by burying as much as they can.

The New Mexico Recycling Coalition is taking a stand against this tide of wasteful practice. But we need help and we need the help of the Sierra Club. You are one of the strongest environmental entities in the state. You have many voices. When spoken as one, your voice is so strong that those hard of hearing can get the message. We have doubled our membership in the past year and have assembled a very talented and energetic board of directors who has taken on an underdogs role of bringing waste diversion to the forefront of the state's solid waste program.

In June of this year (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>) we are going to host a state wide Recycling Conference. There will be programs on State Policy, Residential and Municipal Composting, Waste Reduction and Diversion, Computer and Electronic Recycling, Campus Recycling, Household Hazardous Waste, Building Green and others. We are looking for speakers, exhibitors, and attendees.

Please contact Nancy Judd, our Executive Director, in Santa Fe at 505-983-4470 or [info@nmrecycle.org](mailto:info@nmrecycle.org) if interested.

### Update on the Campaign to Protect Petroglyph National Monument

Most of our effort to stop Paseo del Norte from bisecting Petroglyph National Monument the past two months centered around stopping a number of Capitol Outlay bills in the New Mexico legislature that would have funded the road. The Sierra Club, through our legislative lobbying efforts and our legislative and Congressional e-mail alert listserve, made the difference and got those bills tabled till they died from inaction when the session ended. Thank you to everyone who called legislators about this important issue.

The session did not end with no possibility of money going to Paseo del Norte road however. Some legislators chose to include amounts in their discretionary project moneys for the road through Petroglyph. In the end, we expect Governor Johnson to veto most all of these items.

If you would like to sign up for our legislative and Congressional e-mail alert list, please e-mail us at [jennifer.degarmo@sierraclub.org](mailto:jennifer.degarmo@sierraclub.org). If you have signed up for this in the past and have not received e-mail alerts, re-send us your e-mail address to be sure we have it correct.

Now, we return to our efforts in cooperation with SAGE and others in Albuquerque. Attend our General Meeting on April 15th to learn more (see General Meeting listing below).

### General Public Meetings

**Monday, March 18th at 7:30PM**

**OTERO MESA SLIDESHOW**

Steve Capra, member of our Executive Committee and staffer with the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance will present a slide show on the glories of Otero Mesa and how we can protect it. (see related article) Where: The Unitarian Church at 3701 Carlisle NE, at the corner of Comanche, in the Social Hall.

**Monday, April 15th at 7:30PM**

**PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

Come and hear what we are doing, what's next and how to help. Where: The Unitarian Church at 3701 Carlisle NE, at the corner of Comanche, in the Social Hall.

*"Eliminating wildlife habitat for economic reasons is like burning Renaissance paintings to cook dinner."*

Edward O. Wilson

### Outings

**Sunday, March 17 - Embudo Canyon to Three Gun Spring Trail**  
Sandia Mountain Wilderness Hike. Excellent conditioning hike to viewpoints. Depending on conditions, may go as far as Oso Pass. Approx. 7 miles round-trip, 2000 ft. elevation gain.  
Contact David Ther, 260-1553.

**Saturdays, March 16th and 23rd**

**Desert Exploratory Hikes**

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

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

Contact leader by previous Wednesday for info on specific hike location and meeting time. You may also request to be included on an E-mail list for advance info on hike location and meeting time. Meeting time will vary from 8:30AM to 10AM. Meeting place will always be Smith's at Carlisle and Menaul, nearest to Carlisle. Joint outing with Outdoor Adventures For Singles.

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

**Saturday, March 30 - Lybrook Badlands Hike**

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

Meet 8:30AM at Bank of America, San Mateo and Academy. Joint outing with Outdoor Adventures For Singles.

Leaders: Rick Hurley (299-8401, [RickHurley@aol.com](mailto:RickHurley@aol.com)) or Tom Petencin (271-9928, [tompeten@juno.com](mailto:tompeten@juno.com))

**Saturdays April 6th and 20th, and Sunday, April 14th**

**Desert Exploratory Hikes (see above for info)**

**Sunday, April 14 - Pino Trail, Sandia Mountain Wilderness Hike**  
Approx. 6 miles round-trip, 2500 ft. elevation gain.

Contact David Ther, 260-1553.



# Dale Ball TRAILS

The Dale Ball Trail system was built by the Foothills Trails Trust through the generosity of an anonymous donor and a grant from the McCune Foundation. The trails are on land owned by the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, The Nature Conservancy and several private individuals who have given trail easements to the City of Santa Fe.

By resolution of the City and County, the trail system is named after Dale Ball, who conceived the idea, worked on it for seven years, secured the funding and followed through by directing the construction of the trails. Twenty miles of trails are already open, including the entire North and Central Sections and approximately five miles of the trail system's South section. The remaining four to five miles will be finished this summer.

## Update

Construction work on Santa Fe's new Dale Ball Trails shut down for the winter at the end of November 2001. The plan is to start up again in mid-April 2002 and complete the trail system. Still to be built are:

- the connection between the Dale Ball and Dorothy Stewart trails,
- a connection to the parking areas on Cruz Blanca, and
- a trail between the top of Picacho (Talaya) and the top of Atalaya.

The entire trail system should be completed in July 2002.

## Using the Trails

These trails are intended for the enjoyment of hikers and bicyclists. No motorized vehicles or horses are allowed. When bicyclists and hikers meet, the hikers have priority. We have tried to protect lines of sight, so that no one should be surprised by the sudden appearance of another trail user.

The City has provided an area across Sierra del Norte Road from the north parking lot where dogs can run free. They must be on a leash while they are on trails, however, and we ask that people clean up after their dogs. There are trash receptacles at the trailheads.

The City of Santa Fe has built two parking lots to serve the trails. As the map on the left shows, one is at the intersection of Sierra del Norte and Hyde Park Road. The other is at the intersection of Cerro Gordo Road and Upper Canyon Road. Trailhead parking is available within the fenced areas of both lots. Cars parked outside the fence are subject to ticketing by the City of Santa Fe, which will police the area. Please take your valuables with you. There have been a few break-ins

within the parking lot.

All of the trails in the North and Central Sections are designed for easy to moderate hiking. For bicyclists, the trails are rated as moderate to difficult. In most places, the grade is no greater than 6%; a few places, such as switchbacks, are steeper for short distances.

Many of the trails in the South Section are more difficult, with an average grade of more than 8%. Only expert bicyclists should attempt the South Section trails. Even experts find them difficult.

