

Rio Grande Sierran



NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB MAY/JUNE 2003

Ojito Could be Largest Wilderness Bill for New Mexico in 16 Years

The effort to secure permanent Wilderness protection for the Ojito Wilderness Study Area and the surrounding wild lands is continuing to gain momentum and broad-based support. Environmental groups including the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness, and the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance are working in close alliance with the Pueblo of T'siya to protect Ojito. This remarkable collaborative effort has brought a new dimension to conservation in New Mexico and has made substantial progress toward the preservation of this incredible landscape.

The Ojito Wilderness Study Area (WSA) was actually recommended for Wilderness status by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) more than ten years ago. The WSA contains approximately 11,000 acres and is characterized by dramatic land formations and rock structures, multi-colored badlands, as well as a multitude of cultural, archaeological, and paleontological sites. The Pueblo of T'siya recognizes numerous sites of religious and cultural significance in the Ojito WSA, as well as the surrounding wild lands. As a result, the proposed legislation protecting the Ojito area includes both:

- permanent Wilderness status for the Ojito Wilderness Study Area; and
- the transfer of the surrounding buffer lands to the Pueblo of T'siya.

In return, T'siya will be legally bound to maintain public access to the proposed Ojito Wilderness Area and the transferred lands. They will also be legally bound to preserve the surrounding land by managing it as *de facto* Wilderness. In order to ensure continued access, the Pueblo of T'siya has extended a remarkable gesture of good faith by including in the legislation a limited waiver of sovereign immunity. This guarantees that, if access is ever restricted to the public, the Pueblo of T'siya has allowed itself to be brought into federal court. In another demonstration of its conservation goals, T'siya Pueblo has a plan for prairie dog reintroduction once the land transfer is complete.

The collaborative effort between environmental groups and the Pueblo of T'siya is only one indication of the broad-based support behind this initiative. Across the political spectrum, many of New Mexico's leaders stand behind the protection of Ojito. Most notably, Governor Bill Richardson

(continued on page 4)



The Ojito Wilderness Study Area encompasses 10,794 acres of state land and 638 acres of U.S. Bureau of Land Management Land in north central New Mexico (see map, page 4; photo by Bill Stone).

Rio Grande Chapter Priorities for the 2003 Legislative Session

For information about the state of legislation pertaining to these issues and much more, see the Legislative Report (pages 18-23).

First-priority Issues

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

Second-priority Issues

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

Farmers and Environmentalists Challenge Albuquerque's Plan to Divert River Water

The City of Albuquerque has applied for a permit to divert 47,000 acre-feet of San Juan-Chama Project water, along with an equal amount of native Rio Grande water, from the river. A historic alliance of farmers and environmentalists has protested Albuquerque's application. A hearing on the protest concluded in late February 2003.

The San Juan-Chama Project diverts water from the San Juan River basin, through a mountain tunnel in northwest New Mexico, into the Chama River, which flows into the Rio Grande at Española. The native Rio Grande water that Albuquerque seeks to divert would be returned to the river about 14 miles downstream as treated effluent.

The historic alliance of farmers and environmentalists includes:

- the Assessment Payers Association of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District,
- the Socorro Soil and Water Conservation District,
- one individual farmer,
- the Sierra Club,
- Rio Grande Restoration,
- Amigos Bravos, and
- the New Mexico Public Interest Research Group.

The protestants do not object to Albuquerque using San Juan-Chama water, but they do object to

(continued on page 7)



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SIERRA CLUB STRUCTURE

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

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



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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 315, El Rito, NM 87530). 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.

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Congratulations!

Three of our very own Rio Grande Chapter leaders have recently been recognized and honored by appointments to advisory boards within the Richardson Administration. Commissioner of State Lands Pat Lyons has appointed Chapter Chair Doug Fraser to its Advisory Committee on the Environment and Cultural Resources. The Governor has appointed Paul Paryski, Conservation Chair of the Northern Group, to his Blue Ribbon Water Task Force; and Gwen Wardwell, Political/Legislative Chair for the Chapter, to the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board.

MAY/JUNE 2003

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Ever since the anthrax scares in late 2001 and early 2002, postal mail has been the least effective way to contact elected officials in Washington, DC.

A Note From the Chair

To begin, I would like to comment on my first tour of the Water Festival programs for fourth-grade elementary school students in the region. This is a collaborative endeavor which is, in my humble opinion, the most important thing we as environmentalists and conservationists can do—that is to pass on to our children our knowledge and concern for sustainability through stewardship of our land and resources. To watch the young kids eagerly absorbing all the different program approaches—from aquatic life to water pollution—reminded me of why I have spent most of my professional career in this movement. Truly an inspiration. Thanks to all who contribute to this program (the Chapter does help financially), and particularly to Susan Gorman and Blair Brown (Chapter Treasurer) who are the primary organizers. Please read their article on page 6. I hope the Festival will spread throughout our Chapter region. (Presently, it has been offered only in Albuquerque and Santa Fe.)

Next, my wife Kathy and I attended the Second Annual High Plains Lesser Prairie Chicken Festival this past April 11-13 in Mlinesand, New Mexico. It was another great collaborative effort, involving Eastern NM University, the State Game



and Fish Department, local ranchers, and conservationists. The good news: the numbers of birds appear to be increasing. We aren't sure why, but a 10-year study is underway. Who says we can't work together? But getting up at 4:00AM to watch the grouse (they are not chickens) prance, strut, hop, and boom takes a lot out of a normal human who is not so inclined to expend such singular energy for the perpetuation of the species at such an hour. A special thanks to the local ranchers and the community of

Mlinesand for not only their great hospitality, but also for their work in reviving the prairie chicken habitat. Special thanks go to Jim and Cris Weaver and their Grasslands Charitable Foundation, and Charles and Brenda Dixon of Wildlife Plus. Thanks also to the State Game and Fish Department, particularly Lesser Prairie-chicken Biologist Dawn Davis, Supervisor for Game Bird Management Bill Dunn, consultant Tish McDaniel, and State Game and Fish Department Director Larry Bell whose last day was April 25th. (Larry will be missed.) Remember, second weekend in April 2004, if you want to attend. Mlinesand is halfway between Portales and Tatum, New Mexico.

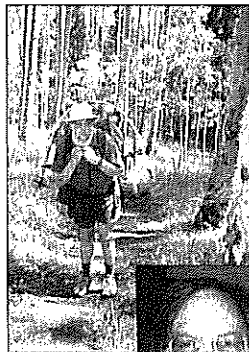
—Doug Fraser

Chapter Conservation Chair John Buchser

You know John Buchser's name, and probably you John himself, because he's been with the Club for better than 25 years now, he's worn a lot of hats, and he's covered a lot of ground—and the better part of most of our rivers. John's serving as Chapter Conservation Chair now, with a special interest in water issues, but he came to us at first as a volunteer on trail maintenance hikes (and that's where he met his wife Linda). Over time, he has served on the Santa Fe (Northern) Group Executive Committee (including chairing the committee); and he's herded us as Chapter chair and editor of the *Sierra*.

About his advocacy for water conservation, he says, "I'm sorry it took so many years of low precipitation to get us thinking about it, but I'm pleased we're thinking about it, because I think there's still a chance of meeting all our needs—the needs of people and the environment."

He says that in the spirit of nearly bottomless hope and good will, because he also says, "Today, I have to say I think the Rio Grande is going to die. I've seen it where it runs through El Paso (and I've seen the Salt River where it runs through Phoenix). When you see the river valley through Albuquerque, you think, 'That's really



nice.' But then I see where we're headed and that we're not very far from losing it."

Leadership positions within the Chapter have ushered John into a richer kind of engagement with people who love New Mexico and with the dynamics of issues. He explains, "I'm finding that, because I'm in this position, people are more likely to share their perspectives with me. I have a chance to get people together. I'm hearing from people with common interests who wouldn't by any stretch call themselves environmentalists—legislators for instance. It's great to see

them taking on environmental issues, and pretty satisfying to find someone who knows how to work with their interests and skills."

Weekdays, John's designing, implementing, and maintaining computer systems for the State Engineer's Office—immersed in the workings of state water issues from the inside, literally. But after hours, look for him on skis, or in a raft, or hiking with a saw in his pack.

—Marty Peale



WOLVES AND MORE WILDERNESS

Otero Mesa and Cabezon Also Climbing NM Wilderness

Support for protecting Otero Mesa continues to grow. In a letter to U.S. Secretary of Interior Gale Norton, Governor Richardson reiterated his opposition to oil and gas drilling there, at least until the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) studies the Wilderness potential in the area. In addition, the letter asks for the "designation of a significant wilderness area." This brave commitment from the Governor and mounting grassroots opposition caused BLM to postpone release of its Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Otero Mesa.

For more information, contact Southern Group member and Chapter Vice-chair Don Dearholt in El Paso (522-3035; dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu).

The Cabezon Country proposal includes nine roadless areas west of Ojito along the Sandoval County/McKinley County border. Currently, there is significant local support on the west side of the proposal and significant local resistance on the east side. The McKinley County Commission has passed a resolution supporting the whole proposal; the Sandoval County Commission is opposed. Support is growing in McKinley and Cibola Counties where Coalition member Arturo Sandoval has been doing some great grassroots work. The new mayor of Gallup (McKinley County seat) supports the proposal. Additional relationships are developing with community members in Grants and Gallup, where residents see land-conservation initiatives as part of their economic development strategy—a major shift

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For more info Chapter Wilder Albuquerque (se

The Lobo Faces Challenges in the Gila

In mid-April 2003, members of the El Paso Group of the Sierra Club and the Eco Club of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) joined former Mexican wolf recovery coordinator Dave Parsons and wolf activist Michael Robinson (Center for Biological Diversity) for an outing into the Gila Wilderness in search of one of the most endangered mammals in North America, the Mexican gray wolf, or "lobo."

The 700,000-acre Gila roadless area, most of it designated wilderness, is home to only a small number of wolves. What factors explain the current lack of wolves in the Southwest's finest lobo habitat?

The Mexican wolf was extirpated in the United States thanks to hunting by the federal government at the behest of the powerful livestock industry. The government maintained an agency whose hundreds of trappers and poisoners eradicated wolves from the western United States by the 1940s. Beginning in 1950, the United States initiated a similar program in Mexico, complete with American poison and personnel—and they very nearly succeeded in driving

learning to scavenging on dead cows and horses left on both public and private land. They are learning to regard stock as food, and after they learn to kill livestock, the government traps and removes them from the wild. Some of these wolves are re-released into other habitats, while others will spend their lives in confinement.

In Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, the Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan forbids the baiting of wolves with carcasses, but this basic protection has not been extended to the Mexican wolf. In our area, this abuse has resulted in the removal of four packs.

In mid-April 2003, several more wolves were released into the Gila National Forest. The new

packs are already newly released w "cow scavenging to Michael Robi Diversity, "... F risk of injuries a some circumstar poachers. ... Sc lations are a maj remains low."

A June 2001 and written by a experts led by th of the University mended policy c

Take Action!

Work to end public land grazing.* Write to your public officials



WILDERNESS

Let's Not Backslide on Protecting Public Lands

“This week, Americans celebrated Earth Day, asserting our commitment to preserving and passing on a beautiful world to our children. Ironically, the Bush Administration just days earlier told Congress that it will no longer assess which public lands deserve to be protected as wilderness areas. This decision could significantly alter how millions of acres of public land across the country are managed.

“In my view, this decision is a step backward in preserving America's great natural inheritance for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Furthermore, it totally ignores public support for strong environmental and conservation measures. Wilderness can always be destroyed, but it cannot be created.

“The Administration's decision to no longer perform wilderness reviews on federal land follows on the heels of another troubling Interior Department action [re: RS 2477] that could allow states to claim rights-of-way to thousands of miles of dirt roads, trails, and wagon tracks, many of which are in national parks and wilderness areas. This proposal was developed in secret and presented as a final policy, without public comment and without reason or explanation. In light of the harmful impact it could have on our public lands, I have asked the Comptroller General for a legal opinion. I've also asked Secretary Norton not to implement this procedure until Congress has received that opinion.”

—NM Senator Jeff Bingaman
Ranking Member of U.S. Senate Energy Committee
25 April 2003

Ojito Wilderness (continued from page 1)

joined the local State Representative, James Roger Madalena, to support the proposed Ojito legislation. In addition, the Sandoval County Commission unanimously passed a resolution in support of this venture.

The permanent protection of the Ojito WSA and the surrounding wild lands would be a huge victory for conservation in New Mexico and would be the largest Wilderness legislation in this State for the past 16 years. Most importantly, this is an attainable goal. Ojito supporters have worked tirelessly to gain the broad support behind this initiative and received a positive reception with the New Mexico delegation and the BLM in Washington, DC in March 2003. You can help by writing letters of support to our New Mexico delegation, encouraging them to introduce the Ojito legislation in the 108th Congress.

—by Jessica McCormack
Sierra Club member
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance intern

Tom Udall, Mark Udall, and Jim Leach Promoting Clean Energy and Protecting Consumers

The Sierra Club thanks Representatives Tom Udall (D-NM), Mark Udall (D-CO), and Jim Leach (R-IA) for their leadership in helping America cut its dependence on polluting fossil fuels and improving our nation's energy security. In March 2003, these Representatives introduced a measure that would increase the amount of electricity produced by clean, renewable sources like wind and solar power.

The representatives introduced legislation that would require 20% of America's electricity to be produced by renewable energy sources by the year 2025. With modern technology, we can have clean, renewable energy and a healthy environment—but we need other representatives to join them in their vision. If we keep relying on dirty power plants, we'll be stuck with pollution, health problems and security concerns. Our dependence on fossil fuels leaves us vulnerable.

Increasing our use of renewable energy will help reduce our dependence on polluting fossil fuels, which are responsible for more than half of our nation's global warming pollution. By requiring utilities to sell more clean, renewable energy, this legislation would reduce our need to burn fossil fuels, and take giant steps toward cleaning up our air and curbing global warming.

Increasing our use of renewable energy will also protect consumers from wildly fluctuating energy prices. Natural gas prices are currently at record highs, and diversifying our energy mix will make consumers less dependent on one fuel that may become very expensive very quickly. The Energy Department's Energy Information Administration showed that a renewable standard similar to the one introduced today could reduce natural gas prices, which could potentially lower consumers' overall energy bills.

Rural communities and farmers are big winners, too. Much of the country's renewable energy potential is in rural areas and on agricultural lands, and renewable energy development can be a powerful economic support. Some farmers and ranchers are receiving \$2,000 a year for each wind turbine operating on their land. Renewable energy projects bring tax revenues and jobs to communities.

—Debbie Boger
Senior Washington Representative, Sierra Club

Take Action!

Please help pass this important Wilderness legislation. Write to ask U.S. Congressman Udall and U.S. Senators Bingaman and Domenici to introduce legislation that will:

- grant Wilderness designation to the Ojito Wilderness Study Area; and
- transfer the surrounding buffer of lands to Zia Pueblo to be managed in perpetuity as de facto Wilderness with permanent public access.

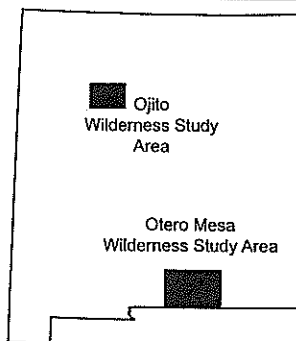
Please add your own thoughts.

Representative Tom Udall

Senator Pete Domenici

Senator Jeff Bingaman

(see contact info, page 3)



(woodcut by Carolyn Keskulla)

A Clean-energy Economy Is an Investment in Peace

“The Sierra Club opposes the impending military attack on Iraq by the United States. We believe that the best course of action is disarmament through the United Nations' authorized inspections and weapons destruction process. No matter what the duration or outcome of this conflict, however, we will find ourselves in the same situation once again if the United States and other nations fail to recognize that continued dependence on oil and other fossil fuels is a significant destabilizing influence in international affairs. The Sierra Club therefore reaffirms its urgent call for the United States to move to a clean-energy economy using energy-efficient technologies and renewable power.”

—Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director
17 March 2003
www.sierraclub.org

Otero Mesa and Cabezon Also Climbing NM Wilderness Charts

Support for protecting Otero Mesa continues to grow. In a letter to U.S. Secretary of Interior Gale Norton, Governor Richardson reiterated his opposition to oil and gas drilling there, at least until the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) studies the Wilderness potential in the area. In addition, the letter asks for the "designation of a significant wilderness area." This brave commitment from the Governor and mounting grassroots opposition caused BLM to postpone release of its Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Otero Mesa.

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from the days when uranium mining was paramount. A memorial opposing several of the wilderness study areas (WSAs) in this region passed the state House and Senate in early 2003; however, the legislators with whom Chapter Wilderness Chair Martin Heinrich has had a chance to meet have indicated that did not realize the implications of the memorial and are re-evaluating their positions on the basis of new information. While the Cabezon Country campaign still faces many obstacles, the momentum has shifted toward us somewhat in the past six months.

For more information, contact Rio Grande Chapter Wilderness Chair Martin Heinrich in Albuquerque (see Masthead, page 2).

—Martin Heinrich

The Lobo Faces Challenges in the Gila

In mid-April 2003, members of the El Paso Group of the Sierra Club and the Eco Club of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEPEP) joined former Mexican wolf recovery coordinator Dave Parsons and wolf activist Michael Robinson (Center for Biological Diversity) for an outing into the Gila Wilderness in search of one of the most endangered mammals in North America, the Mexican gray wolf, or "lobo."

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The Mexican wolf was extirpated in the United States thanks to hunting by the federal government at the behest of the powerful livestock industry. The government maintained an agency whose hundreds of trappers and poisoners eradicated wolves from the western United States by the 1940s. Beginning in 1950, the United States initiated a similar program in Mexico, complete with American poison and personnel—and they very nearly succeeded in driving the lobo to extinction.

After passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973, five wolves captured between 1977 and 1980 from Mexico, plus two already in captivity, became the basis for an emergency captive breeding program for eventual reintroduction into the wild. In 1998, 18 years after the last confirmed wild wolf was removed from the wild in Mexico, the first eleven wolves were reintroduced into wild in the Southwest.

For political reasons driven principally by the influence of the livestock industry in New Mexico, the Apache National Forest of Arizona was designated the primary wolf recovery area, while the adjoining and much larger and wilder Gila National Forest in New Mexico was only to receive wolves that had been recaptured from the wild or that migrated from Arizona on their own.

The wolves have paid a price. At least 13 have been shot, most in the more heavily roaded Apache National Forest, while wolves translocated to New Mexico have often been traumatized in their capture and periods of captivity, and have sometimes been injured and even killed in accidents during trapping. Previously cohesive packs translocated into the Gila have often split apart.

Results from an ongoing review of Mexican wolf prey indicate that approximately 75% of their food is elk, and less than 5% is cattle. Wolves are, however,

learning to scavenging on dead cows and horses left on both public and private land. They are learning to regard stock as food, and after they learn to kill livestock, the government traps and removes them from the wild. Some of these wolves are re-released into other habitats, while others will spend their lives in confinement.

In Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, the Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan forbids the baiting of wolves with carcasses, but this basic protection has not been extended to the Mexican wolf. In our area, this abuse has resulted in the removal of four packs.

In mid-April 2003, several more wolves were released into the Gila National Forest. The new

packs are already at a disadvantage. Some of these newly released wolves are recaptures from previous "cow scavenging/predation" incidents. According to Michael Robinson of the Center for Biological Diversity, "... Removals subject the wolves to the risk of injuries and social disruption, and under some circumstances increase their vulnerability to poachers. . . . Scientists have indicated these manipulations are a major reason that the population remains low."

A June 2001 report commissioned by the USFWS and written by a team of four independent wolf experts led by the renowned Paul C. Paquet, Ph.D., of the University of Calgary in Canada, recommended policy changes to address the issues of:

(continued on page 18)

Take Action!

Work to end public land grazing.* Write to your public officials and let them know that the following modifications to the current reintroduction policies are needed immediately:

- Release wolves directly into the Gila National Forest. This is currently forbidden; there is no biological basis for the current policy, and the wolves dispersing from Arizona face a gauntlet of temptations in the form of livestock carcasses. This frequently ends in their incarceration before they reach the relative safety of the Gila Wilderness. Animals captured and re-released have not been as successful as animals released just once and then left alone.
- Mexican wolves should be treated like other wildlife and not be recaptured simply for leaving the recovery area. The USFWS is required to recapture wolves that establish territories outside the recovery areas, even if they move to other public lands. But the ESA should function to keep species from risk, not to isolate them in small populations that face a greater risk of extirpation.
- As long as wolves are required to share the public lands with private livestock, ranchers should be required to clean up or dispose of the carcasses of those cattle and horses that die of other causes, before the wolves discover them and become habituated to stock, inevitably leading to the wolves removal.

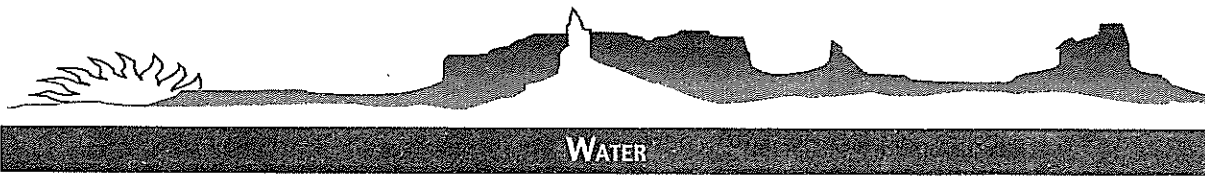
U.S. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton

U.S. Senators Bingaman and Domenici

U.S. Representative Tom Udall

(see contact information, page 3)

* Ed Note: Neither the Club nor the Rio Grande Chapter has taken a categorical position against public land grazing. Both National and the Chapter have adopted a position which takes a number of factors into consideration in such determinations. Please see the Federal Public Lands Grazing Policy, adopted by the Sierra Club Board of Directors on 23 September 2000 (page 19).



Kids Answer the Big Water Questions!

As New Mexico legislators at the Roundhouse debated legislation for a State Water Plan for the future, students gathered for the first Santa Fe Water Festival at Swcency Center to learn how to take action to conserve water now. They will be the future decision makers and voters; perhaps some of them will be legislators and water managers. They will be faced with even tougher decisions to ensure that the State Water Plan is implemented.

More than 500 fourth-grade students from schools in the Santa Fe area attended the Santa Fe Water Festival. As they arrived, students were greeted by the Water Wizard who "knows all there is to know about H₂O." Later, they met a huge Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout, New Mexico's state fish, and a giant stone fly, Mr. Trout's favorite food.

The Water Festival featured 12 activities that were presented five times each day for different groups of

students. Students discovered, for instance, how to determine the purity of a stream by identifying which "bugs" live there. Teams of students worked together to puzzle out how to create the most perfect river, while others learned how native vegetation along the river's edge keeps the water cleaner. Using a watershed model, students could see how sediment, pesticides, and oils from parking lots can pollute our water.

According to Doug Fraser, Chair of the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter, "I believe that the Water Festival is the most important work that we can do to pass on our knowledge and concern about conserving water and protecting water quality to the next generation." The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club has been a financial supporter since the first Water Festival in 1999.

In the Students' Classrooms, Too

Following the Water Festival, teachers Carmilla Martinez and Maria Bernardez, from Kaune Elementary, invited us to come and talk with their students about what they had learned at the Water Festival. Martinez and Bernardez had used the resources they had received at the Teacher Workshop held before the Water Festival to prepare students for the Big Day and to reinforce the lessons of the Water Festival activities afterward.

We talked with the students about the Big Water Questions:

- Why is water so important to life?
- What is the water cycle, and why is it important?
- What is a watershed and how does it function?
- How do trees, plants, animals, people, soils, and water depend on each other?
- How do our actions affect water quality?
- How much water does my family use?

The students responded with a high level of understanding about water, its importance and function, and its connection to everything else. The students described ways in which they are taking actions to conserve water and protect water quality, and they promised to tell their families and friends, too!

Even the teachers were impressed by the students' knowledge! "They know so much more than they knew a month ago," said Martinez proudly.

Please Come Join Us, Meet the Kids!

Looking to the future, planning is underway for the Fifth Middle Rio Grande Water Festival to be held 16-17 October 2003 at the Albuquerque Convention Center. After that, we'll focus on the Second Santa Fe Water Festival to be held in 2004. In between, there is outreach to other New Mexico communities that might want to hold a Festival, too.

There are many opportunities to participate in one of the Water Festivals. Right now, we are seeking presenters for the Middle Rio Grande Festival. If you would like to find out what it's like to talk to 10-year-old kids, you might consider this. We have plenty of great activity ideas you can use, if you don't have an activity of your own in mind.

If you live outside the Santa Fe/Middle Rio Grande area and think a Water Festival would be good for your community, let us know!

For more information, contact Festival Manager Susan Gorman in Albuquerque (505/259-7190; h2ofest@aol.com; www.pionercwest.net).

—Susan Gorman

"[These students] will be the future decision makers and voters; perhaps some of them will be legislators and water managers."



In an activity called "Runoff 101," presented by Rio Grande River Rangers, students learn how precious topsoil can run off the land and end up in the river—and they find out what can be done to prevent topsoil loss (photo by Abe Franklin).

Water Issues Fare Well in the 2003 Legislature

S spurred by increased concern about water in the wake of the drought, water had what we could call a banner year in the state legislature. The legislature passed, and the Governor signed, a bill that would create a state water plan—an important tool for understanding our water situation and making decisions about how we will provide for our water needs. A separate bill requires municipalities, counties, and other water providers to develop water conservation plans.

A bill was also passed and signed into law that will permit the reuse of gray water—that is, water from showers, baths, and laundry (see March/April 2003 *Sierra*). Such water can now be applied to landscaping and gardens without being treated before use.

In two separate bills, the law dealing with the financing of water projects was amended:

- to permit the financing of conservation and recycling projects, and
- to require that all projects financed under the law incorporate technologies and designs for efficient water use.

Funding was also obtained for the creation of the Mesilla Valley Bosque Park, which will restore an area of bosque in the Las Cruces area.

Recognition of the scarcity of our water resources and the importance of protecting them did not, however, seem to be enough to counteract the influence of special interests in the legislature. They were able to defeat two important pieces of water legisla-

tion. Once again, legislation that would allow the State Engineer to deny a permit for a domestic well went down in flames. Under the current statute, the State Engineer must grant such a permit. The problem is that new domestic wells can have a negative impact on existing water rights, either because:

- too many domestic wells in an area are depleting the aquifer, or
- the domestic wells are drawing water from a river and thereby impairing prior surface-water rights.

The State Engineer needs authority to condition or deny well permits when these circumstances exist, but the homebuilders and the unlimited-growth crowd once again prevailed in defeating the bills.

(continued on the next page)

Summer Outlook Bleak for the Rio Grande and Its Silvery Minnow

The weather, legal constraints, and politics, at home and within the Norton Interior Department, are pushing the endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow ever closer to extinction. The Rio Grande and the endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow are facing a very dry summer. Spring runoff is expected to be somewhat less than normal, and more critically, only a limited amount of water can be stored upstream for release over the course of the summer because of the provisions of the Rio Grande Compact.

The Rio Grande Compact governs the use of the waters of the Rio Grande by Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Under the provisions of the Compact, when Elephant Butte Reservoir falls below 400,000 acre-feet, as it is now, no Rio Grande water can be stored in most upstream reservoirs. Normally, snowmelt is captured during spring runoff and stored upstream. It is then released gradually as needed for farmers during the summer and early fall. The releases not only provide water for irrigation, but they also keep the river wet up to the point where the water is diverted from the river. Without this storage and release of irrigation waters, drying will be much worse than normal this year.

The Rio Grande Compact does permit New Mexico to trade any credit it has from the over-delivery of water to Elephant Butte for the right to store water upstream, if Texas agrees. New Mexico is now in a credit situation and has negotiated an agreement with Texas to store some water upstream. The amounts of water involved are likely to only delay the drying in some stretches, not prevent it, and will not prevent drying at all in some reaches of the river.

Under the agreement, 30,000 acre-feet will be available for the silvery minnow. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, however, recently issued a new

Biological Opinion (BO) that is intended to govern the actions it will take to protect the endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow over the next ten years. The BO proposes that, after June 15 of each year, the agency will keep the river wet—and only minimally wet—only down to the Isleta diversion dam, a few miles south of Albuquerque. The 30,000 acre-feet will permit them to keep this stretch wet this year, but approximately 100 miles of river south of Isleta

term, however, there must be a sufficient reservoir of genetic diversity such that some members of the species will survive when the species encounters new diseases, parasites, and other stressful conditions. A University of New Mexico geneticist who examined the genetic diversity of the captive minnow populations concluded that there is not enough genetic diversity in the captive populations for the minnow to survive in the long term.

"The Biological Opinion, thus, simply goes through the motions of trying to save the minnow. It is, in fact, a prescription for extinction."

to Elephant Butte will be permitted to dry, under the BO.

Most of the few minnows remaining in the river are in the area that will be permitted to go dry. There are few silvery minnows north of Isleta, suggesting that the area that will be kept wet does not presently provide adequate habitat for the minnow. The BO thus simply goes through the motions of trying to save the minnow. It is, in fact, a prescription for extinction.

The agreement with Texas will also provide about fifty to seventy thousand acre-feet of water for irrigation. This water will help to keep the river wet for a part of the summer, but it is expected to run out in mid-August. Unless we have an exceptional monsoon season, this water will not be sufficient to keep the river south of Isleta wet throughout the summer.

Defenders of the BO contend that minnow populations can be replenished from minnows bred in captivity. In order for species to survive in the long

The river and the minnow could, in theory, be rescued by a favorable decision of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, in the appeal of last summer's favorable ruling in the minnow litigation. It is unknown, however, when the Court will rule or how it will rule when it does so.

Last year, when things looked equally bleak for the river, we were saved by the weather. There is always this element of uncertainty. At present, however, it is difficult to put a very positive face on the silvery minnow's situation. I am optimistic that, through the work of the Sierra Club and many other talented and dedicated organizations and individuals, the Rio Grande will eventually become a secure, healthy, living river. I am less optimistic that the silvery minnow will be there to see it.

For more information, contact Chapter Executive Committee member Richard Barish (see Masthead, page 2).

—Richard Barish

Farmers and Environmentalists Protest *(continued from page 1)*

the details of how Albuquerque plans to put the water to use. The plan calls for the construction of a new dam in the river near Paseo del Norte, with no adequate assurances that fish will be able to pass around the dam. The plan also would allow the City to continue to divert native Rio Grande water during periods of summer low flow, even though there will be little or no water in the river for a stretch of about 14 miles through Albuquerque.

Under New Mexico statutes, the State Engineer can impose conditions on a diversion permit if an application is detrimental to the public welfare. The State Engineer could thus mitigate the environmental harm caused by the project. The case presents novel questions:

- Does the State Engineer consider environmental concerns to be matters of public welfare?
- How much weight will the State Engineer give to such concerns?

Protestants also object to faulty accounting methods used to calculate the amount of water the City will have to put in the river to compensate for the ongoing effects of its past ground-water pumping. The river and the aquifer are hydrologically connected, and the "hole" created in the aquifer by the City's pumping pulls water out of the river. As a result of underestimates from faulty calculations, Albuquerque's proposal will impair the water rights of farmers and the river environment south of the City.

For more information, contact Richard Barish (see Masthead, page 2).

—Richard Barish

Water Fares Well *(continued from the previous page)*

In addition, a bill that would have required power companies to consider alternate ways to cool new power generating plants was defeated. There are a considerable number of applications for the construction of new power plants within the State. These plants are not intended to provide power for use in New Mexico; rather they are intended to provide power for export to other states. Conventionally, water is used to cool these power plants. If very many are built, they could represent a significant new use of our limited water resources. The bill that

was defeated did not mandate the use of any particular cooling technology; it would have simply required an examination of the costs and benefits of dry cooling and hybrid technologies so as to conserve our water resources. Unfortunately, in this case, for the time being, the power of special interests still appears to trump reason.

For more information, contact Chapter Executive Committee member Richard Barish (see Masthead, page 2.)

—Richard Barish



Dragonfly (print by Norma Evans).



