

Rio Grande Sierran



NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003

NM Reps and Demos Introduce Ojito Wilderness Act in Congress!

On 24 September 2003, Senator Jeff Bingaman and Representative Tom Udall introduced the Ojito Wilderness Act (S. 1649/H.R. 3176), which would designate approximately 11,000 acres northwest of Albuquerque as the Ojito Wilderness. The bill is co-sponsored by Senator Pete Domenici and Representative Heather Wilson. If approved, the measure would create the first new Wilderness area in New Mexico since 1987.

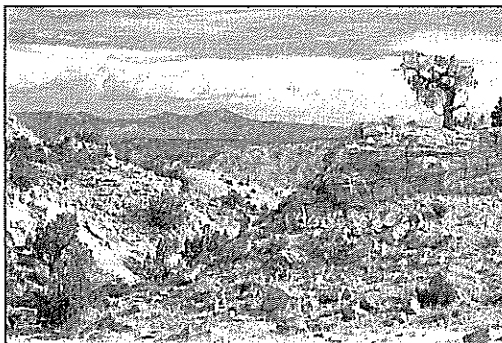
In addition to permanently protecting the Ojito Area as Wilderness, the bill would allow the Pueblo of Zia to purchase some BLM land abutting the Ojito area—land which holds strong cultural and religious significance for the people of Zia. Under the bill, the land to be purchased by the Pueblo of Zia will remain open to the public for recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, paleontological, and conservation uses and is required to be managed as open space in perpetuity. In fact, this land will be protected from development, off-road-vehicle recreation, mining, and oil and gas exploration. That is a

far higher level of protection than the land in question currently receives under BLM management. More than 20,000 acres of land in the greater Ojito area will be conserved if this bill is passed. As a result, important archeological sites, petroglyph panels, habitat for rare plants, and incredible hiking areas will be forever protected.

This historic bill would not exist were it not for the strong coalition forged between groups such as the Sierra Club, the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness, the Pueblo of Zia, numerous businesses, conservation organizations, and many local and statewide elected officials.

Thanks go to all of you who worked hard to make this bill a reality.

Please write or call Senators Bingaman and Domenici, and Representatives Tom Udall and



The Ojito landscape may receive permanent protection thanks to bipartisan support (photo by Martin Heinrich).

Heather Wilson (for contact information, see page 3) and thank them for introducing the Ojito Wilderness Act.

—Martin Heinrich
Chapter Wilderness Chair

New Mexico Will Hold Democratic Presidential Caucus Early—To Participate, Register by 15 December 2003

The Democratic Party of New Mexico will hold its Presidential Caucus on Tuesday, 3 February 2004, at more than 170 caucus sites throughout the state. Participation will be open to all Democrats who are registered to vote with the Secretary of State's office (www.sos.state.nm.us/ELECTNET.HTM) or their County Clerk by 15 December 2003.

In the past, New Mexico has held this election in June. The traditional state primary will still be held in June 2004 and will include typical primary contests for congressional races, state legislative races, and other competitive elections.

New Mexico's caucus will operate like a party-run primary. Voting locations will be open that day from 12:00-7:00pm. Voters will mark a paper ballot.

Ballots also may be cast by mail, starting 2 January 2004. Vote-by-mail ballots may be requested from the State Party by mail, e-mail, or fax from 15 December 2003-20 January 2004. Vote-by-mail ballots must be postmarked by 26 January 2004.

**"In 2000, Al Gore won the state by just 366 votes....
Every vote counts!"**

For more information about the caucus, please contact Democratic Party of New Mexico (see below).

The New Mexico League of Women Voters also provides key information about registering and voting (www.lwvnm.org/2003VotersKeyFinal.pdf).

Contact the major parties in New Mexico for information about how to participate in their efforts:

- Democratic Party of New Mexico (830-3650 in Albuquerque, 800/624-2457; www.dpnm.org/)
- Green Party of New Mexico (830-3650; www.nmgp.org/)

- Republican Party of New Mexico (298-3662; www.gopnm.org/)

In 2000, Al Gore won the state by just 366 votes, and New Mexico will be considered a "battleground" state in the upcoming 2004 general election. Every vote counts! Sierra Club urges its members to participate in the political process by exercising their right to vote in state, local, and national elections.

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

—Gwen Wardwell and Susan Martin



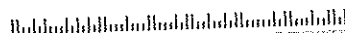
Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Group Pages

Pajarito Group	7
Northern Group	8-9
Central Group	10-11
Southern Group	12
El Paso Group	13

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

21513628 1704 \$ 9 04 1023 240
Norena McCallan
627 Camino Don Emilio
Santa Fe, NM 87507-7680



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RIO GRANDE CHAPTER DIRECTORY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Doug Fraser, <i>Chair</i> fraser@thuntek.net	474-7615
Doreen Dearholt, <i>Vice-Chair</i> dearholt@cs.nmsu.edu	522-3035
John Buchser, <i>Conservation Chair</i> jbuchser@comcast.net	820-0201
Laurence Gibson, <i>Secretary</i> lgibson@utep.edu	915/594-7342
Blair Brown, <i>Treasurer</i> bblairb2@aol.com	259-7190
Richard Barish rdbarish@aol.com	232-3013
Jim Hannan jhannan505@aol.com	988-5760
Ken Hughes blfamily@comcast.net	474-0550
Susan Martin, <i>Council Delegate</i> smartin31@worldnet.att.net	988-5206
Norma McCallan nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005
Ted Mertig tmertig@earthlink.net	915/852-3011
Ilse Bleck, <i>Pajarito Group</i> ibleck@yahoo.com	662-2368
Marilynn Cooper, <i>Central Group</i> marilynncooper@qwest.net	842-0185
Margot Wilson, <i>Southern Group</i> margotwilson40@hotmail.com	744-5860
Doug Fraser, <i>Northern Group</i> fraser@thuntek.net	474-7615
José Escobedo, <i>El Paso Group</i> escobedo25@hotmail.com	915/751-1834

CHAPTER OFFICE

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

SIERRA CLUB NIM OFFICE

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

SIERRA CLUB STRUCTURE

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

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

Central Group P.O. Box 25342 • Albuquerque, NM 87125-5342
El Paso Group P.O. Box 9191 • El Paso, TX 79983 • 915/594-7342
Pajarito Group P.O. Box 945 • Los Alamos, NM 87544
Northern Group 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, #10 Santa Fe, NM 87505 • 983-2703 • fax 982-9766
Southern Group P.O. Box 3705 UPB, Las Cruces, NM 88003 • 522-3035
Southwest Regional Office 202 E. McDowell Road, Suite 277 • Phoenix, AZ 85004 • 602/254-9330; fax 602/258-6533
Sierra Club National 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor • San Francisco, CA 94105 • 415/977-5500

CONSERVATION ISSUE CHAIRS

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

ACTIVISM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

OUTINGS CHAIRS

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

NATIONAL & REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

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

SIERRAN

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

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

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

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

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

The *Rio Grande Sierran* runs paid advertisements. Contact the editor for advertising policy and rates.