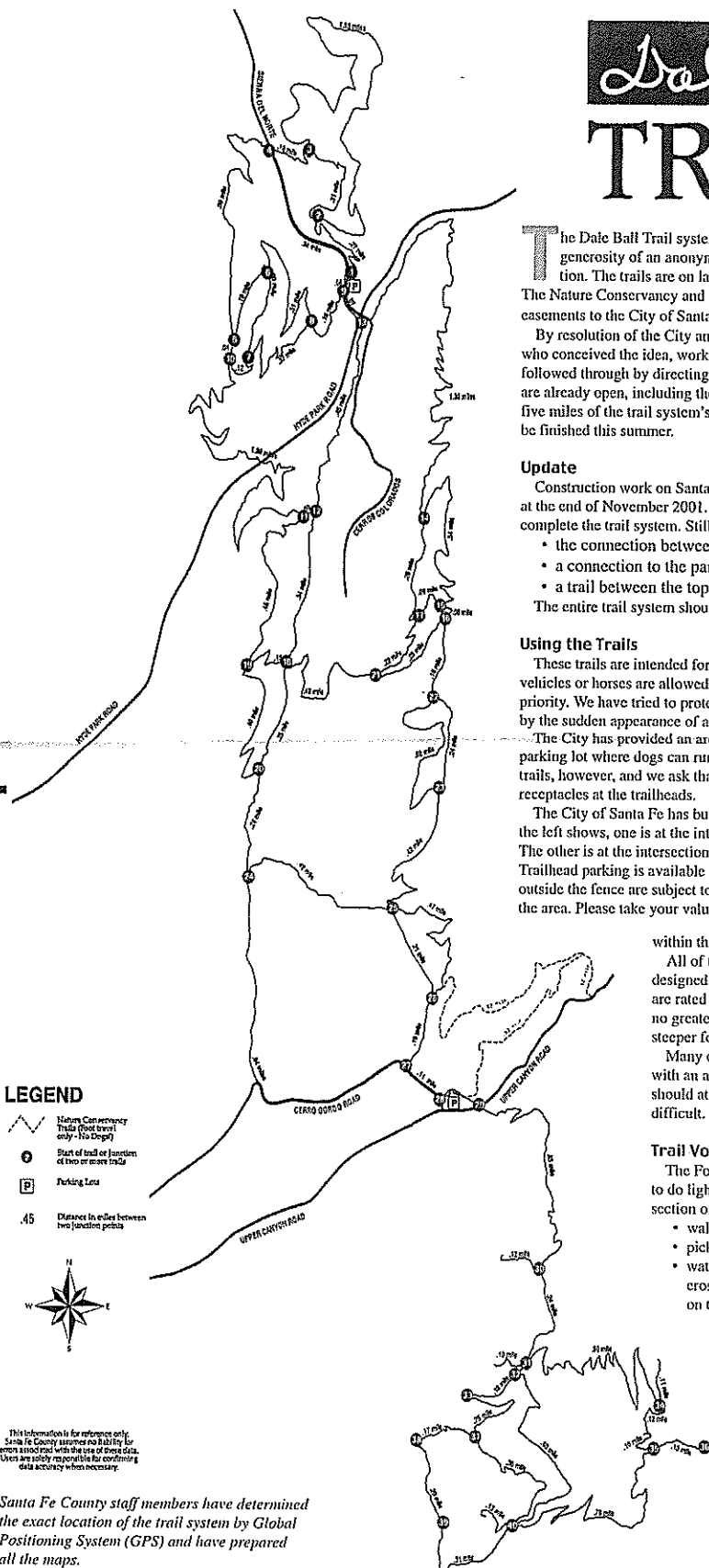
## Trail Volunteers

The Foothills Trails Trust has organized a volunteer group to do light trail maintenance. Each volunteer has adopted a section of the trail and has taken on these responsibilities:

- walk the section every two weeks;
- pick up trash;
- watch for any damage to the trail through either usage or erosion—if the damage is minor, it can probably be fixed on the spot; and
- report serious damage to the trails.

If you'd like to consider becoming a trail volunteer, please send your name, address and phone number to Mike Wirtz (161-D Calle Ojo Feliz, Santa Fe, NM 87505) or call him (983-9208). Mike designed the individual trail segments and supervised the construction crew. He is training and coordinating the volunteers and is responsible for ongoing trail maintenance.

The work of the trail volunteers is greatly appreciated! They are keeping the trails in good condition for all who use them.



Santa Fe County staff members have determined the exact location of the trail system by Global Positioning System (GPS) and have prepared all the maps.

## Water and Elections in a Dry Land

by Lindsey Grant

This article first appeared as an Op/Ed piece in the 20 January 2002 issue of The Santa Fe New Mexican. It is reprinted by permission of the author.

Tensions rise when we begin to hit the stops. Water shortages are becoming an issue, worldwide, as populations grow. The State Engineer reports that New Mexico is falling behind the deliveries to Texas mandated by the US Supreme Court. He has warned the cities along the Pecos and Santa Fe that they may lose some of their surface water to meet that commitment. He is restricting new wells in the Estancia Basin, including southern Santa Fe County. He has told the Pojoaque Pueblo that he thinks it is using more water than it is entitled to. Española has a temporary moratorium on

construction. El Dorado had one, which is being nibbled away.

Santa Fe is running out of water, and the battle is joined between those who see the limits and those who oppose any constraints on growth. The county's population rose 2.8%/year in the 1990s, faster than the Census Bureau expected. We have probably passed 135,000. The city water company is relying on the San Juan-Chama diversion to rescue the city for a decade or two, but it is lowering its expectations as to how much additional water that will provide. It now must begin to look beyond San

Juan-Chama for new water sources.

To top it off, some environmentalists (but by no means all of them) threaten to sue the US Forest Service to stop a thinning program intended to avert a disastrous fire in the watershed, imperiling Santa Fe's surface water supply.

San Juan-Chama is not faring too well. The test collector on the Rio Grande at San Ildefonso pueblo is now running, and the water is being tested. But the city cannot invest in a major water system without a perpetual commitment from the pueblo, and the pueblo remains noncommittal. Senator Domenici says that a regional water system with federal aid might

(continued on page 19)

## Endorsements for Santa Fe City Elections on March 5<sup>th</sup>

The Santa Fe Group has endorsed the following candidates for Mayor and City Council in the 5 March 2002 Santa Fe City Election:

- Frank Montano—Mayor
- David Pfeffer—Council District 1
- Carolyn Sigstedt—Council District 2
- David Coss—Council District 3
- Carol Robertson Lopez, Council District 4

The Santa Fe Group Political Committee distributed questionnaires with 31 questions, and conducted interviews with most of the candidates. The Political Committee spent 11+ hours reviewing the questionnaires and interviewing. The Group believes that these are all outstanding candidates who will work hard for Santa Fe. We hope that their leadership delivers a Santa Fe that:

- effectively confronts sprawl,
- creatively redevelops under-used lots within the city,
- allows residents to use renewable powered electricity, and
- limits growth according to the tests of:
  - the City's master plan policies;
  - efficient use of water, land and infrastructure; and
  - proven supplies of water.

### Caution! Districts Have Shifted

You may have been moved to a new city council district. To find out your new district and where to vote, call the Santa Fe City Clerk (955-6521).

### Mayor— Frank Montano

A Santa Fe native and member of the Santa Fe City Council since 1991, Frank has consistently demonstrated courage and leadership in his introduction and support of environmental protection measures. He championed the bus line, the mountain ordinance, water conservation measures including water-collection systems for new construction, and clean-up of the



Baca Street well by the Public Service Company of New Mexico. Frank co-sponsored the original Early Neighborhood Notification ordinance, requiring neighborhood involvement in zoning and development decisions, proposing that infill development follow a master plan, working with those affected, and ensuring that developments meet zoning requirements. Frank was a strong supporter of integrated pest management (IPM) as an alternative to pesticide use and was instrumental in getting the City to adopt IPM.

Frank Montano for Mayor  
P.O. Box 29874 • Santa Fe, NM 87502  
660-7938 • frank4mayor@aol.com

### City Council District 1— David Pfeffer

An architect, planning commissioner and activist, David has been a leading voice for sensible and community-sensitive development. He supports individual water budgets for households and businesses, affirming that "we have to plan for serious conservation, retrofitting, water harvesting, effluent recycling and finding new supplies." David recognizes the importance of protecting the Santa Fe watershed, for forest and riparian habitat preservation and for a healthy water supply.

David Pfeffer for City Council—District 1  
369 Montezuma • Santa Fe, NM 87501-2626  
983-5834 • dpfeff@aol.com



### City Council District 2— Carolyn Sigstedt

A long-time resident and community activist, Carolyn raised her three children in Santa Fe, taught in its school system, and is a small business owner. She recognizes that our water and land-use decisions must be considered on a regional basis, and that



the City and County must work together on resource issues. She is committed to working with the two governments to link growth and water, and supports the development of a regional water budget and the election of a regional water and waste board.

Carolyn Sigstedt for City Council—District 2  
P.O. Box 901 • Santa Fe, NM 87504  
820-1731 • cbsigstedt@aol.com

### City Council District 3— David Coss

A life-long Santa Fean, David has spent his career in environmental and natural resource protection. Currently the Director of Field Operations at the New Mexico State Land Office, David has served as a water-resources professional and union organizer at the New Mexico Environment Department, and is the head of the Rio Nuevo project to restore and protect the Santa Fe River on state trust lands. He rides the bus to work.

Committee to Elect David Coss  
2014 Otowi Road • Santa Fe, NM 87505  
988-7373 • otowi@email.msn.com



### City Council District 4— Carol Robertson Lopez

A Santa Fe City Councilor since 1998 and southside resident for 22 years, Carol acts as Mayor Pro Tem and Chair of the City Finance Committee. A former chair of the Santa Fe Planning Commission, she recognizes the need for community dialogue in resource sustainability, and believes that there should be one City/County water system and a regional water authority to conduct water planning. Her achievements include her efforts on behalf of the Dale Ball Trail system, the thinning of the Santa Fe watershed, the financial stability of the bus system, and the landscape and water conservation ordinances. She also worked to stop the flea market on the bypass.

471-9116 • crobersonlopez@qwest.net

Santa Fe Group News



# SANTA FE GROUP NEWS

## SANTA FE GROUP 2002 MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 19, 7 PM

### AN EVENING OF ROCK ART WITH DENIS SLIFER

Well-known local rock art expert Denis Slifer will present a slideshow of the Rock Art of the Upper Rio Grande. Denis is currently the archeologist for the Highway Department and involved in all environmental impact statements for highway construction. He has done extensive fieldwork throughout the Southwest, mapping and photographing rock art, and is the author of four books: *Kokopelli: Fluteplayer Images in Rock Art*, *Signs of Life: Rock Art of the Upper Rio Grande*, *Guide to Rock Art of the Utah Region*, *Sites with Public Access*, and his most recent work *Serpent and Sacred Fire: Fertility Images in Rock Art*. Denis also guides trips and lectures extensively.

Join us for a delightful evening and bring your questions about the meaning and background of these haunting images. Denis will have his books to sell and autograph.



**Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club**  
621 Old Santa Fe Trail, Suite 10, Plaza Desira, Santa Fe, NM 87505  
505 983 2703

Tuesday, April 16, 7 PM

### GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE WATER FORUM

All of the candidates running for the nomination of Governor in the June primary, both Republicans and Democrats, are being invited for a panel discussion on issues relative to water. As this is proving to be a very hot topic in our State, you can be sure we will all want to hear what our future Governor will have to say about water.

For further details about the meeting and which candidates have accepted our invitation, please watch for the "News of the Santa Fe Group" that will be mailed to you the beginning of April.

From the lack of snowpack in our mountains, we know that water is going to be a key topic in the coming elections and this will be a good discussion.



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

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

#### NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Doug Fraser

#### CONSERVATION CHAIR

Paul Paryski

As you will read in the first portion of the newsletter, Paul Paryski and I spent a very busy time lobbying for environmental issues on behalf of the Sierra Club at the legislative session. Many of the same issues will be recurring during the 2003 session, particularly matters relative to water. Water concerns are now on the front burner for legislators.

On that same subject, Tom Turney, New Mexico State Engineer, spoke before the Group at our general meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The topic of water and all its related issues was well presented and received by a capacity crowd. The question and answer period was most informative. It was interesting to note that the legislature threw more money at this subject than the Office of State Engineer asked for or can possibly spend. That is a first. The Club has been warning of these matters for years - now people are becoming aware of its importance. In fact, there is a chance that the State will under deliver its Pecos River water obligations, pursuant to Compact, this year (or perhaps next), which could necessitate a special legislative session just on water matters.

Tom also talked about the water problems facing the City of Santa Fe. If this turns out to be a drought year - hang on to your hat! We could be in for very serious problems for the whole region. Even the local officials are talking water ... water ... water. We may invite Tom back soon for another discussion of these matters.

#### LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD PEOPLE

The Growth Committee is primarily concerned with containing sprawl and helping preserve the beauty and culture of the Santa Fe area. Interested?? Call Jan Kindel (474-7207).

Cliff Larsen, Conservation Committee Chair, has resigned - leaving behind a legacy of fine initiatives and accomplishments. Cliff plans to concentrate his efforts and many skills on mining issues, both on the state and national levels. Paul Paryski, Conservation Vice-Chair, is temporarily holding the chair until a new chair can be chosen.

The major issue discussed by the committee was the so-called bear scare. Lack of natural food in the high mountains and hills forced New Mexico's black bears to forage for food in lower areas and near to urban areas and farms. Many people requested that the bear hunting season be greatly extended and include hunting with dogs. The Club opposed this, and, happily, the seasons were not greatly modified.

The same pressure has been brought on the State concerning cougars. Ranchers feel that cougars are too numerous and attack and kill sheep and cattle. The issue is still being debated.

We are happy to report that a House Joint Memorial on Black Tailed Prairie Dogs was passed during the 2002 Legislative Session. This memorial sponsored by Representative Mimi Stewart (D-Abq), a friend of the environment and Wild Friends, a school children's group. The memorial proposed the continuation of the Black Tailed Prairie Dog Working Group, an exemplary group of ranchers, farmers and environmentalists all working together to preserve the prairie dog and save it from becoming endangered, which would negatively affect ranchers. The Club participated in writing and passing the memorial and will participate in the working group.



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

Chair — Doug Fraser \* 474-7615 / 662-4104 fax  
Vice-Chair — Barbara Johnson \* lunah3@aol.com 466-4935  
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Soracco 983-6715  
  
Political Committee—Susan Martin \* smartin@lanl.gov 988-5206  
Membership/Activist Outings—Norma McCallan \* nmccallan@mindspring.com 471-0005  
  
Newsletter/Publicity — Kay Carlson kcarlsonwp@earthlink.net 982-3926  
Phone Tree — Berta Hanna 424-1435  
Chapter Rep — Doug Fraser \* 474-7615  
\* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

Outings — Norbert Sperlich 474-4354  
— Tobin Oruch 820-2844 oruch@lanl.gov  
Conservation — Paul Paryski \* pparyski@aol.com 992-1984  
Mining — Cliff Larsen \* clarsen1@ix.netcom.com 466-2128  
Water-John Buchser \* jbuchser@earthlink.net 820-0201  
National Parks-Courtney White \* widwst@ri66.com 982-5502  
Rangelands-Roger Peterson roggpete@aol.com 983-7559  
Carson Nat'l Forest-George Grossman 982-1024  
Activist Outings-Norma McCallan \* nmccallan@mindspring.com 471-0005  
Growth—Eleanor Eisenmenger 820-6401  
— Jan Kindel \* jankindel@aol.com 474-7207

# SANTA FE GROUP NEWS

## SANTA FE GROUP OUTINGS FOR 2002

### Sat Sun March 2002

- 2 **Snow Shoeing (or Hiking)** at Wild Rivers Rec Area north of Questa. Burritos in Taos at 9 AM. Bring lunch and something to drink. Sandra Newton (505-758-1678 or sn@rhl.com)
- 2 **Easy Petroglyph Hike**, some scrambling, limit of 15, call for time/place. Gail Bryant (505-757-6654)
- 3 **Potluck Dinner** to discuss activities in Taos area (hiking, backpacking, singles group, dinners, horseback riding, llama trekking). A pre-dinner wine tasting is \$10. Skiing at Taos beforehand? Sandra Newton (505-758-1678 or sn@rhl.com)
- 3 **Easy/Moderate Hike** new Central Section of the Dale Ball Trail circling Cerros Colorados between Hyde Park & Cerro Gordo Rds. 6 miles. Dogs (on leash) okay. If too much snow in foothills, we'll do Arroyo Chamiso. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
- 9 **Moderate Hike**. Heather Liston (982-9715)
- 10 **Easy Hike** to Frey Trail in Bandelier. Leave 9 AM or meet in White Rock with prior arrangement. Victor Atyns (438-9434)
- 16 **Intermediate X-Ctry Ski** (beginners) Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 17 **Easy Hike** to Tent Rocks. Leave 9 AM. Jeff Jones (466-2389)
- 23 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** - bring binoculars. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 23 **Easy/Moderate Hike** to Ghost Hotel in Glorieta. If too much snow, an alternative hike will be planned. Leave 9 AM and meet leader at north end of Glorieta overpass at 9:30 AM. David Bryant (505-757-3477)
- 24 **Strenuous Hike** in Bandelier. Norbert Sperlich (983-1962)
- 30 **Easy Petroglyph Hike** Some scrambling, limit of 15, call for time/place. Gail Bryant (505-757-6654)
- 30 **Strenuous Climb** up Cabezon peak, exposure to falling, not for faint of heart. Tobin Oruch (820-2844) or Steve Markowitz (505-797-5833)
- 31 **Easy/Moderate Hike (or Snowshoe Trip)** DOE lands near White Rock. Little elevation gain. Carpool from Sierra office in SFe 8:30 AM. Meet leader 9:30 AM parking lot of Smith's Supermarket, White Rock. Dogs okay. Bob McKee (672-3426).

### Sat Sun April

- 6 **Moderate Hike** near Ojo Caliente. Bring swimsuit for optional soak in the hot springs afterwards. For details, call Marcia Skillman (982-4967 h, 983-7323 w).
- 7 **Moderate Hike** in high country. Leave 9 AM. For reservation, call Art Judd (982-3212).
- Saturday, Sunday, Monday - April 13, 14, 15  
**Bandelier Backpack** with base camp in Capulin Canyon. For details, call Bob McKee (672-3426).
- 13 **Intermediate X-Country Trip** (no beginners) Lionel Soracco (983-6715). Moderate Hike if no snow.
- 14 **Easy Hike** for details, call Gail Bryant (505-757-6654).
- 14 **Strenuous Hike** to Sierra Negra (near Abiquiu). Rough terrain, no trail, 2200' elevation gain. For reservation, call Norbert Sperlich (474-4354).
- 20 **Strenuous Hike** on Atalaya-Sierra Pelada Loop. 11 miles roundtrip, 2500' elevation gain. Dogs allowed. Call for details. Tobin Oruch (820-2844).
- 21 **Moderate Hike** on Dockwiler Trail, trail conditions permitting. 8 miles roundtrip, 1700' elevation gain. Leave at 8:30 AM in Santa Fe, meet leader at 9 AM at north end of Glorieta Overpass. For reservation, call David Bryant (505-757-3477).
- 27 **Easy Bird Watch Walk** - bring binoculars, call for time/meeting place. Ron Duffy (982-2890).
- 27 **Moderate Hike** to Kitchen Mesa (Ghost Ranch) and beyond. Some scrambling required. Leave 8:30 in Santa Fe, meet leader in Española. For reservation, call Michael Di Rosa (663-0648).
- 28 **Moderate Hike** to Rio en Medio. Leave 9 AM. For reservation, call Heather Liston (982-9715).

