

# Rio Grande Sierran

NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

JULY/AUGUST 2003

## Clean Energy: A Priority for the Richardson Administration

New Mexico is blessed with enormous energy resources from both fossil fuel and renewable sources. To date, the state has taken advantage of vast oil, natural gas, and coal reserves, which has both stimulated New Mexico's economy and significantly contributed to state government's annual revenue. In spite of ranking second in the nation in solar energy resources and twelfth in wind energy potential, little to date has been done to capitalize on the state's clean, renewable resources (see box).

That is all about to change.

During his campaign, Governor Richardson pledged to establish New Mexico as a national leader in clean energy—both renewable energy and energy efficiency. We've got a long way to go, but the foundation is being established for getting us there.

The following is an overview of the Governor's clean-energy agenda, and some of the projects and program development under way to make that agenda a reality.

### 10% of Electricity from Renewables by 2010

New Mexico currently obtains less than 1% of its electricity from renewable sources. This percentage will increase significantly when PNM's 204-megawatt (Mw) wind farm comes on line later this summer (see article below). Located near Ft. Sumner, more than 130 wind turbines are being constructed, each greater than 200 feet in height. The wind farm will be one of the largest in the country. If you're a PNM customer, you'll have an opportunity to

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### Renewable Energy Generation in 10 Western States

State	Installed Capacity of Renewables (Mw)
California	5,481
Washington	512
Oregon	303
Nevada	238
Wyoming	141
Idaho	120
Colorado	68
Utah	44
Arizona	9
New Mexico	4

Source: Renewable Energy Atlas ([www.EnergyAtlas.org](http://www.EnergyAtlas.org))

## Wind Farm Leases on State Land Generate Revenue and Energy

Wind power is the world's fastest growing, and most cost-effective, source of non-polluting renewable energy, which is vital for a healthy environment and ecosystem. The American Wind Energy Association has ranked New Mexico as having the 12th highest potential for wind-energy generation in the nation and as one of the few states with the capacity to export wind energy. Wind energy offers us a wealth of economic development opportunities, including hundreds of construction and administrative jobs. Moreover, it can be a new source of revenue to pass along to New Mexico's school children.

In October 2002, New Mexico's largest utility, Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM), and Florida Power and Light Energy (FPL) announced an agreement to develop a New Mexico Wind Energy Center in eastern New Mexico. FPL Energy will construct, own and operate the facility, and PNM will purchase all of the power it produces.

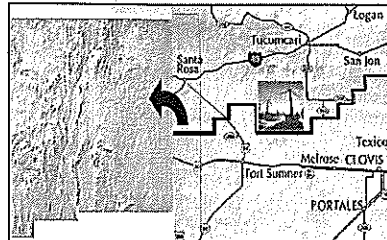
The wind farm's 136 turbines have the capacity to generate 204 megawatts of power at peak wind speeds of 8-50 mph for a total annual output of 594,000 megawatt hours. Only two existing wind facilities in United States are larger in terms of output. New Mexico's current wind capacity is 1.32 megawatts (Mw).

In April 2003, the State Land Office signed an agreement to lease 1,160 acres of state trust land to FPL for the wind center. Most of the 9,600-acre development is on private land. With nine million acres of state trust land that includes thousands of acres in the prime wind country of eastern New Mexico, the State Land Office is actively recruiting companies that produce renewable energy. We hope to be the landowner of choice for new wind-energy farms and wind-turbine manufacturers alike. Furthermore, renewable energy producers can take advantage of a renewable-energy-production tax credit, passed by the state legislature in 2002 and signed by then-Governor Gary Johnson.

Leases with the State Land Office for a period of five years are available with simply the Commissioner's signature, while leases for periods from six to 99 years require a public bid.

Over the next 20-50 years, our non-renewable energy resources—coal, oil, and natural gas—will begin to dwindle, along with energy-related returns to our beneficiaries, including school children. For this reason, the State Land Office is eager to incorporate our vast resources of sustainable,

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The New Mexico Wind Center, now under construction 170 miles east of Albuquerque, will be the third-largest facility of its kind in the United States. It is expected to bring more than \$40 million into rural De Baca and Quay counties over the course of the first 25 years (wind farm photos courtesy of FPL, map courtesy of the State Land Office).



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

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## RIO GRANDE CHAPTER DIRECTORY

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Doug Fraser, <i>Chair</i>	474-7615
fraser@thuntek.net	
Don Dearholt, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	522-3035
dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu	
John Buchser, <i>Conservation Chair</i>	820-0201
jbuchser@earthlink.net	
Laurence Gibson, <i>Secretary</i>	915/594-7342
lgibson@utep.edu	
Blair Brown, <i>Treasurer</i>	259-7190
bblairb2@aol.com	
Richard Barish	232-3013
rdbarish@aol.com	
Jim Hannan	988-5760
jhannan505@aol.com	
Ken Hughes	474-0550
b1family@nets.com	
Susan Martin, <i>Council Delegate</i>	988-5206
smartin31@worldnet.att.net	
Norma McCallan	471-0005
nmccallan@mindspring.com	
Ted Mertig	915/852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net	
Ilse Bleck, <i>Pajarito Group</i>	662-2368
ibleck@yahoo.com	
Marilynn Cooper, <i>Central Group</i>	842-0185
marilynncooper@qwest.net	
Don Dearholt, <i>Southern Group</i>	522-3035
dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu	
Doug Fraser, <i>Northern Group</i>	474-7615
fraser@thuntek.net	
José Escobedo, <i>El Paso Group</i>	915/751-1834
escobedo25@hotmail.com	

### CHAPTER OFFICE

Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club  
621 Old Santa Fe Trail, Suite 10  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
505/983-2703 • fax 505/982-9766  
www.riogrande.sierraclub.org

### SIERRA CLUB NM OFFICE

Mary Wiper, *Associate Representative*  
110 2nd Street, SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102-3337  
505/243-7767 • fax 505/243-7771  
mary.wiper@sierraclub.org • www.sierraclub.org

### 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.

Central Group P.O. Box 25342 • Albuquerque, NM 87125-5342

El Paso Group P.O. Box 9191 • El Paso, TX 79983 • 915/594-7342

Pajarito Group P.O. Box 945 • Los Alamos, NM 87544  
Northern Group 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, #10 Santa Fe, NM 87505 • 983-2703 • fax 982-9766

Southern Group P.O. Box 3705 UPB, Las Cruces, NM 88003 • 522-3035

Southwest Regional Office 202 E. McDowell Road, Suite 277 • Phoenix, AZ 85004 • 602/254-9330; fax 602/258-6533

Sierra Club National 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor • San Francisco, CA 94105 • 415/977-5500

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### CONSERVATION ISSUE CHAIRS

Energy	Gail Ryba	955-9578	gnryba@cybermesa.com
Mining	Abe Jacobson	672-9579	abe.jacobson@worldnet.att.net
	Cliff Larsen	466-2128	clarsen1@ix.netcom.com
Rangelands	OPEN		
Sand & Gravel	Cliff Larsen	466-2128	clarsen1@ix.netcom.com
Sprawl Issues	Jan Kindel	474-7207	jankindel@aol.com
Trade	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Transportation	Ken Hughes	474-0550	b1family@nets.com
Valles Caldera	Ilse Bleck	662-2368	ibleck@yahoo.com
Water	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@earthlink.net
Wilderness	Martin Heinrich	232-7151	mtheinrich@aol.com
Wildlife	Liz Walsh	915/747-5421	ewalsh@utep.edu
	Roger Peterson	983-7559	rogpete@aol.com

### ACTIVISM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Elections	Michael Mudd	884-3315	micmud@aol.com
Fundraising	Michael Mudd	884-3315	micmud@aol.com
Legal	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Membership	Ted Mertig	915/852-3011	tmertig@earthlink.net
Nominating Committee	David Farrell	895-3352	dafarrell@hotmail.com
Personnel Committee	Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
	Jan Kindel	474-7207	jankindel@aol.com
Political/Legislation	Gwen Wardwell	438-3060	g.wardwell@worldnet.att.net
Sierra Student Coalition	OPEN		
Standing Rules	Laurence Gibson	915/594-7342	lgibson@utep.edu
Webmaster/Listserver	Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com

### OUTINGS CHAIRS

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

### NATIONAL & REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Southwest Region Conservation Committee (SWRCC) John Buchser & Ted Mertig, Norma McCallan (*Alt.*)  
Council of Club Leaders Delegate Susan Martin, Ken Hughes (*Alt.*)

### SIERRAN

Editor/Layout/Ads Marty Peale 983-0841 mpeale@newmexico.com

The *Rio Grande Sierran* is published six times a year by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club as a benefit for Sierra Club members living in New Mexico and West Texas. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the *Rio Grande Sierran* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Articles may be freely reprinted for non-profit purposes, provided that credit is given to the author and the *Rio Grande Sierran* (Please let us know if you reprint.) Products and services advertised in the *Rio Grande Sierran* are not endorsed by the Sierra Club.

Contributions are welcome from members. E-mail contributions preferred. Contributors' names and e-mail address will be included in the article, as a source of more information, unless the contributor specifies otherwise. Send to the editor (mpeale@newmexico.com • P.O. Box 535, Tesuque NM 87574). All submissions must be received by the 10th of the month prior to publication. (The *Rio Grande Sierran* is published in early January, March, May, July, September and November.) Photos, artwork and poems are also welcome. Letters and articles are subject to abridgement.

Editorial practices as developed by the Grand Canyon Chapter and adopted by the Rio Grande Chapter will be used in production of the *Rio Grande Sierran*. Letters to the editor over 500 words will be edited for length or returned to the author for editing. Submissions of Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence over other submissions. Contents of Group pages are the responsibility of the editor for that group and any policies that are in place from the applicable Group.

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

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Send address changes to: Membership Services  
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## Congratulations!

To Maxine Goad, who was recently appointed to the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission. Also, Governor Richardson has appointed Barbara Johnson to his Blue Ribbon Water Task Force. And *Rio Grande Sierran* Managing Editor Marty Peale is, as of July 1, also the Coordinator for the Valles Caldera Coalition.

## Political Contact Information

**President George Bush**  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500  
202/456-1111 • fax 456-2461  
president@whitehouse.gov

**Secretary of Interior Gale Norton**  
1849 C Street  
Washington, DC 20240  
202/208-7351 • fax 452-5124  
gale\_norton@ios.doi.gov

**U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman**  
703 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
DC phone 202/224-5521 • fax 224-2852  
senator\_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov

625 Silver SW, Suite 130  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Abq. phone 505/346-6601 • fax 346-6780

**U.S. Senator Pete Domenici**  
328 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510-3010  
DC phone 202/224-6621 • fax 224-6621  
senator\_domenici@domenici.senate.gov

625 Silver SW, Suite 330  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Abq. phone 505/346-6791 • fax 346-6720

**U.S. Representative Tom Udall**  
502 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
DC phone 202/225-6190 • fax 226-1331  
www.house.gov/tomudall/

811 St. Michaels Drive, Suite 104  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
SFe phone 505/984-8950 • fax 986-5047

**U.S. Representative Heather Wilson**  
318 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
DC phone 202/225-6316 • fax 225-4975  
www.house.gov/wilson/

20 First Plaza NW, Suite 603  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Abq. phone 505/346-6781 • fax 346-6723

**U.S. Representative Steve Pearce**  
1408 Longworth  
Washington, DC 20515  
DC phone 202/225-2365 • fax 225-9599  
400 North Telshore, Suite E  
Las Cruces, NM 88011  
LC phone 505/522-2219 • fax 522-3099

**New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson**  
State Capitol, Room 400  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
505/827-3000

**New Mexico State Legislature**  
Legal Council Services  
505/986-4600

**New Mexico State Senators**  
Senate Chief Clerk's Office  
505/986-4714

**New Mexico State Representatives**  
House Chief Clerk's Office  
505/986-4751

## A Note From the Chair

It is indeed a great victory when what is generally considered a "conservative" Federal Court, the 10th Circuit in Denver, gives us a ruling that, yes indeed, the Endangered Species Act requires that the concerns of all species be considered when dealing with local issues. We take issue with our political leaders, who, except for Rep. Tom Udall, have jumped on the Rio Grande silvery minnow issue as merely an either/or contest between a stupid fish and our babies' survival.



This is the essence of the stewardship battle—do we learn, with all our God-given powers, to coexist and sustain the remaining creatures? Or do we play political brinkmanship with what has been endowed to us? Let's hope that Governor Richardson can find his way to a better political position—he could, after all, be using his considerable negotiation skills to protect our rivers, starting with the Rio Grande. We all depend on a long-term solution for the total ecosystem, of which we are a part, for the benefit of New Mexico and our children's children—our babies. Like the proverbial canary in the mineshaft, the wee silvery minnow is a symptom of a dying river that runs through the heart of New Mexico—and a symptom of our mismanagement.

This *Sierran* focuses on energy issues here in New Mexico, and on the importance of the state in the national and global context:

- because both Senators Bingaman and Domenici are ranking members of the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee;
- because the Southwest has the greatest potential in the world for solar energy development;
- and for many other reasons.

This *Sierran* is filled with contributions from dedicated New Mexicans who are advocating for

course-correction. They are holding open a door for us to participate in our biological communities, watersheds, ecosystems, and our biosphere in a way we can be proud of. Right now.

We laud the Administration's efforts to promote renewable energy (see cover stories), but we have little patience any more for "this transition will take a long time." We are wasting precious time. Managing for fossil fuels is managing for crisis. They are a finite resource—the more we consume, the harder we fall in the end. Period.

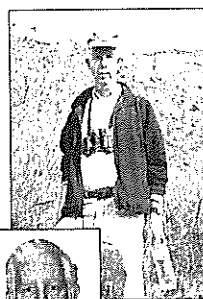
Crisis is bad for the Rio Grande. It's bad for Otero Mesa and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It's bad for air and human health.

Please, the time for action is quick at hand.

—Doug Fraser

## Blair Brown—Chapter Treasurer, Webmaster, Activist

Growing up in New Jersey, Blair Brown had plenty of opportunities to observe the impacts of industrial pollution. Later, when he and his daughter, Hilarie, came west to explore the wonders of National Parks, they also observed the big dams, clear-cut forests, and humongous mine pits. In the late '70s, they visited Glen Canyon Dam as Lake Powell drowned the canyon—it was increasingly clear: something was wrong with this picture.



In 1987, Blair and his partner, Susan Gorman, walked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. That walk—an almost religious experience of entering the Earth's past—changed both of their lives. At the same time, they witnessed the haze from power plants that obscures the Canyon vistas, and realized that even remote and special places are impacted by pollution.

So Blair and Susan joined the Sierra Club and, after moving to Albuquerque in 1991, attended a general meeting of the Albuquerque Group (now the Central Group)—and were hooked immediately! Blair's first reaction was to take on every environmental threat, but there was way too much. He recalls, "I decided that, by focusing on the 'nuts and bolts' stuff that keeps the

Club up and running, I could make it possible for other activists to focus on their work."

Blair became Chapter treasurer in 1994, and under his careful management and with some good fortune, the once slim financial resources have grown nicely. "Now," he says, "the challenge is to invest these funds in activist development and campaigns so that our actions get results—special places are saved and pollution is prevented."

Blair has also applied his computer skills. In the early '90s, when only a few folks had internet access yet, he and Bruce Batson created the Chapter's original web site and its first e-mail listserve. Blair still administers the web site and six listserves for us, and he plays an active leadership role on both the Central Group and Chapter Executive Committees.

Blair has now joined Susan in their Project Management and Electronic Publishing company. Their big project is the Children's Water Festival (see *Sierran* March/April and May/June 2003). Blair continues to study the complex challenges of urban sprawl, and the associated issues of allocating limited water and finding alternatives to more and wider roads. He plans to be active for many years to come!

—Susan Gorman

## Tell Our Senators to Vote "No!" on the Energy Policy Act of 2003

**T**he Energy Policy Act of 2003 threatens the environment and takes us backward by entrenching our dependence on polluting sources of energy.

This bill fails on all counts—from opening up our coasts and special places to oil development, to removing key consumer protections in electricity markets, to funneling billions of dollars to polluting industries.

Instead of an energy bill that takes us backward, the country needs an energy policy that:

- cuts our dependence on oil;
- increases our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power; and
- protects our special wilderness places from drilling.

The current bill is even worse than last year's energy bill and should not be passed. We call on the Senate to reject this irresponsible and environmentally destructive legislation.

### The Energy Policy Act of 2003 Takes Us Backward

**Threatens our coasts and other public lands**—The bill allows new oil exploration all along the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) using invasive technologies that will damage sea life and ocean habitat in environmentally sensitive areas. In addition, the bill would open our public lands to further destructive drilling and mining operations. These provisions threaten some of America's most unique wilderness areas, and critical fish and wildlife habitats that provide the headwaters for most of the drinking water in the West.

**Puts consumers at risk from electricity market manipulation**—The bill repeals the nation's oldest law that protects electricity consumers—the Public Utilities Holding Company Act (PUHCA). This would allow power companies to set up multiple subsidiaries and blur their financial reports, opening the door to the type of market manipulation that was seen during the California energy crisis.

**Funnel billions of dollars to polluting industries**—The bill provides close to \$10.7 billion in tax breaks to polluters, including a first-ever tax break for burning coal. In addition, the bill provides tens of billions of dollars in loan guarantees to build new nuclear plants and indefinitely exempts the nuclear industry from liability. The bill also allows the oil and gas industry to stop or reduce royalty payments to the government and states, at a time when the latter are in a fiscal crisis.

**Undermines property rights**—Undermines the property rights of farmers and ranchers by providing incentives for destructive coalbed methane

drilling that ignores the rights of surface property owners. This practice threatens thousands of acres of sensitive lands in the West and its scarce water resources.

**Removes environmental protections for Native American lands**—The bill removes Native American lands from the protections of the nation's hallmark environmental law, the Nation Environmental Protection Act, opening them up to destructive mining and drilling projects.

**Does nothing to cut the nation's dangerous dependence on oil**—The country's dependence on oil threatens our national security and our environment. There are many opportunities to cut our oil consumption economy-wide, particularly from the biggest consumers—our cars and trucks. Making new cars and trucks go further on a gallon of gas is the biggest single step we can take to curbing our dependence on oil.

**Does nothing to increase our use of clean, renewable energy**—The bill fails to include a Renewable Energy Standard (RES) that would ensure that more of our electricity comes from clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Encouraging the use of clean, renewable energy would reduce air pollution and global warming emissions that threaten public health.

For more information, contact Mary Wiper in Albuquerque (243-7767, [mary.wiper@sierraclub.org](mailto:mary.wiper@sierraclub.org)), or see the Energy pages on the Sierra Club web site ([www.sierraclub.org/energy/](http://www.sierraclub.org/energy/)).

—Mary Wiper  
Sierra Club Associate Representative

### Take Action!

**B**oth Senator Domenici (R-NM) and Bingaman (D-NM) are ranking members of the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Their leadership, wise or otherwise, will guide energy policy nationwide.

Please contact them today:

- Urge them not to support the Energy Policy Act of 2003.
- Affirm that New Mexicans and all Americans deserve a safe, clean, and affordable energy future. The technologies exist to get us there. By increasing our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power, New Mexico and the United States can cut our dependence on oil and protect our natural treasures from drilling.

Senator Pete Domenici

Senator Jeff Bingaman

(see contact information, page 3)

### Richardson Admin. on Energy (cont. from page 1)

choose "green energy" as your power source.

Getting to the 10% goal, however, will require many more projects to be constructed, wind and otherwise, within the next seven years. In fact, one of the Governor's goals is to place the state in the top three of wind producing states.

