

Rio Grande Sierran

NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2003

NM Rule Sets Target for Renewable Energy: 10% by 2011

On 17 December 2002, after two years of hearings and revisions, the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) voted to adopt a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), a rule requiring the four major electric companies to provide renewable electricity to their customers in New Mexico.

The rule is to take effect on 1 July 2003. The coal lobby or others, however, may sue the PRC, claiming that the authorizing statutes directed the Commission to study renewable energy, but did not give it authority to act. It is good news that Shirley Baca (D) and David King (R), the incoming PRC commissioners from southern and eastern New Mexico, respectively, both support renewable energy and the mandated RPS. It is possible that the Legislature will pass legislation regarding this measure—so let your legislators know how you feel about renewable energy.

Renewable electricity includes solar, wind, geothermal, some biomass, and some types of hydropower. The rule now requires utilities to derive 5% of their electricity from renewable energy by 2006, and 10% by 2011. Affected utilities are:

- Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM),
- Xcel Energy,
- El Paso Electric Company, and
- Texas New Mexico Power.

The electric co-ops are exempted from the rule.

In order to provide incentives for diversifying energy sources beyond wind power, the PRC approved a schedule in which the utilities will receive:

- one credit for generating one unit of wind,
- two credits for generating one unit of either biomass or geothermal power, and
- three credits for generating one unit of solar power.

If, for example, a utility chooses to fulfill its renewables requirement with solar power, it would

have to provide only one-third of the 10% (3.33%) of its electricity from renewables by 2011.

Each power source has advantages and disadvantages. Biomass and geothermal power, in particular, differ from wind and solar in that they can provide "baseload" or constant power. Just the same, the intermittent nature of wind has not seriously hindered its deployment elsewhere.

As a start, PNM announced plans in October 2002 for a long-term contract to purchase all of the energy from a 204-Megawatt wind farm to be constructed 20 miles northeast of Fort Sumner in Quay and De Baca counties. It will generate enough electricity to power 94,000 averaged-sized homes. According to PNM's web site, this will mean that

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"The cost of wind energy has declined from 40¢ per kilowatt-hour to less than 5¢. The cost of electricity from photovoltaics has dropped from more than \$1/kilowatt-hour in 1980 to nearly 20¢/kilowatt-hour."

—National Renewable Energy Laboratory (www.nrel.gov)

Water, Energy, Mining, and Wildlife Are Key Issues for 2003

Rio Grande Chapter Priorities for the 2003 Legislative Session

First-priority Issues:

- ☒ Protect water resources:
 - Acequia water banking and transfers
 - Metering and limiting the use of domestic wells
 - Pollution from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs)
- ☒ Promote responsible use of energy:
 - Renewable portfolio standard (RPS)
 - Solar tax credits
- ☒ Increase funding for Conservation Services
- ☒ Defend the NM Mining Act

Other Important Issues

- ☒ Promote other water-conservation initiatives (e.g., graywater use, water-conservation appropriations)
- ☒ Advocate for public transportation:
 - Regional transit districts (RTDs)
 - Safe routes to schools
- ☒ Establish Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park
- ☒ Support Otero Mesa wilderness designation and other sound land-use initiatives

The Rio Grande Chapter has targeted four issues—water, energy, wildlife, and the NM Mining Act—on which to focus attention during the 2003 session of the New Mexico Legislature, which convenes on 21 January and runs for two busy months. Chapter members and Lobbyist MaryBeth Morand will also track developments in several other arenas, including public transportation, Otero Mesa wilderness designation, and creation of the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park. Summaries of the legislative status of these issues are included below.

Protecting New Mexico's Water Resources

Water issues are surfacing in the form of many initiatives, memorials, and bills, in part because clean water is so fundamental to quality of life, because drought has heightened awareness that we are seriously depleting our aquifers and rivers, and because failure to deliver water to Texas may cost the state millions of dollars in litigation. Chapter members are anticipating developments on the following four fronts.

Acequia Water Banking and Internal Transfers—The Sierra Club is very interested in two bills presented by the New Mexico Acequia Association to the Interim Legislative Committee on Water and Natural Resources. These bills would give authority to acequias to protect their water rights.

The first bill would give acequia associations the authority to approve or deny any proposed transfer of a member's water right out of the acequia. Under present law, acequia associations are not allowed any meaningful input into these significant transactions, other than to file objections with the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) and enter into litigation against the proposed transfer.

The second bill would allow the formation of acequia-managed "water banks" to hold in reserve and reallocate water rights to farmlands on the same acequia. Such internal reallocations would not have to be approved by the State Engineer. Banked water rights would be exempted from the use-it-or-lose-it penalty. Any transfer off the acequia, temporary or otherwise, would have to go through the OSE process, as under current law.

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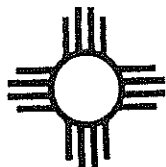
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SIERRA CLUB STRUCTURE

The Club has three structural levels. The National Board of Directors determines the overall direction of the Club. The National Organization is subdivided into Chapters, and each Chapter is further divided into Groups. One representative from each Chapter reports to the National Board through the Council of Club Leaders. The largest part of the Chapter's budget goes to the salary and expenses for the Conservation Organizer and a part-time lobbyist, followed by the printing and mailing of this newsletter.



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Thank You!

Several extraordinarily dedicated volunteers rotated out of important leadership positions at the end of 2002. We can only begin to thank Jim Hannan who served as Chapter chair for two years, John Buchser who served as vice-chair and managing editor of the newsletter, and Barbara Johnson who has been chair of the Northern Group. We'd also like to offer our sincere appreciation to Doug Fraser and Paul Paryski who represented us as the Chapter's lobbyist and assistant lobbyist, respectively, in 2002.

Priority Issues For 2003 *(continued from page 1)*

The bill would give legal recognition to historical acequia water-management practices. For years, acequia associations have opposed the idea of a single, state-operated water bank, believing it to be conceived as a mechanism to move water rights from rural to developing areas. Given a chance to craft their own water-banking bill, acequia leaders have redefined water banking as a mechanism for water rights to remain in, and to continue to benefit, the local community.

Thanks to the efforts of the New Mexico Acequia Association, two bills have already been considered by the interim joint House and Senate Water and Natural Resources Committee.

The acequia community, like the environmental community, struggles to remind decision-makers that water policy is not just about new infrastructure, but rather is about what we value as a State and what we want the landscape—both natural and human—to look like in the future.

For more information, contact Chapter Conservation Chair John Buchser (820-0201, jbuchser@earthlink.net) or David Benavides at Community & Indian Legal Services of Northern NM (982-9886 ext. 111, or 800/373-9881 ext. 111; david@cilsnm.com; P.O. Box 5175, Santa Fe, NM 87502).

Graywater—According to the State Engineer, New Mexicans are using twice as much water as we receive, a situation that can hardly be called sustainable. A viable "source" of water is saved water. Up to 40% of potable water consumed in urban areas is used to water landscapes. Using graywater—from bathtubs, showers, bathroom sinks, and washing machines—for this purpose could save more than 1% of New Mexico's total water consumption.

An Environment Department Graywater Advisory Group has presented recommendations for legislation and/or regulations permitting greater use of graywater to the Legislature's Interim Water and Finance Committees. Representative Mimi Stewart agreed to sponsor a bill, and the committees unanimously approved it. We are now seeking additional sponsors and support for the bill, which we think has a very good chance of being adopted.

Based on Arizona's graywater law, the bill will allow the daily use of up to 250 gallons of graywater for landscape watering without a special permit and special costly treatment (as now required), providing that certain public health considerations are met.

For more information, contact Paul Paryski, conservation chair for the Northern NM Group, in Santa Fe (992-1984; pparyski@aol.com).

Metering and Limitations on Domestic Wells—The Chapter will support a bill to require metering of new domestic wells as a way to gather sound data to inform regional planning efforts, including allocation of resources.

The Chapter will also support legislation affirming that the State Engineer has the authority to deny or place limitations on permits for domestic wells, if the Engineer determines that the well will infringe upon existing water rights. Presently, the State Engineer grants all requests for domestic well permits.

For more information, contact Chapter Conservation Chair John Buchser (see Directory, page 2).

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)—New Mexico is sustaining a dramatic influx of large, industrialized dairy operations, notably in the eastern part of the state—Chaves, Curry, Las Cruces, and Roosevelt counties. The average dairy cow in New Mexico uses 115 gallons of water/day. At this rate, a 3,000-head operation uses more than an acre foot/day, not including water used to

clean facilities, spray waste onto fields, and grow feed. And according to the EPA, a single cow generates 120 pounds of wet manure/day; a 3,000-head operation produces as much waste as 90,000 people.

According to a NM Environment Department employee, "Of 194 permitted dairies [in New Mexico], about 61 have recorded discharges exceeding state regulations." Cesspools leach into ground-

water and overflow into surface waters, contaminating supplies with bacteria and nitrates, the latter of which correlates with higher levels of bladder cancer in women.

While the Chapter heartily supports farming and ranching practices that embrace sustainable agriculture, we will continue to oppose operations that

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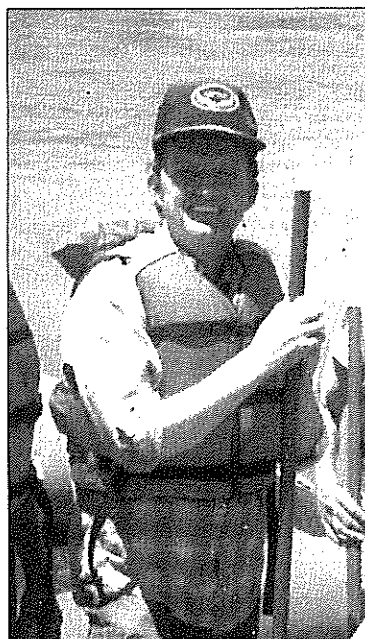
A Note From the Chair

Let me first say that I hope everyone had a joyous holiday season. Happily, we did have a measurable amount of moisture throughout the state this past month. May it continue!

Next, I want to thank Jim Hannan for leading the Chapter as Chair for the past two years. I'm already learning that dealing with all the correspondence from the national headquarters is enough, on its own, to bury a normal human.

And then, let us deal with our New Year's Resolutions. Good luck with yours! Mine? Well, besides introducing the Club's new lobbyist, MaryBeth Morand, around at the start of the upcoming legislative session, my primary focus will be traveling on a regular basis to the various Groups of the Chapter and assisting them in all ways possible. Most importantly, that means bringing each of our five Groups—namely, Central (Albuquerque), Northern (Santa Fe and vicinity), El Paso, Southern (Las Cruces), and Pajarito (Los Alamos)—up to comparable levels of functioning. This may involve offering them help in membership drives, local environmental focus projects, and leadership development. This will be quite an undertaking, but it is worth the investment to us, and also in the eyes of National Club leaders who have recently re-emphasized the importance of local grassroots involvement.

—Doug Fraser Newly elected Rio Grande Chapter Chair Doug Fraser



Please Welcome MaryBeth Morand as Our Lobbyist

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club would like to welcome MaryBeth Morand as its lobbyist for the 2003 session of the New Mexico Legislature—and we'd like to take this opportunity to introduce her to our 6,000+ members throughout the Rio Grande watershed.