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

### Sat Sun Mny

- 4 **Easy Hike** for details call Gail Bryant (505-757-6654).
- 5 **Strenuous Hike** to Cerro Pederal. 9 miles roundtrip, 1900' elevation gain. One rock scramble. For details, call Marcia Skillman (983-7323 w, 982-4967 h).
- 11 **Moderate Hike** in Tent Rock area. Dogs allowed. Leave 8 AM. For details, call Bob McKee (672-3426).
- 11 **Moderate Mountain Bike Trip** to Christ-in-the-Desert Monastery. About 30 miles roundtrip on a dirt road. Leave Santa Fe at 8:30 AM, meet leader in Española. For reservation, call Michael Di Rosa (663-0648).
- 12 **Moderate Hike** to Rio en Medio. Leave 8 AM. For reservation call Art Judd (982-3212).
- 18 **Strenuous Hike** to Shaggy Peak. Mostly off-trail, rough terrain, some scrambling. 3000' elevation gain. Dogs allowed. For details, call Tobin Oruch (820-2844).
- 19 **Moderate Hike** to Hamilton Mesa. Leave at 8:30 AM in Santa Fe, meet leader at 9 AM at north end of Glorieta overpass. For reservation, call David Bryant (505-757-3477).
- Saturday, May 25 through Sunday, June 2  
A week in **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Moderate/Exploratory Backpack(s) and Day Hike(s)** in the remote upper Paria Canyon/Bull Valley Gorge area of South Central Utah. Dogs allowed. Call for details. Norma McCallan (471-0005).
- 25 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** - bring binoculars, call for time, meeting place. Ron Duffy (782-2890).
- 26 **Moderate Hike** in Jemez. For reservation, call Norbert Sperlich (474-4354).
- 26 **Strenuous Hike** to Glorieta Baldy. 11 miles roundtrip, 2800' elevation gain. Leave Santa Fe at 8:30 AM. Meet leader at the entrance booth to Glorieta Baptist Center at 9 AM. For reservation, call Jeff Jones (466-2389 h, 827-3931 ext 109 w).

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

### OUTING LEADERS GET TOGETHER

We are planning an evening get together/mini workshop for Outing Leaders and potential leaders on Thursday, April 11, or Wednesday, April 17, at the Sierra Office from 6:30 to 9:30 PM. If you have ever thought about leading hikes, this is an excellent time to get started. Please call Tobin (820-2844), Norbert (983-1962) or Norma (471-0005) for details, and to let us know which evening is better for you.

### OUTING LEADER TRAINING WORKSHOP - May 17-19, 2002

Rocky Mountain Village of the Easter Seals  
Empire, Colorado - 40 miles west of Denver

Hosted by Sierra's Outdoor Activities Training Program and only \$45, including meals (Friday dinner to Sunday lunch) and bunk-style lodging Friday and Saturday nights. Contact Steven Shewach at steven.shewach@sierraclub.org or (415) 977-5711.

### GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Executive Committee:	Group Conservation Committee:
Tuesday, March 5, 6:30 PM	Tuesday, March 26, 7 PM
Tuesday, April 2, 6:30 PM	Tuesday, April 23, 7 PM
Tuesday, May 7, 6:30 PM	
Water Pot-Luck (John Buchser's house [820-0201]):	
Monday, March 12, 6:30 PM	
Monday, April 8, 6:30 PM	

### RIO GRANDE SIERRAN NOW ON THE 'NET' !!

<http://www.riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/home.html>

**Outings Notes** - Unless otherwise noted, all outings leave from the Sierra office, 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, "Plaza Desira," just south of Kaune's Grocery at the corner of Old SF Trail and Paseo de Peralta. Carpooling will be arranged. Each hiker should come prepared to pay 5¢ a mile to the driver of the car in which s/he rides. Bring a lunch, water, sturdy hiking boots or shoes, and clothing suitable for the weather - leader reserves the right to turn away anyone whose equipment or experience appears unsuitable. Leader has right to alter destination of hike or cancel trip due to weather, unfavorable conditions, or insufficient numbers of participants. Unaccompanied minors must have written permission from parents or guardians to participate; permission forms are available at the Sierra Club office. Dogs not permitted on hikes unless noted otherwise. Telephone leader for details of the individual hike. To participate, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver, see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms>

### PHONE TREE/E-MAIL TREE

#### A Great Way To Reach Our Legislators And Officials!

Berta Hanna has graciously agreed to take over our phone tree and is currently contacting all members. John Buchser has the email tree up and running. If you would like to be on either "tree" to receive and act upon conservation alerts, please contact Berta (424-1435) or John (jbuchser@earthlink.net). Our environmental battles have only increased as the public's attention and money is focused on the War on Terrorism. We need everyone's help, and this is a good way to start getting involved.



## EL PASO GROUP NEWS

### March General Meeting

Grazing the Southwest  
with  
**Kiersten Stade**  
Forest Guardians

Confused about what cows actually do to your public lands? The ranchers figure the desert here will support one cow per section per inch of yearly precipitation. Ms. Stade will give us an overview of the effects of livestock grazing on our desert environment.

**Wednesday, March 27th, 7:30 PM**

University and Wiggins on the UTEP campus  
**Centennial Museum**

### Cougars and the Precautionary Principle

by Jamie Newlin

Lisa Jennings of APNM will soon give us a presentation on the mismanagement of cougars in New Mexico. Mismanagement because, according to the best available science, the cougar population is about half the number being used by the NM Department of Game and Fish to establish kill quotas. Mismanagement because the total kills allowed are about three times the sustainable limit, according to the best available science. State allowed cougar kill quotas have now reached the point where the yearly kill may be large enough to crash the entire cougar population of New Mexico...according to the best available science.

Which bring us to the precautionary principle. Roughly translated the precautionary principle tells us "Don't gamble with what you can't afford to lose". It is far easier to decide to live and manage within limits now, than to exceed limits and then have to travel the hard road back to ecological security. This applies to cougar management as well. Do we really want to create another endangered species in the region? We don't have to, yet the new cougar quotas violate all sense of the precautionary principle, based on the best information available to us at this time.

### Website News

Lose your Lorax? Need a membership application? Log on to our outstanding website for these and more details on El Paso Regional Group activities. The El Paso Regional Group earns credits for new members entering through <http://texas.sierraclub.org/elpaso>

### Selected Outings

#### Mar 23: Bishop Cap Dayhike

Place: Organ Mountains, east of Vado

Class: Moderate

Length: 3-4 miles

Elevation gain: 1000 feet

Leader: Ed Storey (915) 587-8720 (H) [enstorey@elpasonet.net](mailto:enstorey@elpasonet.net)

Bishop's Cap is interesting esthetically, historically and geologically. It is the site of Conkling's Cave, where bones of Homo sapiens have been found. There are outcroppings of fluorite, barite and selenite, although there has been no significant mining. There are no established trails, so the hike will be across open terrain. How far we go depends on the interest of the group and the weather. We have the options of exploring the prospect holes, looking for the cave, and climbing the Cap.

#### Mar 30-31: Dog Canyon Car Camp

Place: Guadalupe Mountains NP

Class: Easy

Length: 0-5 miles

Elevation gain: 0-500 feet

Leader: Carl Horkowitz (915) 755-3968 (H)

Dog Canyon in the Guads lies a few steps south of the state line at the park's northern border. The drive in is somewhat circuitous; but the solitude gained is amazing for a car campground. There are several excellent trails leading up gently into the hills; or one can simply lounge around the camp and observe the wildlife, which seems to know it's protected once across the park boundary.

#### Apr 6-7: Indio Ranch Service/Car Camp

Place: SE of Sierra Blanca, Texas

Class: Easy to Strenuous

Leader: Liz Walsh (915) 584-1471 (H) [ewalsh@utep.edu](mailto:ewalsh@utep.edu)

Owned by the University of Texas at El Paso, Indio Ranch is in the hills above the Rio Grande down close to the Hudspeth/Culberson County line. The road is not suitable for passenger cars. The accommodations are limited to a bunkhouse and an outhouse. We'll arrive around noon on Saturday and spend some time clearing Salt Cedar away from the spring. There should be good times around the evening campfire and plenty of time to explore this rustic area on Sunday before departing. This trip is a first for the El Paso Group!

#### Apr 26-28: Anita Park Backpack

Place: Chiricahua Wilderness, Coronado Nat. Forest, Arizona

Class: Moderate

Length: about 10 miles

Elevation gain, loss: +1150 feet; -3000 feet

Leader: Rollin Wickenden, (915) 855-6697 (H) [rwickgila@aol.com](mailto:rwickgila@aol.com)

Leaving vehicles at West Turkey Creek Campground Saturday AM, we will drive to Rustler Park and hike the Crest Trail south along the high ridge of the Chiricahuas to beautiful Anita Park. After spending Saturday night in the high, cool pines, we will retrace our steps north to the Saulsbury Trail, and then descend some 3000 feet to our autos.