Relearning the Art and Science of Goat Management in NM

In his article on the evolution of ecosystems (see page 24), Jack Noel correctly states that "We must go back . . . and relearn the techniques used by the people who first ran livestock on these lands." What was once common knowledge to rural 10-year-old children in New Mexico must be relearned by those of us who hope to use this powerful tool for restoration. Not only must we look back, we must also look forward. The world has changed in the past 100 years in ways that require new skills and understanding to successfully manage goats for managing vegetation and, hopefully, economic development. Today we have challenges that did not exist at the turn of the last century. Some of the more challenging areas where we need to relearn old skills and learn new applications are discussed below.

These are:

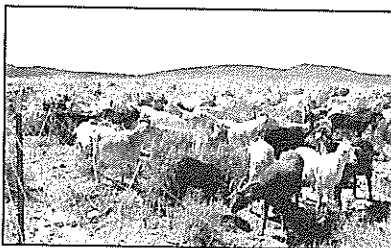
- containment,
- transportation, and
- the link between goat grazing and the science of restoration.

Containment

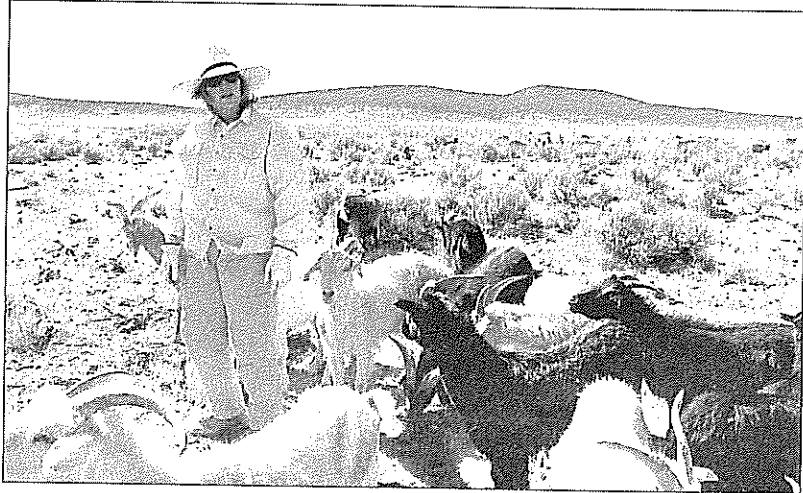
Perhaps the greatest challenge we face in today's environment is keeping goats where we want them. Goats are notorious escape artists. They manage to find every weak spot in a fence and also have been observed splitting up into two or three groups to thwart the efforts of even the best herding dogs to keep them together. Goats' instinct to wander for better browse can easily entice them to cover 20 miles a day. No longer can herds travel for miles in the wide-open rangelands for months on end without encountering a fence, or orchard, or garden. Our neighbors are close these days, and they often have fruit trees, lilac bushes, and other delicious plants that require a different kind of management than hungry goats offer.

Keeping goats where we want them, and more importantly away from where we don't want them, requires a combination of talent and technology. While some degree of skill is required on the part of the goatherd, much more skill and talent is required on the part of the herding dog. Training and using dogs for herding is not a lost art, but it does require looking to the past to relearn old skills. Finding and training a good herding dog is both fun and challenging—the challenge is mostly to learn to get out of the dog's way when it's doing its job.

Portable electric fencing is one of the modern, miracle, breakthrough technologies that we can now apply to goatherding. While not foolproof, electric fences do provide a good first line of defense.



"You can't chase symptoms," explains Lani, "and that's what all herbicide spraying programs are about. You have to address the problem which, almost everywhere I work, is bare ground. You've got to load that bare ground up with organic matter and get it healthy enough to produce the desired plant species. The water cycle has to be functioning."



Goatherd Lani Lamming Malmberg has 2,100 cashmere goats—and a Masters degree in Weed Science. Lani comes from a working-cattle-ranch background, but she owns no land of her own now. Instead, she and her herd migrate throughout nine Rocky Mountain and Great Plains states—always on the job. Lani serves as a board member for Beyond Pesticides (a national coalition against the misuse of pesticides), and she is a guest professor in Agriculture at Central Wyoming College in Riverton (photos by Courtney White).

"It probably never occurred to the herders at the turn of the century that they should be taking data on what goats ate, during what season they ate it, and what happened to the landscape after different levels of grazing."

Transportation

At the turn of the last century, when you wanted to move a large group of animals from one location to another, you gathered them up, hopped on your horse, and started riding. You might have ridden for two or three weeks to go 100 miles, but what was the hurry? Today, time is money, and the logistics of herding 1,000 goats 100 miles are daunting.

The transportation needs are different for moving 100 goats 30 miles for a two-day grazing job on 20 acres, than for moving 1,000 goats 500 miles for a one-month job on 1,000 acres. How can we satisfy both types of transportation needs efficiently and cost-effectively? The work of small, local herds (<500 goats) can be coordinated by a decentralized structure. Large herds, on the other hand, call for a more centralized management structure and facilities. Both types of herds are needed.

Goats and the Science of Restoration

It probably never occurred to the herders at the turn of the century that they should be taking data on what goats ate, during what season they ate it, and what happened to the landscape after different levels of grazing. Managing goats for restoration requires science and data. The New Mexico Legislature took a bold step in the 2003 session that ended in March by allocating \$100,000 for a scientific test using goats to graze the invasive salt cedar along the Rio Grande. This project will provide actual data on the effectiveness of managed grazing for controlling salt cedar.

Certainly, similar experiments need to be conducted on other noxious weed species in other areas. The Taos Noxious Weed Committee is now in its second year of testing alternative noxious weed-management approaches, goats being one of them. The

NM State Highway and Transportation Department has agreed to a second year of using goats to control Russian knapweed and hoary cress along six miles of right of way south of Tires Piedras on US 285.

The Challenges Ahead

In the interest of finding more natural ways to control noxious weeds and restore health to damaged land, New Mexicans are planning controlled tests and forming local goat herds. Our capacity to put goats on the ground is improving along with our knowledge of how to manage them when they do hit the ground. To date, more than 10 New Mexican goatherds are interested in using their animals for vegetation management. Most of these, however, have little or no experience with using goats for vegetation management. Nationwide, few people are actually in the business of using large numbers of goats for vegetation management. There are some good reasons for this.

At Earthworks, just south of Santa Fe in Galisteo, we have learned that, although the goats do the real work, managing goats is labor-intensive and requires an infrastructure of its own to successfully move, manage, nourish, kid, milk, shearing, and so on. Doing each of these well is hard work but potentially rewarding for both people and the land.

To realize the full potential of goats as a management tool, we must keep in mind two guides to successful projects, most recently articulated by goat friend and ally Tamara Sherburn: "It's not as easy as it looks, and you better do your homework."

For more information, contact Craig Conley at Bionomics Southwest in Santa Fe (982-3966; bionomicssw@aol.com).

—Craig Conley

RANGELANDS AND RESTORATION

The Evolution of Ecosystems, Humans—and Goats *(continued from page 24)*

textbook example of environmental shift exacerbated if not caused by overgrazing. The grazing monoculture pushed plant populations toward the woody species end of the spectrum, removing the grassy sponge and reducing the carpet that had carried fires that had driven the natural cycle of disturbance. Without grassfires to burn back young shrubs and trees, the system shifted to favor sagebrush, stands of P/J forests, and dense thickets of young trees.

This is the present condition of the West on a huge scale.

So What?

The traditional ranching economy that flourished 150 years ago has struggled to maintain a way of life as the grasslands have grown threadbare. It has depleted its primary resource base and will now either adapt or go the way of the buffalo. On a national scale, our values have changed, and the resulting tension over land use blinds us to the collaboration and resourcefulness necessary to address the problems well. As we lose our ranchers, our open space is subdivided, and our environmental crisis only deepens.

We face three primary problems:

- Overgrazing, leading to the species shift from grasses to woody plants, and 80 years of fire suppression have led to very unhealthy conditions in our forest systems.
- The loss of the grassy sponges, severe erosion, the encroachment of woody native plants into traditional grasslands, and the introduction and spread of non-native species into the riparian areas have resulted in the loss of water from the landscape.
- Economic degradation in rural areas, brought on by the depletion of the traditional resource base, has led to the splitting up of the large tracts of open spaces needed to sustain healthy ecosystems—the foundation of human economies as well as wild life.

The Solution

By studying the changes we are witnessing, and change as it is recorded in the historical and environmental record, we are beginning to have a clearer vision of how ecosystems work and what it will take to begin to put them back together. As we move from conservation to restoration, and recognize the role humans can play in correcting our course here, we would do well to use tools that we can afford—because the challenge of ecosystem restoration on the scale we have created is daunting. The extent to which restoration can pay for itself—can sustain

itself and jump-start natural dynamics that will foster recovery—is a measure of the extent to which we will be able to proceed with our vision.

We see addressing entire watersheds—or rather, water catchments—not pieces of them, as the way to return health to our landscapes. The invasive species must be removed and a maintenance program implemented that protects the health of soils—the basis of healthy systems.

We have begun to believe that soils in this semi-arid landscape will benefit if the plant populations can be induced to shift from an overabundance of woody species back toward grasses, until we achieve the balance that retains enough moisture and topsoil to sustain further growth, regeneration, succession, and natural cycles of disturbance. We then need to adopt management programs that address a goal of fostering healthy ecological systems, not resource extraction that is unsustainable precisely because it is unresponsive to change.

We must go back to our roots and relearn those techniques used by the people who knew this dry environment intimately and first ran livestock on these lands—multi-species herd grazing, low-stress management, and a connection to the system—and utilize the knowledge gained from our own failed experiment.

There must be no shame or blame; we got to where we are through ignorance. The only thing we could call stupidity would be not to learn from our mistakes.

Why Goats?

Properly managed, goats offer a solution to these and other problems.

Goats eat woody species! They convert them into meat, milk, fiber, and fertilizer—one of the few manures that can be put on a garden fresh. They disc the soil with their hooves, providing pockets that trap seed and pool water, and they irrigate the soil as they go. Properly managed, goats deposit fertilizer where it is needed, move water to areas in need, and round off the oversteepened side and head cuts created by erosion, to allow the establishment of vegetation.

According to the latest figures from the American Sheep Industry, 2,000 goats working 7,500 acres/year contribute \$105,000 of inputs to the soil.

Goats are living systems—they're a tool that reproduces, and we can scale their numbers to address the magnitude of the problems we face.

For more information, contact Jack Noel, NM Prescriptive Browsing Group, in Monticello, NM (743-0242, lastnoel@hotmail.com).

—Jack Noel

Goat People and Places

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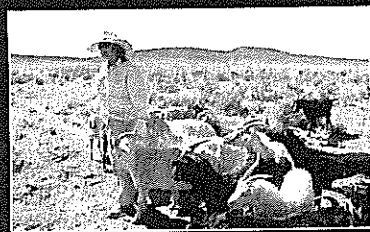
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"It is important to stress properly managed browsing is the key," says Jack Noel. "This is what Lani Lamming Malmberg brings to the table. A socialized and experienced herd of goats moved by an educated (Masters in Weed Science in her case) herder with the goal of land restoration and health is much different from a bunch of meat goats left to their own devices with a goal of economic profit."

New Poll Shows That Americans Are Eager To Walk

According to a poll released by the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP), Americans want to walk more places more often, and are willing to invest in making it possible. If given a choice between walking more and driving more, 55% of adults choose walking. A majority (68%) favors investing more federal dollars toward improving walkability.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, on average people in the mountain states region are spending 65 minutes/day in a car, and 51% of all of their trips under a half-mile are made in a vehicle.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of the people polled said that the best solution is to "improve public transportation" or "develop communities where people do not have to drive long distances to work or shop." Only 25% of Americans advocate building new roads.

Policies that would make streets more friendly for walkers find overwhelming support in the poll:

- 84% favor design streets for slower traffic speeds;
- 68% favor using federal funds to make walking safer from traffic; and
- 74% favor funding safe routes to school.

"In New Mexico the accident rate for pedestrians is also disproportionately high; we need to address this by investing in safe, convenient facilities for walking," said DeAnza Valencia, Director of the New Mexico STPP office. Currently, New Mexico is spending less than 1% of its federal transportation dollars on pedestrian and bicycle facilities. In Albuquerque, 22.4% of all traffic deaths were pedestrians—much higher than the national average of 11.8%.

(continued on page 19)



MINING, AIR QUALITY, AND HEALTH

El Paso Living With the Effects of 112 Years of Lead Poisoning

El Paso, Texas is on the United States–Mexico border, separated from Ciudad Juarez by the Rio Grande. This metropolitan area is home to 1.9 million people. It is also home to several extractive industries that settled here to take advantage of the area's natural resources and plentiful labor supply to work the smelters and quarries.

A medical epidemiologist from the Center for Disease Control was commissioned by health authorities to do a survey of the area. He found that "a very high proportion of all age groups living near the smelter had blood lead levels equal to or greater than 40 micrograms per 100 ml."

"For the 112 years it operated, ASARCO emitted hundreds of tons of lead, arsenic, and cadmium into the sky and onto the homes of El Paso and Juarez residents."

One example of such an industry is the American Smelting and Refinery Company of El Paso (ASARCO), which refines lead and copper. It is situated on the banks of the Rio Grande, across the river from a heavily populated and economically distressed neighborhood in Juarez and five minutes from downtown El Paso. It opened in 1887 and stopped operating in 1999, when the price of copper plummeted.

For the 112 years it operated, ASARCO emitted hundreds of tons of lead, arsenic, and cadmium into the sky and onto the homes of El Paso and Juarez residents. In a letter dated February 1972, the director of the El Paso City-County Health Department warns the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that, in 1970 alone, ASARCO emitted more than 611 tons of lead. Soon thereafter, preliminary tests of smelter area children, ranging from 2-6 years of age, showed high levels of lead in their blood; enough to warrant immediate medical attention.

Forty micrograms per 100 ml was considered excessive in 1973; today that figure is ten micrograms per 100 ml. A followup study found that children with this type of lead poisoning showed significant learning and neurological disorders.

Our problems today stem from the unresolved issues then. For instance:

- we have unresolved legal challenges,
- those responsible for protecting public health have not been accountable, and consequently,
- health and social welfare problems remain.

The conclusions of a metal survey prepared in 2002 by the Texas Department of Health say that "exposure to lead and arsenic at some of these areas could pose an unacceptable public health hazard to children," and has categorized the El Paso site as a "public health hazard." To date, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been using Superfund money to remove soil from a few of the most affected residences.



This photograph of the American Smelting and Refinery Company of El Paso (ASARCO) smelterstack was taken from a playground. The University of Texas at El Paso is in the background. For 112 years beginning in 1887, the American Smelting and Refinery Company of El Paso (ASARCO) refined lead and copper on the United States-Mexico border. In a letter dated February 1972, the director of the El Paso City-County Health Department warned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that, in 1970 alone, ASARCO emitted more than 611 tons of lead. Soon thereafter, preliminary tests of children in the area, ranging from 2-6 years of age, showed high levels of lead in their blood; enough to warrant immediate medical attention (photo by Margaret A Papke).

Meanwhile, a few individuals with vested interest label public fear an excessive reaction; this, combined with ASARCO-commissioned studies and large public relations resources, stifles public outrage. ASARCO continues to deny responsibility in El Paso, even as it has been settling litigation in other

(continued on page 1)

In a Polluted World, Personal Choices Make a World of Difference

A few months ago, a presenter on the *Bioneers* radio program talked about health as a global issue. She and her husband live in Bolinas, California, a beautiful, somewhat secluded community on the coast north of San Francisco. They breathe what she described as some of the cleanest air on the planet and eat certified organic food. Yet, tests of their fat cells revealed levels of toxins equal to those of people who live in some of the country's most polluted industrial areas. We're fooling ourselves, she said, if we think that health is strictly a local concern. It is a global one.

So what difference does eating healthy and taking good care of ourselves really make when we live in a polluted world?

According to Dr. Erica Elliott, a physician, board-certified in Family Practice and Environmental Medicine, practicing in Santa Fe, eating healthily and taking good care of ourselves does indeed make a difference on several levels. First, as interest in certified organic food grows, more farmers will produce it, there will be less pesticide use, and fewer chronic health problems related to pesticides. Farm workers' exposure to pesticides will decrease, resulting in fewer birth defects, less sterility, less cancer, and lower medical costs.