While wind energy is becoming, on its own, cost-competitive with fossil-fuel based electricity, New Mexico has established innovative tax incentives to help further stimulate renewable power development. A New Mexico "production tax credit" (PTC) offers a one-cent-per-kilowatt-hour (\$.01/kw hour) tax break for electricity produced from renewables. This past legislative session, the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) and Economic Development Department worked jointly to expand the PTC to include biomass projects and increase the total amount of funds dedicated to the tax credit from \$8 million to \$20 million per year. New Mexico is one of only two states to have enacted a PTC. Adding biomass to the law was significant. Biomass includes any organic material, but the emphasis here is on utilizing forest material not large enough to be commercially viable (see article page 7) and dairy wastes. With appropriate air-quality and environmental controls, electricity production from biomass offers the opportunity to utilize material previously treated as "waste" and to stimulate rural economic development. It's impossible to develop a viable wind project if you don't know where the wind blows! EMNRD recently completed a detailed "investment grade" wind map for the state. The majority of the "good wind" is on the eastern plains, but even then, it's fairly site specific. The presence and frequency of consistently strong winds can vary dramatically, in short distances, with topography. This new map will assist wind developers with identifying favorable project sites, and,

(continued on page 23)

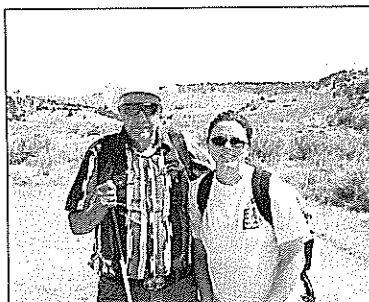
### Mary Wiper Is the Club's New Organizer On Energy

**M**ary Wiper is the Sierra Club's new associate representative in the Albuquerque office. She has been hired because the national Sierra Club organization and other environmental groups recognize the strategic importance of New Mexico at this time in the national energy policy debate—in part because both of New Mexico's senators hold leadership positions in the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Mary is dedicated to shaping a sound, sustainable national energy policy, and to educating the public about oil and gas development on New Mexico's public lands.

Although new to New Mexico, Mary is not new to the Sierra Club and she is not new to energy issues. She worked for the Club for three and half years in Montana on a variety of issues, including:

- protecting Weatherman Draw, a sacred site for Northern Plains Indian Tribes, from oil development;
- opposing development of coal-bed methane in Montana's Powder River Basin;
- addressing impacts on water, wildlife, and wildlands; and
- organizing voter education on environmental issues in a Senate race.

Mary is originally from a small North Dakota farming community and went to college at University of North Dakota. She began her work with Sierra Club in South Dakota's Badlands National Park, educating tourists about the need for protective management for our National Grasslands. "I'm happy to be in New Mexico," she says, "working with Rio Grande Chapter members to protect New Mexico's environment. Please feel free to call me (see Masthead, page 2) with questions about the Energy bill, energy development in New Mexico, and the Sierra Club."



Mary Wiper, then conservation organizer for the Montana Chapter, and historian, friend and ally Howard Boggs of the Crow Tribe visited Weatherman Draw after a successful campaign to save the site from oil drilling (photo by A. Lamonaca; reprinted from *The Planet*, the Club's activist newsletter—[www.sierraclub.org/planet/](http://www.sierraclub.org/planet/)).

## Chapter Urges Domenici to Change His Course on 2003 Energy Policy Act

Dear Senator Domenici,

It is time for us to fulfill the promise of the 21st Century and develop new, clean, technologically advanced energy sources based on wind, solar, geothermal, hydrogen, and other clean energies. The current energy bill is stuck in the 20th Century in its reliance on the old and outdated industries that have been polluting this country for decades, and we are opposed to the bill in its current form.

We believe that the energy bill should be amended to:

1. **Raise fuel economy standards for new cars and trucks to at least 43 mpg**—Increased energy efficiency in cars, as well as buildings, is good for our economy, especially in New Mexico, where people must often drive long distances to attend to their needs and business.
2. **Produce at least 20% of our electricity from clean, renewable energy sources like wind by the year 2020**—New Mexico has vast wind resources, and a national Renewable Energy Standard would be a boon to New Mexico farmers harvesting our plentiful wind. Additionally, the development of wind power will improve national security by reducing our dependence on foreign energy, and it will benefit consumers by increasing energy supplies and keeping natural gas prices from spiking. Increasing renewable energy use to just 10% by 2020 can reduce both gas and electricity prices, according to an EIA analysis of a renewable energy scenario for former Senator Frank Murkowski last year.
3. **Disallow any subsidy to nuclear power**—We strongly oppose the construction of any new nuclear power plants. It is expensive, and no safe method to dispose of the nuclear fuel rods and contaminated items has yet been devised. We also believe that producing hydrogen from nuclear power is a travesty.

The bill should also protect areas like Otero Mesa from oil and gas development. There is no need to increase New Mexico's production of oil and gas from sensitive ecological areas, nor from established well fields. After considering damage to the land, as well as to the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels, there is just no net long-term benefit to New Mexicans from the exploitation of fragile lands.

Moreover, the revenues from our oil and gas will continue to benefit the State's Severance Funds, and we feel it is expedient to increase the lifetime of these existing fields, rather than building up in a boom of development, only to bring the bust times sooner. New Mexico's Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department has reported annually for several years that the projected natural gas supplies will only last about 10 more years at current rates of extraction. This fact also points to our need for development of other energy resources, such as wind and solar.

Finally, we want to convey to you our support for hydrogen energy development in New Mexico, ultimately to be derived from renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. New Mexico's recently formed Hydrogen Business Council and HyTER, the Hydrogen Technology Partnership, involving the state of New Mexico, Los Alamos and Sandia National laboratories, and many other organizations, affirm that there are untapped technical resources in New Mexico that can be developed to create new jobs and businesses based on this clean energy source.

Let's keep New Mexico in the forefront of energy production nationwide by passing a progressive energy bill—one that moves us toward a future where New Mexico's inexhaustible wind and solar resources, along with its high-technology expertise, can help power the nation with clean energy.

Sincerely,  
Doug Fraser, Chair  
Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club

## Tom Udall Stands Up for Protecting Ojito Country from Oil & Gas

In a mid-June 2003 visit to Zia Pueblo and the Ojito country, Congressman Tom Udall pledged to work with Zia and the conservation community to advance the Ojito/Zia Conservation Proposal. "We are out here to visit the Ojito area... I realize how important this is to you, and we will work with your leaders to get something through Congress," said Udall.

This unique legislative proposal would protect the Ojito Wilderness Study Area as fully protected federal wilderness and would transfer management of some adjacent, culturally rich lands to the Pueblo. Approximately 12,000 acres would become the Ojito Wilderness to be managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) along with the adjacent Area of Critical Environmental Concern. About 13,000 acres of adjacent land containing important Zia religious and archeological sites would be managed as open space by the Zia tribe. All lands involved in

the proposal will remain open to the public for recreational use and scientific research, but will be protected from off-road-vehicle abuse, mining, new roads, and development. Zia would also agree to a limited waiver of sovereign immunity so that conservation and public access provisions for the transferred lands could be enforced in federal court. The Wilderness Area and the lands proposed for transfer will enjoy far higher protection than they receive under current BLM management.

The proposal has the backing of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness, the New Mexico Audubon Council, as well as public officials including Governor Bill Richardson, the Sandoval County Commission, local State Representative James Roger Madalena, Representative Tom Swistack of Rio Rancho, the Bernalillo County Commission, the Albuquerque City Council and

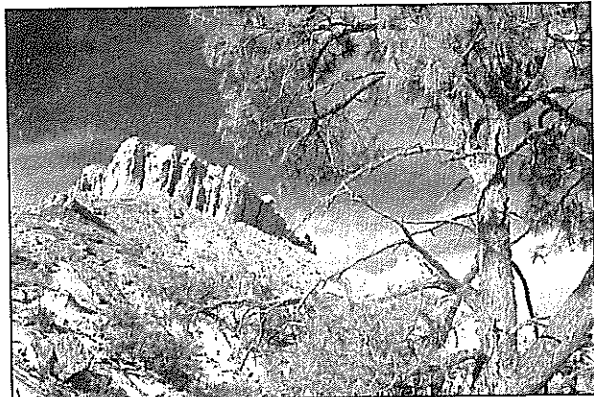
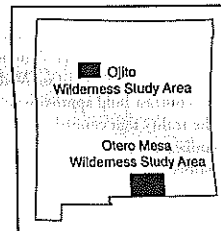
former Governor Bruce King. While BLM currently opposes an outright transfer of land to the Pueblo, Congressman Udall remains optimistic that their concerns can be addressed. "I think several hearings are necessary, and I really think we can come up with an agreement that will benefit everyone," he said.

Congressman Udall's pledge to become personally involved in seeking a solution that will protect these wild lands is a very positive development. This is the first wilderness

proposal in more than 15 years to enjoy such broad public support. We still have a long way to go, however, before the Ojito country is permanently protected. Your help is needed for this progress to continue.

For more information, contact Chapter Wilderness Chair Martin Heinrich in Albuquerque (232-7151; mtheinrich@aol.com).

—Martin Heinrich



(photo by Martin Heinrich)

### Take Action!

Call Congressman Tom Udall in Santa Fe or Washington, DC to thank him for his leadership in working to protect the Ojito country.

Please also write to Senators Bingaman and Domenici. Ask them to introduce legislation that will:

- grant Wilderness designation to Ojito, and
- transfer the surrounding buffer lands to Zia Pueblo to be managed in perpetuity as Open Space with permanent public access.

We encourage you to add your own thoughts.

Representative Tom Udall  
Senator Pete Domenici  
Senator Jeff Bingaman  
(see contact info, page 3)

## Op-Ed: 2003 Senate Energy Policy Bill Is Bad for All But Utilities

As New Mexico consumers struggle through tough economic times, the U.S. Senate Energy Committee has developed a disaster of a national energy bill. The bill is loaded with provisions written by and for the utility, nuclear, coal, and oil industries that threaten our pocketbooks, public health, national security, and environment.

Electric utilities are already passing the costs of their investments on to consumers through higher electricity prices. Yet this bill rolls back one of the only electricity-consumer protections currently on the books, opening the door to more Enron-type abuses and California-style electricity disasters.

Properly implemented, the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 (PUHCA) would require simplified corporate structures and easily monitored accounting practices. Instead, the Senate energy bill repeals PUHCA. This clears the way for more power companies to set up complicated systems of subsidiaries to blur their financial pictures and manipulate electricity markets as Enron did. Thus, if the Senate energy bill becomes law, consumers around the country will be at the mercy of large power companies and could see their electric bills skyrocket.

At a time when our government is cutting back on important programs because of increasing budget pressures, the Senate energy bill lets the oil, coal, and nuclear industries off the hook for more than \$10 billion in federal taxes.

These companies already don't pay their fair share of taxes. In fact, a Treasury official testified in 1999 that 75% of U.S. oil companies pay no corporate income tax whatsoever.

**"On top of its tax breaks,  
this bill allows oil and gas companies to reduce or stop paying royalties  
for oil and gas that is drilled on public lands.**

**New Mexico cannot afford to lose  
any part of the \$193 million in royalties collected last year."**

On top of its tax breaks, this bill allows oil and gas companies to reduce or stop paying royalties for oil and gas that is drilled on public lands. New Mexico cannot afford to lose any part of the \$193 million in royalties collected last year.

In an outrageous new money grab, the nuclear industry would hit up taxpayers twice for new reactors. Under the Senate energy bill's nuclear provisions, taxpayers would pay for up to half the cost of constructing new nuclear power plants, which could easily top \$30 billion. The Senate energy bill hits up taxpayers a second time by authorizing the federal government to enter into agreements to purchase power from the new reactors even if that power is more expensive than currently available sources.

If it weren't bad enough that the Senate energy bill rips off electricity consumers, state treasuries, and taxpayers, the bill is also bad for the environment, public health, and national security.

Provisions in the bill would increase global warming pollution, threaten coastal areas with oil and gas exploration, and undermine national security by increasing oil consumption and increasing the risk

of nuclear proliferation. For instance:

- Coal-burning power plants would have a financial incentive—a first-ever tax break—to burn more coal, thus increasing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Instead of requiring the auto industry to use existing technology to make cars and trucks go farther on a gallon of gasoline, the bill actually encourages the auto industry to build more gas-guzzlers, increasing oil consumption.
- The bill rolls back decades of U.S. nuclear non-proliferation policy by using taxpayer dollars to fund the use of weapons-grade plutonium as fuel in commercial nuclear reactors.

This bill is too expensive and too dangerous for our country.

—Jeanne Basset  
Executive Director

New Mexico Public Interest Research Group

*This Op-Ed first appeared in the Albuquerque Journal on 22 May 2003. For more information, contact Jeanne Basset at NMPIRG in Albuquerque (254-1244; [jw@www.nmpirg.org](http://www.nmpirg.org)).*

## Op-Ed: Energy for America, Jobs for New Mexico

Ever since the Bush Administration came into office, it has used the bully pulpit to try to persuade the American public that domestic energy production is the key to our national security and that America has the ability to drill its way to energy independence. What continues to be left out of this equation is that America possess only 3% of the world's reserves of oil. Middle-Eastern countries by contrast hold approximately 64%. Add to this the reality that countries such as China, Russia, and India are beginning their love affair with the automobile—and one thing becomes quickly apparent: competition for the world's remaining oil will only grow fiercer in the near future.

Let's be clear, oil is not the future. What makes sense for our country, and what would be a boost for New Mexico, is for the Administration to adopt a "Marshall Plan" for alternative energy production. Such a mobilization of science, the private sector, and government, much like we had with the space program, could create America's greatest capacity for national security—energy independence.

Currently, the Senate is locked in a bitter energy debate that again attempts to focus the nation on an old and tired theme—domestic oil and gas drilling. For New Mexico and much of the West, the stakes are high. The President enters the debate with near-record levels of popularity and seems poised to enter into a new battle—The War on the West. The question remains: "Does drilling our remaining wild public lands in the West make good sense for the long-term security of our nation?" The answer will always be, "No."

Several years ago, the Bush Administration, under the direction of Vice-President Cheney, met repeatedly with energy companies to craft an energy plan for America. Morally corrupt companies such as Enron focused the administration on plans designed to maximize profit with little thought to the social

and environmental costs that domestic drilling would have on the West. Here in New Mexico, one potential site is our wildest grassland—Otero Mesa. Located in the southern part of the state, Otero Mesa remains an area where wildlife, independent ranching, and wilderness thrive on a grand scale. The area is home to our state's healthiest and most genetically pure herd of pronghorn antelope, as well as independent cattle ranches that have used this area for grazing for generations. More than 500,000 acres of Wilderness-quality lands have been identified by citizen surveys, yet by summer's end, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will issue a *Final Environmental Impact Statement* that will likely open this area to full-scale oil and gas development. For ranchers and conservationists alike, development would transform this wild landscape into a series of roads, rigs, pipelines, power lines, toxic waste ponds, and heavy truck traffic. In the end, most of the gas produced will likely be transported to California.

This once quiet, biologically rich, and beautiful part of New Mexico will be reduced to an industrial wasteland, according to several reports by leading experts that conclude this area could never be properly restored. In return, America will remain no more independent from foreign sources of energy than they were prior to drilling, but New Mexicans will be stuck with potential water contamination and degraded air quality—and future generations will be left to ask why?

Last Summer, the President's Executive Order 13212 was sent to all BLM state directors dictating that all "decisions made by the BLM will take into consideration adverse impacts on the President's National Energy Policy." In other words, anything that BLM does that puts conservation above development will be frowned upon. Industry and elected officials that push such tired policies continue to speak of "environmentally sound development."

The question remains, "Where has this ever occurred?" Are there any examples in the sacred lands and contaminated water around Carlsbad and Artesia, or in the brown cloud above Farmington (see page 11)? Oil and gas development by its nature is a sloppy business, and the bottom line remains profit, not your health or that of the land.

Ironically, a recent survey by the Mellman Group, a Washington-based polling firm, found that voters overwhelmingly prefer to achieve energy security by focusing on increasing efficiency and developing alternative energy sources, rather than increasing the supply of oil—which should be good news for a state like New Mexico. Blessed with 300+ days of sun, good wind in the eastern part of the state, Sandia Lab, and the alternative energy program at New Mexico State University, such sentiment could translate into long-term economic development for our state, in other words—jobs.

The future of energy lies in alternatives, and New Mexico should make this our #1 priority. Drilling in our wildest lands is no solution, but using our minds and our research dollars to create alternatives that give our country true energy security is a dividend we can all live with.

We have reached a crucial crossroads, world events have left us all feeling vulnerable, yet destroying the natural beauty of America to enrich a few special interests will only leave ourselves and our landscape that much more fragmented. We must understand that part of what makes us uniquely American is protecting the mountains, rivers, grasslands, deserts, and mesas that are the fiber of our country. Pride in being American means protecting the very land we call home.

—Stephen Capra  
Director of Campaigns  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

*This Op-ed first appeared in the Albuquerque Tribune.*



# From Fossil Fuels to Real-time Fuels—The Biomass Transition

When the cold weather hits, we crank up the heat, which for most of us means turning on the gas. But what happens when that gas costs three times what it cost last winter? As individuals, we lower the thermostat, pay more to PNM or Ferrelgas each month, or cut some firewood and crank up the woodstove. But what about the hotels, schools, nursing homes, and all the other big users? To begin with, they can't just drop the thermostat way down, and they're also looking at monthly bills going up by \$10,000, not \$100.

We are facing this crisis now due to the fact of natural gas depletion—gas fields in the United States are past their peak production, and from now on, it's all shortages, volatility, and high prices. U.S. storage and production are at historic lows, never to recover. The East Coast last winter was weeks away from running out of pressure in the major pipelines. Add to that 200,000 megawatts of new gas-fired electric power plants to run air conditioners all summer (New Mexico has the capacity to generate 4,000 megawatts at any given time, statewide), and you begin to see the scope of the crisis.

But what if we could get our BTUs from another source—a renewable source, a local, cheaper, cleaner source—and simultaneously create a healthier forest ecosystem and record job growth in our cities and our rural communities? This is the promise that biomass offers.

Europeans have utilized forest thinnings for years as the fuel to run industrial boilers that provide hot-water heat to entire communities. A Santa Fe-based non profit group, Local Energy ([www.localenergy.org](http://www.localenergy.org)) has recently applied for a grant to finance the initial engineering study for a biomass-fired district heating grid for the city. This grid would derive much of its fuel from forest thinnings from the Santa Fe watershed; secondary fuel would come from piñon kill, construction waste, woodlot scraps, pallets, etc. Hot water would circulate through pipes, receiving temperature boosts from passive solar collectors along the way. Once the engineering is done in Santa Fe, this model can be exported to other communities with forest-thinning issues, high utility bills, unemployment, or all of the above.

For a number of reasons, our forests are choked with small-diameter trees, creating an intense fire hazard and a forest monoculture where a few species dominate and understory diversity is lost. Studies have shown a marked increase in snowpack reaching



(woodcut by Carolyn Kehula)

**"This will call for a combined effort on the part of environmentalists, local loggers, and forestry professionals."**

the forest floor in a well thinned forest, which greatly enhances aquifer recharge.

There are several key criteria for sustainable forest thinning in New Mexico:

- create a good market price for wood chips—somewhere from \$30-50/ton;
- optimize opportunities for local communities to participate in local forest management; and
- create a culture of sustainable logging through community involvement and ongoing training at a statewide level.

This will call for a combined effort on the part of environmentalists, local loggers, and forestry professionals: The sustainable forestry culture will arise from old community knowledge, the latest harvesting technologies, local non-corporate control, and

good feedback loops among all parties. Once the watersheds begin to be thinned in a sensitive manner, allowing a diverse understory to evolve, wildfire will again be seen as a vital part of forest regeneration. In the context of local economies, sustainable forestry practices go hand in hand with increased profitability and job security. They also create a robust urban/rural economy in which money stays and cycles within those economies, rather than fleeing to outside corporate shareholders.

I know that there are more questions than answers right now—especially within the environmental community. I am inviting that community, and all others, to bring your concerns and your vision to the table—to be part of renewing our capacity to be healthy, self-sustaining, accountable communities, and to design a future we'll be proud of. This will serve to strengthen old community bonds and create exciting new ones.

The challenges and the benefits of generating our own fuel are much like the challenges and benefits of growing our own food. It's like community-supported organic farming—only, you're investing in free-range energy cultivated from local renewable sources, by local, renewable providers. It's a worthy experiment. Please join us.

For more information, contact David Bacon at Local Energy in Santa Fe (474-0484; [debacon@cnsp.com](mailto:debacon@cnsp.com)).