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

<http://texas.sierraclub.org/elpaso>

#### Chair

Laurence Gibson: 594-7342  
[lgibson@utep.edu](mailto:lgibson@utep.edu)

#### Vice Chair

Jamie Newlin: 584-1471  
[chaetura@juno.com](mailto:chaetura@juno.com)

#### Secretary

Ann Falknor: 833-9162  
[afalknor@prodigy.net](mailto:afalknor@prodigy.net)

#### Treasurer

Kathy Sunday: 584-9301  
[sundayt@zianet.com](mailto:sundayt@zianet.com)

#### Editor

Laurence Gibson: 594-7342  
[lgibson@utep.edu](mailto:lgibson@utep.edu)

#### Members

Ted Mertig: 852-3011  
[tmertig@earthlink.net](mailto:tmertig@earthlink.net)  
Jose Escobedo: 872-8422  
[escobedo25@hotmail.com](mailto:escobedo25@hotmail.com)  
Greg Lawson: 532-7273  
[vcgetexan@aol.com](mailto:vcgetexan@aol.com)  
Liz Walsh: 584-1471  
[ewalsh@utep.edu](mailto:ewalsh@utep.edu)

#### Chapter Delegate

Ted Mertig: 852-3011  
[tmertig@earthlink.net](mailto:tmertig@earthlink.net)

#### Chap Del - Alternate

Liz Walsh: 584-1471  
[ewalsh@utep.edu](mailto:ewalsh@utep.edu)

#### Inner City Outings

Ted Mertig: 852-3011  
[tmertig@earthlink.net](mailto:tmertig@earthlink.net)

#### Outings

Laurence Gibson: 594-7342  
[lgibson@utep.edu](mailto:lgibson@utep.edu)

#### Outings

Rollin Wickenden:  
[rwickgila@aol.com](mailto:rwickgila@aol.com)

#### Membership

Ted Mertig: 852-3011  
[tmertig@earthlink.net](mailto:tmertig@earthlink.net)

#### Webmaster

Terry Sunday: 584-9301  
[sundayt@zianet.com](mailto:sundayt@zianet.com)

## News from the Chair

### Group Directory

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

Don Dearholt  
Chair  
522-3035  
dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu

Margo Wilson  
Vice Chair, Chapter Rep.  
744-5860  
margotwilson40@hotmail.com

Cheryll Blevins  
Treasurer/Secretary  
524-4861  
spotblev@earthlink.net

David Farrell  
Legislative Issues  
895-3352  
dafarrelli@hotmail.com

### Don Dearholt

The fine programs have continued, with the programs on *Watershed Problems in New Mexico*, by Karl Wood, and *Border Environmental Health Problems in Southern New Mexico*, by Vicki Simons, particularly relevant and full of interesting and important information. Our programs this year are being selected to help us in establishing priorities for our conservation work. Please note that the next programs scheduled are also very timely and important, and please attend if at all possible, so that you can help us decide where to put our resources to the best advantage! Our Christmas potluck was great fun, and is the beginning of a new tradition--we expect to have another one next year.

Perhaps you've heard that an oil company has applied for a permit to drill lots of oil and gas wells on Otero Mesa, and all the environmentalists who know and appreciate the quality and extent of the grasslands, with its unique wildlife and ecology, would like to give the BLM many good reasons not to approve this request. Call Jim Scanlon at 527-9962 for further information, and see the program for April below!

### 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.

### Programs

**Thursday, March 14: Decanalization: A Giant Step Towards Restoring the Rio Grande;** Kevin Bixby, Director of the Southwest Environmental Center, Las Cruces, NM. 7:00 p.m., SH 107, on the NMSU campus.

**Thursday, April 11: Oil and Gas Drilling on Greater Otero Mesa:** New Mexico's Version of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; Steve Capra, Media Coordinator for the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. 7:00 p.m., SH 107, on the NMSU campus.

\*\*\*\*\* We expect this program will be within the comment period for the BLM proposal, so we expect to have information on possible action(s) we might be able to take relating to this potential disaster!!! \*\*\*\*\*

(To find the programs, Science Hall is the L-shaped building just north of Stewart Street, and west of Williams and the tennis courts; it is across from O'Donnell Hall, the education building. SH 107 is in the east wing of Science Hall, which is the part of the L that extends north and south.)

For more information, call Don at 522-3035.

### Coming Events

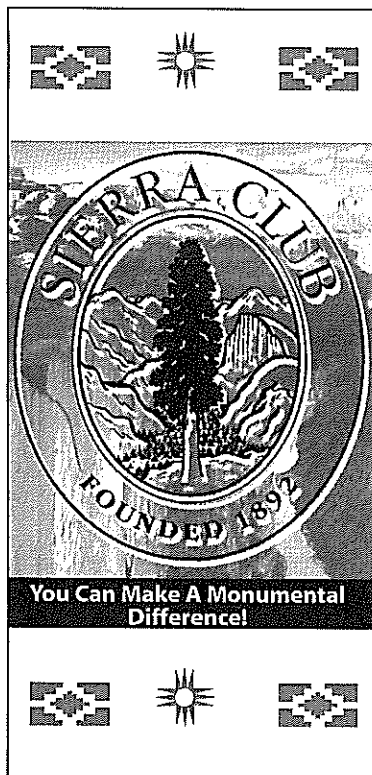
#### Outings

**March 2, Saturday: Hike Broad Canyon** in the Las Uvas Mtns. Trip is rated moderate - maybe we'll see some petroglyphs along the way. Call Ron @ 522-4527 for info.

**March 30, Saturday: Cooke's Peak** - Strenuous hike up this prominent peak north of Deming. Site of BLM WSA. 3,000 ft. elevation gain. Call Ben @ 526-7811 for info.

**April 6, Saturday: Achenbach Canyon** hike in the Organ Mtns. Rated moderate-maybe some spring wildflowers if we're lucky. Call Ron @ 522-4527 for info.

**April 27, Saturday: Time to do Hillsboro Peak** again. This is a moderate hike of 10 miles on trails over relatively easy terrain. 1,800 ft. elevation gain. Call Ben @ 526-7811 for info.







## PARAJITO GROUP NEWS

### Group Directory

#### Pajarito Group of the Sierran Club

Ilse Bleck Chair	662-2358 <a href="mailto:ibleck@yahoo.com">ibleck@yahoo.com</a>
Kim Manley Vice Chair	
Matt Heavner Member	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>
Abe Jacobson	672-9579 <a href="mailto:abe.jacobson@worldnet.att.net">abe.jacobson@worldnet.att.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

All meetings are held in the upstairs rooms of the Mesa Public Library at 7:00 PM, and are open to the public. General meetings are on the first Wednesday, Conservation Meetings on the second Wednesday, and Excom Meetings on the third Wednesday of each month.

#### Other Meetings:

##### March 6, 7:00 PM

Discussion on Area G: The Los Alamos Study Group requested that the Pajarito Group endorse a petition to close Area G (the nuclear Hot Dump) at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Due to the complex issues, both scientific and political, however, we decided to schedule a panel that will address the operation and potential closure of Area G. Panel members participating will be: Ray Hahn from the Lab's Solid Waste Operations, Merlin Wheeler, a retired hydrologist and environmental scientist Greg Mello from the Los Alamos Study Group, and potentially a member of the New Mexico Environmental Department.

##### April 3, 7:00 PM

Review of Los Alamos Comprehensive Plan: Los Alamos is revising its Comprehensive Plan. The process, begun in 1999, was put on hold, first because of many protests against the Plan as submitted (no land use designation-including open space-was including), and then the Cerro Grande Fire. Once again the plan is moving forward, this time the process includes community participation and visioning. Carl Moore, one of the planners, will present the an overview of the process and procedure and the findings thus far.

## Outings Questionnaire

To help us make our outings program more attractive, please provide some guidance by filling out the following questionnaire.

Check all that apply to you.

- I am not interested in outings however,
- I am interested in: \_\_\_\_\_
- Short hikes with little elevation gain lasting half a day, in the vicinity of Los Alamos.
- Moderate day hikes in the vicinity of Los Alamos.
- Moderate to strenuous day hikes in northern New Mexico.
- Weekend car camping trips with moderate to strenuous hikes.
- Backpacking trips.
- Float trips.
- Family outings.
- Outings on which pets are welcome.
- Cross-country ski trips.
- Outings on mountain bikes.
- I would like to be an outings leader.

My favorite outing is: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send completed questionnaires to:

Rainer & Ilse Bleck  
1007 Big Rock Loop  
Los Alamos, NM 87544

## A Letter From the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

*This narrative was written by Mark Herndon, an oilman from Oklahoma who has worked with us for many years on our storm intercept projects as a volunteer. He spent a month trekking in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Read what he has to say. Pass it on to your friends, if you are so inclined.*

—Erik Rasmussen

*Cooperative Institute for Mesoscale Meteorological Studies  
NSSL/Oklahoma University*

**H**i everyone. I returned yesterday from a month alone in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in far northeastern Alaska. I lost 25 pounds and basically feel like I have been beaten up. It was a really tough trip.