Yes, our bodies do have the capacity to eliminate certain toxins and to keep some toxins in storage. When overloaded, however, our detoxification systems malfunction—allergies, chronic fatigue,

hormone abnormalities, and other chronic health problems result. Individuals succumb at different levels; men, for instance, seem to have a higher tolerance than women and children.

Fat biopsies have documented that it is possible to help our bodies unload this toxic burden. One way is through chelation of heavy metals. Another way is through an intensive dry-sauna program. Since we have the ability to decrease our toxic load, we have an incentive not to increase it by consuming unhealthy food and neglecting our bodies.

Second, although we have little control over our exposure to pollutants, we do have control over what we consume. This is an exercise of our free will and power.

- The more whole, unrefined, and unprocessed our diet, the better.
- Most of us do best when each meal includes some protein (animal or plant).
- We feel much better if we find the ratio of fat, protein, and carbohydrates that suits our metabolic type.
- Vegetables (more than a lettuce salad) and beneficial oils everyday promote well-being.
- Fruit juice, breads, pastas, crackers, and desserts convert quickly to sugar and drag us down.

We can also observe what pollutants we might be breathing in our homes and workplaces from products containing petrochemicals (e.g., cleaning products; personal care products; new carpet; plywood, particle board, and press board; insecticides). Mold is

also a prevalent toxin in homes and workplaces.

Most products containing petrochemicals can now be replaced by non-toxic alternatives (see *Prescriptions for a Healthy House: A Comprehensive Guide for Builders, Architects, and Homeowners*, by Paula Baker Erica Elliott, and John Banta).

Regular exercise that engages the whole body (e.g. yoga, t'ai chi, dancing, swimming) enhances our immune systems. Exercise fosters the flow and drainage of our lymph system. Sweating during exercise releases toxins. A regular sauna program also helps to detoxify.

We can raise awareness in our neighborhoods about activities that might endanger people, such as pesticide use. Getting involved politically around common environmental concerns is an indirect way to protect ourselves and others and to build healthy communities.

We can also look for opportunities to release emotional toxins such as resentment, anger, and hatred. Forgiveness promotes health.

By taking responsibility for the things we can control—by exercising the power inherent in making good personal choices—we can protect ourselves and many others from the debilitating effects of pollutants on our health, both personally and collectively.

—Elise McLaughlin

Elise McLaughlin does permaculture site assessments and master plans in Santa Fe (elisemc@aol.com).

The Greater Good versus The Greater Contributions

-Jamie Newlin

Mayor Caballero was voted in with high hopes of cleaning up El Paso, of cleaning up money influence in local politics, of cleaning up our environment. In the last two years he has indeed begun to address some very large problems.

But, as two years gone by in the blink of an eye go to show, it's hard for one man to clean up a century of business-as-usual in such a short time.

During Caballero's first term we saw a mayor say no, almost for the first time, to business-as-usual. We saw the beginnings of water conservation, the beginnings of sprawl awareness, and moves to attain clean air for our city.

Yet there remains so much to be done. To continue to clean up El Paso we need to keep Ray Caballero in office. But we can't stop there, as we did last time around.

It was a good start, to send Caballero to the mayor's office. But once elected, Caballero was mostly left to fend for himself. It was a good start, but Caballero versus the entire old guard of El Paso remains an unequal contest. And the old guard, the defenders of sprawl, unsustainable water use, lax pollution enforcement, and big money influence in politics, were bound to hit back.

And so they have. Money is pouring into the camp of Caballero's adversaries, and City Council appears to be 100 percent in the hands of El Paso's big money. Witness the recent unanimous City Council rejection of a UTEP student group's request for a public hearing on the subject of a permit renewal that could affect air quality at UTEP. And the El Paso Times has shown once and for all that it is a tool of business-as-usual by endorsing Joe Wardy, industry's latest champion for avoiding meaningful change in El Paso.

So, El Pasoans, if you want to keep the fires of hope alive for lasting reform in our city, vote again for Ray Caballero. If you want to reserve for our city another two-year window of opportunity to expand the cleanup of El Paso's political and physical environment, vote for Ray Caballero.

And let us resolve to back him up next time. We need to start planning now to take back City Council. And to do something about being a one newspaper town. And to make our city government work for the greater good instead of for the greater contributions.

All this begins with re-electing Mayor Caballero. Without Ray in the mayor's office, our already uphill battle will be more like climbing a cliff-face. Take the time to vote for Ray Caballero.

Selected Outings

May 10-11: Whitewater Creek Backpack

Place: Gila Wilderness E of Glenwood, NM

Class: Moderate

Length: 10 miles total

Elevation gain: 1000 feet

Leader: Harry Newman 588-7192 (H) Swttraveller@aol.com

After a Friday night carcamp, we will set up a shuttle using the DeLoche Canyon trailhead. The backpack will begin at the DeLoche Canyon Trailhead. After ascending DeLoche Canyon, we will hike downstream on Whitewater Creek until we reach our campsite, sampling remnants of the old mining industry and canyon vegetation along the way. Sunday we will climb out the Gold-Dust Trail and complete our shuttle. Participants should be prepared with 3-season backpacking gear.

May 12-16: Black Range Ridge Traverse

Place: Aldo Leopold Wilderness, NM

Class: Very strenuous

Length: 50 miles

Elevation gain: 4000 feet

Leader: Laurence Gibson 594-7342 (H) lgibson@utep.edu

After setting up our shuttle on Sunday we'll hit the trail early Monday morning. The concept here is to follow the Continental Divide Trail North to South from Lookout Mountain, over Reeds Peak and McKnight Mountain, to Hillsboro Peak with trailheads at Monument Park and Emory Pass. This is some of the wildest country in New Mexico. Hopefully the recent snows will have recharged the springs so we can stay high on the ridge, returning to the vehicles Friday afternoon after five 10-mile days.

May 17: Rabbit Ears Plateau Dayhike

Place: Organ Mountains E of Las Cruces, NM

Class: Strenuous

Length: 8 miles roundtrip

Elevation gain/loss: 3100 feet

Leader: Mike Episcopo 584-9322 mlepisco@episd.org

The Rabbit Ears are a distinctive set of granite towers south of Baylor Pass. From the Baylor Canyon Road trailhead we will hike up to the Minchouse Springs Ruins, then climb east up the drainage of Rabbit Ears Canyon. With an escarpment of 3000 vertical feet, the panoramic view from the Rabbit Ears Plateau is spectacular. This hike is mostly off-trail, involving some rock scrambling.

May 23-26: Canyon Creek-Clear Creek-Flying V Canyon Memorial Weekend Backpack

Place: Gila Wilderness, NM

Class: Moderate

Length: 18 miles

Elevation gain: 800-1000 feet

Leader: Rollin Wickenden 855-6697(H) rwickgila@aol.com

We will depart El Paso Friday evening and drive to a carcamp spot in the Gila National Forest. This 3-day backpack trip into the Northern Gila begins with a descent of beautiful Canyon Creek to the Middle Fork of the Gila River and continues downstream to our first night's camp near Clear Creek. Sunday we will make a big loop into the heart of the Gila Wilderness and return to the Middle Fork near Flying V Canyon. Brave souls can enjoy some fine swimming holes nearby. Monday morning we will hike back to our vehicles near the historic Hulse Ranch on Canyon Creek.

2003 El Paso Regional Group Directory (Area Code 915)

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

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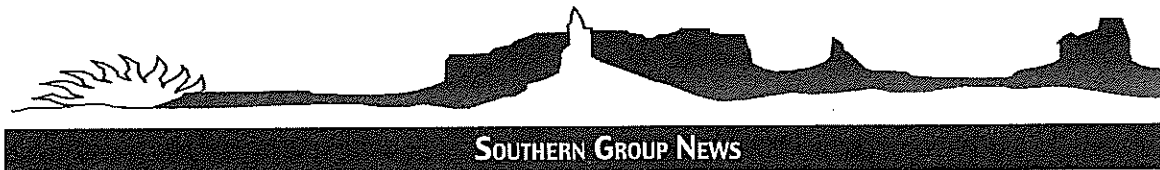
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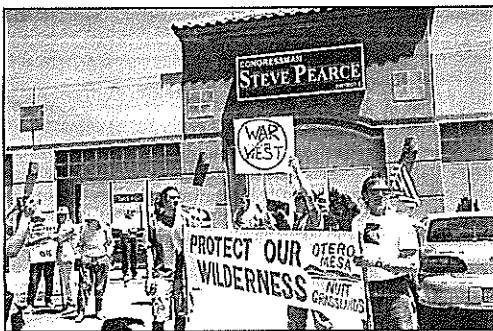
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NEWS FROM THE CHAIR

Don Dearholt

As I write this, Earth Month is almost over. Our efforts on Earth Day, and the attempts at persuasion at the Town Hall meetings held by Steve Pearce the week before, are now history. The Town Hall meeting in Las Cruces (it was on Monday, April 14, at the Munson Senior Center) was attended by about 80 citizens, and it seemed clear to me from the applause at appropriate times, that there were at least 30 or so with a nontrivial interest in the environment. One attendee counted 11 people who favored preserving Otero Mesa rather than drilling on it, and there were others who spoke about other environmental issues. The rally on Earth Day, in front of Steve Pearce's office, had at least 52 activists present, with most holding signs or flags. Press coverage included KRWG (public TV here), the Las Cruces Sun News paper, and KFOX TV (El Paso and Las Cruces) that I know of. The full page ad appeared as intended in the Sun News on Earth Day, and must surely have gotten noticed by Pearce's staff, and more importantly, by those who may be undecided on issues like Otero Mesa. Thanks to all who worked on the various aspects of these activities--I believe they will come to fruition within the not-too-distant future.



Michael Haley and David Farrell holding the Protect our Wilderness sign in front of Steve Pearce's offices

Meanwhile, let's call Pearce's office from time to time, expressing our concerns about the various aspects of development, and also ask him what he is doing to help turn New Mexico toward the future using our wonderful natural resources of wind and sun as alternatives to petroleum resources, the development of which results in significant destruction of some of our best natural resources--reasons people like New Mexico. Here are phone numbers and street addresses for Congressman Pearce's two permanent offices (I'm told there are also some "floating" offices):

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

Have you ever wondered if there is an association between the oil and gas development in eastern New Mexico and the current economic stagnation there? If anyone knows of an economic study that has been done to explore this possibility, please let me know--I'd love to have a copy, and spread it around as it should be. I have a paper that shows that, in many places, the natural environment is worth more than development. It's hard to imagine tourists wanting to tour the oil and gas fields of eastern New Mexico--to camp there, to watch for birds there, to hunt or fish there, or many other activities of that sort. Please do make a real effort to call Pearce's office in the weeks ahead, and leave your concerns with his staff if he's not available. Thanks!!! If you're interested in becoming more active in the Sierra Club, we'll welcome your participation--please give me a call at 522-3035.

UP-COMING PLANNING MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS:

Wednesday, May 7--PLANNING MEETING: ExCort interested members and guests of the SNM Group, p.m. at the new Southwest Environmental Center (SV location at 275 North Downtown Mall (1/2 block south of Coa's My Bookstore), just south of Las Cruces Avenue the mall. Please enter the west door, just south of I Hamburgers. We have a long and important agenda including discussion of suggestions from National on our laws. We'll also discuss whether to continue planning meetings for the summer, or not--sometimes we've taken a break then, although it's common to stay in touch about issues and to try to be effective via email and letters and calls on behalf of the environmental issues we're dealing with.

COMING EVENTS: OUTINGS

June 7 - Saturday - Sawyers Peak in the Black Ra. Part trail and part off-trail, rated moderate. About 1.5 elevation gain. Call Ben Zerbey at 526-7811.

July 12- Saturday - Discovery hike to Monument S in the Sacramentos. Long drive but easy hike. Call B 526-7811.

And if you'd like to lead an outing, please call Ben at 526-78



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Margo Wilson Vice Chair, Chapter Rep. 744-5860 margotwilson40@hotmail.com	David Farrell Legislative Issues 895-3352 dafarrelli@hotmail

MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the upstairs rooms in Mesa Public Library at 7:00PM and are open to the public. General Membership meetings are on the first Wednesday, and a combine Excom Board and Conservation Committee meeting is on the second Wednesday of each month.

OPEN MEETING
**WATER ISSUES
 IN LOS ALAMOS COUNTY**

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

Tim Glasco
 Los Alamos County
 Deputy Utilities Manager



OPEN MEETING
**GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT AND
 THE VALLES CALDERA
 NATIONAL PRESERVE**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4 • 7:00PM
 MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY
 UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOMS

Courtney White
 Executive Director
 of The Quivira Coalition

OUTINGS

Sunday, May 18 • **Toosas Mountain Bike Trip**—A moderately strenuous, 12-mile, mountain-bike trip through a little known but ecologically diverse area. Toosas is located north of Tres Piedras and south of San Antonio Mountain. Please contact trip leaders to coordinate cars and bikes. Meet at the "y" at 8:00 AM. Abe and Carole Jacobson (672-9579).

Thursday, May 29 • **Spring Highway Clean-Up**—We will meet at Ponderosa Campground at 4:30 PM and carpool up to the Valles. Bring work gloves; we have a large supply of bags. This is a good time to work and watch the elk.

Saturday, June 14th • **Frijoles Canyon Hike and Bike Trip**—Meet at the Ponderosa Campground at 8:30 AM and carpool to the Banelier Visitor Center. Hike archeologically rich Frijoles Canyon and return to the campground via Upper Crossing. Those interested can bicycle back to their cars at the visitor center. Easy to moderate hiking, approximately 7 miles. Rainer and Ilse Bleck (662-2368).

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

What's a Good Republican To Do?

How do we respond when our party leadership abandons some of our core Republican principles: our traditions of conservation and environmental stewardship?

I'll tell you how rank-and-file Republicans around the country responded when, in 1995, our party leadership became a hotbed of anti-environmental radicalism. They founded REP America, the national grassroots organization of Republicans for Environmental Protection.

These Republicans realized that the GOP has a proud heritage of conservation that dates back to the greatest Republican of them all—Abraham Lincoln, who protected Yosemite Valley in 1864.

Although conservation has long been a bipartisan cause, it has often been Republicans who have taken a leadership role in preserving and protecting our environment. President Ulysses S. Grant signed the law establishing Yellowstone National Park. President Benjamin Harrison signed the Forest Reserve Act in 1891.

Theodore Roosevelt was our greatest conservation President. One hundred years ago, he protected Pelican Island, the very first National Wildlife Refuge. Here in New Mexico, TR set aside the Gila, Lincoln, and Carson National Forests, among the 130 million acres of national forests he protected. Grand Canyon was one of 18 National Monuments he established. What is less well known, but equally important, is that TR was able to protect many national treasures because the Republican Congress of 1906 adopted the Antiquities Act, which gives

Presidents the authority to create National Monuments.

The Republican conservation tradition continued with President Calvin Coolidge's protection of Glacier Bay in 1924, the largest National Monument in the nation until the late 1970s.

President Herbert Hoover established nine National Monuments, including White Sands in New Mexico.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower protected what is now the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in 1960.

Richard Nixon was one of America's greatest environmental presidents. He said, "The 1970s must be the years when America pays its debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its waters, and our living environment. It is literally now or never." He went on to oversee the burst of legislation that gave America the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act, and other measures to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the natural heritage we will pass on to future Americans.

It wasn't only Republican presidents who were conservation leaders. Republicans at the national, state, and local level have made many contributions. Barry Goldwater, the "Father of Modern Conservatism," was an ardent conservationist throughout his life, as were Congressman John Saylor, Senator John Chafee, and several governors, including New Mexico's David Cargo, Oregon's Tom McCall, and Michigan's William Milliken.

Many contemporary Republican figures realize the importance of being good stewards of the environmental legacy that we are, after all, borrowing from our children and grandchildren. Thanks to leaders such as Senators Olympia Snowe, Susan Collins, Lincoln Chafee, Peter Fitzgerald, and John McCain, as well as Congressmen such as Sherwood Boehlert, Christopher Shays, Jim Greenwood, and Nancy Johnson, Republicans are working within the party to turn our energies back to protecting and conserving our natural world.