—David Bacon  
Director and Co-founder, Local Energy

## Years of Peak & Mid Production of the Top 10 Countries

	Reserves at end 2001 (billions of barrels)	Peak Production	50% left
Saudi Arabia	261.8	2012	2020
Iraq	112.5	2018	2032
Kuwait	96.5	2013	2022
Iran	89.7	1974	2010
United Arab Emirates	97.8	2013	2031
Venezuela	77.8	1970	2003
Russian Federation	60.0	1987	1992
USA	30.4	1971	1971
Libya	29.5	1979	2007
Mexico	12.6	2003	2003

In order to significantly increase oil production, a country must possess both:

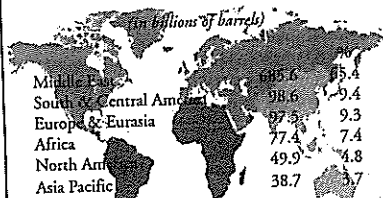
- large reserves, and
- more than 50% of its original endowment.

Only five countries still fit that profile, and they are all in the Middle East.

Production is falling in 50 countries today. As more countries experience declining rates of production, fewer countries remain to supply the world's need for fossil fuels. The economic, geopolitical, and environmental consequence of this imbalance are sobering.

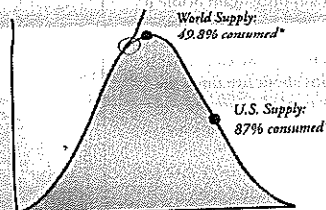
Source of data: BP Amoco; C.J. Campbell, Association for the Study of Peak Oil (ASPO)

## The World's Proved Oil Reserves\* at the end of 2002



Source: BP 2003 Statistical Review of World Energy

\* Generally, those quantities that geological and engineering information indicate with ≥90% certainty can be recovered in the future from known reservoirs under existing economic and operating conditions.



## The Oil Endgame

The area under the classic curve above represents the total supply of oil recoverable from any given area. The curve itself represents the rate at which the oil is pumped from the ground. The rate is slow in the beginning because infrastructure and efficient technologies must be developed, and it is slow at the end because only the most inaccessible (and therefore costly) oil remains.

Supplies are finite; hence, the area under the curve is finite. Experts agree that current world production is somewhere near the peak of the curve, where the rate of production must begin to decline. The shape of the right half of the curve may change slightly, depending upon how rapidly oil is produced from now on. If we place a priority on perpetuating a high rate of production now, we necessarily steepen the ultimate decline of production. On the other hand, slowing production—and consumption—would allow for a more gradual and diplomatic transition to another source of energy to support world economies.

For more information, see the Local Energy web site ([www.localenergy.org](http://www.localenergy.org)).

—Mark Sardella

\* Source of data: ASPO

# The Hydrogen Hallucination—There's No Free Lunch

It's being called the "freedom fuel," capable of releasing us at last from the grip of the oil barons. The "hydrogen economy" is even the buzz of the bestseller list. But don't break out the party balloons yet, because hydrogen hasn't a chance of solving our energy problems. A bold assertion, perhaps, but it is based on the simplest of facts: Hydrogen is not a source of energy.

It is true that hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe, but here on Earth, all hydrogen is combined with other elements. Our best example is water—two hydrogen atoms are bonded to an oxygen atom, forming the familiar molecule  $H_2O$ . Four hydrogen atoms bonded to a carbon atom make methane, which we know as "natural gas." But if what we need is pure hydrogen—the stuff to run fuel cells—we have to manufacture it. Doing so requires tearing hydrogen loose from whatever it's bonded to, which requires an input of energy. The energy we invest in breaking the bonds is essentially "stored" in the hydrogen, and we can get it back by allowing the hydrogen to bond to something again, as a fuel cell does. Hydrogen is simply a storage medium—we have to put energy in before we get any back. It could thus be considered a *carrier* of energy, by it is by no means a source of energy.

This notion of hydrogen as a storage device is vastly different from petroleum, which is clearly a source of energy. As with hydrogen, petroleum requires an energy investment before it is a usable fuel. We have to drill for it, then pump, transport, refine, and transport it again before it can be used as an automobile fuel. But in the case of petroleum, the fuel we end up with contains about five times the energy needed to produce it. That's why it's called a *source* of energy—the energy returned is greater than the energy invested.

The distinction between energy sources and carriers is significant because the decline of our major sources of energy has reached a critical point. The production of petroleum—our most important energy source and the provider of about 40% of the world's energy—is now falling in more than 50 countries. The falling production in these regions must be offset by increased production somewhere else, but as more and more regions head into decline, fewer and fewer places remain to pick up the slack. Significant increases in oil production require large oil reserves, but at this point, the Middle East is the only place that still possesses a reserve large enough to allow production increases on the scale needed to offset the collective decline of all other countries (see page 7). Rates of decline, meanwhile, are accelerating, and within the decade, even the Middle East will be unable to bridge the gap. At that point, oil production will peak, and from there it can only begin an irrevocable decline. Efforts by the petroleum geology community to nail down the exact date of peak are interesting academically, but the real trouble begins with the loss of oil stability, which is already happening. Price stability requires that excess production capacity be available, but excess capacity is down to around 2% of the market volume—far less than is needed. And with every developed nation's economic future reliant on Middle Eastern oil, geopolitical stability hangs in a delicate and unsustainable balance.

If world oil depletion isn't distressing enough, the heating fuel crisis in the United States poses an imminent economic threat. Natural-gas production from existing U.S. wells now falls at an alarming 29% per year—a rate too steep to overcome even with more than 900 drill rigs working full-time to bring new gas wells on line. The inability to increase production apace with demand is already destabilizing gas markets, as evidenced by the current price hikes and storage deficits. At winter's end, the United States had just nine days of gas remaining in storage overall, and the northeast region dipped to just three days of reserve. Propane and heating oil also finished the winter at near-record lows, and even the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA)—a group well known for emotionless reporting of dire news—termed the situation "precarious." In its characteristic matter-of-fact style, the EIA writes in its 16 April 2003 weekly report, "The prospect of rebuilding propane inventories to prior year levels appears to be in jeopardy." The EIA goes on to discuss the possibility of supply disruptions as if they were normal occurrences as opposed to early warnings of a structural failure of the industry.

If three different heating fuels all run short next

not a source, but that coupled with renewable sources, it's the perfect fuel. Unfortunately, that's just not the case. Hydrogen's low energy density makes it exceedingly inefficient to transport. To illustrate this, consider that a 40-ton tanker truck loaded with gasoline contains nearly 20 times the energy of a 40-ton truck loaded with compressed hydrogen. If both trucks deliver fuel to a filling station 800 miles away, the gasoline truck consumes about 3% of the energy in its payload to make the roundtrip. But the hydrogen truck traveling the same route would consume all of the energy in its payload. Put another way, if you tried to run the hydrogen delivery truck on hydrogen, it would consume its entire payload making the trip, and have no fuel to deliver.<sup>1</sup>

If it's not a source and it's a lousy carrier, why does hydrogen get so much attention? Are the 985 U.S. organizations that are listed as fuel-cell developers, researchers, distributors, consultants, suppliers, associations, government agencies, and laboratories (including our own Los Alamos National Labs) really on to something, or are they simply riding a tidal wave of government hype and subsidies? Are the coal and nuclear industries pushing hydrogen in hopes that they will get to provide the necessary energy to

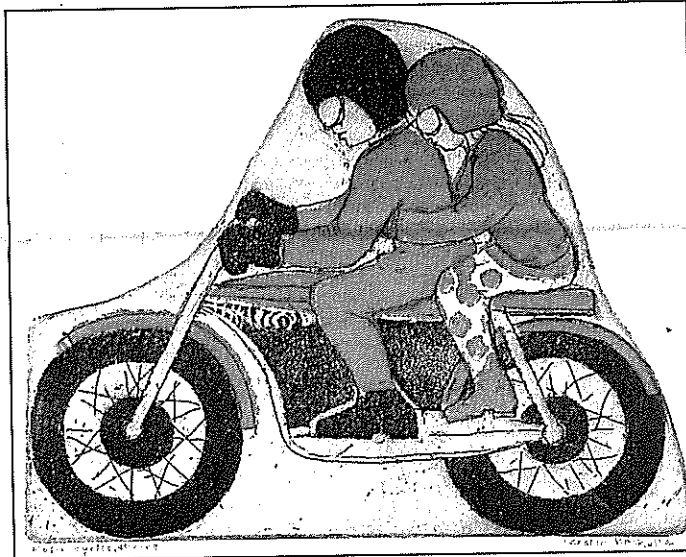
produce it? Once again the answers may be academic. It doesn't matter why we are fixated on an energy carrier while charging headlong into a source crisis. We must simply acknowledge the oversight and move on.

Imagining that the simplest element in the universe held the key to solving our energy problems was exciting, but now it's time to awaken from our hydrogen hallucination and devote attention to the real solutions of improved efficiencies and sustainable sources.

For more information, contact Mark Sardella at Local Energy in Santa Fe (820-2312; [msardella@localenergy.org](mailto:msardella@localenergy.org); [www.localenergy.org](http://www.localenergy.org)).

—Mark Sardella

Mark Sardella is a professional engineer and co-founder of Local Energy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping communities regain energy self-reliance.



(art by Carolyn Kesulla)

winter, what market dynamics are likely to ensue? When oil and gas prices skyrocket, what's the alternative? Hydrogen? I think not. You might as well suggest that we heat our homes and power our cars with batteries and flywheels. We'll need energy sources, not carriers.

Some enthusiasts acknowledge that hydrogen is

## References

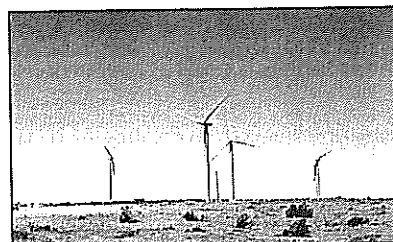
1. Ulf Bossel, Baldur Eliaison, and Gordon Taylor. 15 April 2003. *Final Report: "The Future of the Hydrogen Economy: Bright or Bleak?"* ([www.efcf.com/reports/](http://www.efcf.com/reports/)).

## State Land Office & the NM Wind Center (continued from page 1)

renewable energy and the related technologies into the lives of every New Mexican. We have the capacity to provide our neighbors a never-ending supply of energy generated from wind, sun and organic biomass. The economic and environmental viability of our world depends upon this.

For more information, please contact the Commissioner's office in Santa Fe (827-5760).

—Patrick H. Lyons  
Commissioner of Public Lands





# America's Original Auto Fuel Can't Be Kept Secret Any Longer

In the beginning, cars and trucks did just fine without petroleum fuels. Henry Ford designed a car in 1880 to run solely on an alcohol fuel called ethanol. His first mass-produced car—the Model T—could operate on either ethanol or gasoline. In the 1890s, Rudolf Diesel, the inventor of the more efficient diesel engine, wanted to empower farmers by affording them a non-petroleum option, so he built his engine to run on hemp and peanut oil.

"Biofuels" have been available, and we've been using them, for years. Instead of burning in a couple of hundred years fossil fuels that took 100 million years to create, we can make our transportation fuels from today's solar inputs and what we might ordinarily consider "waste products." Biofuel production:

- occurs domestically,
- supports rural American communities, and
- recycles materials we usually pay to get rid of.

Furthermore, production and combustion of biofuels results in a dramatic reduction in environmental damage, pollution, and related health impacts.

Biofuels are stored solar energy derived from plant and animal matter. The two most commonly in use today are ethanol and biodiesel.

Unlike humans, gasoline engines run very well on alcohol. Ethanol has a long and proven track record as an automobile fuel. It blends nicely with gasoline, and its high octane rating helps the fuel to burn cleaner. Americans have driven more than two trillion miles on ethanol-blended fuels since 1979, and ethanol-gasoline blends were about 9% of total gasoline sales in the United States last year.

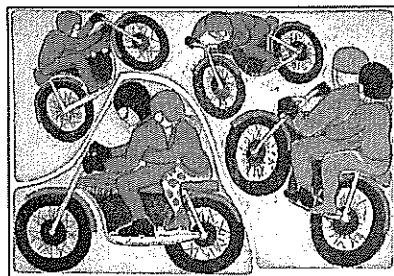
All American and foreign car manufacturers warranty the use of properly blended ethanol-gasoline fuels for all automobiles in North America. GM has approved ethanol use in its vehicles since 1990, Chrysler since 1991, and Ford since 1993.

Brazil is the world's largest user of ethanol as an automobile fuel; 15% of its cars run on pure ethanol (E100), all the rest use 20% ethanol (E20). Brazil chose to commit to ethanol because:

- it has a great ethanol source—sugar cane, and
- it wanted to reduce its dependency on foreign oil. (Is there a message for us here?)

Any gasoline vehicle in the United States can use a mixture of 10% ethanol/90% gasoline (E10) right now, but we can do much better. Nearly three million cars on U.S. roads today are capable of refueling with a blend of 85% ethanol/15% gasoline (E85). Chrysler, Dodge, Ford, GM, Isuzu, and Mazda make 18 different models of cars, trucks, and SUVs that can use any combination of gasoline and ethanol up to E85. Such vehicles are called "dual fuel" or "flexible fuel" vehicles (FFV), and they cost no more than regular models! Check your own fuel-tank door to see if you can use an ethanol-rich blend; you may actually be driving an FFV and not know it.

For a complete listing of FFVs and refueling stations in the United States, see the National Ethanol Coalition web site ([www.e85fuel.com](http://www.e85fuel.com)).



Ethanol can be made from almost any agriculture product from which starch is derived (e.g., sugar cane, soy, sorghum, wheat, cheese by-products, corn, Milo). The vast majority of domestic ethanol is made from corn—indeed, the income of many hundreds of mid-western American farmers comes from corn-to-ethanol production. A production facility here in Portales, New Mexico makes 15 million gallons of ethanol per year from Milo. Ethanol also can also be made from wood chips, sawdust, recycled cardboard, and small-diameter forest thinnings removed as a fire-reduction strategy.

**"All American and foreign car manufacturers warranty the use of properly blended ethanol-gasoline fuels for all automobiles in North America."**

Ethanol is non-toxic, water soluble, biodegradable and renewable. It is also nearly carbon neutral—that is, the carbon released from ethanol combustion is recaptured when new plants are grown to reproduce more ethanol. (Only the fossil fuel that's used in the production process is not recaptured.) Combustion of fossil fuels, on the other hand, creates a big loop-hole in the natural carbon cycle by releasing carbon that nature locked away eons ago without providing a way to reabsorb the newly-released carbon. Thus, the use of carbon-neutral ethanol slows the pace of global warming. Furthermore, E85 emits 50% less harmful exhaust than gasoline.

A number of federal and private studies conclude that corn-to-ethanol production stores 38% more energy than it uses. Gasoline, on the other hand, can be a net energy loser, up to 26% net energy loss, according to USDA research. Also, 18 gallons of water are used to refine one gallon of gasoline; water used in ethanol production depends on process used, ranging from zero to the gasoline equivalent.

Because a gallon of ethanol contains only 70% as much energy as a gallon of gasoline, the range of a FFV may be reduced by 15%-30%. A vehicle will, however, perform better on ethanol than on gasoline (E85 has an octane rating of 106-110).

E85 prices are competitive with regular-grade gasoline. It's true that ethanol benefits from large government subsidies in the form of tax credits, and U.S. car companies use FFV quotas to enable them to produce greater numbers of SUVs. But international oil companies also benefit from massive government subsidies, not to mention defense spending, while endangering public health, the environment, and the future of democracy.

The other common biofuel is biodiesel. Any diesel vehicle can use a blend of 20% biodiesel/80% petroleum diesel (B20) without modification. Post-1994 diesels can use higher blends (up to B100) in warm weather, or with a fuel-heating system.

Biodiesel is made from a wide variety of plant oils, animal fats, and used cooking oils. In New Mexico, peanuts, pecans, Jojoba beans, castor beans, and mustard seed could be grown for biodiesel production. And diesel drivers may soon find themselves cruising on last week's taco or French fry oil.

Biodiesel is more efficient to produce than ethanol; soy-based biodiesel has a positive energy balance of 3:1—that is, its combustion provides three times as much energy as is required to convert it to fuel in the first place.

The performance of biodiesel is similar to that of petroleum diesel. Biodiesel blends are competitive with other alternative fuels on a life-cycle basis, in part because they can extend engine life. When using 100% biodiesel (B100), carcinogenic air toxins are

reduced by 75-90%, particulate matter by 84%, and carbon dioxide by 78% as compared to standard diesel fuel. Biodiesel is also sulfur-free, eliminating the need for expensive exhaust catalysts. Biodiesel is the only alternative fuel to have passed the rigorous health-effects testing of the Clean Air Act. All fleets and buses could run on biodiesel, as health studies have shown that children and drivers riding in school buses, and commuters on diesel buses, are subjected daily to dangerous levels of respiratory toxins.

Like ethanol, biodiesel is available in a variety of blends, B20 (20% bio-diesel) being the most common. It is generally priced about 10-20 cents more per gallon than regular diesel.

An active "biofuels movement" is flourishing in the United States, and each month, more facilities are being added. About 250 E85 locations exist nationwide, most in the Midwest. Colorado has nine E85 stations, but bio-diesel refueling locations are almost nonexistent in the Southwest. Albuquerque has two E85 and biodiesel refueling locations:

- a public station at First and Mountain, near the Convention Center; and
- a non-public station at Sandia National Laboratory.

Renewable Energy Partners of New Mexico (REP), a non-profit organization:

- will open the first E85 fuel pump in Santa Fe at the new Horseman's Haven (4354 Cerrillos Road, between Via Linda Mall and Santa Fe Auto Park), in mid July;
- is planning to install a second E85 fuel pump and a biodiesel facility near downtown Santa Fe later this summer;
- is planning to install a biodiesel facility in Santa Fe this summer; and
- has assisted Los Alamos National Lab and Bandelier National Monument to install E85 and biodiesel fueling facilities.

For more information on biofuels emissions, station locations, and biofuels-ready vehicles, see the REP web site ([www.renewableenergypartners.org](http://www.renewableenergypartners.org)).

New Mexico's Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department would like to see biodiesel and ethanol refueling stations in at least five locations around the state within the year. The department has helped various non-profit groups secure grants to purchase tanks, dispensers, and other equipment. Individuals in Taos and Abiquiu are acquiring bulk-storage biodiesel tanks. The biofuels infrastructure could expand rapidly, if petroleum retailers would dedicate an existing tank or install new tanks for biofuels.

That's about consumption—but New Mexico could easily assume a leadership position as a biofuels producer. We have abundant municipal solid waste, manure, animal renderings, used vegetable oil from restaurants, forest-waste materials, and crops that could be used to make ethanol and biodiesel available at costs highly competitive with today's petroleum fuels.

We must strongly oppose additional oil and gas drilling, and lobby for increased fuel-efficiency standards. But we must also propose a practical, affordable alternative to continued use of fossil fuels for transportation purposes. Biofuels offer us an immediate alternative with considerable environmental, economic, and health benefits.

For more information, contact Charles Bensinger, at Renewable Energy Partners (989-4750; [newworld@timewindow.com](mailto:newworld@timewindow.com); [www.renewableenergypartners.org](http://www.renewableenergypartners.org)).

—Charles Bensinger  
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## Surface Vs. Subsurface Rights—The West's Emerging Conflict

Conflicts over resources have always plagued the West. White settlers fought Native Americans for the land and its treasures, cattlemen fought homesteaders for water and grass, cities fought agricultural users for water. We still live with the traces of those conflicts. And now, as the West becomes more urbanized, landowners are fighting gas and oil companies over whose rights to the same land are dominant.

People from areas outside of the West usually don't know that mineral rights—what's beneath the surface—can be severed from surface rights and sold or leased as separate property. For years, case law and statutes established the predominance of the mineral estate over the surface estate—in other words, the mineral owner's subsurface rights trump those of the surface owner. A gas developer who leases the subsurface rights to your land (the mineral lessee) has the right to enter your property and drill a gas well to profit from his property right.

Until recently, this division of rights didn't cause much hardship, and western courts applied the "accommodation rule" to mollify surface owners—under which, the mineral developer must do the least damage possible to the surface owner. But the situation has changed:

- as population has increased in the West, especially in areas such as the San Juan Basin (where New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona come together);
- as incentives to develop coal-bed methane have increased; and
- as natural gas sources and supplies and have dwindled.