Change of Address?

Send address changes to: Membership Services
415/977-5649 • address.changes@sierraclub.org

Wanted: Publications Assistant!

The managing editor of the *Sierran* is looking for a desktop publishing assistant/trainee. If you work on a Macintosh platform, have PageMaker and Photoshop applications and experience, and want to weigh in on behalf of the environment, contact Marty Peale in Tesuque, NM (see contact information above). Pay depends upon experience.

INFO FOR ACTIVISTS & A WORD FROM YOUR CHAPTER EXCOM MEMBERS

Political Contact Information

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

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

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

625 Silver SW, Suite 130
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Abq. phone 505/346-6691 • fax 346-6780

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

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

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

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

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

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

U.S. Representative Steve Pearce
1408 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515
DC phone 202/225-2365 • fax 225-9599

400 North Telshore, Suite E
Las Cruces, NM 88011
LC phone 505/522-2219 • fax 522-3099

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

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

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

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

A Note From the Chair

As I write this, I am preparing for another 224-mile whitewater rafting trip down the Grand Canyon with only some 80 rapids to worry about. Jim McCarthy, Chair of the Grand Canyon Chapter (Arizona) of the Sierra Club, has been kind enough to invite this duffer along on his permit. (These days, one must wait some 20 years to obtain a private river permit.) At my age, I don't even apply—The Grand is not wheelchair-accessible.

Just for a moment, let me comment that, as I review this past year's accomplishments, there are two things that stand out. First, we have undertaken a more equitable dispersion of Chapter and Group leadership authority throughout our region of New Mexico and west Texas. As a result, our Groups are now working (as we reviewed in the September/October 2003 issue of the *Sierra*), on their projects with largely unprecedented financial support from the Chapter. My thanks particularly to the Chapter leadership—Don Dearholt (Las Cruces), *Vice Chair* (who is now, unfortunately, on a medical sabbatical—let us pray for his speedy recovery); Laurence Gibson (El Paso), *Secretary*; and Blair Brown (Albuquerque), *Treasurer*. Thanks also to Lawson Legate and

Mary Wiper from national Club staff for their instrumental assistance. This spirit of environmental comradeship, with a minimum of that old personal competitiveness, over such long distances has made this position very rewarding. True environmental collaboration is rarer than it should be, even among like-minded people, and was great to behold. I plan to be visiting again El Paso, Las Cruces, and Albuquerque upon my return from the Grand.

We've put some great news right up front this time: with bipartisan support that reflects remarkably broad-based citizen support, we have an Ojito Wilderness bill introduced in both the U.S. House and Senate. Just say "Yes!" And let's say "Thanks" to all of them while we're at it!

The fact that you sent four letters to the editor for this issue (pages 4 and 15) suggests to us that you're reading this newsletter, thinking on your feet, sensing the value of sharing your ideas, and recognizing that the *Sierra* is a good way to reach some 6,500 households in the Rio Grande watershed. Great! Thanks for stepping up to the plate! Keep up the good work—and register to vote by December 15 (see page 11).

—Doug Friar



Susan Martin Knows That We Each Make a Difference

You could say that the Sierra Club is in Susan's blood. Her Colorado-born grandfather had moved to the Sierras to explore that landscape, and Susan has been a Club member since college at UC—San Diego, when she worked for a summer as a Volunteer in Park (VIP) at Olympic National Park in the Hoh Rain Forest.

During law school at UC—Berkeley, Susan was an editor of the *Ecology Law Quarterly* and worked during summers at the Energy and Commerce Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. This opportunity led to her appointment as counsel to the committee, where she organized the first congressional hearings on acid rain. These efforts derailed an attempt to pass energy legislation that would have increased coal emissions by Midwest utilities that were prime contributors to acid rain in Canada and New England.

Susan left Congress to join Natural Resources Defense Council, where she, along with the Sierra Club, lobbied to protect the EPA from crippling budget cuts planned by the Reagan Administration.

When Susan moved to Santa Fe, she became the research director for Western Network and co-authored "Western Water Flows to the Cities." Her next position was planner director at the

New Mexico Environment Department, where she headed its legislative efforts.

Susan is the chair of the Northern New Mexico Group's Political Committee, which has been active and effective in getting environmentally responsive city councilors and county commissioners elected. "This is the time when Sierra Club members can have a positive influence on who is elected to serve them locally, nationally, and on the state level. It is vital that we register to vote, talk to our friends about candidates who have good records protecting our environment, and help in campaigns of officials who have kept their promises on Sierra Club issues." Research from the last election has shown that expensive TV ads in the last moments of an election become a blur to voters, and that voters are most influenced by talking with their neighbors and friends. "We in the Sierra Club can have a positive impact on this next election cycle by relying on the strength of our relationships with others."

—Susan Martin



Susan Martin is a member of the Chapter Executive Committee and the Executive Committee of the Northern New Mexico Group. She is also the elected delegate to the Council of Club Leaders.

It's Time for Progressives to Draft a Comprehensive Energy Bill

Dear Editor,

The September/October *Sierra* points out that the U.S. Congress just passed energy bills supported by the oil and coal industry. Worse, Democrats presented energy bills only marginally better. Energy legislation is the most important issue facing Americans today, since it deals directly with worsening global warming and our distorted foreign policy that protects our oil addiction. Politicians are behaving poorly on energy issues because they lack strong leadership from the public.

Groups like the Rocky Mountain Institute, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Sierra Club offer a different energy future. Yet even good people like Senator Bingaman are not getting the message and continue to work against the public interest.

Corporate energy interests are ever-present on Capitol Hill, writing checks, distributing information, and writing legislation. Industry lobbyists are helped by an administration drawn from the oil industry.