I want to share a little bit about the place with you, while it is still fresh in my mind—things that I feel are very important. I want to grab you by the lapels and tell you a few things that are true, because I have seen them.

ANWR is probably the biggest chunk of absolute wilderness left in this country. I've been in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Noatak National Preserve, two other large protected areas in the Brooks Range. ANWR is huge compared to those places; it's a place where you could walk your whole life and never see it all. Contrary to what you may have heard in the media, it is not a vast wasteland. It is like heaven on earth and hasn't been touched by man. There is not a single building, not a single trail, in an area that I've heard is about comparable to South Carolina. It's 19 million acres—and there ain't no visitor center.

Very few people go there. It is difficult and committing to get there. Since I have been there, and given the current political situation about ANWR's coastal plain, I emphatically want to tell you what it is like. And feel free to tell your friends.

**F**irst, I paddled the Canning River, on the west side of the Refuge. I started up high in the glaciated Brooks Range and hiked for a few days—craggy mountains and a two-day snowstorm on the 4th of July. It looks wilder than the wildest part of Colorado without the trees. That part of the Refuge is far north of treeline.

As I floated down, I saw gyrfalcons, peregrines and golden eagles. I saw musk ox and had a long, close encounter with a grizzly bear. Everywhere were tracks of caribou, muskox, grizzly, wolf and wolverine.

I hiked up side valleys that were miles wide and absolutely flat tundra covered with lupines and arctic poppies. A close examination of the tundra reveals hundreds of tiny flowers and lichens. Everywhere, old caribou antlers and skulls poked up through the tundra. Wolf-killed caribou skeletons also dot the tundra, often skulls with huge antlers attached. I saw more musk ox and managed to walk pretty close to some of them, before they got a little agitated.

As I floated out of the mountains to the coastal plain, I began to see caribou in earnest—more than you could ever count. It was like being in a herd in Africa. This is where I came out of the wilderness part of the Refuge, and the river became the boundary between state land on the left (where oil exploration goes on) and ANWR on the right bank. On the state land, I began to see many abandoned fuel drums, and huge tracks on the tundra where cat trains shoot

seismic in the winter. The tracks don't go away any time soon. After a while, I saw abandoned drums constantly on the state land.

As I crossed the coastal plain, I saw many smaller caribou herds and began to see lots of birds—geese, ducks, tundra swans, and many strange types of birds (I have no idea what they were), probably migrating up from Hawaii or Chile to nest.

All this time, I saw more and more garbage on the left bank. Most of the animals were on the right bank. In this day and age, I would think that BP-Amoco, Exxon, and Phillips would go clean up all that crap.

I made my way to the delta of the river where it empties into the Beaufort Sea and, in a 2:00am lull in the wind, paddled a roundabout 10 miles across the four-mile lagoon to an island that is about six miles long. There were many small icebergs about 30 feet across. I saw old sod huts that the Eskimos used to live in on the island, and I found that the entire north side of the island was still fast against the sea ice which continues to somewhere in Russia, I guess. I walked out on it for a ways; it is really rough. One day, through binoculars, I watched ringed seals (polar bears' staple food) sunning on the ice. I saw a huge set of polar bear tracks around the lagoon side of the island, but they were pretty old. The island was just a few miles outside of the ANWR boundary, and Exxon had drilled a dry hole on it in the past two years. It was one of the filthiest locations I have ever seen in my 15 years working in the oil industry. I was really surprised, because Exxon drillsites in the lower 48 are usually the cleanest of them all. I was not impressed with what I saw of the oil industry in Alaska.

Then my bush plane landed on a sandspit and took me to the headwaters of the Jago river, which is supposed to be one of the most beautiful places on earth. I spent ten days in this valley, hiking up to the glaciated peaks at its headwaters. Part of the Porcupine Caribou Herd had gone south up the valley a couple of days before my arrival—there were millions of tracks. Interspersed were the occasional wolf or grizzly track.

On the Jago, I was trapped for two days waiting for a rain-swollen river to come down. I had fallen in the same river on the way up, and wet gear up there is serious trouble because of the cold. The only way to describe this valley is to take the prettiest valley in Montana or Idaho and double it. It just took my breath away. It was so different that it may as well have been the moon. One night while I slept, a grizzly walked by my tent—a set of fresh tracks hadn't been there the night before. He paid me no mind.

Anyway, I was picked up on a gravel bar on the lower river and flown out to Kaktovik, on the coast. I heard there were nine white people in Kaktovik, but the Inupiat Eskimos who live

there were very nice people. You'd see someone cleaning a freshly killed bearded seal in the front yard of their house. A local hunter (they basically all hunt and whale) heard I'd been on the Canning and sought me out for skinny on where the caribou still were. From there, I made all of the flights home.

**B**efore I went to see ANWR for myself, I had some preconceptions. After last year in Alaska, I thought that modern oil exploration could be done responsibly. Certainly most Alaskans were for it—they each got \$1,600 each last year from the North Slope oil money.

After seeing ANWR... seeing that coastal plain myself, I realized that there are a lot of lies being told about this place. It is not a vast wasteland. It is achingly beautiful, and if you value wild places, the Refuge could be considered a sanctuary or a cathedral. To me, it was an intense experience far beyond what I expected. I have been going to wild places most of my life, but I have never been to a place like this—not even close—in the Lower 48.

There are a few places that are just not appropriate for large-scale oil exploration. This place is far more fantastic than Yellowstone or Grand Teton, but it is far away and few care.

If we put a bunch of drill pads on that coastal plain, we will be making a terrible mistake. Our country will never again be energy-independent anyway. Those numbers don't lie. Drilling in ANWR will only help about four major oil companies and the State of Alaska (which is completely addicted to the oil tit). It will only make a few percent difference to the nation.

The first morning back, I read in the paper that the House approved drilling in ANWR. I felt like crying. That coastal plain is very narrow, and the most environmentally sensitive exploration would put a giant blot on it.

Most of you will never meet anyone else in your life who has actually been to ANWR—fewer still who have crossed the coastal plain. I emphatically urge you to listen to what I am saying and take it into account as you form your own opinions. The vote to open ANWR still has to make it through the Senate. Those of you in Oklahoma are wasting paper by writing to our senators; to those of you in other states, maybe you can help.

And remember—I am *in* the oil industry. I'm all for drilling in many, many places. Not here. The price is way too high.

I can't emphasize enough how special this place is. I don't believe the promise that they will only disturb 2,000 acres. When they get through shooting seismic in that place, it will look like a chessboard from the air. It's kind of like a football field. Twenty-two players standing on their feet probably occupy far less than 100 square feet of that football field—but they sure do make an impression. The coastal plain is the living part of the Refuge. The rest is very mountainous and almost sterile by comparison. To go stomping on the coastal plain with a series of industrial sites is just too much.

I don't want to have to say that I saw ANWR way back before it got all messed up.

Thanks for listening.

—Mark Herndon

these bills but insisted, in collaboration with the Alliance for the Rio Grande Heritage, that very strict controls and limits be established on the use of herbicides. This required long negotiation with the dairy, rancher and farmers' associations—all of which finally agreed to our proposals. This negotiation process, and our support of their water concerns, helped mend fences and build bridges with these communities. In the end, we must all fight to preserve the same natural resource base on which we depend.

After long hours in various committee meetings discussing the various bills, the senators and representatives concerned agreed to a package bill of \$30 million to devise and implement a program to restore water to the Pecos River in order to meet New Mexico's obligations. Apparently the Governor agreed to the bill that was introduced and hotly defended by Senator Tim Jennings (D-Roswell). Senator Jennings admitted to being a "closet" environmentalist. We must now work with the State Engineer to make sure that the program is environmentally sound and includes the restoration of watersheds and riparian areas. We may also work to propose a riparian ecosystem-restoration bill during the next session—a measure that now probably *would* get the support of the ranchers, farmers and dairy farmers, a new alliance.

We did not succeed in getting a domestic well bill passed, although we tried very hard. The proposed bill, introduced in the House by Representative Stell (D-Eddy, Chairman of the House Agriculture and Water Resources Committee), would have given the State Engineer the right to deny well permits:

- in areas of the state that are considered critical for water, and
- in areas where wells would have a negative effect on the state's ability to meet its obligations of the Rio Grande and Pecos River Compacts.

After the House bill was tabled, however, we were able, with the help of Senator Cisco McSorley (D-Albuquerque) and Senator Dede Feldman (D-Albuquerque, Chair of the Public Affairs Committee), to get a similar bill introduced in the Senate. Senator McSorley showed great courage in introducing the bill, since it was highly controversial and vigorously opposed by conservatives and libertarians. This bill was also tabled, but only after an extensive discussion during which the committee senators all agreed that a new bill should be presented at the next session. Conci Bokum of 1000 Friends tirelessly led the fight to pass these bills.