As older fields decline, more effort is required to recover the resource. More wells are drilled, and more compressors are needed to lift the gas—which results in more noise, more pipelines, more traffic,

and more disruption. Meanwhile, more people are occupying areas where gas wells are proliferating, creating a classic western conflict among resource users. Ranchers watch access roads, pipeline corridors, and well pads damage their soils, carve away at their grass, spread noxious weeds, and increase erosion. They see cows and wildlife die from drinking out of unfenced well pits or from ethylene glycol spills on the well pads. Urban homesteaders, who built their dream home on 20 acres in the San Juan Basin, may end up sharing their plot with a gas well or 1,000-horsepower compressor. In La Plata County, Colorado (including the Durango area), a county-funded study found that homeowners can expect to get 22% less for their property if it has a gas well on it.

Gas companies usually try to obtain a surface-use agreement with the land owner, but they are not required to do so. State oil and gas boards often suggest that companies make a good faith effort to reach an agreement with land owners. If no agreement is reached, however, the company can post a minimal bond and proceed with the well. This imbalance among property rights leaves the surface owner in a weak bargaining position.

In December 2002, New Mexico ranchers in the Aztec and Blanco areas, caused an earthquake across the West when they locked gates on their private lands to restrict access by the gas companies. Industry officials accused them of "grandstanding" and exaggerating the problems, but the ranchers were just asserting their rights. They were balancing the scale, shaking up the *status quo* in the gas patch, insisting that the companies to strike a fair agreement. As Blanco rancher Chris Velasquez puts it, "After we locked the gates, it kind of clipped their wings. They were really going wild before that."

But the conflicts are bound to increase, as the Bush Administration pushes for more gas drilling in the



(photo by Marty Peale)

West and shows no interest in protecting the rights of surface owners.

For more information, contact Alan Rolston at the Southwest Citizens Alliance in Durango, CO (505/360-8994; arolston@frontier.net).

—Alan Rolston

## Lawsuit Against San Juan Power Plant Alleges 60,000 Air-quality Violations

In May 2002, Sierra Club and The Grand Canyon Trust filed a lawsuit against New Mexico's principal utility, PNM, alleging violations of the Clean Air Act at the San Juan power plant (San Juan) in northwest New Mexico. Air pollution from San Juan, a 1,600 megawatt coal-fired power plant that does not employ up-to-date pollution control equipment, regularly sullies the skies of the Four Corners region. San Juan supplies power principally to New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and southern California.

San Juan pumps thousands of tons of pollution into the air every year.

- In 2001, San Juan emitted into the air of the Four Corners area 28,414 tons of nitrogen oxides—roughly equivalent to the annual nitrogen oxide emissions from 1,386,049 passenger cars—and 21,320 tons of sulfur dioxide. These two pollutants and other particulate matter:
  - can all cause adverse health and environmental impacts, and
  - can react with other chemicals to form visibility-impairing nitric acid and sulfate particles.

According to a January 2002 report from the State of Colorado, sulfate is the largest contributor to visibility impairment at Mesa Verde National Park, in the Four Corners region in southwestern Colorado.

- San Juan discharges more than 1,000 pounds of mercury into the air of the Four Corners every year.

- Meanwhile, the Colorado Division of Wildlife has issued mercury-contamination fishing advisories for both the McPhee and Narraguinep reservoirs in southeast Colorado, near the Four Corners area. San Juan is a suspected source of mercury in these reservoirs.
- The State of New Mexico has also issued fish-consumption advisories for the waters near the San Juan power plant, including:
  - the San Juan River,
  - the Lake Farmington Reservoir, and
  - the Navajo Reservoir.

The Sierra Club case alleges that:

- PNM has violated its opacity (plume density) limit more than 60,000 times at San Juan; and
- PNM is operating San Juan Units 3 and 4 without a required "prevention of significant deterioration" (PSD) permit.

In May of this year, the Court granted Sierra Club standing to bring its action against PNM, based on the compelling testimony of Sierra Club members in the area who have been injured by the excessive emissions of air pollution from San Juan.

The case is scheduled for trial on 4 August 2003, although PNM has filed a motion asking it be moved to September to accommodate the birthday party of one of its many lawyers.

For more information, contact Susan Martin in Santa Fe (988-5206; smartin31@worldnet.att.net), or Mary Wiper in Albuquerque (243-776; mary.wiper@sierraclub.org).

—Marty Peale

## Oil & Gas Accountability Project Opens Its Doors in NM

The Oil & Gas Accountability Project (OGAP) officially opened its doors in New Mexico in early 2003 with a field office in Taos. Headquartered out of Durango, Colorado, OGAP works with communities across the country to reduce and prevent the social, economic, and environmental problems caused by oil and gas development.

In January 2003, OGAP convened its first New Mexico Oil and Gas Network meeting, gathering more than 25 activists from across the state to discuss oil and gas problems and find grassroots solutions! The Network focuses on public health, public land, and private property issues at state and local levels.

OGAP is also working with groups in Washington, DC and across the country to affect national energy policy, and to create a national network of citizens committed to oil and gas policy reform.

For more information, contact OGAP Director Jennifer Goldman in Taos (776-3276; jennifergoldman@ogap.org), or see the web site (www.OGAP.org).

—Jennifer Goldman

## San Juan County Nearly Failing Air-quality Standards for Ozone

At a public meeting in Farmington, New Mexico in April 2002, the New Mexico Environment Department's Air Quality Bureau staff advised San Juan County residents that the area is near "nonattainment" status for ozone.\* The county assessment was based on ozone monitoring results from San Juan Basin monitoring stations located near Kirtland and in Bloomfield. The ozone concentrations found in San Juan County were described as being among the highest in the state and higher than the concentrations found in Albuquerque during the summer months, refuting the widespread belief that ozone is a problem limited to highly populated urban areas.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ozone is a gas that is usually not emitted directly into the air; rather, it forms as a result of a chemical reaction between nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight and heat. The NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs are termed the "precursors" of ozone. Ozone levels typically rise between May and October when there is more sun and higher temperatures. Stagnant atmospheric conditions appear to contribute to higher levels of ozone. The EPA states that ozone is the main component of smog.

It is important to distinguish between "good" and "bad" ozone. Both "good" and "bad" ozone occur in the earth's atmosphere, and they have the same chemical structure. "Good" ozone occurs in the upper atmosphere where it protects us from the sun's ultraviolet rays. "Bad" or "ground-level" ozone harms human health, vegetation, and many common materials, according to the EPA.

Ozone can irritate your respiratory system and reduce lung function, according to the EPA. It can exacerbate asthma and chronic lung diseases; ozone can inflame and damage cells that line your lungs. Preliminary findings in work done with rhesus monkeys at the Regional Primate Research Center, University of California—Davis suggest that ozone adversely affects lung development and may actually cause asthma.\*\* According to retired public health physician Dr. B. Brooks Taylor, MD, MPH, recent medical research shows that ozone negatively impacts health at levels much lower than the national standard.

Many groups of people are at risk from ground-level ozone as reported by the EPA:

- active children, because they spend a lot of time outdoors in the summer, and because they are more likely to have asthma;
- active adults, who are engaged in vigorous work or exercise outdoors;
- people with existing asthma or other respiratory diseases, who experience the negative health effects of ozone earlier and at lower ozone levels than less sensitive people; and
- even some healthy people, who experience the negative effects of ozone at lower levels of activity and at lower ozone levels than the average person.

Ground-level ozone negatively impacts plants, impairing their ability to make and store food and making them more susceptible to drought, disease, and other stressors. Ozone damages leaves, spoiling the appearance of trees and other plants in cities and parks. Ozone can have a negative impact on crop

and timber yields, and increases these plants' susceptibility to disease, insects, and other stressors.

While many local residents view power plants as major polluters, oil and gas facilities are actually the major sources of VOCs in the region (see box), according to information presented by the New Mexico Air Quality Bureau during its April 2002 public meeting.

The negative impact of existing and future oil and gas activity on air quality is of great concern to many county citizens. An example of existing industry emissions is found in a letter that El Paso Natural Gas, Blanco Compressor Station, was required to send to landowners within a half-mile of the facility, advising them that there will be approximately 3189.2 tons/year of NO<sub>x</sub> and 106 tons/year of VOC emissions.

**"Non-attainment status triggers a requirement that industry use the best available technology.... [We] argue that industry should be required to use the best available technology at all times."**

### Sources of NO<sub>x</sub> in Northwestern NM\*

Source of Nitrous Oxides	tons/year
Electric power generation	86,715
Oil and gas facilities	33,934
Vehicles	9,803
Other sources	1,585

\* New Mexico Air Quality Bureau ([www.nmenv.state.nm.us/laq/projects/Ozone.html](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/laq/projects/Ozone.html))

### Sources of VOCs in Northwestern NM\*

Source of Nitrous Oxides	tons/year
Oil and gas facilities	9,840
Vehicles	7,516
Electric power generation	653
Other sources	490

\* New Mexico Air Quality Bureau

More than 10,000 (some say 12,500) new wells are proposed for the next 20 years—many of them coal-bed methane with their additional wellhead compressors and compressor stations—on Bureau of Land Management land in the area governed by the Farmington Field Office. An example of what the future holds is found in a 2 April 2003 air-permit application by SG Interests (in the Legals of the local paper), which shows 39.5 tons/year of NO<sub>x</sub> and 76.8 tons/year of VOCs as a worst-case facility emissions for only ten proposed coal-bed methane wells. An August 2002 public notice of an air-quality operating permit for the Hart Canyon Compressor Station located a few miles from Aztec shows estimated maximum emissions of 116 tons/year of NO<sub>x</sub> and 33.2 tons/year of VOCs.

Electric power generation is the major source of NO<sub>x</sub> in northwestern New Mexico, with emissions of 86,715 tons/year according to New Mexico Air Quality Bureau figures (see box). The Navajo tribe is

proposing the construction of another coal-burning power plant in the next few years southwest of Farmington, and the City of Farmington is adding its Bluffview Power Plant, which will use a natural-gas-fired turbine, a heat-recovery steam generator, and associated cooling tower. Estimated emissions will be 99 tons/year of NO<sub>x</sub> and 35 tons/year of VOCs, according to the Legal Notice for a Preliminary Determination for an Air Quality Permit, 10 March 2003.

While many environmentalists support the development and use of alternative energy sources as a means to reduce air pollution, much resistance prevails among the existing power providers. In the Farmington Utility System's 2002 Annual Report, the City of Farmington negates the potential of wind power, citing the large amount of land

required, the stated lack of the required sustained winds, and wind fluctuation. The report also negates the potential of solar facilities, citing monthly fluctuation, zoning laws that restrict access, and the need of a solution for energy storage. The city says both renewable sources would require a heavy reliance on traditional energy sources as backups. In contrast, locals supporting the use of renewable energy are considering a campaign to get the city to include renewable energy in its planning.

Some members of industry claim that biogenic sources of VOCs, those from vegetation, may be significant contributors of this pollutant. Local environmentalists, however, believe the contribution from these sources will prove insignificant. Industry has also raised the possibility that atmospheric transport brings ozone to the area from other parts of the country (e.g., California). Local environmentalists, however, believe that local sources of ozone precursors, based upon the permitted source data, are sufficient to account for the detected levels of ozone in the region.

The Four Corners Ozone Task Force has formed to address the problem. Meetings are open to the public. Members include representatives from industry, city and county governments, the community, environmental groups, the National Forest Service, and Mesa Verde National Park. In December 2002, the cities of Bloomfield, Aztec, and Farmington, and San Juan County signed an Early Action Compact that established deadlines for finding ways:

- to reduce ozone and
- to avoid reaching nonattainment status for ozone.

The state Air Quality Bureau touted the compact as a way to avoid the greater expense and hardship that would likely occur if the area does nothing and deteriorates to nonattainment status. Non-attainment status triggers a requirement that industry use the best available technology. Members of the environmental community, however, argue that industry should be required to use the best available technology at all times.

The text of the Early Action Compact is available via Internet ([www.nmenv.state.nm.us/](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/)). Also available is a list of non-binding, potential ozone-control strategies that will be submitted for EPA approval. Environmentalists had concerns that too many of the strategies targeted vehicle owners while making little mention of possible industry strategies. In response, the Air Quality Bureau staff requested additional suggestions and has included some of these in a revised listing.

(continued on page 13)

\* The national Environmental Protection Agency standard is 0.08 parts per million (ppm), averaged over an eight-hour period, based on the fourth-highest reading per year, averaged over three years.

\*\* See [www.niehs.nih.gov/oc/news/davisozo.htm](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/oc/news/davisozo.htm).

## Saving Money and the Planet Through Energy Efficiency at Home

The looming natural gas crisis, in combination with the severity of global warming, has made it imperative for us to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. The most cost-effective approach is energy efficiency. This is not conservation, which means turning down your thermostat and wearing a sweater in a cold house. Energy efficiency allows you to be warm and toasty throughout the home, while using much less energy.

A simple analogy is a bucket. The bucket is the house. You try to fill the bucket with water, which is heat, and it's very easy if the bucket has no holes. You fill it one time and it stays full. If the bucket is full of holes, heat must be constantly pumped into the house to make up for the constant leakage. In most homes, there are hundreds of holes. Windows and doors are obvious, but many others that affect the performance even more severely are hidden. If all the holes in the home were plugged, the utility bill—and the global warming impact of that home—would be zero.

At Althouse, Inc. we utilize an approach common in other countries called "Building Science" or "house doctoring"—the study of how air, heat, and moisture in a building interact with people and the building's parts. Building Science treats a home as a living/working system and looks at health, safety, comfort, durability, energy efficiency, and sustainability.

To protect you from natural gas price gouging, we offer the following tips:

- First, be sure that infiltration, or actual air leakage, is limited. This includes caulking, weather stripping, sealing heating duct leaks, and eliminating all other air pathways out of the home.
- Once infiltration is limited, then insulation is the next step. Preparing the house to be insulated is as important as the insulation itself. "Thermal by-pass" occurs when heat can go around or through insulation like it doesn't exist. Thermal by-pass is common wherever there is a break in plane of the interior surface of the home. Breaks in plane occur where wall meets ceiling, wall meets wall, wall meets built-in fireplace or banco, and most severely, where two rooms with different ceiling heights adjoin. Before installing insulation, eliminate thermal by-pass by installing air blocking at all breaks in plane.

Insulation must not only be thick enough to achieve the required insulation value, but must also be free of gaps, voids, and compression, which severely degrade performance. It is almost impossible to install a typical conventional fiberglass batt insulation that is completely free of voids and gaps. Batt insulation is a square peg and every space in the walls and ceiling of the home are round holes. Blown-in type insulation uses the house as a mold to completely eliminate all voids and gaps,

including behind outlets, wiring, pipes, and unusual framing details.

- Once the envelope of the home has been addressed, additional major improvement can be achieved by installing ultra-high-efficiency heating equipment and/or switching to alternative fuel sources like biomass or solar. The cost of alternative heating systems can be greatly reduced by the improvements in the efficiency of the envelope; if the heat requirement is cut in half, the cost of the alternative heating system is cut in half.

Although fixing existing homes can be costly and time consuming, it is very easy and inexpensive to implement Building Science in new construction.

Althouse Inc., by being involved during construction, has been able to certify hundreds of homes to meet the EPA Energy Star homes program.

Althouse, Inc. guarantees the energy consumption of these homes to be at least 30% less than the building code requires. Cuts of up to 70% are possible if energy efficiency is a priority during the design of the home. The average home emits twice as much annual carbon dioxide as a car, so proper home design can cut global warming more than eliminating your car!

For more information, contact Bill Althouse at Althouse, Inc. in Santa Fe (469-7480; althouse@earthlink.net; www.althouse.biz).

—Bill Althouse

## Things You Can Do to Save Energy and Keep Your Home Warm

Let's start with a pretty typical 1,400-square-foot, two-story house that:

- meets basic current thermal codes (R-19 walls, R-38 ceiling);
- has old double-pane windows on the south side, some east and west, and just a couple to the north; but
- isn't really very airtight.

This typical house loses its heat as follows:

- 36% through its windows,
- 34% by air leaking through seams,
- 19% through its walls,
- 4% through its ceiling/roof,
- 4% through its doors, and
- 3% through its foundation.

This home uses 70 million btu (mbtu)/year. Here are savings we can expect if we make the following improvements:

- 6.14 mbtu, if we install the best windows available (R-3.1);
- 5.85 mbtu, if we insulate walls to R-38;
- 12.38 mbtu, if we insulate walls to R-38 and add lots of indoor mass; and
- 19.5 mbtu, if we improve air tightness significantly.

Average domestic hot water heaters, waste more heat up the chimney than they put into the water! We can save:

- 19 mbtu by replacing an average hot-water heater with one that is 95% efficient; and
- 24.2 mbtu, by doing the same with the average heating system.

If your house is *not* up to current standards, you can save:

- 44 mbtu by bringing uninsulated adobe walls (R-4) up to R-19;
- 15 mbtu by bringing your ceiling from R-19 to R-38;
- 18 mbtu by replacing single-pane windows with cheap double-pane windows;
- 4.5 mbtu each, by replacing an old fridge or freezer with a new efficient model (upgrading to a Sunfrost can save an additional 1.3 mbtu); and
- 8.7 mbtu by installing exclusively fluorescent lighting.

—Carl Rosenberg

### Cost to Buy 1 mbtu (million btus):

10 therms of natural gas @ \$.32=\$3.20  
292 kwh of electricity @ \$.09=\$26.37  
10.9 gallons of propane @ \$1.20=\$13.08  
7.2 gallons of gasoline @ \$1.60=\$11.52

### Pajarito on Feds' Covert War (cont. from page 15)

I haven't done very well on my investments since 1999, to put it mildly. Many of you are probably in the same boat. The energy companies, on the other hand, invested much more cannily during the 2000 election, even as the long bear stock market was beginning portfolio contraction for the rest of us.

—Abe Jacobson  
Forest Issues Chair  
Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club  
This article first appeared as an op-ed  
in the Pajarito Monitor

### Primary Energy Use\* in New Mexico (1999)

Petroleum	33%
Natural Gas	28%
Coal	38%
Renewables**	>1%

- \* "Primary energy" includes losses in generation and distribution.  
\*\* "Renewables" include wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal, and waste materials.

### NM's Sources of Electricity

Coal	86%
Natural gas	13%
Hydropower	0.7%

Source: www.swenergy.org \* www.lawfund.org

### For more information on Energy Efficiency...

Southwest Energy Efficiency Project  
www.swenergy.org

Land and Water Fund of the Rockies  
www.lawfund.org

American Council  
for an Energy Efficient Economy  
www.aceee.org

Alliance to Save Energy  
www.ase.org

Consortium for Energy Efficiency  
www.cecl.org

U.S. DOE's Energy Efficiency  
and Renewable Energy Network  
www.eren.doe.gov

Energy Star Products  
www.energystar.gov

## Chihuahuan Grasslands Alliance Forms to Preserve the Past and Protect the Future

Driving through the Nutt Grasslands in the Chihuahuan Desert of southwestern New Mexico, one wonders if, without power lines and the paved two-lane highway, the landscape looks any different than it did a hundred years ago. According to the old timers in the area, in a year of average rain, the grass has been "stirrup high." During time of sustained drought, the grass is shorter but remains the constant, prevailing feature of the land.

The Nutt Grasslands are unique; they are one of the few remaining areas of pristine grasslands not yet spoiled by invading mesquite and other shrubs, which create an inhospitable environment for wildlife, as well as livestock. The land hosts a number of wildlife species including migratory grassland songbirds, hawks, Golden eagles, Whitetail kites, Prairie falcons, and the endangered Aplomado falcon. Antelope, mule deer, elk, coatis, and box turtles also live in the Nutt Grasslands. These grasslands comprise some 200,000 acres of state, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and private land on both sides of New Mexico Highway 27 from Hillsboro in Sierra County and extending south into Luna County.

Embrée Hale, Jr. has lived in the Hillsboro area for more than 60 years. His family has been here since the mid 1920s. He remembers talking to one of the area's most prominent ranchers about grasslands ranching. "He told me that the land was so fragile that he never drove on the same track twice when he went out to tend his cattle. He said if you did, you'd make a rut and the rut would become an arroyo and pretty soon you'd have nothing but deep cuts all over your land." In northwestern New Mexico, San Juan

County ranchers have been forced to literally lock the gates to their private land to prevent further destruction of their property and cattle by the gas industry. Environmentalists and ranchers, so often at odds, have joined together to fight this battle in court.