MaryBeth comes to us with an impressive background in relief work, primarily in war zones. She brings social, business, and administrative skills cultivated in international and domestic environments that are deeply affected by politics and constant change. MaryBeth began her international work as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya, where she built potable water systems in rural villages. Back in the United States, she completed an M.B.A. in International Management at Thunderbird, the American Graduate School of International Management in Glendale, Arizona. Within a couple of years of graduation, MaryBeth headed back to Kenya to work as a logistics coordinator of relief supplies for refugee and displaced persons camps throughout northern Kenya, South Sudan, and Somalia. While she was in Kenya, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) invited her to become one of its staffpersons inside Somalia and then in Geneva, Bosnia, and Azerbaijan. After a total of six years in three war zones with UNHCR, MaryBeth returned to the United States to set up a base in Tucson, where she was a refugee-resettlement case manager and then a finance director for a non-profit social services organization. MaryBeth moved to New Mexico in 2002 to take a position as a contractor for risk-management assessments for Indian trust lands. Over the past year, she has traveled to Bureau of Indian Affairs agencies and tribal headquarters throughout the western United States.

MaryBeth will be working out of the Sierra Club office on Old Santa Fe Trail in the Capital City (see Directory, page 2 for contact information). She welcomes calls and visits from members, and would especially like to encourage all of us to come meet with our legislators during the upcoming two-month session, as well as at home throughout the year. The strength of her lobbying efforts on behalf of the Chapter rests on our genuine concern for our natural resources, our conviction that there are sound solutions for our challenging natural resource issues, and our readiness to back her up with letters, calls, and visits with our state representatives and senators.

Deregulation Negotiations May Prove Costly for NM Rate-payers

In October 2002, the Public Utility Company of New Mexico (PNM), the NM Public Regulatory Commission (PRC), the NM Attorney General, the NM Industrial Energy Commission (NMIEC), and the City of Albuquerque signed a stipulated agreement effectively agreeing to repeal the 1999 Electric Utility Industry Restructuring Act, thereby returning New Mexico to a regulated electricity market.

The New Mexico Legislature and the Attorney General's office had been eager to repeal the 1999 utility-deregulation legislation, in part because the experience in California was so disastrous. PNM, however, has been eager to develop its unregulated wholesale power activities. By its own testimony, PNM acknowledges that it seeks to "participate in the emerging competitive generation business... through the integrated utilization of regulated and unregulated assets, a structure best achieved within the utility using merchant generation."

"Merchant power" is power that is developed specifically to be sold out-of-state. There are currently approximately 20 applications for new power plants in New Mexico, most of which are merchant-power plants that will tie into our natural gas pipelines and consume large amounts of water. By developing merchant power in a deregulated environment, PNM believes that it can return more profit to its shareholders (who are not necessarily its customers).

In exchange for agreeing not to oppose repeal of deregulation during the 2003 legislative session, PNM has been granted permission to pursue unregulated merchant power by leveraging its regulated assets (i.e., those for which customers have paid). PNM may invest up to \$1.25 billion in merchant-power generation plants using the credit security and utility assets provided by New Mexico rate-payers. The profits, however, will accrue to shareholders, not ratepayers.

The stipulated agreement 1) requests the PRC to approve financing of PNM's merchant plants on an

expedited basis, and 2) takes away the Commission's authority and reasonable scrutiny of PNM's merchant-plant financing activities.

In October 2002, the U.S. Executive Agencies (USEA; the federal agencies that buy power from PNM) filed an objection opposing the stipulated agreement. USEA argues that the deal—repealing the Restructuring Act in exchange for the merchant-plant provision—subverts the interests of PNM ratepayers (see box).

The stipulated agreement also authorizes PNM to recover 100% of nuclear decommissioning costs (PNM is part owner of the Palo Verde nuclear plant in Arizona) and up to \$100 million associated with the decommissioning of the San Juan, La Plata, and Navajo coal mines.

Are we doing all that we could to move toward a renewable energy future? PNM is a utility with excess generation capacity and, therefore, has less incentive to develop efficiency measures that would do the most to reduce energy use, the consequent generation of greenhouse gases, and consumption of large amounts of water. Moreover, most of PNM's generation equipment is old, and approximately 85% uses coal. While other states are moving to wind power and lowering their electricity rates (e.g., Utah, Colorado), we are allowing our utility to generate more fossil-fuel based electricity at a financial risk to New Mexico residents. We should change the incentive structure, so that utilities are rewarded for efficiency, rather than only for generating and selling more electricity by building more power plants.

If these issues concern you, please contact your legislators and elected commissioners on the Public Regulation Commission. There will be bills related to renewable energy and electricity deregulation in the 2003 Legislature, and our elected officials need to hear that New Mexicans want to aggressively pursue development of cleaner electricity.

For more information about renewable energy in New Mexico, see the web site of the Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy (www.cfcae.org).

—Gail Ryba
Chapter Energy Chair

Objection

“USEA [United States Executive Agencies] is opposed to the Stipulation which USEA believes subverts PNM ratepayer's interest in exchange for a political issue, i.e., repeal of the Restructuring Act. . . .

“Such merchant power will be used by PNM mainly to sell power to non-NM customers with none of the benefits or profits accruing to NM customers who will bear the financial risks, and could face risks arising due to potential bankruptcy if PNM's merchant activities go sour as has happened in the case of Enron and a significant number of other merchant power suppliers in the country. . . .

“This Stipulation violates the letter and spirit of the Commission's Holding Company Order. . . which attempted to insulate NM ratepayers from PNM's unregulated and uncontrolled business activities. The Stipulation requests the Commission to approve financing of PNM's merchant plants on an expedited basis and would take away the Commission's authority and reasonable scrutiny of PNM's merchant plant financing activities.”

—United States Executive Agencies
Grounds for Opposing Stipulation
Utility Case No. 3137
Filed 17 October 2002

Forum Focuses on Mexican Gray Wolf

On 7-8 February 2003, historians, wolf-experts, ranchers, and environmentalists will gather in Las Cruces, New Mexico to discuss the history and future of the Mexican gray wolf at a public forum, which is free and open to the public. “El Lobo,” the first Aldo Leopold Forum organized by the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Department of History, will address:

- the history of wolf eradication to favor deer and elk hunters and ranchers;
- the historical role of large predators in the southwestern ecosystem; and
- the current battle over wolf reintroduction.

Keynote speakers on Friday, February 7 are:

- Susan Flader, historian, biographer of Aldo Leopold, and author of *Thinking Like a Mountain*;
- L. David Mech, the country's foremost wolf biologist and author of *The Wolf: The Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species*; and
- Caren Cowan, executive director of the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association.

A day-long symposium on Saturday, February 8 will include talks and a round-table discussion with leading environmental historians, biologists, policy-

makers, environmental activists, and ranchers on both sides of the issue. Hank Fischer, special projects coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation, will be the dinner speaker. In addition to the keynote and dinner speakers, participants include:

- historians Thomas Dunlap (author of *Saving America's Wildlife*), Dan Flores (author of *Horizontal Yellow*), Louis Warren (author of *The Hunters' Game*), and Diana Hadley;
- Craig Miller of the Defenders of Wildlife;
- Michael Robinson of the Center for Biological Diversity;
- ranchers Hugh McKeen, Laura Schneberger, Darcy Ely, Jan and Will Holder, and Jim Winder;
- ecologists Michael Phillips and David E. Brown (author of *The Wolf in the Southwest*);
- Brian Kelly of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- a number of other policy-makers and scientists, including representatives from the Apache reservations.

El Lobo is the first Leopold Forum focusing on environmental history and policy in the Southwest Borderlands. The forum is funded by grants from

the Environmental Leadership Program, the New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities, the Thaw Charitable Trust, the McCune Charitable Foundation, the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, and the Southwest and Border Cultures Institute. The forum is organized by the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Department of History, and is co-sponsored by the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum and the NMSU College of Agriculture.

For registration information, contact Vanessa Stewart (wolfeconf@nmsu.edu), or visit the conference web site (www.nmsu.edu/~histdept/wolf). Seating will be limited; advanced registration is required by 24 January 2003. There will be a charge for luncheon and dinner.

For more information, see the NMSU web site (www.nmsu.edu/~histdept/wolf.html), or contact Marsha Weisiger (646-4037; mweisige@nmsu.edu).

—Vanessa Stewart
Leopold Forum Project Assistant
Department of History, New Mexico State University

Come Celebrate Water Education!

There's nothing like spending the summer enduring a Stage 3 Water Shortage Emergency to increase awareness of how precious water is! Santa Feans now understand much more about wilting flowers, brown grass, short showers, and dirty cars. They also understand that there will be difficult choices to be made as we face the future.

So when fourth-grade teachers received a flyer inviting them to apply to bring their students to the first Children's Water Festival to be held in the Santa Fe area, they responded with enthusiasm! The Water Festival for Santa Fe students will be held at Sweeney Center on 13-14 March 2003. More than 500 students will attend to spend the day participating in fun, hands-on learning activities about water science, history, geography, drama, and our water future.

But why a Water Festival? According to Festival Manager Susan Gorman, "This summer, New Mexicans have all learned what drought really means. With not enough water to provide for all needs, we are faced with incredibly difficult choices. In 15 years or so, the fourth-grade students will be the water engineers and managers, the voters and decision-makers. They will have to make critical choices about water—and they must have the facts, concepts, values, and critical thinking skills to do that. The Water Festival will provide teachers and students with some of those water facts, concepts, and values, and will be a catalyst that sets off a chain reaction for ever more water education to take place in every school and each home."

It takes many organizations and individuals donating time, resources and money to make the Water



"Why Does the River Run Brown?" was an activity presented by the New Mexico Environment Department Surface Water Quality Bureau at the 2002 Water Festival. What happens if soil and pesticides run off farms or oil runs off a parking lot? If these substances run off into the river, they cause water pollution. Students can demonstrate how this non-point-source pollution occurs with the watershed model. (photo courtesy of B. Brown)

Festival possible. There are plenty of opportunities for folks to participate!

The New Mexico Environment Department Surface Water Quality Bureau and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 have committed funds through the Clean Water Act, Section 319 grant program to support the Water Festival. The Rio Grande Chapter is a local sponsor.

For more information, contact Festival Manager Susan Gorman in Albuquerque (259-7190; waterwiz@pioneerwest.net; www.pioneerwest.net).

—Susan Gorman

Biopharming: Cultivating Prescription Drugs in Food Crops

Care for prescription drugs or industrial chemicals in your corn flakes? If the U.S. Department of Agriculture continues to allow biopharm food crops to be planted in open fields, this may happen.

Horizontal gene transfer has already been shown to occur in fields of genetically engineered (GE) canola, resulting in the creation of "superweeds" that have become herbicide-resistant. Now the production of drugs or industrial chemicals in GE plants—biopharming—poses new alarming concerns.

Biopharm traits can spread through pollen carried by wind or insects, spilled seed, unharvested seed sprouting the next year, and biopharm seed residues carried by farm equipment to conventional fields.

Three hundred open-air field trials have already been conducted in unidentified locations across the country. While the identities of most of these substances are guarded as confidential business information, a few known examples include a contraceptive, potent growth hormones, a blood clotter, blood thinners, industrial enzymes, and vaccines (see www.ucsusa.org/pharm/pharm_open.html).

For more information, see the Sierra Club web site (www.sierraclub.org/biotech), or contact Jim Diamond, chair of the Genetic Engineering Committee (jim.diamond@sierraclub.org).

Take Action

Dear [Senator/Representative],

I am writing to express my profound concern over the U.S. Department of Agriculture's policy that allows food crops to be used to create genetically engineered pharmaceutical drugs and industrial chemicals.

In mid November 2002, it was widely reported that the biotech company ProdiGene had twice violated USDA guidelines established to prevent the contamination of the human food supply.