Among those who left with broken hearts was the mining industry, led by Phelps Dodge. Using their considerable resources, they pushed to enact an amendment, Senate Bill 386, to the 1993 Mining Act. This amendment would have eliminated the legal requirement that mining companies obtain surety bonds to:

- guarantee the cost of reclamation of closed-out mining sites, and
- to eliminate any pollution these sites might cause.

The amendment would have given mining companies the right to establish subsidiaries holding parent-company shares to provide this financial guarantee. The mining companies argued that the cost of providing surety bonds through third-party establishments has become prohibitive. The environmental community, however, feels that the amendment would allow a mining company to bankrupt its surety subsidiary and

escape financial liability, leaving the State of New Mexico and, therefore, its taxpaying citizens with huge clean-up costs. While other mining states (e.g., California, Alaska and Oregon) insist on bonds, some states without third-party bonding have been saddled with huge costs (e.g., Montana, which paid \$40 million to clean up one site).

We lobbied long and hard, even during the night, along with other environmental groups such as the Conservation Voters' Alliance and the New Mexico Environmental Law Center, to stop this environmentally unacceptable legislation. The Senate Conservation Committee passed the bill after strong arguments from both sides. Due to our efforts and those of the other environmental lobbyists, however, the bill never reached either the Senate or House floors. Senator Richard Romero (D-Albuquerque, pro-environment President Pro Tem of the Senate) heroically supported us on the Senate floor. Senator Shannon Robinson (D-Albuquerque), who was instrumental in passing the original 1993 Hard Rock Mining Act, also helped on the floor. Cliff Larsen, the Chapter Mining Co-chair, testified against the bill before the Senate Conservation Committee and was ready to assist on the floor as an expert witness. Abe Jacobson, the other Club Mining Co-chair, also was prepared to testify.

We did agree to meet with the mining industry during the interim to discuss the problem of high bonding costs. House and Senate memorials also proposed further discussions.

**A** number of good bills were passed during the session:

- A series of bills provided for tax and other incentives for alternate energy production, including an Energy Memorials bill. House Joint Memorial 98, introduced by Don Tripp (R-Hobbs). This bill will establish an interim committee to study the effects of new power plants in New Mexico. Chapter Chair Jim Hannan and Energy Chair Gail Ryba helped draft the bill, along with Charles Bensinger and Dick Kamp of Border Ecology Project. Les Crowder, an activist from Sabinal, testified in favor of the bill. Senator Michael Sanchez (D-Valencia) supported the initiative.
- We helped the NM Environment Department get \$2 million included in the state

budget as matching funds for an EPA superfund grant of \$8 million to clean up five polluted sites in New Mexico.

- The admirable work of a rancher-environmentalist Black Tailed Prairie Dog Restoration and Protection Working Group was extended.
- Used oil was classified as a toxic waste. The purchase of alternate-fuel vehicles by the State was promoted.
- A bill proposing a special license plate to help fund wildlife programs made it through committee.
- A bill funding the use of biomass for energy generation made it through committees.
- Joint resolutions were passed to recommend the establishment of an effluent wetland instead of dumping effluent into the Rio Grande.

The final "bill locator" will indicate whether these measures passed in the confused final days of the session and were signed by the Governor.

**A** couple of capital-outlay measures funding the enlargement of Paseo del Norte in Albuquerque were proposed. Because the enlargement would threaten a number of First Nation petroglyphs, we fought to stop the proposal. Capital-outlay projects are buried in the budget; we will not know whether this measure received funding until a budget is finally passed.

**D**uring the entire session, we worked closely with the Conservation Voters Alliance (CVA) and the Alliance for the Rio Grande Heritage, promoting environmentally friendly bills and fighting bills that would negatively impact the environment. Recognizing that such collaboration is invaluable, we would like to thank Helga Schimkat, Mary Feldblum, Zoe Van Raan and Lois Taylor of CVA; and Matejka Olguin and Sam Ray, lobbyists of the Alliance for the Rio Grande Heritage, for their collaboration and friendship during this short and tiring session.

During the 2003 legislative session, we plan to present a pro-active program to promote our goals:

- water-resource protection,
- wildlife/wildlands protection, and
- stopping sprawl.

We hope we can count on the support of all active Sierra Club members.

#### Rep. Stell on Water (cont. from page 3)

Fighting over water was commonplace in the Old West, but in the past century, we have grown complacent about our water—both the supply and the quality. Now we are again faced with a serious threat to our water, our life blood,

**"Whiskey is for drinking,  
water is for fighting."**

—a saying from the Old West

our way of life—and we are again fighting over water, this time in the courts. It is up to all of us—city dwellers, ranchers, farmers, protectors of wildlife, developers, business owners—to take this issue very seriously. It should be on the front page of every newspaper just about every day, it should be part of school curriculums, it should be at the top of the agenda of every

county and municipality in this state, and it should be a topic of conversation for all of us. The more we ignore the problem, the more likely we are to end up fighting, and that will cost the state, and us as citizens, money and time that could be spent solving the problem.

The Legislature is working on ways to deal with these problems, but the solution will depend on all the citizens of the state, because this is a problem that affects us all—not just farmers, not just a few cities or counties, and not just a few regions of the state. Cooperation, vision and new thinking—not fighting—are the key to protecting our water. And protecting our water is the key to protecting our economic security and preserving our quality of life.

For more information, contact Representative Joe M. Stell (D-Eddy), Chairman of the House Agriculture and Water Resources Committee, in Carlsbad, NM (785-2188; house@state.nm.us).

## NM Legislature Passes Promising Energy Legislation

by Gail Ryba

Some favorable bills pertaining to energy passed the Legislature this session and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

Senator Sue Wilson Belford's SB 187 and Representative Ben Lujan's HB 233 both provide a tax credit of \$.01/kWh for energy from wind and solar facilities that generate 20 MW or more. This will benefit only big wind farms at this point; hopefully, it will encourage the construction of these facilities in New Mexico.

The Legislature passed Senator Lyons' and Representative Lujan's bills (SB 376 and HB 377) providing gross receipt tax exemptions to wind nacelles, blades and ancillary equipment for wind power plants. This exemption could save a \$10-million wind farm about \$650,000 in initial capitalization costs. Because there was concern about losing gross receipts taxes for construction equipment and related projects in general, a compromise limits the exemption to "government sales" of equipment. This ties the exemption to only those wind farms financed

through industrial revenue bonds—in effect, a "government sale" of equipment.

Senator Lyons and Representatives Gubbells and Lujan passed bills providing for the extension of industrial revenue bonds in all counties in New Mexico for use in power plants. The bill would allow the bonds for both conventional and renewable energy plants, but Senator Lyons has indicated he was most interested in promoting wind farms in Eastern New Mexico.

Senator Feldman's bill promoting the use of alternative fuels passed.

Finally, two memorials were passed (SJM-96, HJM-98) that will require all future gas power plants be reviewed by an interim committee for their impacts on water and other natural resources. Hopefully, this will at least guide power-plant construction to use the air-cooling technologies that use almost no water. Memorials do not require the Governor's signature.

For more information, contact Chapter Energy Chair Gail Ryba (gryba@cybermesa.com).

### Lindsey on Water (cont. from page 11)

bring the pueblo aboard and solve the water problems in northern Santa Fe county, but how does that create more water? And how long would it take?

We could tap the river at Buckman. That alternative is becoming more attractive to the city, the county and Las Campanas. The State Engineer and the US Forest Service demand that there be just one tap into the river, not three. The principals are negotiating, but they have yet to iron out their differences as to who pays for what and how they share the water.

Completion of that project would be three years away, but no decision has been made whether to go for San Ildefonso or Buckman. Or both—and at what price?

The city authorized an average of 654 new connections to the water system annually from 1996 to 2000, and 973 through November 2001. Mayor Delgado said in August 2000 that the city must match the demand for water with the supply—and he has stuck to it despite criticism—but the city cannot deny building permits on the grounds of insufficient water unless the Council gives it that authority. (The water company now offers new hookups only on a highly conditional one-year basis, but that has not deterred the developers.) Councilors Bushee, Chavez, Heldmeyer and Montañño have proposed a Water Budget. Logic would seem to call for a moratorium, since the water company says that water is already insufficient for dry years. But this was a more modest proposal, simply limiting annual hookups to the 1996-2000 average. Nevertheless, it generated a firestorm from the development community. The spokesman for the Realtors Association and Chamber of Commerce called the proposal "a monster" and predicted economic turmoil. Developers said they would have to drill their own wells or go bankrupt. Espanola also wants to drill more wells. But the State Engineer long ago said that the aquifer is already completely committed.