The beauty of Chihuahuan Nutt Grasslands, as well as its value as a habitat for multiple species, is currently being threatened by proposed oil and gas development under the BLM's Resource Plan Amendment. Highway 27, which is a BLM Scenic Byway, attracts hundreds of tourists a year. Visitors to this region are rewarded with, not only eye-pleasing vistas, but also a sense of the history that has been made on this land. The Mormon Battalion crossed here on its way to California, and one can walk through the remains of old Fort Cummings. Oil and gas development has an immediate impact on the aesthetic value of any landscape. Pipelines, waste ponds, wells, and roads would alter the grassland vista. If tourism were affected, as it surely would be, businesses in small towns like Hillsboro would be impacted.

BLM has offered parcels of land for sale to energy companies, including Kansas-based Imperial Oil Properties, which has already purchased oil and gas leases on state land in southwestern New Mexico. BLM has failed to provide a site-specific environmental impact statement for its resource management plan, in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

With BLM opening up oil and gas leases on millions of acres in southern New Mexico, organizations like New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (NMWA) and Sky Island Alliance (SLA) have become very concerned that these unique and pristine areas could be put on the auction block. A few years ago, NMWA began to inventory public wild lands suitable for wilderness study areas and wilderness designation.

Chihuahuan Grasslands Alliance (CGA), a community action group from the Hillsboro/Lake Valley area, formed in response to proposed oil and gas development. With support from the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, CGA is working for the preservation and protection of the local grasslands. Currently, CGA is monitoring BLM

actions. Their position is that the BLM must be held accountable for the environmental impact that oil and gas development will have on this vulnerable grassland area.

David Farrell, Chairman of CGA, says that the BLM decision to open sale parcels of land without a comprehensive, site-specific environmental impact statement is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act. "NEPA requires public involvement and input when proposing lease sales on public land. We are the public, and we have not been notified of the opening of sensitive areas for development," said Farrell.

CGA, a coalition of residents and ranchers, maintains that, while oil and gas development in New Mexico is a reality, development must be curtailed and that the BLM must follow environmental regulations or risk being taken to court. CGA is concerned that the BLM has bowed to pressure from Interior Secretary Gale Norton and the Bush Administration to "streamline the process," a phrase justifying the elimination of environmental laws and regulations such as NEPA. Farrell says that, "CGA is mobilizing to make sure these laws are upheld, as well as supporting the protection and preservation of areas in the Nutt Grasslands Complex deemed eligible for wilderness study." While no decision has been made concerning legal action, Western Environmental Law Center and CGA will continue to closely monitor BLM actions in this case.

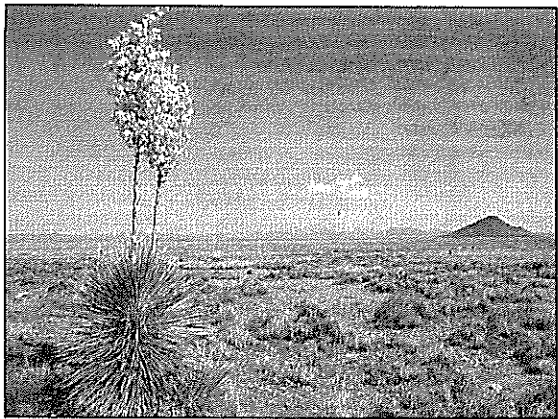
Government agencies that are ostensibly serving as watchdogs over private industry are under pressure to interpret regulations in a manner favorable to energy corporations with political ties to the current administration. Investments in renewable energy can create more jobs than similar investments in oil and gas production. We need to develop strategies that will:

- involve the American public in energy-efficient solutions, and
- look toward renewable energy sources as one way to protect wilderness and wildlife while supplying our energy needs.

CGA believes that, for future generations, some areas must be off limits to development. The natural and cultural inheritance of the Nutt Grasslands should remain protected.

For more information, contact CGA Chairman David Farrell in Hillsboro (895-3352; dafarrelli@hotmail.com).

—Jan Haley  
Vice Chair, Chihuahuan Grasslands Alliance



The environmental consequences of unregulated oil and gas development on these rare and pristine grasslands could alter forever a fragile landscape that is still considered one of the best rangelands in the Chihuahuan desert (photo by B. Pearlman).

### Ozone (continued from page 11)

The Air Quality Bureau continues to monitor air quality at the substations near Kirtland and Bloomfield, and is using passive ozone monitors throughout the county. The New Mexico State Legislature approved \$200,000 funding for this year and 2004; \$153,000 from EPA will fund the science that the Bureau needs. The Bureau has also hired a contractor to perform photochemical air-quality modeling and analysis to determine the causes of ozone formation in San Juan County.

Members of the San Juan Citizens Alliance are assisting with passive ozone monitoring in the San Juan Basin in both New Mexico and Colorado.

The Community Environmental Health Program at the University of New Mexico is providing support for this project.

New Mexico's Department of Health is compiling statistics for asthma and other respiratory diseases at San Juan Regional Hospital, the Shiprock hospital, and possibly other medical facilities to see if there is a correlation with increasing ozone levels in the area.

Individuals can take measures to prevent or reduce their exposure to ozone; negative impacts increase the longer you are outdoors and the more vigorously you exercise, according to EPA. Plan outdoor activity early or late in the day to avoid the times of higher

ozone concentrations. Conserve electricity and plan your car trips efficiently. Keep vehicles tuned and tires inflated properly.

Activism is key to bringing change that will positively affect the future. Air-quality information for regional and national environmental protection agencies is available online. The Four Corners Ozone Task Force provides a forum where you may ask questions or comment. Your elected officials at the city and county levels need to hear your concerns and opinions.

For more information, contact Jan Rees in Bloomfield (632-8335; jrees@acnet.com).

—Janet Rees

## Privatization of Public Lands Flying Beneath the Radar

These days, it's hard to decide which battle to join, as the most anti-environmental administration in history, aided by a largely complicit Congress, works to disfigure our environmental protections and our basic system of land conservation. Even so, the current attack on the very nature of our public land agencies deserves everyone's attention.

Bush and company are moving aggressively to turn the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) over to corporations. They are:

- replacing most government employees with corporate employees (outsourcing),
- selling BLM assets to ranchers, and
- turning over management of the national forests directly to the timber industry.

As part of a push by Bush's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to privatize 425,000 federal jobs, the administration has begun to replace 11,000 National Park Service employees—two-thirds of the Service—with corporate employees. These include interpretive rangers, fire-management people, main-

tenance, trail crews, entrance-station staff, and park scientists. The next time you go to a national park or monument, you may be greeted by an employee of Scott's Lawn Care or Disney rather than a public servant in the green and gray. Most likely, a single corporation—CH2MHill—will get the contract (with no competitive bidding) to manage our national parks for profit. In fact, a \$5-million National Park Service privatization study has already been awarded without competition to CH2MHill; the cost (\$3,000/employee to be hired) came directly out of park budgets.

Right now, the National Park Service operates on a bare-bones budget. Its staff is among the lowest paid in public service, making do with antiquated equipment, shabby offices, and severe personnel shortages. Because Park work is not commercial by nature, corporate park managers will have to contrive ways to make money from the public and will have no incentive to do the most critical park work such as progressive resources management. A century of conservation, tradition, public service, and thousands of careers will be destroyed; in its place, we'll have

an onslaught of mediocrity and commercialism in the very places we go to escape commercialism.

Meanwhile, both the Forest Service and the BLM also face "outsourcing"—replacement of civil servants with corporate employees. For example, Bush plans to outsource 75% of the Forest Service's 39,000 jobs. Under a concept called "Stewardship Contracts," timber companies will fully manage large tracts of national forest for up to ten years (and probably permanently). While the industry won't own the land (yet), they will replace the Forest Service as managers. Washington is using the forest-fire crisis, itself a result of commercially driven land management, as the grounds for this privatization scheme.

Over at BLM, ranchers will be allowed to own fences, wells, pipelines, and other "improvements" on public land that taxpayers paid for over the past century. Thus, for the first time in history, ranchers will have an ownership stake in land they now use as a privilege.

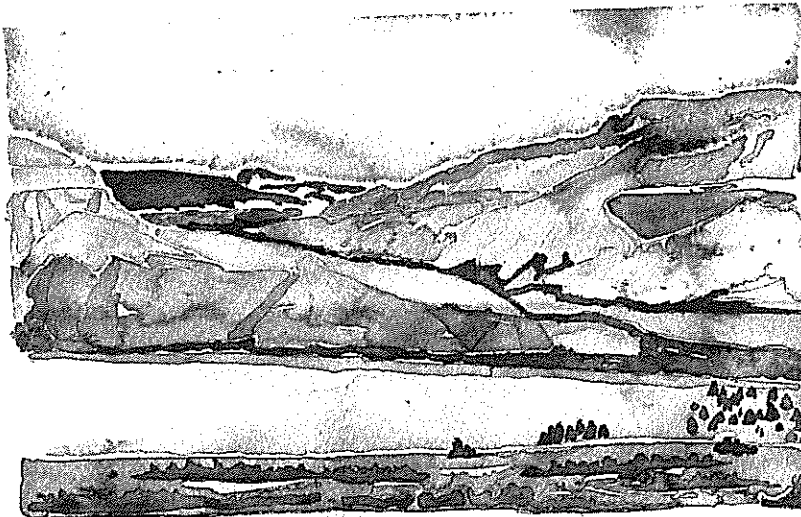
Privatization of public lands is well underway, passing under the radar of most Americans. Replacing the National Park Service and other public service agencies with corporate interests will in no way serve the public interest. Rather, these initiatives are driven by radical capitalist ideologues who abhor "public" anything and whose concept of free enterprise means turning over major government contracts to big campaign donors with no competition and no sense of what is being lost.

Members concerned about the loss of public land agencies to corporate control should contact Senators Domenici and Bingaman and our congresspersons (see contact information, page 3). Tom Udall already is taking a strong interest in the issue and has joined with Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and others to urge the new director of OMB to end the push to privatize many government functions instituted by his predecessor.

Although the Sierra Club national office is not working on the privatization issue (members could urge them to take it up), two other national groups are leading the charge—Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (info@peer.org; www.PEER.org) and the National Parks and Conservation Association (www.NPCA.org).

For more information, contact Tom Ribe in Santa Fe (982-4464; tribe@swadventures.com).

—Tom Ribe  
former National Park Service employee  
Sierra Club member



The Chama River flows through the Carson National Forest upstream from Abiquiú. The Coyote Ranger District administer this portion of the Carson. In a June 19 letter to the Washington Post, New Mexico Congressman Tom Udall, expressed his opposition to the Bush Administration's plans to transfer two-thirds of forest service jobs to the private sector: "The effect on rural communities such as Coyote, New Mexico, where six out of seven jobs—all but the district ranger—are to be contracted out, will be enormous. The effect on an agency tasked with 'caring for the land and serving the people' will be disastrous." Udall wrote (watercolor by Marty Peale).

## LANL Building Project Designed to Support Nuclear Proliferation

The Chemical and Metallurgical Research (CMR) building at Los Alamos National Labs (LANL) at Technical Area 3 is the principal site where LANL conducts analytical chemistry and materials characterization on "special nuclear materials" (i.e., plutonium and highly enriched uranium).

The first CMR building was completed in 1952 and is about 550,000 square feet. During the past decade, the building has suffered from a series of safety problems including a serious explosion in November 1997. A recent study has concluded that it is vulnerable to seismic events. The DOE has sunk hundreds of millions of dollars into trying to bring the building up to code, including remodels to accommodate renewed production of nuclear warhead cores (pits) at a proposed rate of 80/year.

DOE has revised the original cost estimate down from \$900 million to about \$600 million, adopting a simultaneous design/build approach. Staying

within this budget seems unlikely, however, as LANL is infamous for cost overruns even on fully planned facilities. Construction is scheduled for 2004.

The contaminated debris resulting from the demolition of the existing CMR building would be stored at Technical Area 54 (Area G) or at an offsite commercial facility, according to the National Nuclear Security Association (NNSA). The 1999 *Site-wide Environmental Impact Statement* for LANL states that Area G will likely reach capacity by 2009, but NNSA does not intend to write the disposal work plan before 2018. This work plan should be drafted as soon as possible to help identify costs, and risk to workers, air, and water.

CMR replacement is planned in direct support of efforts to:

- fully modernize the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile,
- resume nuclear weapons production, and
- design new weapons.

Not only are these efforts in contravention to international treaties in which the United States unequivocally committed to full and complete disarmament (e.g., the 1970 Nonproliferation Treaty), they will further help to destabilize nuclear weapons arms control and could lead to a new nuclear arms race. Russia and China, concerned about the intent of these new U.S. efforts, have already begun to examine methods to modernize their own nuclear weapons stockpiles.

The Bush Administration seems committed to stopping nuclear proliferation in countries such as Iraq and North Korea. Why, then, do its own actions indicate that America is starting the next nuclear arms race?

For more information, contact Marck Doppke in Albuquerque (768-1160; marckdoppke@yahoo.com).

—Mark Doppke  
Conservation Chair, Central Group



## OUTINGS

**July 18, 19, 20 • Backpack to Rio Grande Pyramid, San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado**—We'll go up to the trailhead near Rio Grande Reservoir Friday evening, backpack up to a camp on Saturday, and then do the summit without backpacks early morning on Sunday. Back on Sunday evening. Call Abe Jacobson (672-9579—Los Alamos).

For more outings in the area, see Northern Group pages.

## MEETINGS

There will be no meetings of the Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club during July and August. We will see you on September 3 for our general meeting (tentatively scheduled as Trout Unlimited).

## ISSUES

The Pajarito Group follows local environmental and political issues. We invite members to become involved in areas of personal concern.

**Cutthroat Trout Reintroduction**—Several agencies are working on reintroduction of the native cutthroat trout to the Jemez River; one method involves the use of the biocide Fintrol to kill competing (and all other) species. Contact Ilse Bleck (662-2368).

**Pit Production**—Five sites have been chosen for Pit Production Facilities; one is in Los Alamos (LA). These facilities will produce pits (triggering devices) for up to 450 nuclear weapons per year. Contact Jody Benson (662-4782).

**Pesticides and West Nile Virus**—LA County is formulating plans for mosquito abatement and pesticide use, specifically for the West Nile virus. Contact Sharon Scarlett (662-7286).

**Siting of New Landfill**—The LA Landfill will soon reach its capacity. The U.S. Department of Energy and LA County are working on a new location. LA County is also trying to include issues such as lifespan, recycling, litter spread, and pollution prevention. Contact Chuck Pergler (661-6169).

**Walmart**—Los Alamos Schools and the County are negotiating a plan to transfer the schools administration area and thus free up the current area for a proposed "big box" store (a 140,000-square-foot Walmart Superstore is proposed). Contact Jody Benson regarding this and other sprawl and development issues (662-4782).

**Valles Caldera Preserve**—We have members on the Valles Caldera Coalition, which advises and assists the Trust on issues of concern and policy with the Valles Caldera Preserve. Contact Carole Jacobson (672-9579).

## THANK YOU!

Our dedicated Webmeister, Matt Heavner, is moving to Alaska. Thank you, Matt, for your dedication, your eye for design and detail, and for presenting our information accessibly and aesthetically. We wish you and Carrie all beauty and grandeur, big water, and open space as you head home.

## Feds. Waging Covert War on Wilderness

The Bush Administration is proving to be a master of tactics: Use "Shock and Awe" and heavy media coverage when you want your actions to be seen and feared, by friend and foe alike. But use behind-the-scenes, covert special-ops methods when Americans would oppose it if they knew about it. *Fox News* will blare the first into America's living rooms, while we will know little, if anything, about the second.

So it goes with a recent war in April. No, not Iraq; rather, the war on America's public wilderness areas. Even as army columns and their embedded reporters were openly racing northward through Iraq, a special operation by the Interior Department was covertly revolutionizing America's public-lands policy. Not a millisecond of news coverage of this appeared on the major networks—just as the Bush Interior Department intended. The majority of Americans support wilderness by wide margins; thus it would be politically unwise to attack wilderness in the public view. Better a special op in darkness, and no reporters, embedded or otherwise.

What happened? Let's go back to some really obscure history. The Mining Act of 1866 had a minor provision called Revised Statute (RS) 2477. This provision guaranteed right-of-way for established county and state roads across federal lands—any federal lands (even today's Wildernesses and National Parks). The Act has since been repealed, but RS 2477 lives on in the toolkit of those who would repeal

wilderness protection for public lands. James Watt, Interior Secretary in the Reagan Administration, claimed that the presence of long-abandoned wagon tracks, built before the expiration of the Mining Act of 1866, could justify taking away protection from those lands today. Only a House of Representatives held by the Democrats saved wilderness-protected lands from the Watt axe.

The policy of James Watt 20 years ago, and of the anti-wilderness constituency he galvanized, was mainly ideological, not economic. This has recently changed. Now there is a wealthy and powerful lobby for commercial development of wilderness-protected lands. This lobby is lining up for payback and is on the verge of a brilliant return on its investment. The massive financial support of the fossil-fuels industry (oil, gas, coal) for the Bush-Cheney campaign of 2000 is well documented in Federal Elections Commission records (for example, see [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org).) This fossil-fuels lobby is now reaping a huge bonanza from their investment.

On 9 April 2003, the Interior Department "settled" litigation in which the state of Utah was claiming that its historic RS 2477 easements crossed wilderness study areas and thus should invalidate those areas from wilderness consideration. In fact, Interior was not defending the public lands in this case, but was colluding with Utah in a Kabuki theater routine, to achieve the long-cherished goal held by right-wing, anti-wilderness partisans ever since James Watt. On April 9, Interior agreed to invalidate all—*all*—Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) and all other special protections on Department of Interior public lands, whenever those lands' special protections are challenged on the basis of RS 2477. The "settlement" is not limited to Utah, but applies to most BLM land everywhere. The historic easement could be just a wagon rut obliterated by a century of disuse. No matter, says the Bush Administration, these tracks mean we must disallow that land from further wilderness, or other special, consideration. Altogether, this "settlement" by Interior effectively disallows new wilderness designation on 210 million acres of public land administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In short, the "settlement" is a dagger aimed at our National Monuments, National Parks, and already-designated Wilderness areas on Department of Interior lands.

Most Americans want to protect the Wilderness we have, and keep open the possibility of more. Many beautiful areas on BLM lands are now managed as WSAs. This is our nation's way of protecting wilderness-suitable lands from development, so that future Americans will have the option of having more officially designated Wilderness. Once development happens on a piece of public land, including roadbuilding alone, the possibility of future Wilderness designation is foreclosed for all time.

Elimination of WSA and similar protections will immensely benefit the oil, coal, and natural-gas industries, by allowing them to develop more BLM public lands for mineral extraction. For example, even the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is now at risk, because its coal-rich Kaiparowits Plateau has century-old wagon tracks that can be construed as "county easements" under RS 2477. Similarly, the natural-gas industry can now move into WSAs like the one protecting Fisher Towers near Moab, or Desolation Canyon on the Green River.

(continued on page 23)

## Pajarito Group Directory

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

### Executive Committee

<b>Carole Griffiths Jacobson, Chair</b> carole.jacobson@worldnet.att.net	672-9579
<b>Ilse Bleck, Vice Chair &amp; Chapter Representative</b> ibleck@yahoo.com	662-2368
<b>Kim Manley, Secretary/Treasurer</b> manlk7@aol.com	662-6163
<b>Chuck Pergler, Conservation Chair</b> pergler@att.net	661-6169
<b>Abe Jacobson, Forests/Mining/Political</b> abe.jacobson@att.net	672-9579
<b>Mat Johansen, Genetic Engineering</b> mjohansen@lanl.gov	662-9763

### Project Leaders

<b>Sandra Tobin, Membership Chair</b> tobin@losalamos.com	662-2057
<b>Ilse and Rainer Bleck, Outings Co-Chairs</b> ibleck@yahoo.com	662-2368
<b>Janet Gerwin, Water</b> gerwin@losalamos.com	662-9568
<b>Jody Benson, Publicity/Sprawl</b> benson@lanl.gov	662-4782

We have an opening for *Webmeister*. If you would like to volunteer your talents, please contact Carole Griffiths Jacobson (672-9579).

## NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

Tuesday, September 16, 7 PM

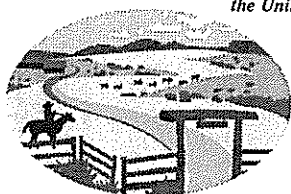
### AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT Common Causes

Russell Grider, CEO of Synergy Resource Marketing, progressive rancher and noted cowboy, will speak on Agriculture and the Environment, Common Causes, a discussion of how the two communities can collaborate to preserve and restore the natural resource base on which they both depend and defend against threatening global and national trends.