I urge you to call for Congressional hearings into this matter. I also ask that an immediate moratorium be placed on the outdoor cultivation of all pharmaceutical drug crops.

Signed,
Your Name & address

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

You can also send form letters or submit your own letters through the web site of the Campaign to Label Genetically Engineered Foods (www.thecampaign.org/alert-pharmacrops.htm).

CAFO Updates

Six-part Newspaper Series on Megafarms—The Dayton Daily News has released a six-part series on megafarms in Ohio (www.actedayton.com/ddn/project/farm/index.html).

- Part I—an overview of livestock farming trends in 11 states, and a look at the hidden costs behind America's quest for cheap and processed food.
- Part II—jurisdictional and budgetary maze associated with permitting and regulating livestock operations; environmental and animal-rights activism spawned by large animal farms.
- Part III—economic trends in livestock farming; profiles of families faced with the choice of growing larger, investing in their own processing equipment, becoming a contract producer, or going out of business.
- Part IV—the sometimes uneasy relationship between large farms and their neighbors; economic advantages of returning to grass-feeding of cows.
- Part V—how communities across the country "are weighing the benefits of modern livestock farming against the costs to the environment and rural way of life."
- Part VI—even as many Americans are giving up farming, Dutch and German farmers are immigrating to the Midwest in droves to open large animal farms, drawn here by relatively cheap land and lax regulations.

Bad News for Chicken CAFOs—Three studies released in mid December 2002 add to the mounting evidence of negative impacts from large animal farm operations. The Consumers' Union, publisher of the magazine *Consumer Reports*, tested chicken from grocery stores in 25 metropolitan areas and found that half were contaminated with *campylobacter* or *salmonella* bacteria. This figure represents a decrease in the contamination rate from their last study five years ago, when 75% of chicken tested was found to be contaminated. Of the chicken that was found to be contaminated this year, however, 90% contained bacteria that were resistant to at least one antibiotic (www.consumerreports.org).

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP; www.iatp.org) and the Sierra Club (www.sierraclub.org) also issued a study in December, that found similar rates of both infection and resistance in 200 chickens purchased in Des Moines and Minneapolis. Both the Consumers' Union and IATP/Sierra Club studies point to widespread use of antibiotics as the cause for the resistance.

—Scotty Johnson and Aimee Delach
Rural Updates

Rural Updates! is a program of Defenders of Wildlife, cultivating a vision where rural and urban communities join together to ensure abundant family farms, healthy critters, clean water, and a wild Earth (520/623-9653 ext. 3; sjohnson@defenders.org; www.familyfarmer.org).

Priority Issues for 2003 (continued from page 3)

threaten the environment and public health, are inhumane, and/or exploit workers.

For more information on CAFOs, see page 5 this issue, the *Rio Grande Sierran* May/June 2002, or contact Chapter CAFO Chair Paul Elders in Clovis, NM (985-2180; paul.elders@saveourwatersupply.com; www.SaveOurWaterSupply.com).

Energy

With the conviction that reducing dependence on oil and gas (and nuclear power) is perhaps the most important strategy for promoting sound management of land and water resources and air quality—not to mention sound international relations—the Chapter will focus on the following two legislative initiatives that promote the use of renewable energy.

Mandatory Targets for Renewable Energy Generation—(see article page 1).

Tax Credits for Residential Solar Power Systems—On 7 January 2003, the Energy Conservation and Management Division of the Energy Mineral and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) will convene an open meeting to discuss incentives to increase the use of solar power, including tax credits for the installation of residential solar systems. For information about the outcome of this meeting and further plans, contact Brian Johnson at EMNRD in Santa Fe (476-3313; bkjohnson@state.nm.us). The Chapter will actively support legislation to institute such a program.

For more information about these and other energy initiatives, contact Chapter Energy Chair Gail Ryba (see Directory, page 2).

Wildlife Protection

The Wildlife Conservation Act (WCA) is New Mexico's endangered species law, and it designates the Conservation Services Division (CSD) of the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish to be responsible for "comprehensive conservation services for non-consumptive wildlife users."

The Chapter will be supporting an initiative to amend the language of the WCA to include threatened species and time frames for required actions. We will also support allocation of at least \$1,000,000 in general obligation funds for the CSD in order to obtain and maximize federal matching money. Legislation to address these issues has passed in previous years but was vetoed by Governor Johnson. We would also support a bill to change the name of the Game & Fish Department to the Department of Wildlife.

Although these measures would help protect wildlife in the short term, long-term protection will require:

- a guaranteed funding stream, and
- realignment of the Department to place more emphasis on non-game species.

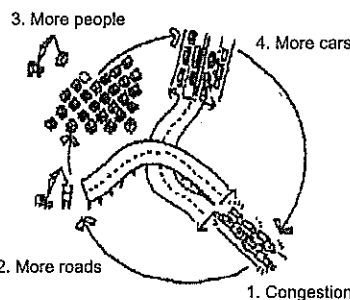
To this end, the Chapter would support a Memorial creating an interim committee to review the status and needs for management and conservation of New Mexico's wildlife resources.

For more information, contact Chapter Political/Legislative Chair Gwen Wardwell (see Directory, page 2).

The 1993 New Mexico Mining Act

Phelps Dodge Mining Company has requested amendments to New Mexico's Mining Act that would greatly weaken environmental regulation of mines. Phelps Dodge has proposed to the Interim Committee on Water and Natural Resources that the

The Congestion Cycle



(figure adapted from *Reviving the Sustainable Metropolis: Guiding Bay Area Conservation and Development Into the 21st Century* (San Francisco, Greenbelt Alliance 1989))

NM Mining Act be amended to:

- eliminate the requirement that Phelps Dodge provide third-party financial assurances for reclamation of its mines;
- allow Phelps Dodge to evade reclamation altogether by creating "mining zones" in which mining would be declared to be the "highest and best use" in perpetuity; and
- transfer environmental regulation from the New Mexico Environment Department to the Mining and Minerals Division of the NM Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department.

This proposal comes on the heels of Phelps Dodge receiving several Notices of Violation (NOV) for not meeting the deadline for closure plans at three copper mines near Silver City. In mid December 2002, the Mining Commission heard testimony from all parties concerning the attempt by Phelps Dodge to have the NOV's withdrawn. Cliff Larsen and Maxine Goad testified on behalf of the Rio Grande Chapter. Phelps Dodge was not successful, and the NOV's and the modified abatement schedules stand.

Our attention will now shift to the legislature, where the Sierra Club and its allies will work to keep the Mining Act from being weakened (see D. Fraser's notes in *Northern Group News* pages 12-13).

For more information, contact Chapter Mining Co-chair Cliff Larsen (see Directory, page 2).

Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park

Since 1999, the Southwest Environmental Center in Las Cruces has advocated for the proposed Mesilla Valley Bosque Park to protect up to 4,000 acres of public and private land along three miles of the Rio Grande near Las Cruces. This would be the largest river-restoration project in southern New Mexico and a pilot project for the kind of work that could be done elsewhere within the International Boundary and Water Commission's (IBWC's) Canalization Project—a 105-mile stretch of the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico and western Texas.

As proposed, the area would be managed by State Parks as a natural area for riparian restoration and nature-oriented recreation. There would be a visitor's center, trails, and interpretation.

Last year, the legislature passed a memorial directing State Parks to conduct a feasibility study. The draft study, completed in August, supported the idea

of establishing a state park at the site. The final study was released to the Legislative Finance Committee in mid October 2002.

The Trust for Public Lands has been actively involved in negotiations with landowners, which include the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation, the NM Department of Game & Fish, the IBWC, Elephant Butte Irrigation District, and several private parties. There is generally wide support for the park proposal.

The Rio Grande Chapter will support legislation to authorize the park and \$50,000 for master planning for it, as well as SWEC's efforts to secure \$400,000 for land consolidation from its local legislators' discretionary funds.

For more information, contact Kevin Bixby at SWEC in Las Cruces (522-5552; swec@zianet.com).

Transportation

The Club is backing the work of the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP)-New Mexico in promoting environmentally progressive transportation legislation to:

- authorize the formation of regional transit districts (RTDs);
- design and build safe bicycle and pedestrian routes to schools;
- bring back park-and-ride transit service; and
- promote the return of "heavy rail" passenger service from El Paso to Denver through New Mexico.

Regional Transit Legislation—Regional transit districts (RTDs) would allow public transit systems to serve multiple communities. Existing New Mexico law does not support long-term cooperation between local governments on public transit projects, and currently does not permit RTDs.

RTD legislation introduced in 1997 died on the Senate floor in a session-ending filibuster by Senator Bill Davis, and similar 1998 legislation died in committee.

The proposed legislation before the 2003 session will enable the creation of RTDs across New Mexico. Local governments could decide whether to participate; each local government would submit to its voters any request for a transit tax. Governor Bill Richardson has stated that he will support enabling legislation for RTDs. His plan to promote balanced transportation system states, "Through these regional authorities, we will provide improved mobility, economic opportunity, and environmental quality" (press release, October 2002).

For more information, contact Chapter Transportation Chair Ken Hughes (see Directory, page 2).

Safe Routes to School—With 120 pedestrian fatalities in 2000 and 2001, New Mexico has the nation's highest pedestrian fatality rate. The state also has one of the highest child-pedestrian fatality rates in the United States. New Mexico ranked sixth in bicyclist fatalities in 1999. In Albuquerque, 22% of all traffic deaths were pedestrians, in Las Cruces 20%, in Santa Fe 12%. Many New Mexico communities, especially those surrounding our schools, lack sidewalks, bike paths, street crossings, and other elements necessary for safe walking environments.

The Traffic Safety Bureau of New Mexico's Highway and Transportation Department (NMSHTD) has identified reducing fatalities and injuries resulting from pedestrian crashes as a priority.

States receive Transportation Safety Set-aside funds from the Federal Highway Administration. The Safe

(continued on page 15)

Working for People: Public Transit Legislation in New Mexico

Public transit works for people. It builds a healthy economy, connects people to jobs, reduces household spending on transportation, and allows more people the freedom to travel. Transit is an increasingly necessary component of livable communities and of economically healthy regions. It fosters strong neighborhoods and is a public service that can be a lifesaver in emergencies. Transit reduces negative impacts on our environment—and that contributes significantly to economic development! It reduces traffic congestion, extending the life of existing roads, and stretching local and state road maintenance dollars. It also reduces air pollution.

- More energy is used for transportation than any other activity in the United States. Transit systems reduce our dependence on oil, 25% of which is imported from the highly unstable Middle East. Nationally, public transit systems have reduced gasoline consumption by 1.5 billion gallons/year. For every passenger mile traveled, public transportation is twice as fuel-efficient as private automobiles.
- New Mexican households spend an average of \$8,211/year (19.2% of total spending) on private transportation. That amounts to \$5.57 billion/year. Money spent on the purchase of vehicles, insurance, gasoline, and related goods mostly leaves the state.
- A motor vehicle costs \$4,800-10,000/year to own and maintain in the United States; public transit costs \$200-2,000.
- A typical family in the United States that lives in an area with many public transportation options can save an average of \$3,000/year.
- For every dollar invested in running public transportation systems in the United States, business sales are boosted by three dollars.
- Purchase of a \$10 bus pass boosts the local economy by \$35, while a \$10 fill-up of gasoline leaks \$8.50 out of the local economy.
- Every year, public transportation prevents emissions of more than 126 million pounds of hydrocarbons and 156 million pounds of nitrogen oxides.
- The 12-mile section of U.S. Highway 84/285 between Santa Fe and Pojoaque carries 40,000 vehicles/day. This includes 2,500 Los Alamos Laboratory employees. The Santa Fe Trails transit system initiated a pilot regional transit service in 1997 to serve communities north of Santa Fe. It supplied rides to an average of 1,200 passengers/day in its first week, and 1,500 in the second week, removing at least 750 cars/day from the highway and local choke-points.
- The Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce recognizes that transit is a business-development issue; it is not simply a social service issue;

Los Alamos businesses cite staffing as their greatest problem, and the key reason cited is the lack of alternative transportation from other communities.