Perhaps our message is lost on Capitol Hill because we lack a clear goal on energy issues. We talk about "sustainable energy," but how many of us really understand sustainability and what alternative technologies we have for realistically replacing carbon and nuclear power sources? Do we have a scientifically based, comprehensive energy policy to offer Senator Bingaman and others as a workable alternative to big oil, big coal, and big war? Do we understand global warming and the need to immediately reduce our carbon dioxide output by 70% to stop this disastrous reality?

With American Middle East policy driven by our reliance on that region's oil, with Congress poised to open critical lands in Alaska and the West to oil development, with America supporting repressive regimes in Africa and South

America to gain access to oil, the energy issue demands understanding from everyone. In New Mexico and much of the rest of the country, we rely on coal power that fuels global warming, spews mercury and uranium into the atmosphere, and gets its raw material from strip mines on Navajo lands.

Let us present to Senator Bingaman and others an achievable energy package that saves the earth from carbon energy. We must:

- acknowledge that oil is too valuable to burn and that future generations will need it more than we do;
- promote decentralized electrical generation—using wind, solar, fuel cell, biomass generation and above all, conservation—as we phase out carbon technologies;
- recognize the shortcomings of soft-energy technology, and dedicate resources such as LANL to improving sustainable energy technology as a matter of national security; and
- devise a transportation plan that moves cars rapidly away from any petroleum consumption (including petroleum-powered fuel cells) with government-sponsored research and strong incentives for auto makers, while we boost public transit, especially railroads for moving people and freight.

A truly new energy policy will be the core of a new economic and industrial era for the United States—one that may even approach sustainability in many ways, and one that moves us away from militarism and global warming.

—Tom Ribe
P.O. Box 31151
Santa Fe, NM 87594
982-4464

Hydrogen Is Promising, Even if It Is Only an Energy Carrier

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Mark Sardella's article about the hydrogen economy in the July/August 2003 edition of the *Rio Grande Sierra*. Before reading this article, I did not know that the hydrogen used in a H-fuel cell is an energy carrier, rather than an energy source, like gasoline. I did not understand that the hydrogen would have to be generated using a quantity of energy about equal to what it would carry.

Upon further research, I have learned that these facts do not debunk the promise of hydrogen fuel cells as your article claimed.

Transportation is one important and developing use of hydrogen fuel cells. These cells can be used to power vehicles without pollution. First, as your article explained, energy must be put into them in the form of compressed hydrogen gas. Contrary to one of your assumptions, this hydrogen can be produced locally, where it is needed and will not require significant transportation as fossil fuels do. In fact, it is very possible that today's gasoline stations may soon be transformed into hydrogen-fixing and -filling stations. The

crucial problem is the source of this initial energy input, which can be generated from any number of sources including the environmentally damaging sources in common use today. This energy could also be generated using much safer renewable energies including wind, solar, and biomass sources. When this energy is generated through a nonpolluting source and then used to fuel such devices as cars through hydrogen fuel cells, it becomes possible to drive cars without polluting. The promise of the hydrogen fuel cells is as one crucial piece in a potentially pollution-free energy system. This is why so many scientists, engineers, environmentalists, and forward thinkers are excited.

Mr. Sardella's stoichiometry is correct that hydrogen is an energy carrier. However, it is incorrect to discount its potential role in an energy economy that can be nonpolluting, renewable, and locally based.

—Jennifer Caron
jenn@ngcs.caltech.edu
HCR 1, Box 3, Suite 102
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Hydrogen Fuel and the Fall from High-Quality Fuels: A Response from the Author

Dear Jennifer,

Thanks for your letter, and for this opportunity to go deeper into the energy debate.

My *Hydrogen Hallucination* article was aimed at clearing up a widespread misunderstanding about hydrogen, particularly about what it can and can't do for us. I frequently hear claims that hydrogen will "replace" petroleum, and I worry that we've lost sight of the significance of having vast reserves of easily tapped energy resources. Hydrogen is merely a fuel, capable of storing energy—it is not an energy resource. As such, it cannot relieve our dependence on energy resources, nor can it alleviate the very serious problem of energy resource degradation that I discussed in the article.

Your observation that hydrogen could enable flexibility in the selection of energy resources used for transportation is a good one, but it is a mistake to therefore conclude that generating hydrogen with renewable energy solves our energy problem. Petroleum is a very *high quality* energy resource, meaning that only a small investment of energy is needed to produce an enormous amount of highly useful energy, in this case in the form of gasoline. Your suggested scenario—in which renewable energy is harnessed, then used to generate hydrogen, which is then run through a fuel cell, producing electricity

to drive an electric motor, which drives the car—requires a comparatively large investment of energy per unit of useful energy delivered. Renewable energy technologies always tend to be lower in quality than fossil-energy technologies, but adding the hydrogen step and the fuel-cell step reduces the quality even further.

The problem with advocating a shift to energy technologies that are so much lower in quality is that this translates directly into a reduction in the amount of energy available to run the economy. This, at a time when the rapidly declining quality of our oil and gas resources is already creating tremendous economic difficulties! The once-legendary "gusher wells" of East Texas are long gone—now we comb the deep oceans with 3-D visualization technology, looking for tiny pockets of oil that must be tediously extracted and shipped to distant markets. Production from U.S. natural gas wells is meanwhile dropping so rapidly that we are contemplating a ten-year, \$20 billion, 3,500-mile pipeline to Alaska to bring back a year-and-a-half supply of natural gas. Oil and gas have both fallen into such short supply that energy markets have gone unstable, driving up prices and worsening our precarious economic situation.

(continued on the next page)

Under the Energy Bill, This Land Will No Longer Be Our Land

The Energy Bill now in conference will put the oil and gas industry in charge of our western public lands—with devastating results for some of our most stunning western landscapes. Even though tens of millions of acres of public land are already open to highly profitable oil and gas exploration and development, proponents of the bill's oil and gas title want to:

- exempt the industry from key environmental laws, and
- fast-track new drilling projects in sensitive areas including proposed wilderness areas, areas with Native American cultural and spiritual importance, and areas with strong connections to local rural and agricultural communities.

Here are the top ten reasons why, under the oil and gas title, lands belonging to all Americans will no longer be managed for all Americans.