Other Republican leaders, however, have turned their backs on conservation and environmental protection. Congressional leaders and the current Bush administration support policies that are likely to result in lasting harm to America's natural heritage. Their policies are not consistent with the party's conservation tradition.

Now we come to the role of REP America. We believe in restoring our party to its traditional place of leadership in conservation and environmental protection, and we believe in accomplishing this from inside the party. Paraphrasing the words of Governor Cargo, a REP America member, "We refuse to let current Republican leadership define our past." We believe:

- society is obligated to protect the interests of future generations;
 - private property and the free market are fundamental social institutions,
 - responsibility is a corollary of freedom, and
 - respect for nature is a virtue.
- We believe:
- government, acting as the representative of the people, should set strong, enforceable standards for protecting the environment; and
 - the private sector should be given proper incentives to help make it happen.

(continued on page 23)

Pajarito Group Directory

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

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Renewed Threat to Petroglyph National Monument !!

Mayor Martin Chavez is again taking steps to extend the Paseo del Norte road through the Petroglyph National Monument.

On very short notice, he requested City Council approval for two engineering companies to do the design of the Paseo del Norte extension road through the Monument.

Working as fast as we could, we sent out email alerts to fellow Club members to rally opposition. Unfortunately, our efforts weren't enough and the measure passed on April 21st. Councilors Brad Winter (District 4), Michael Cadigan (District 5), Sally Mayer (District 7), Greg Payne (District 8), and Tina Cummins (District 9) all voted for this resolution. We urge you to contact them by email and phone and express your disapproval (see phone numbers and email addresses below).

Councilors Miguel Gomez (District 1) and Hess Ynetma (District 6) voted right. Contact them and thank them. Councilors Vince Griego and Eric Griego were absent.

The City will now presumably go ahead and spend \$580,000 for this design work. When the City is laying off workers and reducing services to our fellow citizens, one has to question where the Mayor's priorities are.

Looking ahead to the Fall, we understand there will be Bond Questions on the ballot that will include amounts for the construction of this road. Look for more information on these pages in the July and September issues.

As you all know, the Sierra Club has long opposed the extension of Paseo del Norte through the Monument. You have heard the arguments before, and they all add up to 'IT'S WRONG!'

1. This is an incredibly expensive project and will cost the City lots of money that we are told we don't have. Because there are significant legal problems with the project (see #5 below), any money spent before they are solved could very likely be wasted.

2. This money should be spent on other valuable projects that are sorely needed within the City; projects such as much-needed infrastructure improvement and after-school programs.

3. The City should not be spending our money on projects which desecrate places our fellow citizens consider sacred.
4. The Petroglyph National Monument is a national treasure with the largest concentration of petroglyphs in the nation and draws thousands of tourists world-wide.
5. There are serious legal impediments to the construction of Paseo del Norte. For example, the road expansion must comply with the State Historic Preservation Act, which requires all alternatives to preserve and protect the site be considered. There are many alternatives that have not been thoroughly explored!

What you can do:

1. Continue to monitor the events by reading the newspaper or listening to the news. If you hear that an important vote is coming up, call the Mayor and your City Councilor at 768-3100 and tell him your views. Insist that he or she oppose any resolution that threatens the Monument.

2. Check for updates on our website <http://riogrande.sierraclub.org>. We will do our best to post important information in a timely manner.

3. Email the Mayor and your City Councilor and let them know you oppose any road that threatens the Monument. Ask for a reply to your email.

Their email addresses are:

Mayor Chavez: mayor@cabq.gov
 Miguel Gomez, District 1: mgomez@cabq.gov
 Vince Griego, District 2: vgriego@cabq.gov
 Eric Griego, District 3: egriego@cabq.gov
 Brad Winter, District 4: bwinter@cabq.gov
 Michael Cadigan, District 5: meadigan@cabq.gov
 Hess Ynetma, District 6: hyntema@cabq.gov
 Sally Mayer, District 7: smayer@cabq.gov
 Greg Payne, District 8: gpayne@cabq.gov
 Tina Cummins, District 9: tcummins@cabq.gov
 All City Council members: citycouncil@cabq.gov

General Public Meetings

Monday, May 19th at 7:30PM

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

Monday, June 16th at 7:30PM

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

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

Central New Mexico Group

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Sherry Wolf	254-2190	wolf@libra.unm.edu

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

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

Outings

Sunday, May 18th - Red Canyon-Spruce Spring Loop Hike

Manzano Mountain Wilderness. Moderate hike to the Manzano Crest.

7.5 miles round-trip, 2000 ft. elevation change. Superb views.

Contact: David Ther, 260-1553.

Saturday June 7 - Pino Shadow Spring to Manzano Peak Summit

10 miles round-trip, 2500 ft. elevation. This is the highest point in the

Manzanos, with panoramic views in all directions.

Contact: David Ther, 260-1553.

Albuquerque Earth Day 2003 a Success

Earth Day 2003 celebration was held on April 13, 2003. Once again, La Montanita Coop sponsored Earth Day behind their market on Silver between Carlisle and Amherst. Earth Day was held a week early this year because the Sunday before Earth Day is Easter.

The event was well attended by local organic farmers, conservation groups, local merchants, and civic organizations. Solar panels, solar ovens, and hydrogen fuel systems were demonstrated. Groups were present representing better bike routes, local farmers, noise abatement, anti-nuclear issues, anti-war issues, wilderness creation, water and land conservation, xeriscape, and wildlife protection. Several bands played and a good time was had by all. Interest in the Sierra club was steady all day.

Earth Day is a reminder that the easiest and most effective way to help the environment is to be active at the local level.

Sandia Preservation Alliance Wins Victory Protecting Sacred Lands

By Mark Doppke

The Sandia Preservation Alliance and the U.S. Congress have ended a long standing land dispute over 9,890 acres on the west face of the Sandia Mountains. The area extends from the first ridge to the crest and includes the La Luz trail. The agreement and an act of Congress irreversibly designate this part of the Cibola National forest as a Wilderness Area administered by the Forest Service.

The Sandia Preservation Alliance includes the Pueblo of Sandia, the Sierra Club, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), New Mexico Conferences of Churches, South West Organizing Project (SWOP), Independent Movement Political Action Committee (IMPAC), New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, the SAGE Council, Americans for Indian Opportunity, Jewish Community Center (JCC), Forest Guardians, Albuquerque Hispanic Bar Association, and the Anti-defamation League. In the end, the agreement was also supported by the Sandia Heights Homeowner's Association and the U.S. Congress. The Sierra Club has always been very cautious about taking positions on land claims, but supported this settlement due to its distinctive nature, generosity, and the environmental protections afforded the area.

The area has always been sacred to the tribe. In 1748 the Spanish issued the Pueblo of Sandia a land grant. The original language defining the eastern border was "...y por el Oriente la Sierra Madre Hanmanda de Sandia..." The Spanish Land Grant was resurveyed and acknowledged as legal by the U.S. Congress in 1858 which reaffirmed that the Pueblo's eastern border was "the main ridge called Sandia". The U.S. survey inexplicably indicated that the eastern border of the Pueblo was the first ridge (Sierra). The surveyor Clements has a history of conducting erroneous surveys on other New Mexico reservations. The two adjacent land grants to the south Elena Gallegos and Isleta contain virtually the same language and both were construed as extending to the crest of the mountain. The area has been part of the Cibola National Forest administered by the National Forest Service since the early 1900's.

In the 1980's the Pueblo of Sandia began legal proceeding to fix the 1858 survey and has won one court battle that stated that the eastern boundary is the

crest. The Pueblo of Sandia could probably have pushed to have a new survey consistent with the DC District Court opinion recognizing the crest as the eastern boundary. This would probably result in an administrative appeal and another court date in the US District Court and continued litigation for years to come. If the Pueblo of Sandia continued to prevail in court the area could become part of the Pueblo of Sandia, instead the Pueblo opted to create an agreement that would settle the dispute by designating the area a Wilderness with additional protections.

The Sandia Preservation Alliance agreement called for the creation of the T'uf Shur Bich (green reed mountain) Preservation Trust Area. The Pueblo of Sandia gives up all claims to the area and preserves all existing property rights including private property, permanent utility access, Sandia Peak Tram operations, and right away for roads. It guaranteed public access consistent with current access including recreation, hiking, hand gliding, hunting and trapping. The area would retain its irreversible designation as Wilderness Area Plus administered by US Forest Service with additional protections against development, logging and mining. The Pueblo of Sandia would receive access to the land for religious and cultural purposes and would be consulted in all new uses and changes in current land uses. A system to arbitrate future disputes was also provided.

In the end the agreement included some minor changes, mostly land swaps. The final agreement was primarily intact and included many win-win situations for all parties involved in the dispute. The agreement protects local sacred lands and at the same time forever protects part of Albuquerque's watershed and open space from sprawl and development.

The Sierra Club is very happy with the outcome and is honored to be part of the Sandia Preservation Alliance. We would like to thank everyone involved including the Pueblo of Sandia, the Sandia Preservation Alliance, members of our local and national government, and everyone else who support this action.

Will Albuquerque Be Like This?

In the last issue we reported that Albuquerque is studying a new Bus Rapid Transit Project. The following article from the Arizona Republic describes a similar new Bus Rapid Transit Project in Phoenix.

Phoenix Transit Going RAPID Express.

Silver, cantilevered bus stops that might shelter the likes of George Jetson are exploding throughout Phoenix. They are the signs of benefits to come: a new express service called RAPID, which will start July 14. The service, patterned after rail travel, includes larger, sleeker, more comfortable buses, designed with commuters in mind. It has new park-and-ride lots and fewer stops so riders get downtown faster. And it has more frequent buses and expanded hours to better accommodate business schedules.

The \$50 million project includes 56 new buses and 20 new stops, called stations, that will help people distinguish the express service. "One of the things we learned from professionals in the transit industry is that when you establish a new service, you need to give it a new identity," said Ed Zuercher, Phoenix public transit director.

"The buses are real head-turners, and the stations will be that as well." The new service will double the capacity of the express buses, and Zuercher said he expects the ridership to double but can't predict how quickly. Express ridership in Phoenix has not increased in recent years because the current routes are at capacity, Zuercher said. "You reach a natural saturation point," he said. "People on express buses have less tolerance for standing because they are on the bus for longer periods and on freeways, which is less comfortable. So once you hit capacity, unless you add more buses, ridership will stagnate or decline slightly."

Improved express service is part of the city's overall expansion of public transit, including upgrading of Dial-A-Ride, adding 100 local buses and future light rail service. The RAPID buses, built in Hungary and finished in Alabama, are made of composite material, said Patrick Rona, president and CEO of North American Bus Industries. The lightweight material allowed the company to build 45-foot buses, compared to the standard 40-foot steel bus, increasing capacity by 15 percent without increasing operating costs. Rona said it was the collaboration with Phoenix that pushed North American to design the longer chassis, which now has a two-year backlog in orders from Los Angeles and Chicago.

"They've systematically eliminated all the excuses for not using mass transit," Rona said. "It's more frequent, more rapid, more attractive, more efficient and productive." They have high-backed, front-facing seats with armrests and overhead racks. "This is the culmination of what people said they would get out of their ears for," Zuercher said. "They wanted nicer, bigger buses with amenities like reading lights and reclining seats. They wanted routes where they don't make a lot of stops, where they are always in progress to their destination. That's the concept of RAPID."

The first routes in the service begin July 14, with more being added in the fall. For more information, go to www.phoenix.gov/PUBLICTRANSIT/rapid.html

Sacred Lands Campaign Offers An Opportunity to Work with Diverse Partners

By Martin Heinrich

I was pleased to see that the Central New Mexico Group chose to focus on Sacred Lands conservation in 2003. Some of the most successful New Mexico conservation initiatives in recent years have been the result of building broad non-traditional coalitions to work on unique challenges. We certainly saw this with the Sandia Mountain claim (see related story). When that claim was recently resolved in Congress, the agreement met many of the cultural needs of our friends at the Pueblo of Sandia, and it added an additional layer of protection to the Sandia Mountain Wilderness. I am heartened to see the Central New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club seeking to expand its roll in working with traditional communities and other partners to protect unique areas in our state.

One of the most exciting places where the Sacred Lands Campaign dovetails beautifully with traditional land conservation efforts, is in the vicinity of the Ojito Wilderness Study Area and the Pueblo of Zia, northwest of Albuquerque. This region contains not only Ojito with its numerous sacred and culturally significant sites, but also some surrounding buffer lands that also contain cultural sites very important to the people of Zia. A broad coalition of partners including the Sierra Club and the Pueblo is quickly moving forward with a campaign to protect Ojito as Wilderness. We hope to see legislation introduced in the 108th Congress, which will designate permanent Wilderness status to the core Ojito Wilderness and transfer some of the surrounding buffer of lands to Zia Pueblo to be managed as de facto Wilderness.

Please take action now and help pass the first significant Wilderness legislation for New Mexico in 16 years!

Write letters to Senators Bingaman and Domenici asking them to introduce legislation that will...

- Grant Wilderness designation to Ojito

- Transfer the surrounding buffer of lands to Zia Pueblo, to be managed in perpetuity as de facto Wilderness with permanent public access.

Senator Pete Domenici
U. S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeff Bingaman
U. S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

'We do not now pay for habitat loss, for the disappearance of species, for taking paradise and putting in a parking lot. But, we will...'
Steve Lawrence in the Alibi, 9/12/02 issue



NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

GROUP OUTINGS FOR 2003

Sat Sun May

- Thursday, May 1 to Friday, May 9
Exploratory 5-day Backpack Norma McCallan (471-0005)
 3 **Moderate Hike** 6 miles RT. Gail Bryant (1-505-757-6654)
 4 **Strenuous Hike** in Pecos (exploratory), location depends on snow conditions. Dogs welcome. Sharon Angert (982-1055)
 Saturday and Sunday - May 10 and 11
Car Camp and Moderate/Strenuous Hike Mt Taylor (11,301'), trail conditions permitting. 6.5 miles RT, 2100' elevation gain. Leave Saturday afternoon. Michael Di Rosa (663-0648)
 10 **Strenuous Loop Hike** to Hermit Peak, El Porvenir Canyon, trail conditions permitting. 14 miles RT, 2800' elevation gain, many stream crossings. Alternative hike: Caballo Peak. Leave 7 AM. For reservation, call Dan Rusthol (690-8967)
 11 **Easy/Moderate Hike** on Frey Trail (Bandelier). Leave 9 AM. Victor Atyas (438-7434)
 17 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** Bring binoculars. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
 17 **Moderate Hike** along Tesuque Creek. Dogs allowed. Leave 9 AM. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
 18 **Moderate Hike** Dogs allowed. Tobin Oruch (820-2844)
 24 **Sorry - no hike scheduled**
 25 **Strenuous Hike** to Santa Barbara Peak, trail conditions permitting. About 16 miles RT, 2400' elevation gain. Lavi Malhotra (995-8547; lavim@ix.netcom.com)
 31 **Strenuous Hike** to Shaggy Peak and Deer Creek. 13 miles RT, 2000' elevation gain. Mostly off-trail, some rough sections. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)

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 July 2003

- Friday to Sunday, July 4 to 6
Strenuous Trail Maintenance Backpack Hike up Santa Barbara Canyon, camp at bottom of Dominguez trail, work on cutting out blowdown on trail that goes over ridge to Trampas Canyon. Beautiful views. John & Linda Buchser (820-0201)
 Fourth of July, Independence Day
 5 **Strenuous Hike** Pecos Baldy, limit 15, Marcia Skillman (474-7414)
Moderate Hike Deception Peak (12,000'), site of proposed Ski Basin expansion, 2000' elevation gain, moderate pace, dogs okay. Leave 7:30 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
 6 **Moderate Hike** dogs okay, Tobin Oruch (820-2844)
 12 **Strenuous Hike** Gold Hill or Wheeler, 10-13 miles, 3400'+, Dan Rusthol (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.