- 45,686 households (6.7%; 120,154 people) in New Mexico do not have a car.
- Transit-dependent groups in New Mexico include youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, low-income families, and the unemployed. More than 30% of New Mexicans are under 19 years of age. More than 5% are over 75 years old. The number of people in New Mexico over 65 is projected to grow by 46% to 441,000 by 2025. More than 20% of the adult population (ages 21-64) and nearly 45% of New Mexicans over age 64 have a disability.
- New Mexicans receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families must enroll in work and work-training programs. Only 20% of those families have regular access to an automobile.
- In the Albuquerque region, commuting delays are forecast to increase from six to 20 minutes/hour spent commuting by 2025. The current trend will limit the region's ability to attain air-quality conformity, and Albuquerque's air quality will once again deteriorate.
- A study of regional transit in the middle Rio Grande region states, "It is not possible to build enough roadways to solve all the area's current or future congestion problems."

Surface Transportation Policy Project

The Surface Transportation Policy Project is a national coalition working for transportation policies and investments that protect neighborhoods, increase access to goods and services, promote social equity, preserve the environment, strengthen the economy, and improve quality of life. STPP has offices in Albuquerque, NM; Sacramento and San Francisco, CA; and Washington, DC.

For more information, contact STPP-NM Director DeAnza Valencia in Albuquerque (243-8666; cell 710-5568; dvalencia@transact.org).

STPP-NM publishes an e-newsletter with legislation and campaign information. To sign up for up-to-date information on the State Legislative Action Campaign, contact Communications Coordinator Joanne McEntire (243-8666; fax 248-1361; jomcen@spinn.net).

Public Transit Can Fill Gaps Left by Airlines in the Wake of 9/11

Air travel service nationwide has declined since 9/11, with many airports experiencing a decrease in the double digits, according to a new report from Reconnecting America. The report goes on to call for integrating air, rail, and bus to provide travelers with more choices.

The impact of 9/11 has been most severe on America's small and medium airports. In New Mexico, the Santa Fe and Hobbs (Lea County) airports have lost more than half of their flights over the past year. Twenty-one airports, including New Mexico's Ruidoso Airport, have ended all scheduled service. The report concludes that 9/11 exposed the fault lines in an already faltering industry, and that air travel will be unable to play its traditional role in the national transportation portfolio.

"The reduction in flights means travelers are being forced to take connecting flights instead of direct routes and have fewer flights to choose from when booking their trips," said Hank Dittmar of Las Vegas, New Mexico, co-director of Reconnecting America. "These service cuts represent a fundamental restructuring of the air travel network, not a temporary adjustment." The report analyzes the loss in

nearly 400,000 scheduled flights at over 500 airports described in the Official Airline Guide. The report compares comparable weeks during the fall of 2001 and 2002.

Some of the most dramatic reductions in flight schedules have been seen at non-hub commercial airports, which are typically served by a few flights each day to one or two destinations. Santa Fe had the fourth-highest reduction in the nation (62%) and the Hobbs (Lea County) Airport tied for sixth (61%). The average cut in flight frequency for non-hub commercial service was 7.7%. Farmington, Carlsbad, Roswell, and Taos airports all saw substantial flight losses above the national average. Albuquerque, New Mexico's largest airport, saw an 8.9% reduction in service.

Pressure from low-cost carriers has forced fares down, even as airport charges and security costs are rising, making short- and medium-distance flights unprofitable. The report identifies a way out of this dilemma, noting that there are several markets where bus and rail provide an alternative. Even the airline trade group, the Air Transport Association (ATA), recognizes that this trend has reduced access to

smaller and medium communities. In November 2002, ATA's President Carol Hallet warned, "As the industry continues to contract, smaller and mid-size communities will be disconnected from the national air transportation system—a system vital to their economic health."

Reconnecting America is calling for changes in government policy that would permit a closer integration of air with rail and bus, thereby creating a more financially stable transportation network which will enable each transportation mode to serve the markets it's best suited for. The campaign is calling for an overhaul of the nation's transportation system when Congress reauthorizes funding for air, rail, and highways next year.

The full report is available at Reconnecting America's web site (www.reconnectingamerica.org). For more information, contact Co-directors Hank Dittmar at the Great American Station Foundation in Las Vegas, NM (426-8055; hdittmar@transact.org), and Scott Bernstein at the Center for Neighborhood Technology in Chicago, IL (773/278-4800 ext. 154; scott@cncr.org).

—DeAnza Valencia
Surface Transportation Policy Project-NM

News from the Chair

Don Dearholt

The election has come and gone now, and the results were often disappointing in terms of environmental interests. The best news on that front was the defeat of several of the targeted "dirty dozen". It's clear that, as environmentalists, we have our work cut out for us. Please do not be too discouraged--but rather use the entire situation as one of increased motivation and effort! In short, we need you to become active and to help keep the pressure on those who would despoil our wonderful natural resources through neglect or exploitation for short-term gain, either financial or political.

We're extremely pleased to welcome as new members to the Executive Committee of the SNM Group new members Cathy Mathews and Anthony Hyde--we surely look forward to their involvement and participation in our group's activities! Also, returning members David Farrell and Margot Wilson were re-elected, and we're very appreciative of their efforts on behalf of environmentalism in southern New Mexico. And please consider attending some or all of the following activities our group is sponsoring in the next few months.

UPCOMING PLANNING MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS:

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.

Wednesday, January 8--PLANNING MEETING: (ExCom and interested members and guests of the SNM Group), 6:30 p.m. at the new Southwest Environmental Center (SWEC) location at 275 North Downtown Mall (1/2 block south of Coa's My Bookstore), just south of Las Cruces Avenue on the mall. Please enter the west door, just south of Day's Hamburgers. We'll begin planning our job assignments for the year.

Wednesday, February 5--PLANNING MEETING: (ExCom and interested members and guests of the SNM Group), 6:30 p.m. at SWEC (see location information above in the description of the program meeting on November 14). Please enter the west door, just south of Day's Hamburgers. We'll begin planning programs for the year.

Thursday, February 13--PROGRAM MEETING: 7:00 p.m., on the status of open spaces around Las Cruces--members of the Open Space Task Force will present their current concerns and the issues being addressed now. The program will be at the new Southwest Environmental Center (SWEC) location at 275 North Downtown Mall (1/2 block south of Coa's My Bookstore), just south of Las Cruces Avenue on the mall. Please enter the west door, just south of Day's Hamburgers.

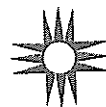
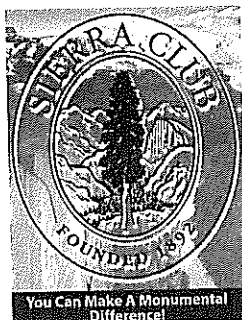
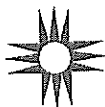
Wednesday, March 5--PLANNING MEETING: (ExCom and interested members and guests of the SNM Group), 6:30 p.m. at SWEC (see location information above in the description of the program meeting on February 13). Please enter the west door, just south of Day's Hamburgers.

OUTINGS:

Saturday, Jan 18, Cross-country ski outing in the Sacramento Mtns. All are welcome. You can rent equipment, if you don't own such. Call Ben at 526-7811 for meeting place and further information.

March 22, Cooke's Peak hike - I'll be leading it and it is already scheduled as a SW Environmental Center Outing. Same call info as above.

And if you'd like to lead an outing, please call Ben at 526-7811



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Growth Strains Water Supply

by Leon Metz

Water seems to be in the news lately. There is a current effort under way to get us to rethink our lawn design, and of course now we have to ask for water in restaurants.

It seems to me that neither the water company nor the drinking public are taking this water shortage seriously enough. While we are not in desperate straights yet, the end may be in sight. And there won't be any icebergs towed down from the Pole to save us.

Looking at it another way, El Paso's problem isn't that we have too little water, but that we have too many people. While historically there have always been a few tight water years, we've reached the point where the tight water years, as they are now, are going to seem natural.

El Paso alone is approaching a million residents, Las Cruces is booming, and Juarez is out of sight in terms of population growth.

By law, Juarez gets a certain allocated amount of Rio Grande water per year. If we think those water needs won't grow, and massively so, we are wrong. If we think we can ignore those needs, we can't. The El Paso, Juarez, Las Cruces population growth is an incessantly, silently ticking water bomb.

Our water comes from underground sources, plus river sources from Elephant Butte and Caballo reservoirs. And these resources are shrinking. Granted that we've purchased underground supplies to the east that we can use (and those folks are furious), and we may have occasional good years with the Rio Grande such as the 1960's when both Elephant Butte and Caballo threatened to overflow. But even if both Elephant Butte and Caballo were bursting at the seams, we still couldn't save the stuff for later uses or emergencies. We'd simply have to open the valves and let it drain off.

So water in a reservoir, even when it's full, is not exactly like money in a bank. We can replenish bank accounts. Only Mother Nature can replenish reservoir accounts.

Even in good years of heavy snowpacks to the north we waste water because there are no other options, no other places to store it. So we tend to think of these good times of ample supplies as periods that will last forever. And they won't.

Last week, I drove past both Elephant Butte and Caballo and what I saw were not so much lakes as puddles. In my mind's eye, I pictured people wading out there instead of paddling.

Eons ago, in addition to the river, we had extensive underground supplies of good water and putrid water. Well, we've pumped and swallowed most of the good stuff. The putrid water is going to taste funny even after being treated, although I'm told we can get used to that. It is the smell that's going to be tough.

So what's the reality?

The reality is that we are trying to find additional water (and should continue) when we should also be discouraging immigration into the El Paso Southwest.

The problem is not too little water, it is too many people. So we can implement, delay the inevitable for many years, maybe even a century, perhaps even find additional supplies, but in the end the population on both sides of the river is going to have to be controlled.

For in the absence of training people to drink less, much less, the only option is to have fewer people.

Historian Leon Metz writes and speaks often on El Paso and the Southwest. He may be reached at cmetz48888@aol.com

Selected Outings

Jan 1: Cottonwood Springs New Years Dayhike

Place: Franklin Mountains

Class: Moderate

Length: 4 miles

Elevation gain: 750 feet

Leader: Elizabeth Walsh 584-1471 (H) ewalsh@utep.edu

Join Professor Walsh for a morning after hike to clear your head. We have the nation's largest urban park in our midst, so what better way to begin the New Year?

Jan 5: Ron Coleman Trail Dayhike

Place: Franklin Mountains State Park

Class: Moderate

Length: 5 miles

Elevation gain: 2400 feet up-1500 feet down

Leader: Terry Sunday: 584-9301 (H) sundayt@zianet.com

From the trailhead at McKelligon Canyon, we ascend the rugged eastern slopes past two natural caves. Soon we top out on the ridge, where fantastic views of the West Side open up. After taking a break at a beautiful saddle, we face the hike's biggest challenge—a sheer rock wall looms ahead. Good hand- and footholds abound. With a little careful scrambling we surmount the obstacle. We're rewarded with a peek through a natural rock "window." After lunch near the top, we join the South Franklin Peak trail at Gunsight Notch and descend to Trans-Mountain Road, where our car shuttle returns us to the trailhead.