1. We'll all have to trust the oil and gas industry to safeguard drinking water supplies, because the use of drilling fluids would be exempt from the Safe Drinking Water Act. Drinking water may no longer be clean, and westerners and visitors may be forced to buy bottled water.
2. At risk: your favorite fishing spots. The construction of oil and gas drilling pads, roads, pipeline corridors and other infrastructure would be exempt from the Clean Water Act. In effect, the oil and gas industry would be given *carte blanche* to pollute western streams and rivers.
3. The deer and especially the antelope may no longer play in many places throughout the West, including Wyoming's Red Desert, which more than 50,000 pronghorn antelope call home during the winter. Why? Because the bill will weaken protections for wildlife. Industry wants to turn the Red Desert into a vast oil and gas industrial zone.
4. Great birding opportunities like those in New Mexico's Otero Mesa will decrease as the energy bill speeds transformation of this beautiful Chihuahuan desert area and other western wildlands into an industrial complex of roads, pipelines, storage tanks, and drill pads by weakening environmental protections.
5. Energy projects on American Indian reservations will no longer have to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The bill will strip tribal members and other Americans of the right to review, comment, and challenge energy projects proposed on tribal lands. The bill will also relieve the federal government of its trust duty to analyze impacts to cultural resources.
6. Ranchers and landowners who own "split-estate" lands would not be protected from damage caused by oil and gas development. In addition, the bill would give federal regulators broad authority to condemn private property for transmission lines, allowing energy companies to circumvent landowner protections in some states, including rights to fair market value for condemned land.
7. Can you say "Jackpot for industry"? The energy bill will give huge benefits to energy companies, including, at last count:
 - tax credits for coalbed methane drilling at a cost of more than \$2.9 billion;
 - an additional \$7.3 billion in tax credits to industry; and
8. You may no longer be able to see the beauty of Utah's redrock wilderness or Colorado's canyon country, as oil and gas development activities pollute crystalline air and cause a host of other damages to sensitive lands that are home to endangered species and important historical sites.
9. Wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities will be reduced as habitat is lost to increased development. The areas targeted for drilling now support 737 rare and vulnerable species, including 75 species listed as threatened or endangered such as grizzly bear, wolves, and prairie dogs.
10. The prime nesting habitat for the prized Black brant goose and many other waterfowl in Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve—the critical Teshekpuk Lake region—is targeted for oil drilling. Also at risk are moose, caribou, brown bears, wolves, hawks, polar bears, beluga whales, and threatened ciders. The energy bill seeks to lease this wild area of the western Arctic at fire-sale prices without regard for wildlife, native hunting and fishing, water quality, or other non-commercial values.

For more information, contact Sierra Club Associate Representative Mary Wiper in Albuquerque (243-7767, mary.wiper@sierraclub.org) or see the Sierra Club web site (www.sierraclub.org).

—Mary Wiper

New Mexico's Own Wind Farm Is on Line

If you are a PNM customer*, you can now choose electricity generated by New Mexico's winds. The Wind Energy Center in eastern New Mexico has 136 turbines which can generate 204 megawatts of power at wind speeds of 8-50 mph for a total annual output of 594,000 megawatt hours (see July/August 2003 *Sierra*). Only two existing wind facilities in the United States are larger in terms of output.

Home and small business customers can choose to participate in one of two ways:

- Purchase "blocks" of 100 kilowatt hours of electricity at a rate that is \$1.80 per month more than the standard rate (approximately \$9.00-\$9.50), up to 90% of your minimum monthly usage during the previous 12 months. The average home customer will be able to

purchase up to four blocks, while the average small business customer will be able to purchase up to 13 blocks.

- Subscribe for 90% of your monthly electric consumption, meaning that your additional monthly billing amount will depend on your actual usage.

Wind-generated energy is not actually segregated from coal generated energy in New Mexico. Nevertheless, "purchasing" wind energy sends a message to PNM about our commitment to clean energy.

If you want to participate, call PNM (800/687-7854; 246-5700 in Albuquerque), visit a PNM office, return the coupon in your October PNM bill, or register online (www.pnm.com/customers/sky_blue.htm). By the way, when I signed up, I identified myself as a Sierra Club member.

For more information, contact Gwen Wardwell, Rio Grande Chapter Legislative/Political Chair, in Santa Fe (see Masthead, page 2).

—Gwen Wardwell

* PNM's retail area reaches from Belen north to Santa Fe, plus Clayton and Deming.

The Limits of Hydrogen (continued from the previous page)

We clearly need to embrace renewable energy technologies, but we must consider our energy predicament and go about it strategically. We should begin by evaluating our vulnerabilities, and then employ the most powerful tools we have to protect ourselves. Given the seriousness of the situation, I believe an all-out effort to increase energy efficiency using current, proven technologies is warranted. Next, we should invest heavily in the highest quality renewable technologies available, including wind and biomass energy from waste streams such as forest thinnings, municipal solid waste, and landfill waste. But with

an economy already suffering the effects of energy resource degradation, focusing on a low-quality, future technology that would necessitate replacement of our entire transportation fleet and much of its infrastructure, simply doesn't make sense.

Thanks for your interest in solving our energy problem, and I hope you will continue your efforts to bring about a safe, clean energy future.

—Mark Sardella
Tesuque, NM
msardella@localenergy.org

Take Action!

Please Oppose the Energy Bill's Public Lands Give-Away

Contact Senators Domenici and Bingaman to voice your opposition to the current Energy Bill (see contact information, page 3).

Is Global Warming Too Hot To Handle?

7-8 November 2003 • Albuquerque

This participatory conference on global warming is bringing together people of faith, public-interest advocates, and state policy makers:

- to explore global warming policy from the perspective of values, and
- to discuss values-based energy principles for the New Mexico Sustainable Energy Campaign.

Speakers from Physicians for Social Responsibility, Natural Resources Defense Council's Climate Center, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, Univ. of Northern Arizona (environmental ethics); Univ. of Arizona's Institute for the Study of Planet Earth, the New Community Project, and Spirituality at Work.

For more information, contact the NM Council of Churches in Albuquerque (255-1509; www.nmchurches.org/globalwarming).

Collaboration Yields Rio Grande Outstanding Natural Area Act

The windswept mesa is studded with fragrant sage cropped by the harsh conditions of high altitude desert heat and winter's freezing temperatures. The sparse soil settles in the cracks and crevices of the basalt canyon landscape to provide slight purchase for the lichen and chamisa. Rattlesnake dens rest cool beneath the rock in summer, and winter sun lends heat during hibernation. The colorful bull snake winds itself in the shade of rabbitbrush and the wind howls over this land of staunch solitude.