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



◆ ◆ NORTHERN NEW MEXICO GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ◆ ◆

Chair — Jan Kindel *	jankindel@aol.com	474-7207
Vice-Chair — Barbara Johnson *	lunah3@aol.com	466-4935
Secretary/Treas — Lionel Soracco		983-6715
Political Committee — Susan Martin *	smartin@lan.gov	988-5206
Membership/Activist Outings — Norma McCallan *		
	nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005
Newsletter/Publicity — Kay Carlson	kcarslonwp@earthlink.net	982-3926
Web Master — Gina Aranda	garanda@cnsf.com	424-1615
Phone Tree — Berta Hanna		424-1435
Chapter Rep — Doug Fraser *	fraser@thumtek.com	474-7615
		* Member of the SF Group Executive Committee

Sat Sun June

- 1 **Moderate Hike** to Hamilton Mesa in the Pecos, limit of 15. Michael Goldey (820-7302)
 7 **Rail/Trail Day Celebration Moderate 8 Mile Hike** along the Rail Trail from 9 Mile to Hiway 285, shuttle to Lamy. See write-up on this page. Meet SF Railyard, south of Tomasita's parking lot, 7:30 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
 7 **Strenuous Hike** to Sandia Crest on La Luz Trail, 14 miles, 3800'. Michael Di Rosa (663-0648)
 8 **Strenuous Hike** Little Costilla Peak, carcamp night before, fast pace, Lavi Malhotra (995-8547; lavim@ix.netcom.com)
 Saturday and Sunday, June 14 and 15
Strenuous Backpack likely to Hermit's Peak, camaraderie under a full moon. Joint trip with NM Mtn Club, 12 maximum, dogs okay. Sharon Angert (982-1055)
 14 **Strenuous Hike**, probably Caballo Peak above Los Alamos, 14 miles, 3300', Dan Rusthol (690-8967)
 14 **Easy to Moderate Hike and Bike Trip** up Frijoles Canyon, return to c.g. via Upper Crossing, 7 miles. Those interested can bicycle back to their cars at the visitor center. Meet Ponderosa C.G. at 8:30 and carpool to Bandelier Visitor Center. Led by Pajarito Group's Rainer and Hse Bleck (662-2368)
 15 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** to Puerto Nambe along Winsor Trail, 10 miles, 1500', moderate pace, limit of 15, dogs okay. Lionel Soracco (983-6715)
 Friday to Monday, June 20 to 23 - Continental Divide summer solstice
4-Day Backpack South San Juan Wilderness, CO. Elk Creek C.G. > Cumbres Pass via CDT. 32 miles. Car shuttle. Dogs ok. Lve Thurs night for early start Fri. Robert McKee (471-0005)
 21 **Easy/Moderate Hike** > 10 mi, Gail Bryant (1-505-757-6654)
 21 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** with Audubon Society, bring binoculars. Ron Duffy (982-2890)
 22 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** to Nambe Lake, 7 miles, 2100', limit of 15. Les Drapela (438-3306)
 28 **Strenuous Exploratory Off-Trail Hike** Climb Jicarilla peak (12,500'), between Leonardo and Trampas Lakes drainages. 3,600'+ gain, 12 miles RT, 50% off-trail with possible tree falls. A few dogs by reservation only. Early start, long day. Car camp at trailhead night before. Bad weather cancels. Stephen Markowitz (505-797-5833 before 8 PM; stepdov@hotmail.com)
 29 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** Jemez, Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Executive Committee:	Group Conservation Committee:
Tuesday, June 3, 7 PM	Tuesday, May 27, 7 PM
Saturday, July 2, 6 PM	Tuesday, June 24, 7 PM

Water Pot-Luck, Wednesdays, 6:30 PM, John Buchser's house (820-0201)
 May 14 - New Mexico Acequia Association, Protecting Our Heritage
 June 11 - Rio Grande Restoration
 July 9 - Santa Fe Farmer's Market

RAIL TRAIL DAY CELEBRATION
 All Day Saturday, June 7

A gala day of festivities, starting with dignitaries and speeches at the Santa Fe RR Depot at 9:30 AM, train ride to Lamy at 10:30 AM, returning 2 PM (tickets at \$5 each way need to be purchased in advance), free buses to and from Lamy all day, and a fair at Lamy featuring arts and crafts, wildlife, children's fun booths, a petting zoo, white elephant table, silent auction, and musical groups. Bicycle, bus, or hike, with free snacks and drinks along the way. **Join the Sierra hike leaving from the Railyard at 7:30 AM. See write-up in outings column.** Information call Santa Fe Conservation Trust (989-7019).



Outings — Norbert Sperlich		474-4354
— Tobin Oruch	oruch@lan.gov	820-2844
Conservation — Paul Paryski *	pparyski@aol.com	992-1984
Mining-Cliff Larsen *	clarsen1@ix.netcom.com	466-2128
Water-John Buchser *	jbuchser@earthlink.net	820-0201
National Parks & Rangelands-Roger Peterson	rogpete@aol.com	983-7559
Carson Nat'l Forest-George Grossman *		982-1024
Activist Outings-Norma McCallan *	nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005
Land Use-Eleanor Eisenmenger		820-6401
Toxics-Jim Hannan	jhannan505@aol.com	988-5760
Genetically Engineered Food-Jim Hannan	jhannan505@aol.com	988-5760

NORTHERN NEW MEXICO (alias Santa Fe) GROUP 2003 MEETINGS

Tuesday, May 20, 7 PM

**CERRO GRANDE FIRE RESTORATION: Lessons Learned
The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly**

The Cerro Grande Fire, because of its proximity to Los Alamos National Laboratory, has received lots of attention. Learning about dealing with the results of fire requires data and monitoring has been implemented on an extensive scale on the Cerro Grande. Greg Kuyumjian, a hydrologist with the Santa Fe National Forest, has been a key member of the team doing post-fire rehabilitation work for the last several years. Greg will explain what we can expect after a large fire, including what happens both with and without burned area emergency rehabilitation.



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

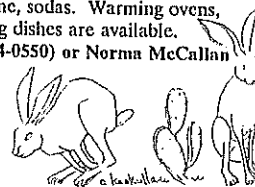
Membership meetings are held at the Unitarian Church 107 W. Barcelona St (between Galisteo and Don Gaspar).



ARNOLD KESKULLA

In memory of one of our most committed hike leaders

On March 8, 2003, Arnold Keskulla died less than two months after his wife Carolyn, whom we memorialized on these pages in the previous newsletter. Arnold was equally a special person. He was born September 21, 1911, in Ossining, New York, graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a degree in metallurgical engineering, worked briefly at a California gold mine, returned east and married Carolyn in 1938. They honeymooned in Utah, lived for many years in New Jersey where Arnold worked as a metallurgist, and raised a family of four children.



They journeyed far and wide on their yearly family vacations. In the late '60s Arnold, then 57, started hiking with the Somerset County Hiking Club, and soon Carolyn joined in. Upon retirement they bought property in Santa Fe in 1976 off Old Las Vegas Highway at the edge of the forest and built a passive solar house. Returning West was a great satisfaction to Arnold, and he truly found himself. They joined the Sierra Club and became very active. Arnold led numerous Club hikes, and he and Carolyn were leaders or participants on a good many of the Sierra outings in the next 15 years or so. Because of his great interest in exploring the outdoors, Arnold developed quite a few trips in the area, utilizing little known routes, and several of their trips are described in our publication "Day Hikes in the Santa Fe Area." I had the somewhat lonely job of outings chair for several years and asked Arnold to co-chair, and for some years we shared the efforts of scheduling hikes and dealing with whatever outings problems arose. Only some time after macular degeneration set in did Arnold confess he couldn't continue that job since he could no longer read the schedule. But he and Carolyn continued to lead trips, albeit at a slower pace as their ages mounted, till about five years ago. At his memorial service, several family members and friends described his leading them on walks in recent years when he could barely see at all.

Arnold also displayed his happiness in the outdoors by maintaining a large vegetable garden in his back yard and creating dozens of birdhouses for his and friends' yards. Till the very end his mind stayed sharp, his conversation was articulate, his curiosity about the world still strong. He was one of our most beloved and respected hike leaders. We will miss you Arnold, but your indomitable spirit remains, and it will forever inhabit those many trails that you graciously shared with us.

Norma McCallan

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Jan Kindel

The El Seville apartments, affordable housing in downtown Santa Fe, will soon be demolished and replaced with gated, expensive condominiums. Contrast this scenario with a process developed in Havana, Cuba.

On a recent educational expedition to Cuba we focused on urban planning and historic preservation in the cities of Havana and Trinidad. In 1992, when the Soviets pulled out of Cuba, Havana embarked on a sweeping historic preservation program for the old city. When the country was again opened to tourism, money was siphoned from tourist profits into rebuilding the inner city. Most of the old buildings were crumbling or in serious disrepair but occupied by residents. As the construction began, temporary buildings were brought into the area to house the former residents. Upon completion of the restorations, the residents will move back into new homes. Since more families were previously living in the old buildings than the new codes allow, some residents will be moved to the suburbs. However, the decisions about who goes and who stays are made by the residents themselves.

Patricia Rodriguez, an architect and coordinator of Havana's Historian's Office, which is overseeing the renovation, said, "We want to recover everything we can, but not to create a movie set. We want to recover the life of the city." In other Latin American colonial cities, such as San Juan, Puerto Rico, the residents were expelled and the buildings were bought by the rich. "They restored them but left the center like a beautiful body with no soul."

Do we need creative solutions to keep our own cities from becoming soulless?

CONSERVATION CHAIR

Paul Paryski

At the request of the committee, the Group heard proposals from two Northern New Mexico Hispanic organizations. Moises Gonzales of the Mexicano Land Education and Conservation Trust (MLECT) described his organization's effort to promote environmentally appropriate stewardship of Land Grants, and Estevan Arellano, a highly reputed Hispanic historian, described his group's efforts to preserve traditional Spanish colonial flora. The Group has given a small grant to Estevan to establish a seed bank and is considering a grant to the MLECT (see Estevan's article in the March/April issue of the *Rio Grande Sierran*). Building bridges between traditional Hispanic communities and the environmental community is essential to protecting and restoring our natural heritage.

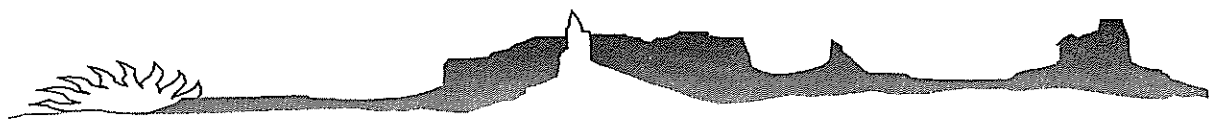
All members are welcome to come to the Conservation Committee meetings. Hot topics are drought and the resulting infestation by bark beetles devastating our forests; the silvery minnow issue and the resulting controversy over in-stream flow in the Rio Grande; proposed Santa Fe city ordinances requiring cisterns and household water budgets; water compacts between New Mexico and Texas.

PUBLIC MEETINGS TO DISCUSS WATER PLAN

Jemez y Sangre Water Planning Council
Thursday, May 8, Sweeney Conference Center, Room 5
3 to 5 PM and 6 to 8 PM

Further info: Amy Lewis (982-0405) or www.dbstephens.com





Valles Caldera National Preserve Update

Trustees of the Valles Caldera National Preserve have a mandate to develop a comprehensive management plan for the Preserve by August 2004. The draft *Comprehensive Management Plan and Strategic Guidance* will be available in Summer 2003 for public review. It is a science-based, adaptive management model that uses ongoing monitoring data as feedback in the decision-making process. The document outlines goals, objectives, values, and public involvement.

Grazing

A 2003 amendment to the *Valles Caldera Environmental Assessment*, published in early 2003 and open for public comment until 15 April, included an analysis of the 2002 grazing program and explicitly addressed drought conditions. The amendment proposes to include the Cerro Seco Pasture, comprised of the Valle Seco and Valle Rosa, in the 2003 grazing program, which is otherwise basically the same as 2002. The proposed season is 1 June-30 September.

Recreation

The Preserve is offering free public hiking (guided and unguided hikes, strenuous to easy) Memorial Day-7 June. The proposed price structure for summer recreation is open to public comment:

- \$10/day/adult;
- \$5/day for children (under 15);
- 25% discount for families;
- 20% discount for seniors (62 and older);
- fishing rod fee \$10/adult, \$5/child; and
- \$30 for other special activities.

The Committee is hoping to provide access from points other than along State Road 4.

For more information, contact Chapter Valles Caldera Issue Chair Ilse Bleck in Los Alamos (see Masthead, page 2); or Gary Ziche, Executive Director of the Valles Caldera National Preserve Trust, also in Los Alamos (661-3333; info@vallescaldera.gov).

—Ilse Bleck

El Paso Lives with Lead (continued from page 10)

American communities over the same problems. In fact, the U.S. Department of Justice has frozen the assets belonging to Grupo Mexico (ASARCO's parent company) for suspicion that the company is divesting certain parts of its business plan in order to avoid legal responsibility for clean up.

Keeping ASARCO's El Paso assets frozen and prioritizing land for remediation in our area is part of the solution. But a just resolution begins with educating our people, especially those in the surrounding neighborhoods on both sides of the Rio Grande, about the extent of the contamination and its effects on children's development. This step lends itself to a public outcry impossible for authorities to overlook. We must work to ensure that the responsible parties decontaminate the hazardous areas of our neighborhoods, regardless of what side of the river they are on, and do so with full public disclosure.

The El Paso Group of the Sierra Club is taking the lead in this educational process. Our core volunteers represents a broad network of support ranging from bilingual leaders in the religious community and organized labor to university professors. We believe that, just as El Paso is a corridor for international trade, it has the potential to be a catalyst for broader international environmental justice efforts.

For more information, contact El Paso Group member José Escobedo (915/751-1834; escobedo25@hotmail.com).

—José Escobedo

Grand Opening for Cerrillos Hills Historic Park

All Day Saturday, 24 May 2003

Come celebrate the opening of Santa Fe County's first open-space park with Santa Fe County and the Cerrillos Hills Park Coalition. Three years in development, this park is among the first and largest areas created by the County open-space bond issue in 1998. The park contains 1,116 acres of the Cerrillos Hills immediately north of the town of Cerrillos. It encompasses a large portion of what is probably the oldest mining area in North America. Cooperative management planning is underway regarding the adjacent 2,200 acres of U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land.

Ceremonies start at 10:00 AM with introductions and comments by invited guests. Ribbon cutting near noon will be followed by the Cerrillos Village Spring Festival, with food, music, and arts and crafts. Several docent-led walking tours will be offered in the afternoon.

To find the park, go to First Street in Cerrillos, cross the railroad tracks, and continue north on a dirt road to the parking lot on the left, 2/3 of a mile from First Street. For more information, call Bill Baxter (424-3574).

Wolf Reintroduction (continued from page 5)

- livestock carcasses;
- the arbitrary boundaries confining the wolves to just two national forests; and
- the provision forbidding release of wolves from the captive breeding pool directly to the Gila, allowing only wolves that have been previously captured to be released to the Gila.

In almost two years since this report was released as part of the government's formal three-year review of the reintroduction program, the USFWS has taken no steps to implement these urgent recommendations for reforms.

Recent action by the USFWS threatens to further undermine recovery of the Mexican wolf. The agency recently divided wolf populations into three distinct population segments (DPS). The Center for Biological Diversity is concerned that the federal government is gerrymandering the range of the Mexican wolf in order to shift attention away from recovery within the lobo's historic range in New Mexico and Arizona. The southwestern DPS segment extends into Colorado, which is outside the historic range of the lobo but within the historic range of another gray wolf subspecies. Robinson explains that, by

including portions of Colorado in the southwestern DPS, the agency may be preparing to ignore the recovery potential of other areas within the historic range, such as:

- the Chihuahuan desert of southern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona,
- the Sky Islands of Arizona,
- the Sacramento Mountains of New Mexico, and
- the Mogollon Rim between the Grand Canyon National Park and the Apache National Forest.

Future reintroduction programs focused on these areas offer the potential of genetic continuity with the present population in the Apache/Gila National Forest. In contrast, reintroductions hundreds of miles outside the historic range would leave each population isolated.

In addition, in March 2003, the USFWS issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to delist the grey wolf in other areas of the United States. Delisting of the wolf has been labeled premature by the Wildlife Conservation Society, Defenders of Wildlife, The Humane Society of the United States, and the Center for Biological Diversity have all stated their intent to challenge the rule in court.

The overall result of these federal actions is to weaken the protection of the wolf. Mexican wolves, with only approximately 40 individuals in the wild and approximately another 200 in zoos, have the most to lose.