Jan 11: Lower Sunset Trail Dayhike

Place: FMSP

Class: Moderate

Length: 6 miles

Elevation gain: 500 feet

Leader: Jim Bell 581-8884 (H)

With Professor Bell as our leader, we return to this great multi-use trail, which wanders through impressive Chihuahuan desert ecosystems.

Jan 17-20: Peloncillo Backcountry Loop Backpack

Place: Peloncillo Mountains on the NM-AZ border near Mexico

Class: Strenuous

Length: 19 miles roundtrip

Elevation gain: 1400 feet

Leader: Rollin Wickenden 855-6687 (H) rwickgila@aol.com

This is an exploratory backpack. Trails may be difficult to follow; signs may no longer exist. Some of these trails follow old roads; others may be overgrown and require bushwhacking. We may have to navigate by map, compass, and GPS. Participants must be experienced backpackers familiar with bushwhacking through cat claw, prickly pear, and mesquite. Monday should be a short day with time to return to El Paso at a reasonable hour.

Jan 26: South Franklin Peak Dayhike

Place: FMSP

Class: Easy

Length: 2 miles

Elevation gain: 750 feet

Leader: Richard Rheder 544-5659 (H)

Meet at the picnic tables at the top of Transmountain Rd. at 8 a.m. for this moderately challenging trek to the towers atop South Franklin. Bring a lunch or snacks, water, and dress for the weather. Call to let us know you are coming.

2002 El Paso Regional Group Directory (Area Code 915)

<http://texas.sierraclub.org/el Paso>

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CENTRAL GROUP NEWS

Sacred Lands is 2003 Focus

At the December meeting, the Executive Committee chose to focus our 2003 efforts on the preservation of "Sacred Lands" in Central New Mexico. Some of these important sites are threatened, such as Zuni Salt Lake, Petroglyph National Monument, and the Sandia Mountains. All three of these sacred lands were recently profiled in the November/December 2002 Sierra Magazine.

Why sacred lands? This issue touches on many issues that are important to our members in central New Mexico.

Zuni Salt Lake is threatened by a proposed coal mine that will likely drain the desert aquifer that feeds the lake. Both the Pueblo and Navajo people hold the lake sacred, harvesting salt for their rituals. Meanwhile, this proposed mine is an example of bad energy policies that pollute the air and destroy the land. To learn more about the Zuni Salt Lake, plan to attend our March General Meeting (see notice below).

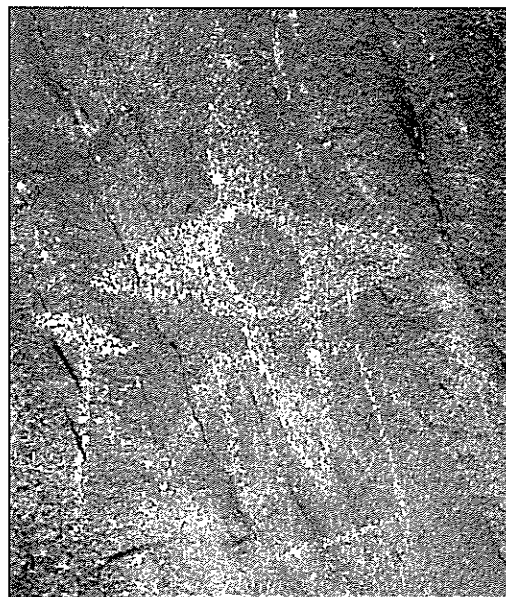
The Sandia Mountains are sacred to the Sandia tribe. Development on all sides of the mountain threaten to overrun sacred sites in the foothills. The Sandia tribe is working to guarantee that the west side of mountains will be protected from future development. Development of the Sandias also threatens favorite hiking places in these mountains.

The integrity of the Petroglyph National Monument continues to be threatened by the proposed construction of a six-lane highway through the park. The highway would also allow Albuquerque to sprawl to the west, threatening our water supply and increasing congestion and pollution in the Rio Grande Valley. The Petroglyph National Monument is also a favorite hiking area.

As you can see, the Sacred Lands focus touches on issues of mining, sprawl, water conservation, and hiking. These are all issues that the Sierra Club has been concerned about in this area. By focusing on Sacred Lands, we can work on all these issues at once.

We are interested in preserving the sacred sites of all cultures. So, we are asking you to help us identify these and other special places, especially if they are threatened. If you would like to bring a site to our attention, please e-mail Richard Johnson at rsheehan@unm.edu.

Also, we are asking you to be involved. We will need volunteers to help us protect these important places in Central New Mexico. Contact any of us.



'Starman' petroglyph in the Petroglyph Monument

Central New Mexico Group

PO Box 25342

Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87125-5342

Executive Committee (area code 505)

Alma Rosa Silva Banuelos		almarosa6@yahoo.com
Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
Steve Capra	843-8696 x103	scapra@nmwild.org
Marilynn Cooper	842-0185	
Mark Doppke	768-1160	marckdoppke@yahoo.com
Richard Johnson	277-4144	rsheehan@unm.edu
Michal Mudd	884-3315	micmud@aol.com
Maribeth Theisen		littledeer@littledeermusic.com
Sherry Wolf	254-2190	wolf@libra.unm.edu

The Executive Committee normally meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30PM. 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)

Chapter Representative		
Marilynn Cooper	842-0185	
Conservation Chair		
Steve Capra	843-8696 x103	scapra@nmwild.org
Membership/Publicity		
Michal Mudd	884-3315	micmud@aol.com
Newsletter		
Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
Outings		
David Ther	260-1553	grelbik@att.worldnet.net
Political		
Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Programs		
Richard Johnson	277-4144	rsheehan@unm.edu
Sherry Wolf	254-2190	wolf@libra.unm.edu
River Issues		
Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Water Issues		
Mark Doppke	768-1160	marckdoppke@yahoo.com
Wildlife		
Sherry Wolf	254-2190	wolf@libra.unm.edu

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

Roadless Rule Put Into Effect!

From the first day that the Bush Administration took over, they have stonewalled on Roadless Area Protection. But as of December 12, 2002, the delays are over! A decision by the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals lifted the preliminary injunction, so that the Bush Administration is now required to protect the 58.5 million acres of roadless areas within our National Forests, including nearly 14 million acres within the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. The court case now moves back down to the District Court level where opponents must win an uphill battle in their efforts to overturn the Roadless Rule.

Welcome to New Excom Members

We are pleased to announce that Alma Rosa Silva Banuelos, Maribeth Theisen and Blair Brown were elected to the Group Excom. Alma Rosa and Maribeth are new to the Excom, while Blair has served for a number of years. We welcome them all and look forward to the challenges of the new year.

General Public Meetings Calendar

Please put these events on your calendar:

Monday, January 20 at 7:30PM

JW Madison from Rails Incorporated will talk about bringing commuter rail service to the central New Mexico area.

Monday, February 17th at 7:30PM

Brian Shields from Amigos Bravos will be discussing the Mining Act of 1872 and its current detrimental effects on New Mexico and the West.

Monday, March 17th at 7:30PM

Andy Bessler, a Sierra Club activist from Arizona, will talk about efforts to protect the Zuni Salt Lake from a proposed coal mine.

Monday, April 21st at 7:30PM

Richard Fagerlund, the "Bugman," will discuss environmentally-friendly ways to control pests in and around your home.

Monday, May 19th at 7:30PM

Denise Forte, a UNM Law School Professor, will talk about legal issues involving water in New Mexico.

Monday, June 16th at 7:30PM

Michael Robinson from the Center for Biodiversity will offer a presentation on wolf reintroduction and ranching in New Mexico.

All meetings will be at the First Unitarian Church on the corner of Carlisle and Comanche, in the Social Hall. All are FREE and open to the public. Coffee, drinks, and snacks are provided.

CENTRAL GROUP NEWS

Trash Talk

by Jay Morrow

Three or four months ago I got a call from a County Sheriff's lieutenant. He asked what the county policy was on Illegal Dumping and asked me if he found an illegal dump site would I go clean it up (I am the County Solid Waste Coordinator). I explained that there are thousands of sites and we don't have the resources to take them all on. At the same time, I was intrigued to be talking to an enforcement officer about illegal dumping and suggested that we get a group together and come up with a strategy. I was thinking about five or six folks over coffee and Krispy Kremes.

I went to my counterpart with the City of Albuquerque, and we decided to jump on this thing of illegal dumping. We started calling governmental entities surrounding Bernalillo County and were overwhelmed by the interest of everybody to work together not only to clean up illegal dumpsites but to actually do something to deter dumping to start with. A VERY DAUNTING TASK. We decided to have a Middle Rio Grande Illegal Dumping Summit. What started out to be a meeting of a few folks over coffee grew to a gathering of 120 professionals from the area at the Hispanic Cultural Center, with elected officials, law enforcement, zoning, environmental health, open space, Pueblos, State Highway, EPA, legal departments, Albuquerque Public Schools, UNM, Keep NM Beautiful, public works and more from a five county area at an all day summit. It was great!

The NM Environment Department brought in a Texas firm that has set up state programs in Texas, Missouri and Louisiana to talk to us about setting up environmental enforcement programs. We heard of a council of governments in Texas that passed an ordinance that confiscated your truck if convicted of Illegal Dumping. Radical! We also heard of a program where a local government paid for old furniture and appliances and tires. Opposite of charging for

them. They had young people going out on places like the West Mesa picking up junk and bringing it in for \$20 a pick up load where it would have cost that government \$100 to do the same thing. Lee County New Mexico has just started a program call "The Worst Mess Photo Fest" where people, without trespassing, take photos of illegal dumping for cash prizes. Very interesting results from that are coming in.

To make a long story short, we are going to establish a state wide Illegal Dumping Campaign in 2003 and will need support from groups like the Sierra Club to turn around an attitude that has permitted this blight. There may be an effort to establish an Environmental Land Use Court in New Mexico next year, so stay tuned.

In another development, the New Mexico Recycling Coalition has joined with the State Highway Department to form a task force to look for ways to incorporate "recycled" items in Highway construction. It will be called "Recycled Roads". This could be HUGE. The first thing we are looking at is using mulch and compost on interchanges in place of chopped straw for erosion control. We did a test pilot at the NE quadrant of the I 40 and Juan Tabo interchange a year ago and it has saved bundles from storm drain clean out cost. The next item will probably be old tires and tire bales and then maybe glass. Highway engineers are tough nuts to crack on trying new materials (bad choices can be very expensive) but both groups are very encouraged about the future possibilities.

Jay Morrow is the Bernalillo County Solid Waste Coordinator and a former member of the Central New Mexico Group Execcom. He can be reached at jmorrow@bernicogov

Outings

Saturday, January 11th - Desert Exploratory Hike

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 1000 feet of elevation.

Meeting time will vary from 8:30AM to 10AM. Meeting place will always be Smith's, at Carlisle and Menaul, nearest to Carlisle.

Contact leader by previous Wednesday for info. on specific hike location and meeting time. Most are joint outings with Outdoor Adventures For Singles. Leader: Tom Petencin 271-9928 tompeten@juno.com

Sunday, January 19th - Desert Exploratory Hike (see January 11th listing for description)

Saturday, January 25th - Desert Exploratory Hike (see January 11th listing for description)

Sunday, January 19th - Three Gun Spring Trail, Sandia Mt. Wilderness
Excellent conditioning hike to wonderful viewpoints. Depending on snow conditions, may go as far as Oso Pass. Approx. 6 miles round-trip, 1500 ft. elevation change. David Ther, 260-1553.