Beneath the antelope and mule deer mesa falls the Rio Grande canyon, richly green, in the narrow riparian zone. The occasional Black Bear trundles down the winding canyon path for a drink and to cool off beside the river. Above, sailing on the thermal blue skies, are Peregrine Falcon and Golden Eagle eager in hunt for mice and kangaroo rats. Their cries against the quiet belie their aeries tucked in the canyon wall.

A few rugged individuals make the Rio Grande canyon their home. Without available power lines and utility conveniences, they rely upon wind and solar power for electricity. These are quiet, reclusive people who would rather not have neighbors closer than two or three miles. However, this land is for sale, and buyers from as far as Japan and Germany purchase lots unseen from real estate developers selling the idea of mountains that one can view in the distance. Many of these lots are offered for sale for unpaid back taxes. The more that people set up housekeeping in this wild land, the more the wildlife, sparse vegetation, and raptors are endangered.

In 1998, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed a study of the Rio Grande corridor from eight miles north of the Colorado-New Mexico state line to Velarde, New Mexico. The study confirmed that the BLM lands qualified for wilderness status. With public lands management under new scrutiny, the San Luis Valley (SLV) Ecosystem Council, a local environmental group, had joined the study team. The possibility of a Wild and Scenic designation in the Rio Grande canyon concerned the water users upstream of the area in the San Luis Valley. Due to Rio Grande Compact obligations already in place, the Rio Grande Water Conservation District (RGWCD) joined with the SLV Ecosystem Council to investigate other options to protect this

fragile and remote landscape and river corridor that did not put federal demands on an already overtaxed water system.

David Robbins, attorney for the RGWCD, and Mary Ann DeBoer, executive director of SLV Ecosystem Council at that time, along with many other stakeholders, began negotiations on options that would not create a Federal Reserve water right in the Rio Grande corridor. They found that designation as an Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) would offer protection without invoking Federal Reserve water rights that would come with a Wild and Scenic designation. A draft of the Rio Grande ONA legisla-

"There are absolutely no federal takings involved, and any participation of landowners is fully a volunteer effort The Act demonstrates a long-term relationship among stakeholders in the San Luis Valley and their amazing ability to come to the table to discuss the needs of all"

tion was completed in 1999 and was introduced in the U.S. Senate in July 2003 by Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. This demonstrates a careful process undertaken collaboratively among water users, federal and state agencies, environmental and public interests.

The Rio Grande and its tributaries begin at the Continental Divide in the San Juan Mountains at an elevation of over 12,000 feet and flow into the San Luis Valley. The protection of the area below the cities and farms of the San Luis Valley is important, not only to the people of the valley, but to all who cherish wild and remote places such as the Rio Grande corridor. The Act will preserve and protect the Area for its unique scientific, educational and environmental values; scenic beauty; cultural sites; and habitats of varied species of raptors, other birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Archeological sites here date to the Paleo-Indian and nomadic bands of Ute and Apache.

The Rio Grande ONA consists of approximately 10,656 acres extending for a distance of 33.3 miles along the Rio Grande in southern Colorado from the Alamosa Wildlife Refuge to the Colorado-New Mexico State line. The boundary encompasses the Rio Grande and its adjacent riparian areas. About 2,771 acres are managed by BLM and 7,885 acres are privately owned. The landowners are in agree-

ment that this land needs protection and have the opportunity to engage in the management planning process as part of the Commission set up within the ONA Act. There are absolutely no federal takings involved, and any participation of landowners is fully a volunteer effort.

The Commission consists of nine members including:

- a BLM representative,
- the manager of the Alamosa Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service);
- a Colorado Division of Wildlife representative;
- a representative from the Colorado Division of

Water Resources, which is responsible for the Rio Grande drainage;

- a Rio Grande Water Conservation District representative; and
- four individuals representing the general public who are citizens of the State and the local region (two to represent non-governmental agricultural interests, and two to represent

non-governmental environmental interests).

We felt that a management plan could be devised to meet the varied needs of the Area with a commission well practiced in the collaborative process.

The Act eliminates opportunities to construct water storage facilities, mining operations, and calls for a reduction or elimination of roads and motorized vehicles on public lands. Any changes in stream flow regime beneficial to the Area can be accommodated through negotiations with the State of Colorado, the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, and water users within Colorado. These changes are encouraged, but may not be imposed as a requirement. The Act may include language to provide for the Land and Water Trust to purchase water from willing sellers and donate it to the Colorado Water Conservation Board to meet future in stream flow needs within the Area.

We are still awaiting final wording and passage of the legislation. The Act demonstrates a long-term relationship among stakeholders in the San Luis Valley and their amazing ability to come to the table to discuss the needs of all, including the needs of the Rio Grande and her natural inhabitants.

For more information, contact Kate Doyle in Del Norte, CO (patsykate@fonce.net).

—Kate Doyle

I'm Buying More Organic Food—Take the Pledge

Are biotech companies and supermarkets listening to their customers? When was the last time you told them of your concerns? What are effective ways of being heard? Tierra Azul has begun gathering data about the amount of money people spend on sustainable agriculture, such as buying organic or supporting small farms. When you pledge your support, you are saying you will, in a substantial way, not support genetically engineered foods and non-sustainable growing practices.

Here's how it works. On the personal pledge sheet, you estimate the amount you spend monthly on organic foods, and the Tierra Azul Coalition compiles the information. (We hope to reach the \$100,000 in November 2003.) After reaching the \$100,000 goal, we'll send letters to biotech firms and supermarket chains to notify them of the amounts.

No GMOs: A Personal Pledge

I [your name] make a personal commitment to significantly decrease consumption of foods containing GMOs [genetically modified organisms] until meaningful research has taken place. I believe that, by doing this, I can help educate people about this issue and counter potential health- and environment-related problems suggested by current research. My action will also serve to notify the industry that I support the labeling of GMO foods.

These firms are putting profits before human values, and this is a concrete way of letting them know that we want safe, affordable food and that the major amount of our food dollars will go toward sustainable practices.