We didn't hear any wolves on our recent trip to the Gila, but they were surely in the area. Because of this, as dusk gave way to night, as the moon hung clean and luminous above the campfire and we listened to wolf expert Dave Parsons recount the history of the wolf in this corner of the world, the Gila experience seemed more full and complete to us than it had on trips past. Let us work to ensure that this new sense of wholeness becomes a permanent part of the Gila Wilderness.

For more information on the Mexican wolf, contact the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson, AZ (520/623-5252; center@biologicaldiversity.org; www.sw-center.org) or in Pinos Altos, NM (534-0360), and see the USFWS web site (www.fws.gov).

—Liz Walsh

Chapter Wildlife Issues Co-Chair

Federal Public Lands Grazing Policy

Adopted by Sierra Club Board of Directors, 23 September 2000

Goals

The primary goal of this Sierra Club Federal public lands grazing policy is to protect and restore native biodiversity and achieve functional and self-sustaining ecosystems. The Sierra Club recognizes that the preponderance of scientific evidence documents that grazing by non-native species has led to severe and sometimes irreversible degradation of native ecosystems. Federal public lands belong to the American public and must be managed to maintain their long-term ecological integrity. In order to achieve our objectives, the Sierra Club advocates significant changes to current land management practices to correct the problem.

The following five points apply to all aspects of this policy:

- (1) Commercial grazing is not appropriate on Federal public lands except where it is shown by science that some grazing is needed to achieve ecological objectives.
- (2) On federal public lands that were once grazed by large native herbivores the Sierra Club will seek, whenever feasible, the replacement of non-native grazing species (cattle, sheep, goats, etc.) with native grazers (within their historic range).
- (3) Where settlement or ownership patterns obstruct the reintroduction of native grazers on public lands, grazing operators should manage livestock toward the goal of maximum restoration of native plant and animal communities, water quality, and other environmental goals. Meat or fiber production should not be a primary goal of such grazing, and operators should be required to demonstrate a steadily improving range trend toward excellent ecological condition.
- (4) The Sierra Club recognizes that restrictions on grazing may have negative impacts on the cultural and economic stability of some communities. These impacts are apt to be most severe in Native American, minority, and low-income communities. We are committed to developing partnerships with community members to identify and implement strategies to protect both traditional communities and the ecological integrity of public lands, without sacrificing either.
- (5) The Sierra Club is committed to helping ease the economic burden on small family-ranch operations with federal public

lands allotments that would be affected by termination or reduction of their grazing leases.

Local entities are urged to advocate whatever incremental improvements seem most appropriate for specific sites within their jurisdiction, up to and including an end to commercial grazing.

In addition to local site-specific efforts, the Club may seek federal legislation and regulations to curtail grazing and accomplish the other goals of this policy.

Nothing in this policy precludes the Sierra Club's full support for legislation and/or administrative actions, such as wilderness bills, that primarily address non-grazing issues, but do not meet the goals of this grazing policy.

Sierra Club Strategy for Moving Toward Our Goals for Public Land Grazing

The Sierra Club believes that the following interim actions can facilitate the long-term goal for eventual restoration of our federal public lands, and would support legislation or regulation where needed:

- (a) Holders of grazing permits or leases should be allowed to reduce utilization rates, or rest or retire lands, without losing their permit or lease, and without the retired use being reallocated to others.
- (b) If allotments become open for reallocation, they should be awarded by a competitive bidding system, whereby a bidder who meets minimum bid requirements and proposes the grazing strategy that will maximize biological preservation and recovery shall be awarded the grazing contract, even if that bidder proposes to retire the allotment and manage it for other values, such as water quality.
- (c) The managing agency should determine and document, at each renewal interval, that the allotment has made substantial progress toward established ecological and environmental quality goals. Permits or leases where such progress is not demonstrated should be terminated.
- (d) The managing agency should establish and enforce strict water-quality standards for all streams on public grazing allotments. The managing agency should establish and enforce standards for protection and restoration of all public land riparian ecosystems. Where progress is not being made to fully meet these standards, grazing should be terminated.

- (e) The federal government should establish a Grasslands Restoration Bank to purchase open space and wildlife riparian easements on private grazing lands in primarily public land grazing watersheds where ecosystems are grazing dependent, or to buy the fee land from private ranchers in arid or other areas where neither private nor public lands are suitable for grazing. Once these two highest-priority needs have been largely met, this Bank could be used to subsidize the transition from non-native to native grazing species.

Internal Priorities for Immediate Action

Recognizing that changes to grazing policy will likely take a number of years to accomplish and that some areas of the public lands are more imminently threatened by destructive grazing practices than others, the Sierra Club has prioritized our efforts. As a first priority, the Sierra Club will work toward ending commercial grazing on federal public lands where one or more of the following circumstance exists:

- Lands that receive an average annual precipitation of 12 inches or less, or areas with cryic soils.
- Associated activities (e.g. water developments, predator control, vegetation manipulation) are occurring in such a manner that native plant and animal species are significantly impacted.
- Grazing is causing degradation of habitat necessary for threatened, endangered, or sensitive native plant and animal species.
- Grazing is causing significant degradation of water quality.
- The public land-management agencies have insufficient funding, staff, and determination to create and administer monitoring systems that will provide reasonable assurance that adverse impacts will be minimized and opportunities for restoration taken advantage of.

This policy supersedes the Grazing on Public Lands Policy of 12 September 1992.

The Board directs the Conservation Governance Committee to see that a Grazing Committee is established to oversee implementation of this policy.

This Committee should also adopt definitions and guidelines to accompany this policy.

Walking *(continued from page 9)*

This poll was made possible by the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The poll was conducted by telephone in October 2002 by Belden,

Russonello and Stewart, with a sample size of 800 adults 18 years and over. The margin of sampling error is ± 3.5 percentage points.

For more information, contact DeAnza Valencia at NM STPP in Albuquerque (243-8666; dvalencia@transact.org); www.transact.org).

—DeAnza Valencia

Chapter Tracks More Than 80 Bills and Memorials in 2003 Session

The intense two-month 2003 session of the New Mexico Legislature ended on March 22. Chapter Legislative Coordinator MaryBeth Morand and Political/Legislative Chair Gwen Wardwell (lobbyists) tracked no less than 83 bills and memorials on our behalf. These included 17 initiatives pertaining directly to the Chapter's seven first-priority issues (as identified by the Executive Committee in December 2002), and eight initiatives pertaining directly to the Chapter's six second-tier issues (see box, page 1). The fates of these and many other bills and memorials of concern are summarized in three categories below.

Chapter lobbyists worked in cooperation with the Senators and Representatives who introduced and amended legislation, and with lobbyists and representatives from the following dedicated organizations:

- 1000 Friends of New Mexico,
- Alliance for Rio Grande Heritage,
- Amigos Bravos,
- Animal Protection of New Mexico,
- Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy,
- Center for Biological Diversity,
- Coalition for a Livable Future,
- Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety,
- Gila Regional Information Project,
- New Mexico Environmental Law Center,
- New Mexico Public Interest Research Group,
- Oil and Gas Accountability Project, and
- Surface Transportation Policy Project.

During the legislative session, the Governor has three days to sign/veto a bill that has passed both the House and Senate. Bills that are signed, and bills that are not specifically vetoed, become law in 90 days, unless the bill contains an emergency clause stating that it shall become law immediately upon signing. After the session ends, the Governor has 20 days to sign bills; unsigned bills are considered to be vetoed.

This year, 28 Interim Committees are scheduled to pursue legislative affairs between sessions. For a complete list of Interim Committees and a schedule of meetings and their locations around the State, call Legislative Council Services (986-4600).

For more information about these and other initiatives, contact Chapter Political/Legislative Chair Gwen Wardwell (see Masthead, page 2).

First-priority Issues

Protect Water Resources

Acequia Water Banking and Transfers

- **Water Banking Authority for Acequias** (HB 302-B. Lujan; SB 124-Cisneros). ☺
- **Compliance with Acequia Requirements** (HB 303-B. Lujan). ☺
- **Acequias and Community Ditch Requirements** (SB 123-Cisneros)—These bills allows acequia associations to transfer water between *parciantes* without approval of the State Engineer, and require acequia approval for the transfer of individual water rights out of an acequia. Success. Signed by the Governor. ☺

Metering and Limiting the Use of Domestic Wells

- **Domestic Well Management** (HB 307-Varela);

Domestic Water Well Management (SB 565-Jennings)—Originally strong companion bills that proposed to allow the State Engineer to deny well permits in "Critical Management Areas," these bills were weakened to be ineffectual and failed in the first committees. ☹

- **Amend Subdivision Regulations** (HB 202-Lundstrom)—Proposed to require well metering, xeriscaping, and efficiency standards for architectural and plumbing features. Failed in the House. ☹
- **Domestic Well Management** (SB 484-Befford) The Homebuilder's Association advocated for this bill to limit domestic well production to 1 acre/foot. The bill died in the second committee. ☹
- **Water Use Reporting Requirements** (SB 102-Sharer)—Proposed to require well metering, but the State Engineer's enforcement capabilities were dubious. Failed in the first committee. ☹

Pollution from Commercial Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

- **Amend Hazardous Waste Act** (HB 781-A. Lujan); **Hazardous Waste Regulations** (SB 514-Lopez). ☹
- **Amend Air Quality Control Act** (HB 782-A. Lujan); **Air Quality Control Regulations** (SB 515-Lopez)—As the Bush administration attempts to gut national environmental laws, it's up to the states to uphold their own standards. These four bills proposed to change New Mexico air-quality and hazardous waste statute language from "no more stringent than federal regulations" to "at least as stringent as federal regulations." They failed. The House versions moved out of only one committee; the Senate versions didn't even accomplish that. ☹

Responsible Use of Energy

Renewable Portfolio Standard

Several initiatives were designed to uphold the Public Regulatory Commission's (PRC) mandate for implementation of the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS; see *Sierra* March/April 2003).

- **Study Renewable Energy Sources** (HJM 97-B. Lujan); **Study Renewable Energy Resources** (SJM 51-M. Sanchez)—These companion memorials uphold and promote the PRC mandate for implementation of the RPS. They were aggressively amended by the environmental community to change studies from impediments that suspended the RPS to vehicles to encourage it. Success. These passed the House and Senate. ☺
- **Renewable Energy Programs** (SB 836-Romero); **Development of Renewable Energy Resources** (SJM 79-Romero)—These initiatives promoted education on and development of New Mexico's renewable energy resources in the Public Utilities Act. SB 836 failed in the first committee. Romero withdrew SJM 79 to gain support for SJM 89 (below). ☹

- **Goals for Use of Renewable Energy** (SJM 89-Romero)—Reinforces the RPS 10%-by-2010 goal and encourages net metering (wherein the electric meter counts down as a customer generates and feeds renewable energy back into the power grid), alternative fuel vehicles, etc. Success. Passed the House and the Senate. ☺

Solar Tax Credits

- **Solar or Wind Energy Tax Credit** (SB 348-Feldman)—Proposed to provide a \$3,000, one-time-only, tax credit for up to 15% of installation costs. Although this was one of the Governor's bills, it did not move past the first committee. ☹

Increase Funding for Conservation Services

- **General Appropriation Act of 2003** (HB 2-Coll)—Proposed to increase the appropriation to the Conservation Services Division of the Department of Game and Fish by \$125,000. Partial success. \$50,000 for endangered species work was included in the general appropriation bill. Signed by the Governor. ☺

Defend the NM Mining Act

- **Establish Mining Districts** (SB 473-Altamirano)—Phelps Dodge sponsored this bill in spite of the Governor's position in favor of protecting the integrity of the 1993 Mining Act. The bill proposed to establish environmental "sacrifice zones" and released mining companies from standard bonding practices. The fiscal impact to the State for mine reclamation activities would have been enormous. Success; Senator Altamirano said that he had not understood the negative implications of the bill, withdrew it from all committees, and requested that it be tabled indefinitely. ☺
- **Public Peace, Health, Safety, and Welfare** (SB 902-Cisneros)—This "dummy" bill (a mechanism reserved for committee chairmen to use after the deadline for all other bill introduction has passed) was first used to reintroduce SB 473 (above). Senator Cisneros said that had not been his intention and withdrew the SB 473 language. Instead, he introduced a bill to remove humates from Mining Act restrictions. This would have unbundled the state law from the federal act. This bill was apparently tailored for one humate-mine operator near Cuba whose mine had been shut down by the State. Success; did not make it through the first committee. ☺
- **Definition of Alternative Fuel** (HB 587-Miguel Garcia)—Proposed to take hydrocarbon out of the definition and include instead 70% ethanol or methanol, or a fuel mix containing not less than 20% biodiesel or vegetable oil. Failed in House Taxation and Revenue Committee. ☹
- **Salt Cedar Biomass for Electric Generation** (SB 769-Adair)—Proposed a \$300,000 appropriation to the Forestry Division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department to inventory and plan interagency removal. Did not make it beyond the first committee. ☹

(continued on the next page)

Key

- ☺ We prevailed
- ☹ We lost this round
- ☺☹ Pros and Cons



2003 SESSION OF THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATURE

NM Legislature 2003 *(continued from previous page)*

- **Salt Cedar Biomass for Electric Generation** (SB 769-Adair)—Proposes a \$300,000 appropriation to the Forestry Division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department to inventory and plan interagency removal. Did not make it beyond the first committee. ☞

More on Air Quality and Hazardous Waste

- **Study Ozone Depletion in Northwest New Mexico** (HB 291-T.C. Taylor, C. Thomas)—Requests matching funds to study the sources of ozone. Funding for this study was rolled into the general appropriation bill. Signed by the Governor. ☞
- **Ambient Air Quality Standards** (HB 371-Heaton)—Proposed to adopt weaker federal standards written for more heavily polluted eastern states. Required the Environmental Improvement Board to review standards every five years, but made no appropriation. This bill was killed in the second committee. ☞
- **Amend Air Quality Control Act** (HB 372-Herrera)—Proposed to amend state statutes to read "consistent and no more stringent than federal" standards. Was killed in the first committee. ☞
- **Air Quality Control Act Appeals** (HB 655-Heaton)—Proposed to severely weaken public participation in the permitting process. This bill was delayed sufficiently on the House side so that it didn't reach the Senate floor. ☞
- **Natural Resource Revenue Recovery Task Force** (HB 452-Stell; SB 401-Jennings)—These companion bills require a study of the effects of federal laws on rural economies. Success. The funding was included in the general appropriation bill. Signed by the Governor. ☞
- **Secretary of Environment Enforcement Powers** (HB 849-Picraux); **Secretary of Environment Authority** (SB 519-Garcia)—Empowers the Secretary to enforce civil and criminal penalties against polluters. Success; the Governor signed HB 849. ☞
- **Amend Air Quality Control Act** (HB 192-Heaton)—Originally, this bill proposed to relax air-quality standards for cotton gins and other seasonal agriculture operations. Fortunately, the bill was amended to pertain only to cotton gins. Stalemate; could have been much worse. Signed by the Governor. ☞

More on Transportation

- **Mile-based Auto Insurance Coverage** (HB 532-Silva; HB 790-Moore)—These bills proposed to provide a financial incentive for driving less. They died in committees. ☞
- **Prohibit New Outdoor Advertising** (SB 72-Komadina)—Prohibits new billboards and small signs. Died in the first committee, partly because of the restriction on small signs. ☞

More on Land Use

- **Subdivision and Land-use Impact Studies** (SB 389-Griego)—Required local boards to conduct

impact studies, but provided no funding for the studies. This bill did not move past the second committee. ☞