Sunday, January 26th - Pre-Super Bowl "Waddle":

Call for meeting time/place. Before indulging myself in "super snacks", I'll need a little exercise. We'll waddle this well-trodden trail in the Sandias as far up as we feel comfortable (deep snow turns us back), with lunch/turnaround about noon. Good exercise (10 miles RT, 2800') if we make the ridge. Feel free to come and walk part-way as hike is out-and-back. Return to cars by mid-afternoon (in time for game). Flying Star for snack/hot tea optional afterwards. Bring lunch, water and dress for the weather.

Leader: Rick Hurley (299-8401, sirspurious@aol.com).

Sunday, February 2nd - Desert Exploratory Hike (see January 11th listing for description)

Saturday, February 15th - Desert Exploratory Hike (see January 11th listing for description)

Sunday, February 16th - Domingo Baca Canyon Hike

Contact leader for meeting time/place. Weather permitting, we'll make a 1/2 day hike up this scenic trail on the West side of the Sandias. Finish in afternoon, may go for a snack afterward. Hike could be changed to another location or abbreviated if snow is heavy in canyon. Hike: ~5-6 miles, Elevation: ~1500'. Leader: Rick Hurley (299-8401, sirspurious@aol.com).

Sunday, February 23rd - Desert Exploratory Hike (see January 11th listing for description)

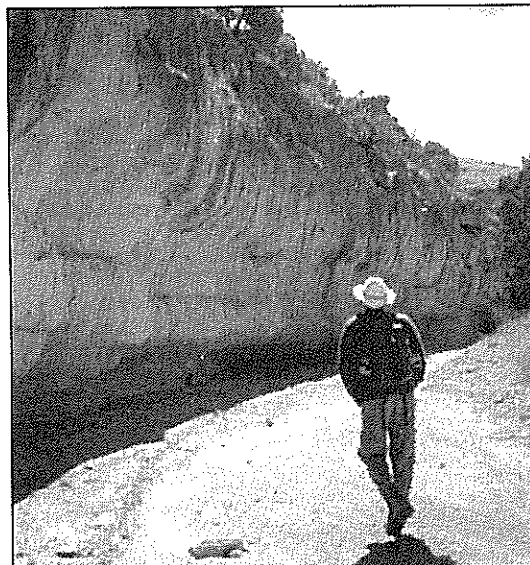
Thinking Locally About Global Climate Change

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change has released "Greenhouse & Statehouse: The Evolving State Government Role in Climate Change," which features case studies of nine states (Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin) that have taken action to mitigate climate change. The report tracks trends in state climate change action and draws conclusions about the potential of state action and its implications for national policy.

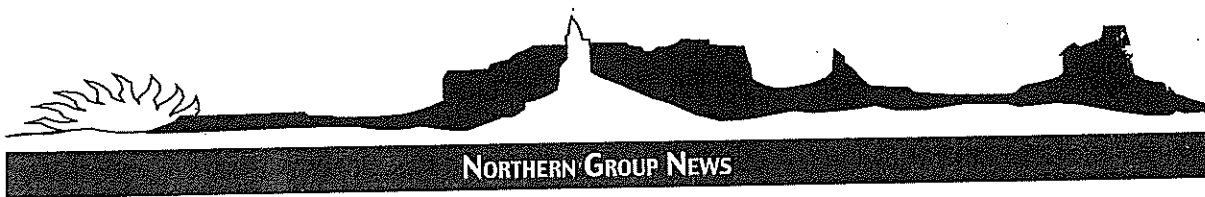
In addition, the Pew Center's searchable database of state activities has published 14 new case studies, covering 7 states. The case studies are available at <http://www.pewclimate.org/states/index1.cfm>.

For information about climate change for public officials, visit <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming/visitorcenter/publicofficials/> on the EPA Global Warming Site.

The site covers a wealth of topics such as the climate system, state greenhouse gas emissions, impacts of climate change on our states and cities, and innovative voluntary actions that can be taken at the state and local levels to reduce greenhouse gas and other emissions while saving money.



Desert Hikes are Enjoyable, even in the Winter



NORTHERN NEW MEXICO (alias Santa Fe) GROUP 2003 MEETINGS

Tuesday, January 21, 7 PM

ENDANGERED SPECIES
And How We Can Help Them

Our guest speaker is Susan MacMullin, deputy assistant regional director for ecological services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Department of Interior. Ms. MacMullin will be showing slides and speaking about grant programs, partnership programs and habitat conservation plans – all through the federal and state auspices.

Come and find out what the government is doing and how we the public can contribute to the programs.



*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).*

Northern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club
621 Old Santa Fe Trail, Plaza 621, Suite 10, Santa Fe, NM 87505
505 983 2703

Tuesday, February 18, 6 PM

STATE LAND STEWARDSHIP
A New Leader

Newly-elected New Mexico State Land Commissioner Patrick Lyons has graciously accepted our invitation to appear at our February meeting. The former State Senator will present his thoughts and answer questions regarding the operation of his office and his responsibilities for the management of State Land.

Now's your chance to give your input and find out what Commissioner Lyons' goals are for overseeing our public lands.



NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Doug Fraser

I've been elected to the position of Chair of the Chapter, which includes all of New Mexico, as well as west Texas. I've enjoyed the leadership of the Northern Group and will certainly remain active on the Group ExCom.

It was certainly a kick-in-the-teeth on December 20th when the NM Supreme Court handed us a decision regarding existing mining area expansions not needing to comply with the NM Mining Act. Talk about the grinch who stole Christmas!! Since the Club helped draft the Act, it was clearly understood that "we," both the mining industry and the environmental community, accepted that an existing mine could not just expand at will without the new section of the mine coming under the Act. Gratefully, dissenting Chief Justice Patricio M. Serna realized this and so stated. It is interesting to note that only one maverick mining operation pursued this litigation. The industry as a whole knew better. Unfortunately, it is sometimes cheaper to litigate a "long shot" than to comply. But now, as the court majority suggested, we will need to amend the NM Mining Act during the upcoming legislative session, which will not be easy. Wish us well. This is the Sierra Club's baby. We led the fight for the Act's 1993 passage following three years' hard work.

May the New Year be good for you and our environment.



CONSERVATION CHAIR

Paul Paryski

Most of the conservation issues facing the Sierra Club in Northern New Mexico in the last months of 2002 centered on water and the consequences of the election of a new Governor.

The snow storms during this period have somewhat allayed the public's and the politicians' fears of water shortages, but these snows in no way can make up for the water deficits, particularly in urban areas. The problem remains critical for residents, the health of the rivers, particularly the Rio Grande and the Santa Fe, and their associated riparian ecosystems and watersheds.

A way to reduce the demand for water is to use graywater for landscape watering, which accounts for almost 40% of water use in cities. With the help of Melissa MacDonald, Santa Fe's Permaculture Institute, we presented a graywater bill to the Legislature's Interim Water and Finance Cmtes. The bill will be sponsored by Rep. Mimi Stewart, a friend of the environment. It would allow the use of graywater for household landscape watering without a permit.

A series of reuse and water efficient housing workshops organized by the State Engineer will result in a series of guidelines for builders, counties and municipalities for reuse and water conservation, a pilot housing demonstration project, and hopefully, in water conservation legislation requiring new commercial construction and new subdivisions. This initiative, begun last summer, has the support of the construction industry.

I helped organize and participate in a series of meetings with representatives of NM's environmental community to propose to the Governor-elect persons whom we suggested for appointments in his new administration. Hopefully, Mr. Richardson and his transition team will accept some of these people.

I represented the Club in a series of workshops, organized by Skyloom Development Services with a grant from the McCune Charitable Foundation, to build bridges between the environmental community and traditional agricultural groups.

Richard Barish of the Central Group and I participated with the Alliance for the Rio Grande Heritage in their laudable efforts to save the Rio Grande.

A conservation issue that will cause some controversy is newly elected State Land Commissioner Patrick Lyons' statement that he favors the shooting of coyotes. Environmentalists consider coyotes to be an essential part of the ecosystems of the region.

NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

GROUP OUTINGS FOR 2003

Sat Sun January 2003 HAPPY NEW YEAR !!

- 4 Easy/Moderate Hike in Cerrillos Hills. Dogs allowed. Leave 9 AM. Bob McKee (672-3426)
- 5 Moderate Hike. Lavi Malhotra (995-8547)
- 11 Easy Hike. Gail Bryant (505-757-6654)
- 11 Moderate Bike Trip in Cabezon area. Michael DiRosa (663-0648)
- 12 Moderate Hike. Dogs allowed. Tobin Oruch (820-2844)
- 18 Easy Birdwatch Walk. Bring binoculars. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 18 Intermediate XC Ski Trip. If no snow, moderate/strenuous hike. Dogs allowed if hike. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 19 Moderate Hike in Arroyo del Cobre near Abiquiu. One steep, rocky section. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)
- 25 Moderate Hike in Sandia foothills. Stephen Markowitz (505-797-5833)
- 26 Intermediate XC Ski Trip. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 26 Easy/Moderate Hike on the abandoned Santa Fe Central railroad bed heading south from Community College. Dogs allowed. Leave 9:30 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
- 26 Strenuous Snowshoe in Pecos area, 6-14 miles, some off-trail, dogs welcome, joint trip with NM Mountain Club. Sharon Angert (982-1055)



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

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

Sat Sun February

- 1 Easy Hike in Cerrillos Hills Park with local guest historian Bill Baxter. Last chance to view some of the historic mine shafts in the park, which are due to be covered up shortly thereafter. Dogs OK. Carpool from Sierra office at 9 AM or meet Bill at the Cerrillos Hills parking lot, .5 mile north of Cerrillos Village on Co Rd 59 at 10 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
- 2 Moderate Petroglyph Hike with Dennis Slifer, local expert, to Cerro Pelon in Galisteo Basin (roads permitting). Only 2-3 miles but steep, rocky scrambling. Limit of 15, call for reservation. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)
- 8 Mod/Stren Hike. Lavi Malhotra (995-8547; lavim@ix.netcom.com)
- 8 Easy Hike. Gail Bryant (1-505-757-6654)
- 8 Cross Country Ski Workshop for skiers with limited experience who want to gain confidence and improve their techniques for backcountry touring, including downhill speed control. Call by January 30 for reservation. Time permitting, lessons may be followed by a short ski tour. Gordon Spencer (672-3707)
- 9 Beginners Snowshoe Ski Basin. Marcia Skillman (474-7414)
- Saturday, Sunday, Monday — February 15, 16, 17
- Moderate/Strenuous XC Ski Tour Weekend, skiing to/staying 2 nights at Neff Mountain Yurt (North of Chama), \$45 for yurt, call John Buchser (820-0201) to reserve space. Only two openings left! (for pix/info: www.southwestnordiccenter.com)
- 15 Easy Birdwatch Walk, bring binoculars. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 16 Easy Hike to Ojo Caliente mica mines and beyond, 5-6 miles, under 1000' gain. Leave 8 AM. Optional soak in hot springs after hike for cars desiring. Les Drapela (438-3306)
- 22 Intermediate XC Ski Trip. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 22 Moderate Hike Wild & Scenic Rivers area near Questa, 9 mi., 1500' gain, steep descent/ascent. Michael Di Rosa (663-0648)
- 23 Strenuous Hike to Diablo Canyon, Sagebrush Flats, and rim of White Rock Canyon. 9 miles, 900' gain, mostly off-trail. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)

LOST ???