If you'd like a personal pledge sheet for individuals or for members of your organization, please contact us (tierraazulprojects@hotmail.com). You can also sign the pledge or pick up pledge sheets at La Montanita Food Co-op or the Economic Justice Center in Albuquerque.

On the Road with a Film: Global Banquet

Look for the next film in our Tierra Azul Projects public film series about food and genetic engineering, *Global Banquet*, showing 18 November 2003 at

(continued on page 15)

PAJARITO GROUP NEWS

MEETINGS

All meetings are held in the upstairs meeting rooms in the Mesa Public Library at 7:00PM and are open to the public. General meetings are on the first Wednesday of each month; Conservation and Executive Committees hold a combined meeting on the second Wednesday.

DECEMBER 3

TWEETI BLANCETT PRESENTS: RANCHERS AND DRILLERS FACE OFF IN THE SAN JUAN BASIN

Tweeti Blancett is a rancher, capitalist, Republican, and, in 2000, was a Bush supporter. She is also the rancher who last year organized other ranchers and stakeholders in the battle against Big Oil's exploitation of the San Juan Basin. She will speak on the environmental impacts to both the natural resources and the ranching community in the Farmington area. Please join us with your questions and comments, as she discusses her struggle to get ConocoPhillips, El Paso Natural Gas, and Burlington Resources to repair the damage their oil exploration has caused to the high-desert plateau her husband's family has ranched for eight generations.



JANUARY 2004

There will be no meeting of the Pajarito Group in January.

Pajarito Group Directory

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

Executive Committee

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

Project Leaders

Ilse and Rainer Bleck, <i>Outings Co-Chairs</i> ibleck@yahoo.com	662-2368
Janet Gerwin, <i>Water</i> gerwin@losalamos.com	662-9568
Jody Benson, <i>Publicity/Sprawl</i> bensonj@lanl.gov	662-4782
Position vacant, <i>Webmeister</i>	

ISSUES

The Pajarito Group follows local environmental and political issues. We invite members to become involved in areas of personal concern. Please contact the ExCom members with your interests or concerns.

One of our most important areas of concern is the Valles Caldera National Preserve (the Preserve, or the Trust, which administers the Preserve: see September/October 2003 *Sierra*). We have members on the Valles Caldera Coalition, a non-profit organization which advises and assists the Trust on issues of concern and policy regarding the Preserve. For more information, contact Carole Jacobson (672-9579; carole.jacobson@att.net).

MAIL-IN BALLOT

This is a reminder to for members of the Pajarito Group to please respond to the special mail-out ballots, and to vote in the up-coming Sierra Club election at the Group and Chapter levels (see article page 15). The Pajarito Group has a candidate running at the Chapter level.

Group candidates:

- Jody Benson
- Ilse Bleck
- Carole Jacobson, and
- Kim Manley

Chapter Executive Committee Candidate from the Pajarito Group:

- Ilse Bleck (see page 3, September/October 2003 *Sierra*)

OUTINGS

Friday-Sunday, November 28-30 • **Bosque del Apache Birding/Camping Weekend**—Enjoy your Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday, and then join us on Friday for a weekend of camping and birding in the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. We will stay at the Riverside Group Campground near the southeast corner of the Preserve (see map 2 at www.friendsofthebosque.org/map.html). If you're lost, ask at the gate. (Others can arrange for lodging in nearby Socorro.)

Bring your family and friends to view and learn about thousands of Canada geese, sandhill cranes and ducks that migrate to the Bosque for the winter each year. Knowledgeable birders are always welcome. Please register in advance by contacting Rainer and Ilse Bleck (662-2368; ibleck@yahoo.com).

Saturday, January 10, 2004 • **Cumbres Pass Ski and Snowshoe Tour**—Moderately strenuous trek at altitudes from 10,000-11,000'. Contact Abe Jacobson (672-9579; abe.jacobson@att.net).

For more outings in the area, see pages 8-9.

WANTED: WEBMEISTERS

We still have an opening for *Webmeister*. The web page is already beautiful (<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/pajarito/>). All you would need to do is to keep it updated with articles and issues. Please contact Carole Griffiths Jacobson (672-9579; carole.jacobson@att.net), if you would like to volunteer to contribute your talents.

Urge Sen. Domenici to Protect Otero Mesa

The Greater Otero Mesa on New Mexico's southern border with Texas encompasses more than 1.2 million acres. This vast and complex Chihuahuan Desert Grassland is home to many species of wildlife and native plants, as well as to independent cattle ranches that have been in operation for generations.

Islands of rolling hills filled with unusual cactus, native grasses, and great rock formations rise from this rare Chihuahuan black-grama-grass desert. This area is a crucial wintering ground for migrating songbirds. Baird's and Cassin's sparrows, Sprague's pipits, long-billed curlews, western burrowing owls, and raptors such as the ferruginous hawk use this undeveloped open space as a sanctuary against the sprawl and pollution that seriously effect their numbers in other parts of the country.

Along with rare biota, Otero Mesa harbors ancient petroglyphs and pictographs on walls and boulders of its remote caves and mountainsides. Images of bighorn sheep and bison on outcrops and rock middens are evidence of the Apache tribes who came to hunt, harvest agave, and collect medicinal plants. The nearby Mescalero Apache still return each spring to harvest agave.

The Yates Petroleum Company, New Mexico's oldest oil company owned by one of its wealthiest families, is pushing aggressively to drill this area. This is the company that, in 1982, illegally bulldozed a road into the Salt Creek Wilderness near

Roswell. Only after many rounds of legal wrangling did Yates remove its well under court order.

Two years ago, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance inventoried the Greater Otero Mesa Area and discovered that it had the largest remaining wilderness potential in New Mexico, with more than 500,000 acres of roadless lands. As NMSU Professor Emeritus Walter Whitford has said, "If oil and gas development occurs in Otero Mesa, the area can never be restored." The combination of shallow soils and little rain make restoration nearly impossible.

Governor Bill Richardson has made protection of Otero Mesa a priority—he even met personally in Washington, D.C. with then-Interior Secretary Gale Norton to make his case. Yet despite its value as one of the United States's two remaining wild grasslands, with all its irreplaceable habitat and cultural sites, the Bush Administration has slated Otero Mesa for full-scale oil and gas development.

The Otero Mesa Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is due out in December 2003. This assessment process was taken out of the hands of New Mexicans and is, instead, being written in Wyoming—Dick Cheney's home state and one in which oil development has few restrictions. Directives are coming straight from Washington, D.C. At this point, Senator Domenici is the kingpin. He needs to hear what we want (see contact information, page 3).