The perceptions of the environmental community about the agricultural community and vice versa are often based on misinformation and perceived conflict. Come see and hear what a real cowboy says about the local, national and international trends that threaten us all. You may be surprised and enlightened.

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, October 21, 7:00 PM

### REWILDING NORTH AMERICA

The indomitable DAVE FORMAN is coming! In his new position as director of the Rewilding Institute, an offshoot of the Wildlands Project he has been spearheading for some years, he will discuss his goal of continental conservation (all of North America), and how he hopes to achieve it. He is writing a book on this topic, to be published by Island Press in 2004. As you may remember, Dave was an original member of Earth First! He has been working on conservation issues his entire adult life, was a director of the Sierra Club some years ago, and has written three books: *The Lobo Outback Funeral Home*, *Confessions of an Eco Warrior*, and *The Big Outside*. He will have copies of *Lobo Outback* available for sale and signing.



### FALL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION

PLEASE CONTACT any member of the nominating committee to voice your interest in running for the Group Excom. Now's your chance to play a leading role. John Buchser, chair; Lionel Sorocco and Kay Carlson. (see contact info below)

For election information, please refer to the article elsewhere in this newsletter. The group election committee members are the same as those for the chapter.

### NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Jan Kindel

The Northern New Mexico Group has been searching for some time for projects in which club members can join with others to explore, protect and rehabilitate our small corner of the earth. The Executive Committee recently approved two projects that meet this criteria with the caveat that sufficient volunteer help is recruited to handle the responsibilities.

One of the projects is working with Santa Fe Watershed Association to adopt a reach of the Santa Fe River. Yes, we do have a river in Santa Fe and, yes, it did once flow freely through the heart of the community. The ultimate goal is to bring the river back to life, and our role would be to provide regular visits to our reach of the river, become familiar with its problems and potential and help to advocate for its restoration. *WE NEED YOU* to participate with us in making this project a reality. Call me (474-7207) to sign up. (See Norma McCallan's article about the other opportunity, the Rail Trail.)

### GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Executive Committee:	Group Conservation Committee:
Tuesday, August 5, 7 PM	Tuesday, July 22, 6:45 PM
Tuesday, September 2, 7 PM	Tuesday, August 26, 6:45 PM

Water Pot-Luck, Wednesdays, 6:30 PM, John Buchser's house (820-0201)  
July 9 - Santa Fe Farmer's Market  
August 23 - E.R.O.S.  
September 10 - 1,000 Friends of New Mexico



### CONSERVATION CHAIR

Paul Paryski

Regarding the eradication of salt cedar using aerial spraying of herbicides, particularly in the Galisteo Basin, I wrote a letter to the Corps of Engineers questioning their use of the herbicides, proposing that the Corps develop and implement an ecologically appropriate riparian restoration program, and suggesting mechanical means or using goats to remove salt cedar. The Corps responded by saying they would consider these suggestions and would hold hearings. The issue of spraying salt cedar and its negative effects is complicated and is now being addressed by a number of environmental groups.

I have been part of an environmental task force that will provide substantive input into the first State Water Plan and also been appointed by the Governor to his Blue Ribbon Water Task Force.

The Committee has proposed a number of new projects for consideration of funding and/or participation by the Chapter: a workshop to bring the land grant and environmental communities together to promote the environmental stewardship of land grant holdings, adopting a stretch of the Santa Fe River, and adopting a stretch of the new Santa Fe Rail Trail.

The Bush administration's attack on the environment is alarming through its so-called "Healthy Forest Initiative" and other efforts to thin forests in inappropriate ways in order to prevent wildfires and gain more water.

I represented the Group in the State Engineer's Water Reuse Group, Alliance for the Rio Grande Heritage, Santa Fe Water Conservation Committee and recently with the new LANL ZeroNet water and energy management initiative.

### ♦ ♦ NORTHERN NEW MEXICO GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ♦ ♦

Chair — Jan Kindel *	jankindel@aol.com	474-7207	Outings — Norbert Sperlich	474-4354
Vice-Chair — Barbara Johnson *	lunah3@aol.com	466-4935	— Tobin Oruch	oruch@lanl.gov 820-2844
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Sorocco		983-6715	Conservation — Paul Paryski *	pparyski@aol.com 992-1984
Political Committee — Susan Martin *	smartin@lanl.gov	988-5206	Mining-Cliff Larsen *	clarsen1@ix.netcom.com 466-2128
Membership/Activist Outings — Norma McCallan *	nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005	Water-John Buchser *	jbuchser@comcast.net 820-0201
Newsletter/Publicity — Kay Carlson	kcarlsonwp@earthlink.net	982-3926	National Parks & Rangelands-Roger Peterson	rogpete@aol.com 983-7559
Web Master — Gina Aranda	garanda@cnsf.com	424-1615	Carson Nat'l Forest-George Grossman *	982-1024
Phone Tree — Berta Hanna		424-1435	Activist Outings-Norma McCallan *	nmccallan@mindspring.com 471-0005
Chapter Rep — Doug Fraser *	fraser@thuntenet.net	474-7615	Land Use-Eleanor Eisenmenger	820-6401
* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee			Toxics-Jim Hannan	jhannan505@aol.com 988-5760
			Genetically Engineered Food-Jim Hannan	jhannan505@aol.com 988-5760

# NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

## GROUP OUTINGS FOR 2003

Sat Sun July

- 12 **Strenuous Hike** Gold Hill or Wheeler, 10-13 miles, 3400'+, Dan Rusthoi (690-8967)
- 13 **Strenuous Hike** Santa Barbara area, off-trail, with NM Mtn Club, 12 maximum, dogs okay. Sharon Angert (982-1055)
- 19 **Strenuous Hike** Cruces River Basin, car camp night before, exploratory, on/off trail, fairly fast pace, Lavi Malhotra (995-8547; lavim@ix.netcom.com)
- 19 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** with Audubon Society, bring binoculars, Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 20 **Strenuous Hike** Los Griegos Ridge in the Jemez. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)
- 26 **Strenuous Hike** Rancho Viejo, 12 miles, 2300', limit of 15. Les Drapela (438-3306)
- 27 **Moderate Hike** La Vega Meadow with mushroom expert and survival instructor Art Judd (982-3212). 7 miles, 2100', limit of 15, leave 8 AM.



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 August

- 2 **Strenuous Hike** Trampas Lakes and optional to ridge with view of Truchas Peaks. 11.5 miles RT, 2450' elevation gain to Trampas Lake. Add 1 mile RT, 800' elevation gain to ridge top. Leave early from Santa Fe. Michael DiRosa (663-0648)
- 3 **Moderate Hike** in high country with mushroom expert and survival instructor Art Judd (982-3212). Limit 15. Leave 8 AM. **Easy Hike** to Glorieta Ghost Town. 6.5 miles RT, 950' elevation gain. Gail Bryant (1-505-757-6654)
- 9 **Moderate Hike** Hamilton Mesa. 6-8 miles RT, 1000' elevation gain. Limit 15. Leave 7:30 AM. Michael Goldey (820-7302)
- 10 **Strenuous Hike** Spirit Lake. 12 miles RT, 2000' gain, mod pace. Limit 15. Some dogs okay. Call Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 16 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** with Audubon Society, bring binoculars. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 16 **Strenuous Hike** to Lake Katherine. 14.5 miles RT, 3300' elevation gain. Leave 7 AM. Les Drapela (438-3306)
- 17 **Easy Hike** along Tesuque Creek. Dogs allowed. Leave 9:30 AM. Eliza Schmid (474-5846)
- 23 **Strenuous Hike** Santa Fe Baldy 13 miles RT, 3600' gain to 12,622'. Dogs okay. Leave 8 AM. Dan Rusthoi (690-8967)
- 24 **Easy Hike** for Beginners on Dale Ball Trail. No dogs. Hiking boots required. Leave 9 AM. Alan Karp (424-8764)
- Friday, August 29 to Monday, September 1
- Backpack** Explore east side of Colorado's majestic Sangre de Cristo Range on two separate one-night backpacks, camping at alpine lakes and returning to cars in between. About 2000' elevation gain and 10-12 miles RT on each part. Moderate pace. Dogs okay. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
- 30 **Strenuous Hike** to Lake Johnson. About 12 miles RT, 2800' elevation gain. Dogs okay. Limit 15. Tobin Oruch (820-2844)
- 31 **Moderate Hike** Jemez Mountains. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)

Sat Sun September

- 6 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** Deception Peak, Lake Peak optional. 2000' elevation gain. Leave 8 AM. Michael Goldey (820-7302)
- 7 **Beginner Easy Hike** on Aspen Vista Road. Fabulous views! No dogs. Hiking boots required. Leave 8 AM. Alan Karp (424-8764)
- 13 **Moderate Hike** to Hamilton Mesa. 7 miles RT, 1000' elevation gain. Limit 15. Gail Bryant (1-505-757-6654)
- 13 **Strenuous Hike** Hermit Peak/El Porvenir Canyon. 14 miles RT, 2800' gain. Dogs allowed. Leave 7 AM. Dan Rusthoi (690-8967)
- 14 **Moderate Hike** in high country. Leave 8 AM. Art Judd (982-3212)
- 20 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** with Audubon Society, bring binoculars. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 20 **Strenuous Hike** to Placer Mountain, highest point in Ortiz Mountains. Done jointly with Santa Fe Botanical Garden in their Ortiz Mountain Educational Preserve - \$5 donation requested. Limit 20. Steep slopes, no trail, rough terrain. About 2000' elevation gain, 7 miles RT. Eliza Schmid (474-5846)
- 21 **Moderate Hike** Apache Canyon Loop. 6 miles RT, 800' elevation gain. Some dogs allowed. Leave 9 AM. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
- 27 **Easy (but steep) Hike** on Hyde Park Circle Trail. 5 miles RT, 1000' elevation gain. Moderate pace. Dogs with leash allowed. Leave 9:30 AM. Bob McKee (471-0005)
- 27 **Moderate/Strenuous Fall Color Hike** in Jemez, probably in Cebolla Canyon, Calaveras Canyon area. Leave 7 AM. Call for meeting place Michael DiRosa (663-0648)
- 28 **Moderate/Strenuous Fall Color Hike** to Tesuque Peak, up by way of Tesuque Creek, down by ridge route. Dogs allowed. Moderate pace. Norma McCallan (471-0005)



**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 \$6 a mile to the driver of the car in which s/he rides. Bring a lunch, water, sturdy hiking boots or shoes, and clothing suitable for the weather - leader reserves the right to turn away anyone whose equipment or experience appears unsuitable. Leader has right to alter destination of hike or cancel trip due to weather, unfavorable conditions, or insufficient numbers of participants. Unaccompanied minors must have written permission from parents or guardians to participate; permission forms are available at the Sierra Club office. Dogs not permitted on hikes unless noted otherwise. Telephone leader for details of the individual hike. 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>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

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

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RAIL TRAIL PROJECT

The Group has agreed to adopt the Rail Trail if we get enough volunteers. As trail projects go, this is a fairly simple task. This popular 11-mile trail is relatively broad and flat, sees little litter, except at trailheads, and the County is able to take on any major maintenance or signage problems. Christi Stapf has graciously offered to coordinate for us. Call her (466-6685-h, 827-3109-w, [findingme@netzero.net](mailto:findingme@netzero.net)) to volunteer or learn more details. Santa Fe Conservation Trust will do training once we reach critical mass; we envision each volunteer agreeing to monitor a certain section of the Trail. An easy assignment for members who regularly walk or bike the trail anyway.

Norma McCallan



### CERRILLOS HILLS PARK TOURS

In honor of its recent grand opening, the Cerrillos Hills Park Coalition is sponsoring a series of walks. Call leader for specifics.

Sun, July 6 Pre-Columbian history & turquoise, Joe Sneed, 992-2959

Sat, July 19 Botanical walk - Mark Kaltenbach (920-4506)

Sun, August 3 Minerals, safety work on the mine holes and their histories - Bill Baxter (424-3574)

Sun, August 31 Native plants & their uses - leader tba

Sat, September 13 trail bike and horse day - Chris Reece (474-0074)

Sun, September 28 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century mining techniques & history - Bill Baxter (424-3574)



### SANTA FE WATERSHED WALKS

Santa Fe Watershed Association is sponsoring a series of hikes on the second Saturday of each month to observe the forest thinning project along the southern boundary of the Municipal Watershed. First hike is Saturday, July 12. The moderate, 6 miles RT walks start at the parking area at the end of Forest Road 79, with carpooling from the BLM office on Rodeo Road. Call Paige Grant (820-1696) for reservations/details.

## Update on the Threat to Petroglyph National Monument !

Since the last issue, the threat to the Petroglyph Monument has become much more serious.

As we reported in the May/June issue, the City approved the expenditure of \$580,000 of the City's very scarce resources to do the engineering and design work on the Paseo del Norte extension through the Monument. Presumably that work is underway.

Since then, the work of the Mayor and some of the City Council has turned to finding the money to pay for the road. The latest news is they came up with the extraordinary plan to use \$11.5 million of next year's road funds to complete the funding for the road. This means there could be 2 years, this year AND next year, when the road budget is already spoken for and other road improvements and repairs will not be done.

What's really dismaying is the fact that this measure passed in spite of widespread opposition to the road. What's even more perplexing is that the people represented by Councilors from all parts of the City, will lose out. Money won't be available to repair infrastructure problems in all parts of the City, be they in the Northeast, Southeast, Southwest or even around the corner from the proposed road. Does this make any sense?

In the newspaper, in the reporting on the passage of the \$11.5 million, Mayor Martin Chavez was quoted as saying, "This is a great day for Albuquerque". What is 'great' about approving a road through a place of religious significance to many of our fellow citizens isn't clear to a lot of people. One can wonder whether other people, especially those from other parts of the country that the City is courting to move their companies and employees here, will see this as 'great' remains to be seen.

## Peace Camp 2003

Peace Camp 2003 will be held this year on September 12, 13, and 14th at the Cedro Peak Campground South of Tijeras on South 14. This year's events will include workshops on Environmental Justice, Creating Peace, Toxic/Anti-nuclear, Sustainability, and Art activities. The goal is fun, education, and working together for a better world. Contact 266-2663 for more information.

*Editors Note: The Sierra Club is a sponsor of this event. All Sierra Club members are invited.*

## General Public Meetings

July

July is vacation month. No meeting is scheduled..

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

The meeting program was not finalized at press time, but should be interesting and informative. We will be sending a postcard to folks interested in attending, so email us at [bblairb2@aol.com](mailto:bblairb2@aol.com) to be added to the mailing list. See you there.

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 everyone.  
Coffee, drinks, and snacks are provided.

## Save Otero Canyon

Otero Canyon (not the same as Otero Mesa in Southern New Mexico) is a popular hiking, biking, and horse riding trail outside of Albuquerque in the Manzano Mountains, south of Tijeras. The trail is on land that has never been fenced or used for anything other than recreation. However, it also sits on land that is called 'military withdrawal land', near but outside of Kirtland Air Force Base. This land was given to the Department of Defense right after World War II, when Kirtland Air Force Base was initially established. In more than 50 years, the Air Force has never found a use for this land.

The Otero Canyon trails extend from National Forest Land into this 'military land', and for at least 20 years there has been no concern by the military over the use of it as a recreation area. However, because of the significant amounts of money available for Homeland Security, Kirtland decided to request funding for a project to fence this land off, thereby depriving hikers and bikers access. Most people here in Albuquerque would agree that this is an unnecessary taxpayer expense and the land is better served to be left open to the public.

Because of the public outcry in opposition of fencing this land, the Department of Defense has established a public participation process to gather input from the public. The cutoff date for public comment has been extended to July 16th. Everyone who cares about this area and would like it left open to the public are asked to let the Department of Defense know how you feel.

Please take the time to visit the website at [www.savetero.org](http://www.savetero.org) and sign the petition to stop the closure of Otero Canyon. Also please pass this onto others that you know of that might be interested in signing this petition.

If this road is built, who wins? Mostly a lot of real estate folks, who will make a lot of money building houses and strip malls out past the Monument. The real crime is who loses. The list starts with the people who will live in those homes and will have longer and longer drives to work, more and more road congestion, more expensive car insurance, and higher gasoline bills. It continues with the citizens in the rest of the City who will have poorer roads and more polluted air. Is this a loss we want our City to experience?

Your next question might be 'What's being done to stop this road?' The answer is a lot.

As we reported in the last issue, there are serious legal impediments to the construction of the road. The Club, in cooperation with other organizations, is preparing legal action. We will have more details on this in later issues.

One bright spot in this process is that the Bond Issue which includes a total of \$12 million for the Petroglyph road must be approved by the voters of Albuquerque, in an election in September. It is clear that there will be a major effort by the Club and many citizen groups in all parts of the City to defeat this measure.

Join us to stop the Bond Issue. Call or email any of the Executive Committee to get involved.

## Nomination Committee Named

The Central New Mexico Group has named Richard Barish, Blair Brown and Michal Mudd to the Nomination Committee for the Executive Committee elections that take place in November.

Any Central New Mexico Group member who wishes to be considered for candidacy should forward a letter of interest along with a brief statement of qualifications to any of the Committee members (see the directory below for contact information).

## Central New Mexico Group

PO Box 25342

Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87125-5342

### Executive Committee (area code 505)

Alma Rosa Silva Banuelos		<a href="mailto:almarosa6@yahoo.com">almarosa6@yahoo.com</a>
Blair Brown	259-7190	<a href="mailto:bblairb2@aol.com">bblairb2@aol.com</a>
Marilynn Cooper	842-0185	<a href="mailto:marilynncooper@qwest.net">marilynncooper@qwest.net</a>
Mark Doppke	768-1160	<a href="mailto:marckdoppke@yahoo.com">marckdoppke@yahoo.com</a>
Richard Johnson	277-4144	<a href="mailto:rsheehan@unm.edu">rsheehan@unm.edu</a>
Michal Mudd	884-3315	<a href="mailto:mudd_pi@mac.com">mudd_pi@mac.com</a>
Mike Puelle	301-5195	<a href="mailto:mikepuelle@mac.com">mikepuelle@mac.com</a>
Maribeth Theisen	238-4535	<a href="mailto:littledeer@littledeermusic.com">littledeer@littledeermusic.com</a>
Sherry Wolf	254-2190	<a href="mailto:wolf@libra.unm.edu">wolf@libra.unm.edu</a>

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	<a href="mailto:marilynncooper@qwest.net">marilynncooper@qwest.net</a>
Conservation Chair		
Mark Doppke	768-1160	<a href="mailto:marckdoppke@yahoo.com">marckdoppke@yahoo.com</a>
Membership/Publicity		
Michal Mudd	884-3315	<a href="mailto:mudd_pi@mac.com">mudd_pi@mac.com</a>
Newsletter		
Blair Brown	259-7190	<a href="mailto:bblairb2@aol.com">bblairb2@aol.com</a>
Outings		
David Ther	260-1553	<a href="mailto:grebik@worldnet.att.net">grebik@worldnet.att.net</a>
Political		
Richard Barish	232-3013	<a href="mailto:rdbarish@aol.com">rdbarish@aol.com</a>
Programs		
Richard Johnson	277-4144	<a href="mailto:rsheehan@unm.edu">rsheehan@unm.edu</a>
Sherry Wolf	254-2190	<a href="mailto:wolf@libra.unm.edu">wolf@libra.unm.edu</a>
River Issues		
Richard Barish	232-3013	<a href="mailto:rdbarish@aol.com">rdbarish@aol.com</a>
Water Issues		
Mark Doppke	768-1160	<a href="mailto:marckdoppke@yahoo.com">marckdoppke@yahoo.com</a>
Wildlife		
Sherry Wolf	254-2190	<a href="mailto:wolf@libra.unm.edu">wolf@libra.unm.edu</a>

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

## The New Modern Pit Facility

By Mark Doppke

On September 16, 2002, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced its intent to build a Modern Pit Facility (MPF). A Plutonium pit and its high explosive detonator is the trigger for a nuclear weapon. Five sites are on the short list for the location of the MPF: Los Alamos National Laboratory, WIPP at Carlsbad NM, the Nevada Test Site, the Pantex Plant in San Antonio, TX, and Savannah River Site in SC. The MPF will be capable of producing up to 500 pits per year and to research new types of weapons. This production rate is similar to US production at the height of the Cold War.