The Water Budget is being put on hold until a consultant studies its potential economic impact (and thereby puts off the issue until after the

coming election.) I hope the analysts look at what would happen to business if we have a prolonged water crisis.

Most of the growth is occurring outside the city, and the county government has no systematic process for reconciling growth and available water. It hoped that it could tap in on San Juan-Chama water, but the city has said no, it needs all that water.

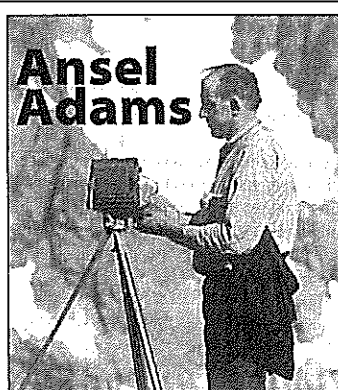
When builders outbuild the water supplies, the pressures become intolerable to mine the aquifers and defer the crisis for a few years, when it will be worse. In fact, the choice is not a free one between unfettered economic growth and no growth. Slow growth, with water, would probably suit most Santa Feans better than roaring growth followed by a crisis.

Water has become the major issue that the city and county governments must face—and they don't want to. At the very least, they can avoid a water crisis only if they demand proof that developers have the water, even in dry years—and will pay for its delivery to their developments. Even this is a rather bleak compromise. Cities can far outbid agriculture for water. They will change the land we know, if the market is allowed to work.

The only real solution is to keep the effective demand below the point at which the bidding wars get serious. That could be achieved only through zoning and land-use policies to hold total development at levels commensurate with available water supplies. The County 1980 Master Plan envisaged such policies, but it was circumvented.

The race for city and county offices is on. The public interest demands a willingness by its elected officials to insist on matching our demands to our water supplies. Some of the candidates are committed to the idea. What do we hear from the others?

*Lindsey Grant is a writer on population/resource issues and a former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Environment and Population (lindseygrant@earthlink.net).*



© 2001 Rondal Partridge

### He didn't just photograph the wilderness. He fought for it

Most people don't know that Ansel Adams was a member of the Sierra Club for over five decades. A fierce environmentalist, Adams wanted to help preserve the Earth for future generations—not just to celebrate it on film. And the Sierra Club shared his vision. Shouldn't your grandchildren have more than photos to remind them of the grandeur of our land? The Sierra Club is dedicated to protecting our wilderness for generations to come. **Join us. You'll be in good company.**

Join today and receive a **FREE** Sierra Club Weekender Bag!



My Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
email \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

Please charge my ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Categories	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47

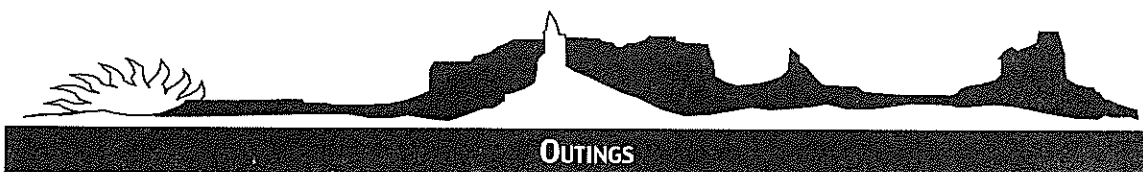
Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

F94Q W 1700 1



SIERRA CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

Enclose check and mail to:  
Sierra Club  
P.O. Box 52968  
Boulder, CO 80322-2968



## It's Spring When We Wake To the Sun Again

Sunlight popping through my bedroom window now awakens me instead of the clock radio. It is light 'til 6 pm, and by the time you read this, spring flowers will be pushing through the warming soil (assuming we get at least a little snow and rain). Spring is a joyous time of reawakening and hope. We need the outdoors even more than usual, after the horrors of September 11; we need its calming magnificence and sense of permanence. We need to revisit our special places, and discover new

ones. How lucky we are to live in a State so blessed with such a diversity of scenery, geology, plants, animals and cultural artifacts. And after we have renewed our energies, we need to work hard to save these special places—even more likely than before to be trampled in the rush for new oil and gas production, the diminished caretaking budgets our already underfunded land agencies will see as monies get funneled to the war on terrorism, the ever increasing interest in motorized recreation.

The Pajarito (Los Alamos) Group has no offerings this month but, instead, a questionnaire designed to elicit suggestions on ways to broaden their outings program (see page 16). If you live in that area, or might be interested in hiking in that general vicinity, please fill it out and send it in. All phone numbers are area code 505 except as noted. Check each Group's pages for further information, and additional trips—and be sure to call the outing leader to confirm time and meeting place.

### Sierra Club Outings in March-May 2002

**Sunday, March 17 • Embudo Canyon Trail/Three Gun Spring Trail**—Excellent moderate conditioning hike to fine viewpoints in the Sandia Mountain Wilderness. David Ther (260-1553).

**Saturday, March 23 • Bishop's Cap, Organ Mountains Day Hike**—Short hike across open terrain in the Conkling's Cave area, where *homo sapiens* bones have been found. Ed Storey (915/587-8720).

**Saturday, March 30 • Cooke's Peak Climb**—Strenuous hike up this prominent peak near Deming, site of a BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Ben Zerbey (526-7811).

**Saturday, March 30 • Cabezon Peak Climb**—Strenuous climb up this landmark volcanic plug near Cuba. Tobin Oruch (820-2844).

**Saturday, March 30 • Petroglyph Hike, La Cienega**—Easy hike to this petroglyph area south of Santa Fe. Limit 15. Gail Bryant (757-6654).

**Saturday/Sunday March 30-31 • Dog Canyon Car Camp**—Easy hikes on trails out of this remote and very scenic campground in Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Carol Horkowitz (915/755-3698).

**Saturday, April 6 • Ojo Caliente Day Hike**—Moderate day hike to the area above this historical hot springs. Marsha Skillman (w 983-7323, h 982-4967).

**Saturday, April 6 • Achenback Canyon Hike**—Moderate hike in the Organ Mountains. Ron or Annie (522-4527).

**Saturday-Monday, April 13-15 • Bandelier National Monument Backpack**—Moderate backpack to a basecamp in Capulin Canyon, and exploratory day hike on Sunday. Robert McKee (672-3426).

**Saturday, April 27 • Hillsboro Peak Hike**—Moderate trail, 10 miles round trip, on easy terrain to a prominent peak on the Continental Divide in the Black Range. Ben Zerbey (526-7811).

**Saturday, April 27 • Kitchen Mesa Hike**—Moderate hike up to Kitchen Mesa, and beyond in the scenic red rocks of Ghost Ranch country. Michael diRosa (663-0648).

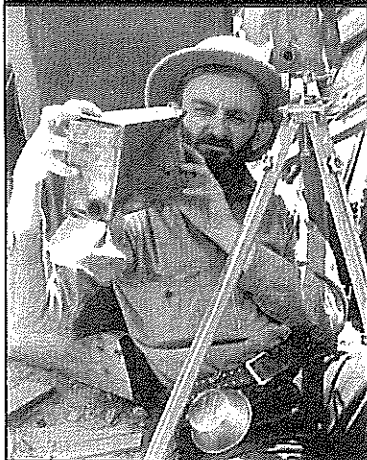
**Sunday, May 5 • Pedernal Peak Climb**—Strenuous hike to this prominent peak of Georgia O'Keefe fame. March Skillman (w 983-7323, h 982-4967).

**Saturday, May 11 • Christ in the Desert Monastery Bike Trip**—Moderate bike ride to this remote site on the Chama River. Michael diRosa (663-0648).

**Sunday, May 26 • Glorieta Baldy Hike**—Strenuous hike on good trail to this 10,000' peak southeast of Santa Fe. Jeff Jones (466-2389).

**Saturday, May 25-Sunday, June 2 • Grande Staircase/Escalante National Monument Backpack**—Moderate exploratory backpack in the remote Upper Paria Canyon/Bull Valley Gorge area of south/central Utah. Norma McCallan (471-0005).

### Ansel Adams on PBS—Sunday, 21 April 2002



© Cedric Wright

Sierra Club Productions and Steeplechase Films invite you to join us for "Ansel Adams: A Documentary Film," on PBS's American Experience on Sunday, 21 April 2002. This project, produced in cooperation with the Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust, is the first comprehensive biography of the legendary photographer. The film explores the meaning and legacy of Adams' life and work within the context of the great themes that absorbed him throughout his career—the beauty and fragility of "the American earth," the inseparable bond of man and nature, and the moral obligation that the present owes to the future.

Producer/director Ric Burns of Steeplechase films is known for his award-winning PBS series "New York," as well as "The Donner Party" and "Coney Island." Sierra Club Productions creates diverse, quality dramatic and nonfiction film and television entertainment that reflects the belief that every person in connected to, inspired by and responsible for the natural world.