—Stephen Capra

Associate Director, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

Tuesday, November 18, 7 PM

NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN NEW MEXICO And Their Waste Cycle

Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) will speak with the Sierra Club about nuclear weapons and their waste cycle in New Mexico. Joni Arends, co-founder and Executive Director of CCNS, will address uranium mining and milling, plans for a uranium enrichment facility near Hobbs, nuclear weapons activities at the national laboratories, and waste generation and storage and final disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

Joni will focus on Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), its role in the nuclear weapons complex and its impacts to public health and the environment. She will present information about CCNS's Rio Grande Watershed Initiative, which has established citizen monitoring of the Rio Grande below LANL.

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

GROUP NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

PLEASE CONTACT any member of the nominating committee to voice your interest in running for the Northern Group Excom by November 14 (see article elsewhere in this newsletter for petition instructions). John Buchser, chair, Lionel Soracco and Kay Carlson (see contact info below)

Members Nominated for the four available positions:

Linda Buchser	Greg Lower	Norma McCallan *
Nelson Denman	Paul Paryski *	Julia Takahshi
Gwen Wardwell		* Incumbent

Saturday, December 13, 6 to 9 PM

ANNUAL HOLIDAY POTLUCK PARTY The Commons

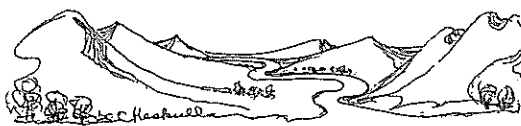
2300 West Alameda, corner of Camino Carlos Real

Once again we will meet for our lively holiday get-together. This is a great time to meet new friends and re-connect with old ones!

Please bring about eight servings worth of food – appetizer, salad, casserole, veggie, meat dish, breads, dessert – or wine, beer, fruit juice and soft drinks if you prefer not to cook. Dishes are provided, and a refrigerator and stove are available for warming.

Our after-dinner program will be a slide show by Lucian Niemeyer, well-known professional photographer who now lives in Santa Fe. He will concentrate on New Mexico images, including those in two books: *New Mexico* and *Desert Wetlands*, which will be published in 2004 and may be available for purchase and signing at the meeting. He exhibits at JackRabbit Fine Art Gallery, 229A Johnson Street.

We will also be auctioning off beautiful prints by the late Carolyn Keskulla. Hope to see you there!



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

Northern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club
621 Old Santa Fe Trail, Plaza 621, Suite 10, Santa Fe, NM 87505
505 . 983.2703

FROM THE CHAIR

Jan Kindel

In early September I participated in a national Sierra Club training for trainers course on Understanding, Preventing and Coping with Conflict. Thirty volunteers from all over the country converged on Denver for this opportunity and have committed to provide the training at least three times during the next two years on an as needed/requested basis. The course is designed for Chapters and Groups that want to communicate more effectively. It is not intended for those entities in the throes of major conflict situations. I learned there is a Sierra Club mediation team available to work with highly charged groups that are having difficulty moving forward. In the course I attended we became aware of our own conflict resolution style, what escalates conflict, and had an overview of the conflict resolution process. It is impressive to me that the Sierra Club recognizes the inflammatory possibilities of the many environmental and political issues that come before us and is ready and willing to provide education to help make our dialogue more palatable to all concerned.

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Group Executive Committee:	Group Conservation Committee:
Tuesday, December 2, 6:45 PM	Tuesday, November 25, 6:45 PM
Tuesday, January 6, 6:45 PM	No December meeting

Water Potluck, Wednesdays, 6:30 PM, John Buchser's house (820-0201)
December 10
January 24

SPECIAL SLIDE SHOW

Norbert Sperlich will present a slide show with beautiful pictures of day hikes with the Sierra Club on Saturday, November 22, from 5-6 PM, at the Travel Bug, 328 South Guadalupe (at Montezuma).

CONSERVATION CHAIR

Paul Paryski

Although a rather pointed letter was sent to the CEO of Sipapu Ski Resort demanding that all mention of the Sierra Club be removed from their website and expressing the Group's opposition to any expansion of the resort, there has been no response from their management. The Group has provided a small amount of funding for an administrative appeal being made by the Western Environmental Law Center and Rio Pueblo/Rio Embudo Watershed Protection Coalition opposing the expansion to the U.S. Forest Service.

The State Water Plan culminating Town Hall, in which the Chair participated as a member of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force, produced a consensus white paper describing priority actions that should be included in NM's first State Water Plan. The document can be found at <http://www.seo.state.nm.us/water-info/NMWaterPlanning/FirstTownHall.pdf>.

The OSE has established a functioning WATERS database using GIS technology and remote sensing to speed up the water rights adjudication process, and both LANL and Sandia are developing water management computer scenario models.

The continuing drought will have a large impact on Northern New Mexico and, according to the experts, will result in the loss of up to 80% of piñons and a significant number of ponderosas.

On September 19, the Mexican Land Education and Conservation Trust held its first workshop with representatives from the lands grants and the environmental community on Environmental Justice and stewardship in Northern New Mexican land grant communities. This project is partially funded by the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter. Doug Fraser, Chapter Chair, and George Grossman, member of the Northern Group ExCom, attended the workshop and reported that it was a success.

Let's hope and pray for ample snowpack in the mountains this year.