The Bush administration is changing the US's nuclear posture. The Bush administration has stated its desire to develop the Robust Earth Penetrating Bunker Buster and a new mini nuke. The Bunker Buster explodes deep underground and produces a huge amount of nuclear fallout from the dirt blown into the air. The rationale for the mini-nuke is to have usable nuclear weapons, presumably for targets incapable of retaliating with nuclear weapons.

The NNSA claims we need the facility to maintain the US nuclear arsenal. This is a highly questionable statement since Los Alamos National labs can currently produce pits and is gearing up to be able to produce up to 80 pits per year. Furthermore, the Bush/Clinton Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (the Moscow Treaty) states that both Russia and the US will reduce their strategic nuclear arsenal from around 8,000 deployed warheads to 2,200 or less by 2013. The US already has an estimated 4,000 pits in 'strategic reserve' and over 12,000 surplus stored at the Pantex Plant.

Rocky Flats CO was the previous Pit Facility and was closed in 1989 by the FBI investigating environmental crimes there. No adequate analysis of the human health and environmental impact has been done. 1,600 compensations claims have been filed from workers and to date only 3 have been settled. Rocky Flats also had a fire that almost got out of control that would have permanently contaminated a large area including Denver.

Federal agencies are required to complete environmental impact statement for proposed major federal actions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). They are also required to complete Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEIS) for new proposed programs. A draft supplemental PEIS is expected to be released soon. Its stated purpose is to assist the NNSA in reaching a decision on whether or not to proceed the MPF and if so where to locate it.

The current Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is flawed. It does not discuss the impact of the MPF on other nations, does not discuss violations of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, fails to analyze the MPF being a permanent disposal site for large amounts of radioactive materials, it has no adequate discussion of transportation, there is no adequate discussion on the impact to the local watershed (including the Rio Grande) and national forests. Finally, the MPF is inconsistent with WIPP's regulatory requirements and WIPP should be disqualified as a site.

America has the biggest and best conventional and nuclear forces in the world. We have no need for this facility in New Mexico or anywhere else. The 2004 fiscal budget for nuclear programs is the second highest ever; the 2005 budget is likely to be the highest ever. Ask yourself, "Why?"

For more information, go to these web sites:

Alliance for Nuclear Accountability <<http://www.ananuclear.org>>

Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety's News Archive

<<http://www.nuclearactive.org>>

Nuclear Watch of New Mexico <<http://www.nukewatch.org>>

Southwest Research and Information Center <<http://www.sric.org>>

## Rallies for Protection of Zuni Salt Lake

Two rallies are planned to show support for the protection of Zuni Salt Lake.

**Saturday, July 12th** at 5PM in Albuquerque at the Peace and Justice Center at the corner of Harvard and Silver SE, near UNM. We will view a film titled 'America's Most Endangered' by The National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has identified Zuni Salt Lake as one of the 11 most endangered historic sites.

**Saturday, July 19th** at Zuni High School in Zuni, New Mexico. The program will start at 11AM with informational presentations and remarks by Tribal and Governmental leaders. At 2:30PM, there will be a Peoples Hearing, where members of the public may testify to the public record. After the dinner break at 6PM, the People's Hearing will continue and be followed by music.

The Sierra Club is a member of the Zuni Salt Lake Coalition, a coalition of Groups formed to protect Zuni Salt Lake. All Club members are encouraged to participate. If you can go, look for Club folks there and identify yourselves as a Sierra Club member, especially to the members of the Zuni tribal community. They really appreciate our support.

We will be organizing vans and carpools to the event in Zuni on the July 19th. Call Mary Wiper at 505-243-7767 if you would like to participate. It should be a lot of fun and a chance to meet other Club members.

## Fish vs. Farmers? Don't Buy It!

By Richard Johnson

Politicians have a bad habit of framing environmental issues in terms of Humans vs. Nature. Unfortunately, the mainstream media usually adopts this rendering of environmental issues with little analysis.

The silvery minnow issue is a classic example. Politicians want the people of Albuquerque to see this issue as fish vs. farmers. In other words, if we want to save these endangered minnows, we need to take the water from the farmers on the Rio Grande.

The elephant in the room no one is talking about is Albuquerque itself. The people of Albuquerque, not farmers or minnows, are the ones who are overusing water. Every day, the moron a few doors down creates a river of water in our street. The local bank branch insists on watering its sidewalk on windy evenings. Our nearby high school is watering a practice football field in the middle of a hot, sunny afternoon. Certainly, all this wasted water could keep farmers and minnows alive.

According to a news release from the Mayor's office, by May this year Albuquerque had used almost a half a billion gallons of water—a 300 million gallon increase over this time last year. In the release, Chavez complains that "We are pouring too much water over our lawn-based landscapes in the desert." How true. (By the way, this is the same Mayor Chavez who wants to use the silvery minnow issue as a "test case" against the Endangered Species Act).

So, when we hear politicians implying that saving the minnow means hurting farmers, don't buy it. They are simply pitting two victims against each other. The real problem is that guy up the street, and that lush football practice field. If Albuquerque would control its own water use, there would be plenty of water for fish and farmers.

Unfortunately, some Rio Grande farmers are buying into these anti-environmental arguments. Many of them don't realize that Albuquerque will continue to suck up more and more water, minnow or no minnow. Driving the minnow into extinction will mean more water for Albuquerque, not farmers. In the end, politicians are simply looking out for the short-sighted interests of Albuquerque, not the interests of farmers.

If anything, farmers and conservationists should band together. Our interests are the same. Until the people of Albuquerque reform their wasteful ways, there will be less and less water for farmers and minnows. Both of these important species will soon go extinct.

*Editors Note: This article was originally printed in the July 2002 Issue of the Sierran. In light of the recent court decisions and statements by some of our political leaders, it is as relevant now as it was then.*

## Outings

**July 19-20 - Crest Trail, White Mountain Wilderness Backpack.**

Backpack trip. We will hike most or all of this spectacular high country trail. Much of this trail is above treeline in alpine meadows and this should be a good time for wildflowers. This is a moderate backpack trip - there are reliable sources of water and elevation gain is perhaps 2000 feet over the trip. Total distance is flexible - the entire trail is 18 miles but there are shorter options. May be appropriate for beginner backpackers who are comfortable with hiking 8-9 miles per day. Hiking guides refer to this as one of the very best hikes in New Mexico. Call leader for details. David Ther, 260-1553.

**Saturday, August 2nd - Narrows Rim, Cebolla Wilderness Hike.**

Moderate hike along the rim overlooking the lava flows to a viewpoint of La Ventana natural arch. We may also visit the Dittert archaeological site. Approximately 6 miles round trip, a few hundred feet elevation gain. Call leader for details. David Ther, 260-1553.

**Saturday, August 2 - "Little Columbia River Gorge" Semi-Exploratory**

Hike This canyon isn't really called by this name, but it is a short, interesting section of the Rio Puerco, a small creek that flows north from the San Pedro Parks Wilderness. The hike is not long (3-4 miles RT and less than 1000' elevation change) but is mostly off trail, with some scrambling/bushwacking possible. If we finish early, we may take a stroll on trail to the meadows of Vega Redonda or sight-see other features in the area. Plan on dinner afterwards in Cuba, late return. Rain possible, bring lunch, rain gear water and hiking gear. Drive: 220 miles RT. Call Tom Petencin (271-9928) or Rick Hurley (299-8401) for meeting time/place.

**Saturday, August 9th - Hike to The Dome**

Our destination will be the 11,273' (tree covered) summit called "The Dome", near Borrego Mesa Campground in the western part of the Pecos Wilderness (Not to be confused with the "Dome Wilderness" near Bandalier, they are different places). We'll have nice views looking into the Rio Medio Valley and possibly of the Truchas Peaks. 7-8 miles RT (on trail, unless we decide to explore a bit), Elevation change about 1850', Drive: 210 miles RT. Rain possible, bring lunch, rain gear, water and hiking gear. Plan for dinner stop, late return. Call Rick Hurley (299-8401) or Tom Petencin (271-9928) for meeting time/place.

## NEWS FROM THE CHAIR

Don Dearholt

It is time--time for all environmentalists to mobilize, for all people of good will and good reason, to mobilize like never before, to gather together and to work together, to work to see that our elected officials and the many large corporate institutions, reflect the values of conservation, of reasonable imprint upon this finite earth, of renewable energy sources, and of conservation. For some of these large corporations, government officials, and bureaucrats seem intent on actions that despoil our environment. It is sad beyond belief that in this day and age, scientific inquiry and results have sometimes been replaced by political expediency, all for short-term gain by the large corporations which have budgets enabling large political contributions. Have you ever noticed that not many of our elected officials speak up for the small companies, those now engaged in the development of alternative forms of energy, for example? Or the small companies that manufacture outdoors equipment, such as tents, sleeping bags, boots, boats, or climbing equipment, etc.? These companies can't afford the large donations to campaigns, or the entertainment budgets, or the lobbyists, that descend upon Capitol Hill like a plague every day for the oil and gas and timber corporations, among others.

It is time for a new age of self-enlightenment within the corporate culture of America, as happened in the industrial revolution when many companies discovered that it was indeed in their best interests to treat employees like real people. Now, they need to discover that this finite earth is being despoiled at an unprecedented rate; and that this is fouling the nest for all of us, including the despoilers themselves. Their legacy is not now, and will never be, a happy one.

As you probably know, the entire Cabinet full of Secretaries are appointed by the President, and his values are reflected in the current rush to development, by oil and gas companies, all places where there might

be oil or gas. It appears that his motto is to "Leave no drop behind", as if that would make up for our national thirst for nonrenewable energy. Otero Mesa, the Nutt grasslands, and of course ANWR, are pristine places where wildlife abounds, and where people can participate in a variety of studies of nature and/or recreational pursuits. How many of you have sought recreation in the oilfields east of Carlsbad? Or near Midland? But, recreation or not, the wildlife in these pristine places needs to not only survive, but to flourish; and our society needs to work rapidly and effectively toward lower energy consumption, and the development of renewable forms of energy generation.

Won't you do something this week for the environment? Please call Senator Domenici, or Representative Pearce, or the local BLM office, or volunteer your talents and services to some environmental organization which is working on issues of interest to you. For your convenience, here are phone numbers for two of Steve Pearce's offices:

**Las Cruces** 505-522-2219 400 North Telshor  
**Roswell** 505-622-0055 1717 West Second St.

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club encompasses the entire State of New Mexico, and part of west Texas including and surrounding El Paso. This is a huge geographical area, and we are mobilizing as never before, in coalitions wherever possible, to work on salvaging as much of the environmental quality as we can under the current thoughtless and selfish onslaught now taking place. We have several projects for which we're seeking funding, and these projects are as varied as the geographical features which define this spectacular and unique region of our country. If you'd like to join the Southern New Mexico Group in our efforts these next months, please call me soon at 505-522-3035; we can surely put your talents and energy to work.

## UP-COMING PLANNING MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS:

**Wednesday, August 6--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 have a long and important agenda, including the three foci recently decided upon--the Nutt Grasslands, Otero Mesa, and assuring that the current representative to congress from District 2 is retired after one term. We'll also begin planning our fall projects and program meetings.

## Otero Mesa Coalition Happenings

To help you plan ahead, we're including the following events, most of which will take place on Otero Mesa. Please plan on attending as many of these as you can, and bring friends!

**September 13, Media and Grassroots Training, Carlsbad, NM.** Open to all members and friends of wilderness. Learn how to be a more effective advocate for wildlands. For more info ask for Stephen Capra in Albuquerque at 505/843-8696 or [steve@nmwild.org](mailto:steve@nmwild.org)

**September 26-28, Science Research Weekend in Otero Mesa.** Members and friends all welcome to come and help with Varied Research Projects. Contact Nathan Newcomer in Albuquerque at 505/843-8696 or [nathan@nmwild.org](mailto:nathan@nmwild.org)

**October 4, Outing to Otero Mesa.** Exploring the petroglyphs and unique vegetation around Alamo Mountain. Some may wish to climb to summit. For more information call Greta Balderrama in Las Cruces at 505/527-9962 or [greta@nmwild.org](mailto:greta@nmwild.org)

**October 17-19, Otero Mesa Religious Retreat & the creation of an interfaith Advisory Statement.** A time of prayerful reflection and working as a group to reach conclusions about Otero Mesa's value and meaning. For more information visit <http://www.oteromesa.org/ReligiousOuting.htm> or contact Stephen Capra in Albuquerque at 505/843-8696 or [steve@nmwild.org](mailto:steve@nmwild.org)

## COMING EVENTS: OUTINGS

**July 12- Saturday: Discovery hike to Monument Spring in the Sacramentos.** Long drive but easy hike. Call Ben at 526-7811.

**August 9th: Trip to the Armandaris to watch the second largest bat population in North America fly from their lava tubes.** Also visit the new prairie dog towns and drive through herds of bison. Meet at the ranch headquarters in Engle. Bring your four wheel drives, binoculars and a lunch. Call Margot Wilson for the rendezvous time at 505-744-5860.

**Sept 6th: Tour the Nutt Grasslands Complex south of Hillsboro and the Cookes Peak area with Chris Havstad of the Jornada Experimental Range.** See the diversity of one of New Mexico's grasslands and the habitat of many migratory birds. Bring sunscreen, binoculars and a lunch. We will meet at Jim Winder's ranch. Call Margot Wilson, 505-744-5860, or David Farrell, 505-895-3352, for directions.

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

## Group Directory

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

Don Dearholt Chair, Chapter Rep. 522-3035 <a href="mailto:dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu">dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu</a>	Cathy Mathews Secretary 649-8761 <a href="mailto:cburr@las-cruces.org">cburr@las-cruces.org</a>
Margot Wilson Vice Chair, Conservation Chair 744-5860 <a href="mailto:margotwilson40@hotmail.com">margotwilson40@hotmail.com</a>	David Farrell Legislative Issues 895-3352 <a href="mailto:dafarrelli@hotmail.com">dafarrelli@hotmail.com</a>
Cheryll Blevins Treasurer 524-4861 <a href="mailto:spotblev@earthlink.net">spotblev@earthlink.net</a>	



## The Battle for El Paso: THE JOBE FACTOR

by Taylor Moore

Last year a congressional study made a futile attempt to learn about the environmental effects of conducting gravel mining in a metropolitan area. The report of the investigation is online at [http://www.house.gov/reform/min/pdfs/pdf\\_inves/pdf\\_enviro\\_gravel\\_mining\\_rep.pdf](http://www.house.gov/reform/min/pdfs/pdf_inves/pdf_enviro_gravel_mining_rep.pdf). It discusses the numerous pollutants produced by such operations, their potential links to respiratory and cardiovascular problems (asthma, lung cancer, strokes and heart attacks) and the appalling absence of concern by those who are supposed to be regulating this politically powerful industry. It should be of maximum interest to anyone living near a potential gravel mining operation.

Areas like El Paso and southern New Mexico, that already have high levels of toxic air pollutants, are especially vulnerable to gravel mining operations because the operation generates large quantities of dust in the process of digging, transporting and processing the sand and gravel. The heavy machinery used to mine and transport the materials burn large quantities of diesel which multiplies the toxic air problems. Vain attempts are made to control dust by utilizing vast amounts of water which, in turn, gets contaminated by the mining operation. The congressional study found that environmental regulators do not know what types or quantities of pollutants the mining operations may release to surface water or groundwater in the area.

It is with increasing alarm that El Pasoans are watching the development of a quarry at the foot of Mount Cristo Rey, where Jobe Concrete Products, Inc. has just acquired over 300 acres inside the city limits of Sunland Park. Eric Kappus, a UTEP graduate student, recently discovered dinosaur tracks on the site, which is located directly across the river from Jobe's 450 acre El Toro Quarry. The quarry will straddle the Texas/New Mexico border and will be smack in the middle of the communities of El Paso, Ciudad Juarez and Sunland Park.

Is the area contaminated? It is in the shadow of the ASARCO smelter. Environmental regulators found that an area 200 square miles downwind from ASARCO's Tacoma, Washington smelter was contaminated by lead and arsenic. Recent EPA soil tests reflect that residences in a large area of west El Paso contain unacceptable levels of lead and arsenic. But on flimsy grounds of landowner's privacy the EPA refuses to reveal the results of soil tests on the Jobe sites. Privacy is a thin reed for the EPA to hide behind because privacy doesn't trump public health. Maybe the tooth fairy saved El Paso. Our region's regulators must think so because they are purposely looking the other way while Jobe proceeds with its plans.

Unless an organization like the Sierra Club forces our environmental regulators to start doing their job, Jobe is going to develop a huge quarry in the middle of a large metropolitan area; create a public health problem for future generations to solve; spread toxic material throughout the region; desecrate the region's most important religious monument; destroy the dinosaur tracks; create a large scar on a beautiful mountain, and facilitate all of this by using vast amounts of water, when there is none to spare.

Do you sometimes think that the world has gone mad? Or is it just the polluters and their regulators.

## Selected Outings

### July 18-20: Redstone Park/Whitewater Creek/DelOche Backpack

Place: Gila Wilderness east of Glenwood, NM

Class: Moderate+

Length: 13 miles

Elevation gain: 1200 feet

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

We will depart Friday evening and drive to our usual car camp site on Whitewater Mesa, at the Gold Dust Trailhead. After leaving a car or two at the Deloche Trailhead, we will continue up the Bursum Road to the Redstone Trailhead. Our hike will follow the Redstone Trail to Redstone Park and then the Whitewater Creek trail downstream to a fabled meadow to camp for the night. Owen says there are the remains of a plane crash in this part of the Canyon. On Sunday, we will continue downstream to the Deloche Canyon Trail Junction. At this point, we will leave the Creek and make a steep climb up to the ridge on the Deloche Canyon Trail and then drop down to our vehicles. Come enjoy the beauty of one of the Gila's longest creeks. Be prepared for rain and mosquitoes.

### July 27: Three Rivers Dayhike

Place: White Mountains northeast of Tularosa, NM

Class: Easy to Moderate

Length: 3-8 miles

Elevation gain: 300 to 1000 feet

Leader: Carolina Greenfield (915) 526-7884 (M)

This hike is a favorite in the heat of summer, as it wanders alongside the stream in the shade of the tall pines. It can be a short walk or a strenuous push to the ridge bordering Ski Apache. An intermediate destination would be the old Boy Scout Camp about halfway up. We'll tailor it to the abilities of the group. This is also a great family picnic spot where the kids can splash in the water without worry. Some of the family could picnic while others make the hike.

### August 16-17: Deloche/Gold Dust Backpack

Place: Gila Wilderness east of Glenwood, NM

Class: Moderate

Length: 14 miles total

Elevation gain: 700 feet

Leader: Harry Newman (915) 588-7192 [Swtraveller@aol.com](mailto:Swtraveller@aol.com)

After carcamping Friday night, we will hike up Deloche Canyon in the morning, enjoying the views during the descent into Whitewater Creek. We will follow the creek downstream to the campsite, hiking along ruins of mine roads and enjoying canyon scenery. After setting up camp, there should be shallow pools for swimming or just cooling off. Sunday morning we will hike out of the canyon using the Gold Dust Trail. Beginners are welcome; but participants should be able to carry enough water for each uphill portion.

### August 30-September 1: Labor Day Loop Backpack

Place: Gila Wilderness near Glenwood, NM

Class: Moderately Strenuous

Length: 17 miles

Elevation gain: 4000 feet

Leader: Laurence Gibson (915) 594-7342 (H) [lgibson@utep.edu](mailto:lgibson@utep.edu)

After a quiet Friday-night carcamp at Sheridan Corral, our exit point, we'll drive around to the Catwalk and hit the trail for Tennessee Meadow up the south fork of Whitewater Creek. After this long first day, we'll climb another 1800 feet during the shorter hike over to Holt Spring, where we'll camp Sunday night. The short hike down to the vehicles at Sheridan should get us back home early, refreshed for fall's challenges.