Outings leaders plan to maintain a collection of topo and other maps of the Santa Fe area at the office. Old topos can be useful, too, since they sometimes show details or old trails left off of more recent versions. To save a tree and recycle your area maps or guidebooks (birds, wildflowers, geology, etc.), call Tobin Oruch (820-2844) or Norbert Sperlich (474-4354).

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Executive Committee: Tuesday, January 7, 6:30 PM
Tuesday, February 4, 6:30 PM
Tuesday, March 4, 6:30 PM

Group Conservation Committee: Tuesday, January 28, 7 PM
Tuesday, February 25, 7 PM

Water Pot-Luck (John Buchser's house [820-0201]):
Wednesday, January 15, 6:30 PM (at Eleanor Eisenmenger's —
Call John for directions)
Wednesday, February 12, 6:30 PM
Wednesday, March 12, 6:30 PM



Outings Notes - Unless otherwise noted, all outings leave from the Sierra office, 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, Plaza 621, 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>

Sat Sun March

- 1 Moderate Hike eagle traps in Bandelier, 8 miles, some off-trail, call before 8 PM. Stephen Markowitz (stepdov@hotmail.com)
- 2 Mod/Stren Hike. Lavi Malhotra (995-8547; lavim@ix.netcom.com)
- 8 Moderate Bike Ride, perhaps Caja del Rio area off Bypass, 15-20 miles, Michael Di Rosa (663-0648)
- 9 Easy-Moderate Hike. Gail Bryant (1-505-757-6654)
- 9 Strenuous Snowshoe Raven's Ridge. Marcia Skillman (474-7414)
- 15 Easy Birdwatch Walk, bring binoculars. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 16 Moderate Hike to Window Rock near Espanola, 8 miles, -1000' gain, walking in sand. Leave 8 AM. Les Drapela (438-3306)
- Friday, Saturday, Sunday, March 21, 22, 23
- Strenuous XC Ski Weekend, skiing to/staying at Bull of the Woods Yurt (east of Taos Ski area), \$40 for yurt, call John Buchser (820-0201) to reserve space. Only four openings left! (for pix/maps/info: www.southwestnordiccenter.com)
- 22 Intermediate XC Ski Trip. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 23 Moderate Hike to the most easterly peak in the Cerrillos Hills, dogs OK. Leave 9 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
- 23 Very Strenuous Snowshoe on Gold Hill Loop (Taos Ski Valley), 10 miles, 3400' gain, some trail breaking. Early start, dogs welcome. Sharon Angert (982-1055)
- 29 Strenuous Hike on Red Dot/Blue Dot trail loop near White Rock, 7 miles, 1000' gain. Dan Rustholi (690-8967)
- 30 Easy Hike to Diablo Canyon near Santa Fe. 6 miles, 400' gain, walking in sand. Victor Atyas (438-9434)
- 30 Moderate-Strenuous or Strenuous Hike near Abiquiu, some off-trail. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)

RIO GRANDE SIERRA NOW ON THE 'NET !!
<http://www.riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/home.html>

♦ ♦ NORTHERN NEW MEXICO 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 carlson@earthlink.net 982-3926
Web Master — Gina Aranda garanda@cns.com 424-1615
Phone Tree — Berta Hanna 424-1435
Chapter Rep — Doug Fraser * fraser@thunte.net 474-7615
* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

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

MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the upstairs rooms in Mesa Public Library at 7:00PM and are open to the public. General meetings are on the first Wednesday, conservation and ExCom meetings the second Wednesday of each month. *There will be no General Meeting in January 2003.*

OPEN MEETING
**BANDELIER
NATIONAL MONUMENT**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 • 7:00PM
MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOMS

Bandelier National Monument Superintendent Steve Bone will focus on major thrusts in upcoming years including:

- Ecological Restoration Environmental Impact Statement (EIS),
- Fire Management Plan EIS, and
- Vanishing Treasures and Archeological Inventory Condition Assessment.

Chief of Resources John Mack will join him as the staff expert on some areas.



OPEN MEETING
**VALLES CALDERA
NATIONAL PRESERVE**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5 • 7:00PM
MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOMS

William deBuys, Chairman of the Valles Caldera Trustees will address our issues and concerns about the new Valles Caldera National Preserve in a question and answer discussion.

**Pajarito Group
Directory**

<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/pajarito/>

Ilse Bleck, Chair & Chapter Representative
ibleck@yahoo.com 662-2368

Kim Manley, Vice Chair
kmmngeol@ix.netcom.com 662-6163

Carole Jacobson, Secretary/Treasurer
abc.jacobson@worldnet.att.net 672-9579

Chuck Pergler, Conservation Chair
pergler@att.net 661-6169

Jody Benson
bensonj@lanl.gov 667-8465

Matt Heavner, Webmeister
heavner@jemez.com 829-3645

Abe Jacobson
abc.jacobson@worldnet.att.net 672-9579

Thanks For Buying the Valles. Now Keep Out.

The Pajarito Group endorses, in general terms, the interim steps by the Valles Caldera National Preserve. On one particular issue, however, the Preserve appears to be headed in the wrong direction—the general public is not gaining the unguided foot access that most people had expected. Perhaps this is only an anomaly of the interim management, and perhaps patience will pay off. But we cannot assume that. It's time to speak out—the Trust should allow unguided public foot access to the Preserve. Remember, it was the public that made the Preserve possible through their taxes and, before that, through their volunteer advocacy for the land purchase. It is neither just nor fair that the public can enter the Valles only for a few hours at a time and only in ultra-pricey guided tours (\$45 for three hours).

Over the past year, we have heard several arguments on why unguided public access cannot presently happen. These arguments don't stand up to reason:

- **The public would trash the fragile ecosystem.** Really? Pedestrian or skier access for 150-pound humans would damage the landscape very little compared to the $\pm 1,000$ half-ton bovines that graze on the Valles for several months each year. Humans would not trample the streambanks, would not pull up and eat the willow shoots from the presently denuded riparian corridors, and would not pose the risk that cattle do of spreading noxious weeds, cheat grass, etc. We are not against the Preserve's grazing program, but only pointing out that humans deserve at least as fair a consideration as cows do. Cows don't pay taxes; people do. If the Trust needs advice or expertise on how both to allow public access and at the same time to protect the environment, then our National Parks and Monuments, including Bandelier, could offer useful guidance.
- **The ranch must obey its legislative charter and has to "pay for itself."** Great! This is easily done with individual access too. For example, we'd gladly pay \$50/year for an annual pedestrian family pass to the Preserve. By contrast, the Trust would have to lure a person on ten (count that, 10) guided three-hour walks in a single year to gain the same revenue. Of the \$45 admission on the guided walk, only \$5 goes to the Trust. The Trust could also charge \$5/day for unguided single-day access, \$10 for a week, \$50 for a year, etc. To impose on the visitor public a \$45/person burden for three hours, so that the Trust can garner \$5/person, is neither efficient nor fair.

If people we know are any market measure, the present Trust policy on \$45 tours will be not only irritating to the public, but an economic flop to boot.

- **At present there are no toilet facilities.** Agreed. But neither are there toilet facilities in the bulk of the National Forest or in the Bandelier back-country. Neither of those places, however, has been converted to a sewer. Moreover, speaking of toilet facilities, there is this little matter of $\pm 1,000$ half-ton cows. Are they toilet-trained? For that matter, what about the elk? But let's not go there! It ought to be possible for the Preserve to install a minimal complement of outhouses near entry points, and dispense with this particularly risible argument against public access.
- **Unguided individuals might hurt themselves.** Some of us still don't demand to be protected from our own mistakes. There are places for folks who desire such protection: shopping malls.
- **There is presently no "developed parking."** True. But neither is there any "developed parking" for most of the wild places people visit on foot or skis. Unguided foot visitors could enter from anywhere around the perimeter, and need not park on State Road 4. For example, Los Alamos (or folks visiting Los Alamos) could enter on foot or skis from Camp May, the Pipeline Road, etc. Folks could enter from the San Antonio hot spring road. Forest roads and trails surround the Valle on the west, north, and east sides. Only the south side is fronted by a paved highway. Parking is a non-issue on three sides, and would be easily remediable on the fourth.
- **The Preserve is supported by paying clients; therefore, the benefits of the Preserve should go to its paying clients.** Yes, indeed, but only if we ignore the massive \$101-million capital outlay that the general public, through their taxes, made to buy the Preserve. If the Preserve were in a real sense "self-supporting," then it would have to do what any self-supporting business does, and use current revenues to cover debt service on its \$101-million mortgage. That would require about \$8-10 million of revenue per year just for debt service (about ten times expected total annual revenues). That sort of revenue is not going to happen.

So, let's not talk about "self-supporting" as an argument to wall out the general public. It just doesn't wash. The Preserve is not self-supporting in a business sense. Rather, the Preserve is a public endowment, established by the public taxes. The Trust should move swiftly to allow unguided public access. We have no problem with this access being subject to appropriate and sensible regulations on public activity, and subject to a reasonable annual, weekly, or daily fee. National Parks and Monuments have done this balancing act successfully for over a century. It's not difficult. The zeal to be innovative should not deny us the benefit of what already is proven and works.

—Abe Jacobson

Pajarito Group Forest Issues Chair

OUTINGS

Sunday, 26 January • Cumbres Pass Ski and Snowshoe Tour—Moderately strenuous trek at altitudes from 10,000-11,000'. Contact Abe Jacobson (672-9579; abc.jacobson@att.net).

Please check the Northern Group pages for additional outings in the area.

2003 SESSION OF THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATURE & ENERGY

Priority Issues for 2003 *(continued from page 6)*

Routes to Schools legislation directs NMSHTD to use transportation funds to make it easier for children to bike and walk to school.

Other Public Transit Issues—The Chapter will also continue to support efforts to establish park-and-ride services and "heavy rail" from El Paso to Denver through New Mexico.

Federal Transit Administration dollars pay for the bulk of transit systems in New Mexico, with a match of local dollars. New Mexico is one of four states in the country that does not expend dedicated state dollars for transit projects.

New Mexico's Public Mass Transit Act prohibits the state from spending more than \$50,000 in federal matching funds on rural transit systems. A 1975 law set this maximum expenditure. In 1997 and 2001, the legislature passed bills that would have raised the funding cap. At the urging of top NMSHTD officials, however, Governor Johnson vetoed the legislation.

The Chapter will support STTP's efforts to promote legislation in the 2003 legislative session to eliminate this funding cap.

Land Use

The Sierra Club will focus on strengthening the 1995 Subdivision Act by requiring the installation of water-conservation measures as a condition for permits, and by opposing attempts to weaken the current laws by adding to the 13 already existing loopholes. The Chapter will call for the new state planning office to put land use on its plate of issues to consider.

For more information about the Chapter's involvement in land-use issues, contact Chapter Sprawl Chair Jan Kindel (see Directory, page 2).

Otero Mesa

The Chapter will follow the lead of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NMWA) regarding the campaign to designate the Greater Otero Mesa Area as a wilderness area. It is possible that the Alliance will ask the Legislature to pass a memorial during this session.