- **Comprehensive Zoning Plans** (SB 410-Griego)—The original bill made zoning optional, but compromise language makes it an acceptable bill. Signed by the Governor. ☞
- **Local Government Ordinance Studies** (SB 411-Griego)—Proposed to require overly burdensome studies for local boards. Did not make it to the House floor. ☞
- **Clarify "Subdivision" in New Mexico Subdivision Act** (SB 435-Altamirano)—Proposed to remove the five-year period for lot splits and the requirement for review of lot splits. Did not make it to the House floor. ☞
- **Prohibit Merger of Contiguous Land Parcels** (SB 438-Altamirano)—The original intent of the bill was bad, but amendments made it into a good bill. Signed by the Governor. ☞
- **State of Emergency in New Mexico Forests** (SB 209-Jennings)—Proposed to promote logging forests to prevent forest fires. Did not make it to the House floor. ☞
- **Paseo del Norte Completion** (HJM 84-Youngberg)—Allows the completion of Paseo del Norte to go through the petroglyphs area and sacred Native American grounds. Was killed in the first committee. ☞
- **Criminal Trespass Posting and Notices** (SB 737-Jennings)—Proposed to allow landowners to use widely-spaced orange paint markers instead of "No Trespassing" signs. Although this bill passed both houses, it was vetoed by the Governor. ☞
- **Transfers of Development Rights** (HB 693-Stell)—Allows for the preservation of rural areas through transfers of development rights. Success. Signed by the Governor. ☞
- **Land Conservation Incentives Act** (HB 747-King; SB 581-Romero)—Provides tax credits for up to \$100,000 and includes conservation restrictions. Success. Senate bill signed by the Governor. ☞
- **Class A County Extraterritorial Zoning** (SB 241-Aragon)—Removes the "extraterritorial zoning authority" of the Albuquerque City/County commission and shifts all zoning authority to the County. An amendment by Maes to apply the bill to Santa Fe and Las Cruces was defeated. The Governor signed this bill. ☞
- **Watershed Restoration** (HB 910-Tripp)—Proposes potential removal of piñons, junipers, etc., but does not specify tree diameters or forest density. We lost; signed by the Governor. ☞
- **Change Designation of Cabezon-area Land** (HM 26-Madarena; SM 48-Fidel)—Requests that the Congressional Delegation consider releasing the Cabezon Wilderness Study area from this status. We failed; the Governor signed HM 26. ☞

More on Wildlife

- **License Plates Featuring Wildlife Artwork** (HB 656-Stewart)—Provides funds for game protection, not endangered species, from license-plate sales. Success. Signed by the Governor. ☞
- **Mitigate Dangers Associated with Wolf Release** (HB 764-Hamilton; SB 746-

Komadina)—These companion bills proposed to undermine the wolf-release program by holding federal biologists personally responsible for any damages and easing the restrictions on killing wolves that wander off the reserves. They were killed in the second committee in both houses. ☞

- **NM Jurisdiction Over Wildlife** (HB 267-Foley)—Another anti-wolf bill. Was killed in the first committee. ☞
- **Support Amending of Endangered Species Act** (SM 36-Komadina)—Attacked the Endangered Species Act. Not introduced by the sponsor. ☞
- **Game and Fish Liability for Property Damage** (SB 709-Jennings)—Proposed to require the Department of Game and Fish to pay property owners for damages by wildlife, without an appropriation. Was killed in the second committee. ☞
- **Game Depredation Program Amendments** (SB 734-Griego)—Proposed to remove the requirement for "good cause" for killing wildlife on private property, and to require landowners to prove that damages were greater than the value of the wildlife. Was killed on the Senate floor. ☞
- **Personal Income Surtax for Wildlife Programs** (HB 240-Begay; HB 943-Coll; SB 329-McSorley)—Proposed to add \$2 to each personal income tax form to be used for wildlife programs. Only one bill made it to the House floor, where it failed. ☞
- **Reevaluate Endangered Species Act** (HM 19-Foley; SM 8-Hurt)—These companion memorials are part of a national campaign to weaken the Endangered Species Act. We lost. HM 19 died in the second committee, but SM 8 passed and was signed by the Governor. ☞
- **Prohibit Cockfighting** (HB 559-Godbey; SB 64-Komadina)—New Mexico is one of the last two states to allow cockfighting, although it is still a form of illegal gambling in the State. Cockfighting was defended as a cultural heritage issue. Although HB 559 passed the House (for the first time), SB 64 failed in the Senate. ☞

Genetically Engineered Foods

- **Labeling for Genetically Engineered (GE) Foods** (SB 915-McSorley)—This bill proposed to require labeling of all foods containing GE ingredients that are sold in New Mexico. However, because this issue involves interstate commerce and nationwide participation, the bill was exchanged for a memorial entitled **Study of Labeling Food Containing Genetically Engineered and Genetically Modified Ingredients** (SM 62-McSorley). Initially, SM 62 requested studies at the state level of the feasibility and effects of labeling GE foods, but it was ultimately modified to "request the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to expedite final rules for labeling genetically engineered food," which the agency had proposed in January 2003. The Senate passed SM 62. ☞

NM Legislature 2003 (continued from previous page)

Recycling

- **Tire Recycling Fees (HB 25--Heaton)**—Raises the recycling fee to \$0.50/tire, with increased funds to go to recycling activities rather than to the State Highway Road fund. Success. Signed by the Governor.
- **Beverage Container Deposit Act (HB 72--Miquel Garcia)**—Proposed to promote recycling of beer bottles only. Failed. Did not make it out of the first committee.

—Gwen Wardwell and MaryBeth Morand

Rio Grande Chapter Quarterly Meetings

The Rio Grande Chapter will meet next on 28-29 June 2003 in Santa Fe. The Conservation Committee will meet on Saturday; the Executive Committee will meet on Sunday morning.

All members are invited. The meeting will take place at The Commons, 2300 W. Alameda, Overnight lodging with Santa Fe members can be arranged. 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 fall and winter meetings are scheduled for September 6-7 and December 6-7, respectively.

A Good Republican (continued from page 13)

There are REP America members in 49 states and several organized state chapters across the nation, all dedicated to being the "Environmental Conscience" of the Republican Party. Our national goals include:

- A New Manhattan Project to greatly improve energy efficiency and commercialize clean energy technologies, producing fuel and electricity from resources in America.
- Preservation of America's public lands heritage, including protection of national forest roadless areas; expansion of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and safeguarding national parks, monuments, and wildlife refuges from inappropriate industrial activities and motorized recreation.
- Clean air and water protection combining vigorous enforcement with incentives for use of advanced technologies that prevent pollution at the source.

Our New Mexico goals are:

- Instituting a statewide water plan.
- Protecting game and non-game wildlife and habitat.
- Developing an effective Planned Growth Strategy for urban areas.

If these sound like goals with which you can agree, then we invite you to visit our web site (www.repamerica.org), or contact me (505/255-4419) for brochures and more information.

—Ken Whitton, President NM Chapter of Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP America)

This article first appeared in the 25 March 2003 edition of The Monitor, in the regular column of the Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club.

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
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

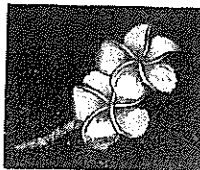
Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletter.

Commentary on Legislation, Drought, and Water

Conservation issues were widely considered during the 2003 Legislative Session. Legislators allocated \$250,000 to establish the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park on the lower Rio Grande. Bills establishing a State Water Plan and permitting the use of gray water for domestic irrigation were passed. A good watershed protection bill was passed, and a couple of bad ones requiring take over of federal lands and forests by the State (an unconstitutional initiative) were tabled. A bad trespass bill was also tabled; it would have eliminated the requirement to have posted no trespassing signs on private lands in order to file trespass complaints, creating a problem for hikers. For more details about the legislative session, see the report on pages 20-23.

Unfortunately, during the session some legislators chose to attack the Endangered Species Act, fortunately without much success. The issue of endangered species and the issue of the killing of livestock by wildlife, particularly mountain lions, is fast becoming heated. Few legislators will admit that wildlife was in New Mexico long before humans and that we are the invasive species. Predation can be mitigated by more effective livestock-management techniques such as the use of sheep dogs.

Drought and the resulting infestation by bark beetles have devastated northern New Mexico's forests, with 50% of trees dying in some areas. As a result, the risk of wildfires is higher than ever. Our forests remain in critical condition due to unnaturally high densities of unhealthy trees. Some thinning of trees and understories has begun in the Santa Fe watershed, but clearly much more remains to be done.



Phlox (print by Norina Evans)

Litigation over the silvery minnow continues, and this issue remains highly controversial (see page 7). Albuquerque is

pressing ahead to divert more than 103,000 acre feet of water from the river. In contrast to Santa Fe which has reduced its water consumption, Albuquerque has one of the highest per capita water-use rates in the United States and is sucking its aquifers dry. The Santa Fe River is still almost dry, but water has been accumulating in the City's reservoirs. Newly proposed city ordinances would require cisterns and household water budgets, making sustainable water management more effective. Please support these measures.

The new State Engineer John D'Antonio and the new Director of the Interstate Stream Commission Estevan Lopez, who are responsible for managing State's water resources, attended a Northern Group meeting to discuss their plans to meet New Mexico's requirement to deliver Rio Grande water to Texas. They propose that water be relinquished from Elephant Butte Reservoir to the lower Rio Grande, in order to:

- meet our flow obligations,
- allowing storage of water upstream on the Rio Grande, and
- avoiding severe evaporation from the reservoir.

On the Pecos, the State has purchased land to retire water rights and is pumping water from wells into the Pecos to meet the State's flow obligations. Both solutions are short-term. Failing to meet the compact obligations would result in

serious and costly litigation, a priority call on water rights, and a possible takeover of the State's water by the federal government.

For more information, contact Northern Group Conservation Chair Paul Paryski in Santa Fe (see Masthead, page 2).

—Paul Paryski



OUTINGS

In Disturbing Times, We Can Turn to the Land and Each Other

These are difficult times, disturbing times, scary times. 9/11 was heart-wrenching and ominous, but it seems that, instead of moving us toward greater cooperation with other concerned countries, and working to make sure our own infrastructure and citizens remain strong and able to deal with the unexpected, it has propelled us into the doctrine of preemptive strikes, ever more devastating exploitation of fragile, even pristine lands to obtain more oil for our gas-guzzling vehicles, and an attack on our own cherished civil liberties. Meanwhile, the overall degradation of our global environment continues as a result of multiple ill advised decisions, ignorance, and inattention.

Where in this gloomy picture can we find something positive, something to give us hope and healing? Our land is still [here](#), our beloved New Mexico

mountains, ponderosa forests, plains, and valleys. It is looking a bit scarred in these drought-stricken days; here in Santa Fe, the soil is dry and dusty, and only a few wildflowers have poked through. But I can look across to the stalwart Sangres, mantled in snow, glorious at sunset, and feel reassured.

The second, and equally important, anchor is our connection to other people—our family, friends, neighbors, work associates, Sierra Club colleagues. Small is beautiful, and we can often find solace and effect change locally, when it seems impossible to change global events. I have long enjoyed the sense of collegiality with other participants on a Sierra Club outing, the shared enjoyment of the trail and terrain, and the lively conversations that ensue from a group with varied backgrounds and life experiences. But I was struck by a remark of one of our

Santa Fe leaders describing a recent national service trip she led, where she strived to and succeeded in creating a sense of community among her participants, a sense of caring and helpfulness. Mary Ray Cate has it right. We can look to and enhance a sense of community with our fellow members. Of course, a week-long trip like hers has more opportunities for bonding than a day hike, but even that can bring about lasting friendships and support. And we can move forward with our new companions in helping to keep our precious land base safe, secure, and beautiful.

So, try out one of our trips, those many of you members who have never participated in our activities or programs, and I think you may come back feeling stronger, and less alone.

—Norma McCallan

Selected Sierra Club Outings in May, June, and July 2003

Saturday-Sunday, May 10-11 • **Mount Taylor Car Camp**—Moderate/strenuous hike, 6.5 miles round trip, to this dominant peak, sacred to the Indians. Mike di Rosa (663-0648—Los Alamos).

Saturday, May 10 • **Hermit Peak and El Porvenir Canyon**—Strenuous loop hike many stream crossing to this prominent landmark near Las Vegas. Dan Rusthoh (690-8967—Santa Fe).

Monday-Friday, May 12-16 • **Black Range Traverse**—Strenuous backpack along Crest Trail from Lookout Mountain to Hillsboro Peak in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. Laurence Gibson (915/594-7342—El Paso).

Saturday, May 17 • **Rabbit Ears Plateau Dayhike**—Moderate/strenuous hike by a distinctive set of granite towers in the Organ Mountains, panoramic views. Mike Episcopo (915/584-9322—El Paso).

Sunday, May 18 • **Tusas Basin Mountain Bike Trip**—12-mile bike trip through a little known but ecologically diverse area north of Tres Piedras. Abe and Carole Jacobson (672-9579—Los Alamos).

Saturday-Sunday, May 10-11 • **Whitewater Creek Backpack**—Moderate backpack in the Gila Wilderness, DeLoche Canyon to Gold Dust Trail. 10 miles round trip. Harry Newman (915/588-7192—El Paso).

Friday-Monday, May 23-26 • **Canyon Creels/Clear Creek/Flying V Canyon Memorial Day Backpack**—Moderate 18-mile loop backpack in the Gila Wilderness, campsites near river. Rollin Wickenden (915/855-6697—El Paso).

Sunday, May 25 • **Santa Barbara Peak**—Strenuous hike to this high peak on the Santa Barbara Divide, 2,400' elevation gain, 16 miles round-trip. Lavi Malliotra (995-8547—Santa Fe).

Saturday, June 7 • **Rail Trail Day Celebration Hike**—Moderate hike from 9 Mile to Highway 285, then by shuttle to Lamy, where a host of booths will be set up, and back to Santa Fe via the Santa Fe Southern RR. Norma McCallan (471-0005—Santa Fe).

Saturday, June 7 • **Sawyers Peak, Black Range**—Moderate hike, part off trail, to this remote peak, 1,500' elevation gain. Ben Zerbey (526-7811—Las Cruces).

Saturday, June 14 • **Frijoles Canyon Hike and Bike Trip**—Easy/moderate hike, approximately 7 miles, up Frijoles Canyon to Upper Crossing in Bandelier National Monument and return to visitor center, if desired, via bicycle. Rainer and Ilse Bleck (662-2368—Los Alamos).

Friday-Monday, June 20-23 • **Summer Solstice Continental Divide Trail (CDT) Backpack**—Elk Creek Trail, in South San Juan Wilderness, to Dipping Springs, back via CDT to Cumbres Pass, 32 miles. Robert McKee (471-0005—Santa Fe).

Friday-Sunday, July 4-6 • **Dominguez Trail Maintenance Weekend**—Backpack up beautiful Santa Barbara canyon, camp at bottom of this little used trail which crosses to Trampas Canyon, work on clearing blowdown. John and Linda Buchser (820-0201—Santa Fe).

Friday, July 4 • **Pecos Baldy**—Strenuous hike up to this well known peak in the Pecos Wilderness. Marcia Skillman (474-7414—Santa Fe).

Saturday, July 12 • **Discovery Trip to Monument Spring, Sacramento Mountains**—Easy hike, long drive to this special, remote spot. Ben Zerbey (526-7811—Las Cruces).

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

All area codes are 505, except as noted.

The Evolution of Ecosystems, Including Humans and Goats

Before the Sierra Nevada uplifted and created a rain shadow to the east of it, western America was a vast tropical area with large shallow lakes. As the mountains rose and cut off the moisture, the land dried out, and the basin and range topography formed. Plants and animals filled ecological niches, before glaciers invaded and interrupted this evolution. As the glaciers receded, ecological niches filled again. Grazing became a vertical cycle, the animals following the grasses into the high llanos and mountains as the snows melted, returning to the lower areas as the snows came.

Fire and the disturbance of the hooves of animals, held together in large herds by predator pressure, played a role in designated where ecosystems would be located. Fire, burning across wide ranges of

altitude and soil conditions, created the dynamic tension that allocated where grasses ended and piñon/juniper (PJ) forests began. Above the PJ areas, the ponderosa forests were also shaped by fires and grazing animals, the grassy understorey and expanses between stands, acting as a sponge, a flywheel mediating between periods of wet and drought.

The first Europeans who arrived with their grazers and browsers had no previous experience raising livestock in this type of semi-arid environment. As livestock production and the extraction of the resource began in earnest, some 150 years ago (at the turn of the century in Sierra County alone, 2.5 million cattle grazed the area to the nubs), heavy rains removed the topsoil, and the woody chaparral moved in. This is a

(continued on page 9)



Goatherd Lani Lamming Malmberg and her mentors taught a workshop, sponsored by The Quivira Coalition, in Taos in the summer of 2002. For sources of more information about goats, weed control, and restoration, see page 9 (photo by Courtney White).