## 2003 El Paso Regional Group Directory (Area Code 915)

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

### Chair

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

### Vice Chair

Jim Gibson: \* 593-0506  
[jgibson932@aol.com](mailto:jgibson932@aol.com)

### Secretary

Ann Falknor: \* 833-9162  
[afalknor@whc.net](mailto:afalknor@whc.net)

### Treasurer

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

### Editor

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

### ExCom Members \*

Ted Mertig: \* 852-3011  
[tmertig@earthlink.net](mailto:tmertig@earthlink.net)  
Jose Escobedo: \* 751-1834  
[escobedo25@hotmail.com](mailto:escobedo25@hotmail.com)  
Greg Lawson: \* 532-7273  
[vegetexan@aol.com](mailto:vegetexan@aol.com)  
Liz Walsh: \* 584-1471  
[ewalsh@utep.edu](mailto:ewalsh@utep.edu)

### Chapter Delegate

Jose Escobedo: 751-1834  
[escobedo@hotmail.com](mailto:escobedo@hotmail.com)

### Chap Delegate Alternate

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

### Inner City Outings

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

### Outings

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

### Outings

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

### Membership

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

### Webmaster

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

## Whiskey's For Drinkin', Water's for Cooperatin'

The 10th Circuit Federal Appeals Court's recent decision in the silvery minnow lawsuit has provoked a new round of outraged declarations of "judicial larceny" by western water users and their legislative and administrative champions. After six months of deliberations, the higher court affirmed Judge Parker's decision that the Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) "has discretion to reduce deliveries of water... to comply with" the Endangered Species Act.

Will this lead to BoR actually taking water from the City of Albuquerque or the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) this year? Probably not. For one thing, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has already set quite modest "target flows," requiring only 100 cubic feet/second (cfs) to flow at the Central Avenue Bridge for the minnow. Although some environmentalists have expressed uncertainty about whether this prescription will prevent the minnow's extinction, Rio Grande water managers should have little trouble keeping the channel wet as it flows through Albuquerque.

Most significantly, a recent interstate pact—the Emergency Drought Water Agreement, which swapped New Mexico water-supply credits in Elephant Butte Reservoir south of Albuquerque for water storage rights in El Vado and McClure Reservoirs upstream:

- provides 30,000 acre feet of water to sustain the minnow;
- bolsters Santa Fe's water supply;
- provides MRGCD farmers with 70,000 acre feet of irrigation water in this second consecutive dry year; and
- provides additional water for fish and farmers in 2004.

Nevertheless, Judge Parker's newly affirmed decision seems likely to fuel renewed attacks on the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in Congress. Opponents of the ESA have long proclaimed against the indignity of a seemingly insignificant little fish having the right to disrupt human economic aspirations.

Using the minnow decision as a ploy to repeal the ESA would be cheap, cynical, and self-serving. Western congressmen may challenge the notion that rivers, species, and ecosystems have a right to persist and thrive, but they must also recognize that their destruction may have undesirable consequences.

A more dispassionate view is that society in the western United States is being sent a signal—that it is time to recognize, and accommodate, the fact that water is scarce here. If we own up to the fact of water scarcity, our appropriate response would be a shift:

- away from aggressively promoting every sort of economic growth,
- toward thoughtfully trying to accommodate such growth,
- while also protecting values we profess to hold dear—our farms, rivers, rural communities, and the very system that sustains us all.

A glance at western history might prove instructive. When the Reclamation Act passed Congress in 1902, western rivers and other resources were viewed as abundant, "under-developed," and ripe for the taking. Throughout the 20th Century, the federal government's stated goal was to control and develop western rivers and resources. To win the great wars of 1918 and 1941, we drastically accelerated the exploitation of western mines, forests, rivers, and ranges. A great deal of wealth and power was thus created. By the end of World War II, the West had become one big boom town, and the present power structure had emerged. Almost unnoticed in the frenzied competition of the past 50 years is the fact that we may have exceeded the limits of what the land can actually provide.

Now, in the beginning of the 21st Century, is the time when we will have to use our fabled ingenuity to regain our balance, or else prepare for the bust. If our legal and political systems actually permit us to exhaust our water, our occupation of this valley,

cooperation. Everything, the court seems to say, is on the table:

- Perhaps Albuquerque will have a new water supply, but much of it will have to come from individual acts of conservation and increased

**"[By enacting the Endangered Species Act,]  
Congress sought to recognize that endangered species provide  
'keys to puzzles we cannot solve,  
and may provide answers to questions which we have not yet learned to ask.'"**

—10th Circuit Court of Appeals, June 2003

and many others, will become precarious, indeed.

As the appellants, facing an intolerable "loss of control" over "their" water, prepare their lawyers to challenge the minnow decision in the Supreme Court, let us pause and consider what the moderate jurists of the 10th Circuit wrote in their opinion:

"[By enacting the ESA,] Congress sought to recognize that endangered species provide 'keys to puzzles we cannot solve, and may provide answers to questions which we have not yet learned to ask.' Like all parts of that puzzle, the silvery minnow provides a measure of the vitality of the Rio Grande ecosystem, a community that can thrive only when all of its myriad components... are in balance."

In issuing his minnow decision, Judge Parker has suggested a course for us to follow in the Middle Rio Grande—achieve balance by learning the lesson of

circumspection in the development industries.

- Maybe the valley's farmers can continue to be productive, but the MRGCD will have to become more restrained, more consistent in scheduling their irrigation.
- It is possible that New Mexico will maintain sovereignty over its water supplies, but it will have to learn to manage that water cautiously and deliberately, within the limits imposed by nature.

It may be, though it is by no means certain, that the Rio Grande can continue to flow in these times of water scarcity, but only if all its human dependents will share the responsibility for making it so.

For more information, contact Steve Harris in Pilar (751-1269; [unclegr@laplaza.org](mailto:unclegr@laplaza.org)).

—Steve Harris  
Director, Rio Grande Restoration

## Water-saving Contest Calls for Community Values

Last summer, the water supply in Santa Fe was so threatened by loss of surface water that the Northern Group ran a full-page ad in the *New Mexican*, encouraging residents to lobby the City Council for controls on rampant urban sprawl that results in steadily climbing demand on our water. As part of this ad, the Club offered \$1,000 for the best idea from a member of the community to save water (<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/ad.pdf>). One criterion was that submissions come from a team, which was meant to stress the importance of working together on solutions.

Although no one idea won the first prize, a range of ideas presented the sort of values that we need to promote within the community.

The first prize of \$500 was awarded to Kevin Pino and Laura May. Their suggestion was entitled "Fund research and development of safe, practical, affordable greywater systems and provide tax incentives for the installation of greywater systems." Their submission was considered particularly important because it affirmed two key factors:

- greywater systems can be made safe and effective; and
- financial incentives for things like recycling water should be integral to the building process.

This ought to be a straightforward process for the Club to pursue politically—we passed a milestone when the 2003 Legislature legalized the use of greywater (see *Sierra May/June 2003*).

The remaining \$500 of the contest money was split among four teams. Ned Sudborough and Marvin VanDilla assembled a rainwater-collection system using a 32-gallon trash can, a hose connection at the bottom, and minimal tools—for a grand total of \$12.50. The simplicity, accessibility, and minimal expense of this effective technique was inspiring.

Karen and Walter Menetrey encouraged the use of rainwater-collection systems for the rooftops of public buildings. They pointed out that a single 20,000-square-foot public building in a half-inch rainstorm would collect 3,125 gallons of water which, properly handled, could even be drinking water. Consider this Class 1 error: Next to the State Library, the State of New Mexico is building a three-story building which has about 26,000 square feet of roof area—but only 500 gallons of storage.

Another team advocated the slowing of runoff in arroyos and rivers to encourage groundwater recharge. Bill Zeedyk has developed this concept from theory into practice, initially working in Mexico and more recently in the Southwest ([www.quirviracoalition.com](http://www.quirviracoalition.com)). We thank the team from along the Santa Cruz River in La Puebla—Joe Matteson, Beth and Bob Detwiler, Mogi and Dick Hogle, Doris Wickersham, and Claire Clay—for pointing out our potential to create healthier streams.

Finally, a team from a housing compound in Santa Fe highlighted the use of swales, sponges, and mulch. During last summer's meager rainfall, Mary Neikirk, Nancy Enright, and Kevin Hart made some salient observations about these basic techniques:

- causing water to pool and settle rather than entirely running off,
- using junk bonds and useless stock certificates as mulch to store water under garden bushes;
- and yes, using that good old, tried-and-true organic mulch.

—John Buchser  
Chapter Conservation Chair

## Richardson Admin. on Energy (cont. from page 5)

importantly, will help them get financing by demonstrating that their "source" can deliver. Many of us complain about the annoying winds in New Mexico (particularly us contact-wearers); we might as well take advantage of it!

Solar is also on the horizon (so to speak). Legislation is being considered to provide a tax credit for small-scale residential and commercial solar installations—primarily photovoltaics and solar water heating. This would act to help to stimulate New Mexico's solar industry. On a larger scale, a technology known as "concentrating solar power" (CSP) is being pursued. CSP electric power is currently more expensive than wind power, but costs are expected to come down (as they did for wind) as more projects are developed.

## Leading by Example

The Governor is committed to making state government "walk its talk" with respect to incorporating clean energy measures into all aspects of its operations and new building construction. It's hard to have credibility championing the clean-energy message without getting our own house in order.

The Governor is expected to issue an executive order this summer, directing state government to pursue a host of clean-energy strategies including:

- reducing fuel usage by promoting carpooling for intercity travel and utilizing the more fuel-efficient vehicles for on-road travel;
- purchasing only alternative-fueled or fuel-efficient vehicles, unless the intended use justifies otherwise;
- retrofitting existing state buildings with energy-efficient lighting and heating/cooling controls;
- purchasing only energy-efficient appliances, fixtures, and equipment; and
- constructing new buildings and facilities that meet aggressive energy-efficient standards.

With respect to new construction, the longer-term goal is "green building"—energy efficiency, water efficiency, passive natural lighting, non-toxic building materials, etc. While green building construction is slightly more expensive at the "front end," the long-term energy savings yield a lower life-cycle cost than traditional construction.

A tangential but important benefit of this effort is reduced operating costs. The energy- and transportation-related measures to be implemented will offer impressive electric-utility and fuel cost savings. Both the taxpayer and the environment come out ahead!

## Promote Energy Efficiency

In the early months of the administration, the focus has been on renewables—adopting measures, legislation, and whatever else is necessary to reach the 10% goal. More recently, however, energy efficiency is being emphasized as an important complement to renewables. The Southwest Energy Efficiency Project issued a report last year indicating that New Mexico energy usage could be reduced by more than 30% by adopting aggressive, but reasonable, energy-efficiency measures. The study concluded that, not only would the environment benefit (less air emissions and water demands from electric power production, less energy resource extraction, etc.), but that citizens and businesses would benefit as well—keeping more of consumers' energy dollars in their pockets can stimulate the economy by increasing discretionary spending.

While a comprehensive energy-efficiency program is still in the planning stage, some areas being considered are:

- adopting state-of-the-art energy-efficient building standards;

- tax credits for purchasing "Energy Star" and other energy-efficient appliances, for energy-efficient construction, and for expanding the residential weatherization program; and
- working with the Public Regulation Commission and utilities to establish utility-based efficiency programs.

With home heating costs expected to be extremely high next winter due to natural gas prices, energy efficiency makes sense now more than ever.

## Link Clean Energy with Economic Development

For too long, many have believed the myth that preserving environmental quality and promoting a strong economy are at odds with one another. Renewable energy and energy efficiency offer the opportunity to help debunk that myth. Governor Richardson has emphasized the important role clean energy can play in stimulating the state's economy. That's why the Economic Development Department, in concert with EMNRD, is aggressively involved with renewable energy development.

Wind projects, for example, stimulate economic development in rural areas both by creating construction jobs and by providing wind turbine lease payments to the property owners. At anywhere from \$2,000-4000 in lease payments per wind turbine per year, I wouldn't mind allowing a few wind turbines on my land! (Unfortunately, I don't think City of Santa Fe zoning codes would let me get away with it.) Long-term drought projections will challenge the ranching and farming-based economies of eastern New Mexico. Wind farms, and possibly in the future concentrating solar power plants, offer the opportunity to diversify and, therefore, stabilize the economies of rural New Mexico.

## A Long Way to Go . . .

Compared with a host of other states, New Mexico hasn't exactly been a leader in clean energy. We've got a long way to go, and much needs to be done to realize the Governor's vision of New Mexico "rising to the top" in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Our Department (EMNRD) is currently involved with:

- identifying the critical components of a clean-energy plan,
- securing reliable funding sources to stimulate clean-energy development, and
- educating policy-makers and legislators to make it all happen.

Join us!

Sign up on-line

www.sierraclub.org/membership

or return this form:

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CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,250
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.

We will continue to rely on New Mexico's fossil fuel-derived resources for some time to come. In addition to the global-warming and air-quality concerns associated with those sources, they are, of course, finite and ultimately will be depleted. Now is the time to start making the transition to an energy-supply portfolio that takes advantage of New Mexico's clean, renewable resources.

We didn't move beyond the Stone Age because we ran out of stones. We're not going to move beyond the Fossil Fuel Age because we've run out of fossil fuels but because we've developed a better, cleaner technology to meet our needs (*modified from physicist/philosopher Fritjof Capra*).

For more information, contact Craig O'Hare, Special Assistant for Renewable Energy, at the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (476-3207; cohare@state.nm.us).

—Craig O'Hare

Rio Grande Chapter  
2003 Election Schedule

The Executive Committee (ExCom) is required to specify dates and deadlines for the annual election. They are as follows:

- ExCom ratified a Nominating Committee (NomCom—D. Farrell, *Chair*; K. Hughes, M. Mudd, T. Merrig, A. Jacobson) and an Election Committee (M. Mudd, *Chair*) at the June 2003 Chapter meeting.
- NomCom must receive names for consideration by 9/6.
- NomCom reports names of nominees to ExCom by 9/15.
- Candidate petitions and ballot-issue petitions must be received by 9/22.
- Chapter must deliver eligible voter lists to printer by 10/8.
- Ballots must be printed and mailed by 10/10 (allowing at least four weeks for return).
- Returned ballots must be postmarked on or before 11/20.
- Ballots will be counted at 7:00 PM, 11/24 in Albuquerque.

## Walking Together, Working Together Creates Comraderie, Builds Community

It is one day away from the summer solstice as I write this. Wonderful long days and balmy air—my very favorite time of the year. Unusually heavy rains in the mountains for June, normally quite dry, perhaps another indicator of climate changes and global warming trends.

I recently sat on the patio of the retiring president of the Cerrillos Hills Coalition, enjoying a potluck supper and the lively conversation of Coalition members. I was honored to have been asked to serve on their board, and this was my first meeting. I had, for many years, winter hiked in this mellow landscape, sometimes with friends, sometimes on Sierra outings; now it would be my turn to help preserve and protect it. The Coalition has been working for some time to create a park in these historic mining hills, got county open-space funding to purchase the

tract, and after many bureaucratic delays, celebrated the park's opening last month. They have planned a whole series of tours to introduce the public to its many interesting geological and cultural features\*, and also continue to work on environmental issues associated with several nearby sand and gravel operations—a wonderful example of local initiative and involvement creating a community of people who care about the place where they live as well as the broader implications of changing times.

You, too, as Sierrans, can get involved with nearby issues in the company of other members and the collaboration of other concerned groups. Next

weekend, the Chapter will be voting on funding projects proposed by our five Groups, and many more egregious issues are out there, waiting to be tackled by local citizens. Attend your Group's General and Conservation meetings, and hear firsthand what is happening; read the many good articles in this newsletter.

Go check out one of our outings, feel your mind and body refreshed and rejuvenated by our still glorious outdoors, and enjoy the camaraderie of the other participants. Then, in the company of Sierrans, friends and neighbors, dig in and work on the project of your choice. You may be surprised what a gratifying sense of community you are creating in these troubled and deeply disturbing times.

—Norma McCallan

\* See the current list of Cerrillos Hills tours on the Northern Group pages, (p. 16-17).

### Selected Sierra Club Outings for July, August, and September 2003

Friday-Sunday, July 18-20 • Rio Grande Pyramid Backpack, San Juan Mountains, CO—Wonderful vistas, easy climb. Abe Jacobson (672-9579—Los Alamos).

Friday-Sunday, July 18-20 • Redstone Park/Whitewater Creek/Deloch Canyon Backpack—Moderate, 13-mile backpack in one of the Gila's longest creeks. Rollin Wickenden (915/855-6697—El Paso).

Saturday, July 19 • Cruces River Basin Hike—Strenuous, exploratory hike, with carcamp the night before, in this remote area near the Colorado border. Lavi Malhotra (995-8547—Santa Fe).

Saturday-Sunday, July 19-20 • Crest Trail Backpack, White Mountain Wilderness—Moderate trip, much of it above timberline with great wildflowers. 2,000' elevation overall. David Ther (260-1553—Albuquerque).

Sunday, July 20 • Los Griegos Ridge Hike, Jemez Mountains—Strenuous hike. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354—Santa Fe).

Sunday, July 27 • Three Rivers Hike, White Mountains—Easy to strenuous options; good family trip. Carolina Greenfield (915/526-7884—El Paso).

Saturday, August 2 • Trampas Lakes and Beyond Hike—Strenuous, great high-mountain setting. Michael Di Rosa (663-0648—Los Alamos).

Saturday, August 9 • Armendaris Ranch Bat Cave Tour—Short walk to the second-largest bat cave in North America, near Truth or Consequences; also view prairie dog towns and bison herd. Margot Wilson (744-5860—TorC).

Sunday, August 10 • Hamilton Mesa Hike, Pecos Wilderness—Moderate hike. Great wildflowers. Michael Goldey (820-7302—SF).

Saturday, August 16 • Lake Katherine Hike—Strenuous hike to this beautiful lake below Santa Fe Baldy. Les Drapela (438-3306—SF).

Saturday, August 23 • Santa Fe Baldy Hike—Strenuous hike to 12,600'. Dan Rusthoi (690-8967—Santa Fe).

Friday-Monday, August 29-September 1 • Colorado Sangre de Cristo Backpacks—Explore two trails on east side of the Sangres. Both are two-day backpacks to alpine lakes, moderate pace. Norma McCallan (471-0005—Santa Fe).

Saturday, September 6 • Chihuahuan Grasslands Field Trip—Visit Jim Winder's Ranch near Nutt, NM, with Chris Haystad from the Jornada Research Station. Margot Wilson (744-5860—TorC).

Saturday, September 6 • Deception Peak Hike—Moderate/strenuous hike from the Santa Fe Ski Basin to 12,000'. Mike Goldey (820-7302—Santa Fe).

Saturday, September 13 • Hermit Peak and El Porvenir Canyon Hike—Strenuous hike loop near Las Vegas. Dan Rusthoi (690-8967—Santa Fe).

Saturday, September 20 • Placer Mountain, Ortiz Range Hike—Strenuous and steep hike to the highest point of the Ortiz Range, with a guide from the Santa Fe Botanical Garden, which now oversees the former Gold Mine property. Eliza Schmid (474-5846—SF).

Please check the five Groups' pages for more information on these trips, and for additional activities.

All area codes are 505, except as noted.

(woodcut by Carolyn Keskulla; for more of her work, see pages 7-9 in this issue, and [www.carolynkeskulla.net](http://www.carolynkeskulla.net))

### The New Ranch: Hope on the Range

The Quivira Coalition offers two tours of progressive ranches in New Mexico:

September 3-7, 2003 (Wed-Sun) and

September 29 to October 3, 2003 (Mon-Friday)

Tour Destinations:

Carrizo Valley Ranch with Sid & Cheryl Goodloe

The USDA Jornada Experimental Range with Dr. Kris Havstad

The Gray Ranch with Dr. Ben Brown and Bill McDonald

Birding on The U Bar Ranch with Dr. Roland Shook

The Williams Ranch with Jim & Joy Williams

Price per Person: \$1,250 (includes travel and most meals)

(A generous portion of this amount is tax deductible.)



A small but growing progressive ranching movement is reinventing the profession. If you are interested in the future of land and people in the rural Southwest, this tour is for you. This will be a great opportunity to see deer, pronghorn, raptors, endangered bird species, and some of the most beautiful horizons in New Mexico.

Call 505-820-2544 for information.

### Rio Grande Chapter Quarterly Meetings

The Rio Grande Chapter will meet next on 6-7 September 2003 at the Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge just south of Socorro.

The Conservation Committee will meet on Saturday; the Executive Committee will meet on Sunday morning.

All members are invited. If you would like to attend, please contact Chapter Chair Doug Fraser; to arrange carpools, please contact Group Chairs (see Masthead, page 2).

The Chapter's winter meeting is scheduled for 6-7 December 2003, also at Sevilleta.