Otero Mesa, in southern New Mexico, is considered to be the nation's largest and wildest remaining Chihuahuan Desert grassland. The NMWA has documented more than 520,000 acres that qualify for wilderness protection according to guidelines prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Thus far, however, BLM has resisted initiatives to protect the grassland, in part because the

Harvey E. Yates Oil Company, based in Roswell, wants to develop the area. As local ranchers have become informed about the scope of the proposed development, they have grown increasingly concerned and vocal about the impact this would have on their quality of life.

NMWA urges New Mexicans to contact U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman (988-6647-SFe, 202/224-5521-DC; bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov) to affirm that we want wilderness protection for the Greater Otero Mesa Area.

For more information, contact Chapter Wilderness Chair Martin Heinrich (see Directory, page 2), or Stephen Capra at NMWA in Albuquerque (843/8696; steve@nmwild.org; www.nmwild.org).

—Contributors: Richard Barish, David Benavides, Kevin Bixby, John Buchser, Stephen Capra, Paul Elders, Doug Fraser, Ken Hughes, Cliff Larsen, Paul Paryski, Marty Peale, Gail Ryba, and Gwen Wardwell

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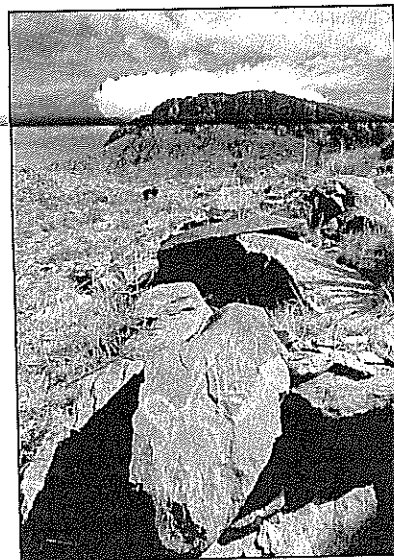
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REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
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SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39

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 for your Chapter newsletter.



Petroglyph at Alamo Mountain in Otero Mesa (photo by S. Capra)

Renewable Energy *(continued from page 1)*

PNM will get 4% of its electricity from wind when this facility comes online in 2004.

Other power developers have referred to the potential for various forms of solar, geothermal, and biomass sources in New Mexico. Vulcan Power, for instance, has suggested plans for power plants on the order of 30 Megawatts, perhaps near Radium Springs or Hillsboro, New Mexico. Bpocing and Sterling Energy Systems have indicated the potential for installing solar thermal power systems and sterling engine devices, respectively.

The *Albuquerque Journal* and the *New Mexican* have quoted utility sources saying that the new rule will cause customer rates to go up. PNM has, how-

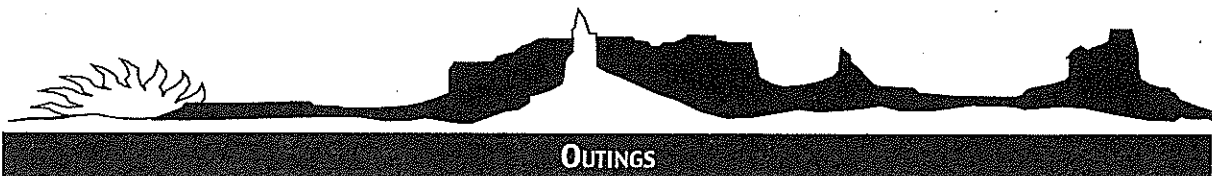
ever, already agreed on a rate-reduction proposal that will take effect next year, and has agreed not to pass any renewable energy investment costs on to customers for five years. Moreover, the Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy (of which the Rio Grande Chapter is a member) believes that, while there may be about a 1.7% rate increase in about the year 2007, this increase will be temporary, and costs will actually come down as the cost of wind-power development decreases.

In any case, one can expect that the price of wind, itself, will stay constant—free—while the cost of oil and gas, in the long term, will continue to rise as reserves are depleted around the world.

In addition to the RPS rule described above, utilities are allowed to offer a "green tariff" that permits customers to voluntarily choose to buy renewable electricity at a higher rate. The reason that the Sierra Club supported a requirement for renewable energy, instead of simply encouraging this voluntary tariff, is that the renewable energy industry can provide much better prices and services if it has an assured market for some amount of power. In Texas, which has adopted this mandated approach, utilities are ahead of schedule.

For more information, contact Chapter Energy Chair Gail Ryba (see Directory, page 2).

—Gail Ryba



OUTINGS

Get Outside, and Consider Getting Involved in Decision-making

It is snowing on the peaks in both the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains as I write this—good news for the land and our drought-stricken city. Down south, the weather is probably mild—a good time of year to get out and explore the areas too hot to hike in summer.

The holidays will soon be over and 2003 slipping in. By most indicators, it's going to be a tough year for the land, for our global environment, for the common man, and all our critters. While it is hard to effect positive change at the global or even national level, it is somewhat easier to move things

at the local level. I urge all of us to get involved in the decisions of our towns and counties. As you are out walking, look for open spaces threatened by encroaching development, power plants spewing too much pollution, Indian cultural sites destabilized by ORV traffic, more highways snaking across the land, when better public transportation would be the more environmentally friendly and energy-efficient solution. Getting into the outdoors and enjoying our magnificent landscape is one of the most healing and rejuvenating activities I know. I hope you will take advantage of some of these

outings led by our dedicated corps of leaders, then come back refreshed, and ready to work with other Sierra and community members in tackling a local issue.

I wish all of you a peaceful and upbeat new year, filled with the songs of birds, the pungent smell of damp creosote bushes and sun warmed pines, the good company of fellow hikers, and the rewards of reaching out into your community.

Be sure and check our five Groups' pages for more information and for additional activities. All area codes are 505, except as noted.

—Norma McCallan

Sierra Club Outings in January, February, and March 2003

Saturday, January 11 • Cabezon Area Bike Trip—Moderate bike ride near the Cabezon Wilderness Study Area. Michael DiRosa (663-0648—Los Alamos).

Saturday, January 11 • Lower Sunset Trail, Franklin Mountains State Park—Moderate 6-mile hike through the impressive Chihuahuan desert ecosystem. Jim Bell (915/581-8864—El Paso).

Friday-Monday, January 17-20 • Peloncillo Mountains Loop Backpack—Strenuous, 19-mile exploratory backpack in one of the most remote corners of New Mexico. Ron Wickenden (915/855-6697—El Paso; rwickgila@aol.com).

Saturday, January 18 • Sacramento Mountains Ski Trip—Cross country ski tour; skis available to rent if you don't own such. Ben Zerby (526-7811—Las Cruces).

Sunday, January 19 • Three Guns Spring Trail, Sandia Mountain Wilderness—Great conditioning hike, 6 miles round-trip to good viewpoints. David Ther (260-1553—Albuquerque).

Sunday, January 19 • Arroyo del Cobre, near Abiqui—Moderate hike in a little known area. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354—SFe).

Sunday, January 26 • Cumbres Pass Ski and Snowshoe Tour—Moderately strenuous outing to the best snow in New Mexico, 10,000-11,000'. Abe Jacobson (672-9579—Los Alamos; abe.jacobson@att.net).

Saturday, February 1 • Cerrillos Hills Park Mine Tour—Easy hike with local guest historian Bill Baxter to view some of the historical mines which will soon be covered up. Norma McCallan (471-0005—SFe).

Sunday, February 2 • Petroglyph Tour, Cerro Pelon, Galisteo Basin—Moderate hike with local expert Dennis Slifer. Call for reservations. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354—SFe).

Saturday, February 8 • Cross Country Ski Workshop—Training for skiers of limited experience who want to gain confidence and improve techniques. Call by 1/30. Gordon Spencer (672-3707—Los Alamos).

Saturday-Monday, February 15-17 • Cross Country Ski Weekend near Cumbres Pass—Moderate/strenuous ski tour, staying at Neff Mountain yurt. \$45. Reservations required, so call pronto. John Buchser (820-0201—SFe).

Sunday, February 16 • Ojo Caliente Mica Mines—Easy hike, 5-6 miles; optional soak in hot springs. Les Drapela (438-3306—SFe).

Saturday, February 22 • Wild and Scenic Rivers, near Questa—Moderate hike. Michael DiRosa (663-0648—Los Alamos).

Sunday, February 23 • Diablo Canyon, Sagebrush Flats, Rim of White Rock Canyon—Strenuous, mostly off trail hike. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354—SFe).

Saturday, March 1 • Eagle Traps, Bandelier National Park—Moderate 8-mile hike. Stephen Markowitz (797-5833—Albuquerque; stepdov@hotmail.com).

Sunday, March 9 • Ravens' Ridge Snowshoe Trip—Strenuous trek up this pristine, controversial ridge where the Ski Basin wants to build new runs. Marcia Skillman (474-7414—SFe).

Friday-Sunday, March 21-23 • Cross Country Ski Weekend, near Taos Ski Area—Strenuous ski tour, staying at Bull of the Woods yurt. \$40. Reservations required, so call pronto. John Buchser (820-0201—SFe).

Saturday, March 22 • Cooke's Peak Hike—Strenuous climb to this prominent landmark near Deming. Ben Zerby (526-7811—Las Cruces).

Ranching At the Crossroads: Forging a West That Works

The Quivira Coalition's 2nd Annual Conference

16-18 January 2003 • Albuquerque, NM • the Hilton Hotel

Guest Speakers Paul Starrs, professor of Geography, University of Nevada, Reno, and author of *Let The Cowboy Ride: Cattle Ranching in the American West* • Jo Robinson, *New York Times* bestselling writer, author of *Why Grassfed Is Best!* and principal researcher for the eatwild.com web site.

Session I: Where Will the Deer and the Antelope Play? An overview of ranchland ecosystems and the folks who steward them—Jeff Jones, research associate, American Farmland Trust • The American West: stir, don't shake—Rick Knight, professor of Conservation Biology, Colorado State University • Science, community, and collaborative management—Bill McDonald, rancher/director, Malpai Borderlands Group • Bridging the cultural divide in the management of natural resources—Guy McPherson, professor, Department of Renewable Natural Resources, University of Arizona

Session II: Restoring the Gift of Good Land Lani Lamming, Goat rancher, Ewe4ic, Inc. • Bill Zeedyk, riparian-restoration specialist • Fire and wildland restoration in the Southwest—Craig Allen, research ecologist, USGS Jemez Mts. Field Station • Kris Havstad, supervisory scientist, USDA Jornada Experimental Range • Reality ranching: trail drives to the new millennium—Sid Goodloe, Carrizo Valley Ranch

Session III: For the Health of the Land and People Making a self-sufficient ranching operation successful—Duke Phillips, owner-manager of Box T Partners, the Chico Basin Ranch • Beavers—Sherry Tippie, president and executive director, Wildlife 2000 • Bugs and bovines—Tony and Jerrie Tipton, ranchers and land-restoration specialists • Cross-cultural collaborative conservation efforts in the field—Gary Paul Nabhan, director of the Center for Sustainable Environments, Northern Arizona University

Session IV: Creating a Society to Match the Scenery New policies and politics for a maturing west—Daniel Kemmis, director, Center for the Rocky Mountain West • Creating community dialogue through maps—Rosemary Romero, facilitator, Romero Consulting, Inc. • A cowgirl's cause—Trecia (Tweetie) Blancett, rancher, Aztec, NM • Alvin Warren, land and rights coordinator, Santa Clara Pueblo

\$50 for Quivira Coalition members • \$65 for non-members • \$30 for students

Two-day conference, evening talks, conference materials, coffee, tea, continental breakfasts, and Friday lunch included

Call to register 505/820-2544