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

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

NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

GROUP OUTINGS

Sat Sun November

- 8 **Easy Walk** from Forest Road 79 via Arroyo Hondo to Watershed Boundary, 6 mi. Guest leader Paige Grant, director of SF Watershed Assoc (820-1696w) will discuss the ongoing forest thinning project along the fence line to prevent a catastrophic fire in our city's primary water source. *Meet 8:15 AM BLM OFFICE on Rodeo Road to carpool.* Dogs okay. Bob McKee (471-0005)
- 8 **Bike Ride Loop** up chiseled Cochiti Canyon and down Bland Canyon, with a stop at the ghost town of Bland if open. 16 miles RT. 1300' gain, and several stream crossings along (mostly) hard-packed gravel roads with some single track make this a technically intermediate and moderately strenuous ride, but worth it. Leave 8:00 AM. *Must call Michael Di Rosa (663-0648 h, 667-0095 w)*
- 9 **Moderate Hike** up Atalaya Mountain in town, 7 Mi, 1800' gain, dogs okay. Dan Rusthoi (690-8967)
- 15 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** jointly with Audubon Society, bring binoculars, Ron Duffy (982-2890)
- 15 **Easy-Moderate Hike** Gail Bryant (1-505-757-6654)
- 15 **Strenuous Hike** Glorieta Baldy and Ghost Town loop, 12 miles, 2800' gain, fairly fast pace. Alternative hike if snowpacked. Tobin Oruch (820-2844)
- 16 **Easy/Moderate Hike** from Nun's Corner along Penstemon Ridge, 7.5 miles, approx. 900' gain. Moderate pace. Dogs okay. Leave 9 AM. Norma McCallan (471-0005)
- 22 **Strenuous Hike** Queen Mary/Otowi Mesas below Los Alamos, NM version of Moab slickrock! Appr. 10 mi, 1500' gain, mostly off-trail, significant rock scrambling and some exposure. Fairly fast pace. Indian steps ascent optional. Leave 8:30 AM; *must reserve people and dogs by 8 PM night before.* Stephen Markowitz (505.797.5833 stephenmarkowitz@comcast.net)
- 23 **Easy Hike** Diablo Canyon, 6 miles, 400', Victor Atyas (438-9434)
- 29 **Easy Hike** to Tent Rocks near Cochiti Pueblo, 2 miles, 350' gain. Leave 9 AM, dogs okay on leash, Eliza Schmid (474-5846)
- 30 **Strenuous Hike** San Miguel Ruins in Banderier, 11 miles, rough terrain, some off-trail, Norbert Sperlich (474-4354)

Sat Sun December

- 6 **Easy Hike** Call for details. Gail Bryant (1.505.757.6654)
- 6 **Strenuous Hike** La Bajada to Tetilla Peak. 12 mi. RT, 1700' gain, mostly off trail. Lve SF 8 AM, meet leader at La Bajada 8:30 AM. Stephen Markowitz (1.505.797.5833)
- 7 **Moderate Snowshoe Trip** Hike if no snow. Marcia Skillman (474.7414)
- 13 **Santa Fe River Cleanup and Vegetation Maintenance** 9AM-12 noon. John Buchser (820-0201) See information below.
- 13 **Intermediate X-Country Ski Trip** Hike if no snow. Call Lionel Soracco (983.6715)
- 13 **Strenuous Hike** near Los Alamos on Mitchell Trail to Guaje Ridge. 10-12 mi. RT, 1600' gain. Leave SF 8 AM, *call for meeting place with leader.* Michael DiRosa (663-0648)
- 14 **Easy/Moderate Hike** Hyde Park Circle Trail. Some steep sections. 5 mi. RT, 1000' gain, dogs okay. Eliza Schmid (474.5846)
- 20 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** jointly with Audubon Society, bring binoculars, Ron Duffy (982.2890)
- 20 **Moderate Hike** to Buckman Mesa/Otowi Peak. All off trail, some steep rough sections, 6 Mi. RT, 100' gain. Norbert Sperlich (474.4354)
- 21 **Easy Hike** Rail Trail. Dogs okay, leave 9 AM. Eliza Schmid (474.2844)
- 21 **Strenuous Snowshoe Trip** up Ravens Ridge. Hike if no snow. Leave 8 AM. Call Lester Drapula (438.3306)
- 27 **Easy Hike** Nun's Corner Loop, trail conditions permitting. One steep section, dogs ok. Lve 9:30 AM. Norma McCallan (471.0005)
- 28 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** Dogs okay. Tobin Oruch (820.2844)

ALWAYS:

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 January 2004 HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!

Thursday, January 1 - NEW YEARS DAY

- Moderate Snowshoe Trip** Hike if no snow. Marcia Skillman (474.7414)
- 3 **Easy Hike** Cerrillos Hills Park with guest mining historian Bill Baxter. Dogs okay with leash. Meet 9:30 AM Sierra office or 10 AM Cerrillos Hills Park. Norma McCallan (471.0005)
- 4 **Strenuous Hike** near Abiquiu/Sierra Negra. About 10 mi. RT, 1000' gain, all off trail, some steep sections. Leave 8 AM. Norbert Sperlich (474.4354)
- 10 **Santa Fe River Cleanup and Vegetation Maintenance Trip** 9 AM-12 noon. John Buchser (820-0201) See explanation next column.
- 10 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** Dogs okay. Tobin Oruch (820.2844)
- 11 **Easy Hike** Call Gail Bryant (1.505.757.6654)
- 17 **Moderate Hike** in Mortandad Canyon to look at pictographs. 6-8 mi. RT, mostly off trail, some rock scrambling. Limit 12. Leave Santa Fe 9 AM. *Call for meeting place* Michael DiRosa
- 17 **Easy Intermediate X-Country Ski Trip** Hike if no snow. Call Lionel Soracco (983.6715)
- 18 **Beginner Snowshoe Outing** Call Marcia Skillman (474.7414)
- 18 **Easy Hike** on Falls Trail (Banderier). 5 mi. RT, 700' gain. Victor Atyas (438.9434)
- 24 **Easy/Moderate Hike** to Tor, volcanic knob in Caja del Rio. 6 mi RT, some off trail, dogs okay. Leave 9 AM Bob McKee (471.0005)
- 25 **Moderate Hike** White Rock Canyon. About 800' change. Some steep sections with poor footing. Leave 8 AM. Call Les Drapula (438.3306)
- 31 **Moderate Hike** in Ojito Wilderness Study Area. All off trail. Beautiful badlands scenery. Leave Santa Fe at 7:30 AM, meet leader at Bernalillo McDonalds 8:15 AM. Stephen Markowitz (1.505.797.5833)
- 31 **Easy Hike** Arroyo de Los Chamisos Trail. Dogs okay. Leave 9 AM. Eliza Schmid (474.5846)

SANTA FE RIVER CLEANUP AND VEGETATION MAINTENANCE December 13 and January 10



Meet at the Closson Street footbridge over the Santa Fe River. Park on Lower Alto Street, at the north end of Closson. Bring work boots, gloves and drinking water. See article in September-October newsletter for more info. John Buchser (820-0201 or jbuchser@comcast.net)

ORTIZ MOUNTAIN PRESERVE AT RISK

In September a Sierra group hiked to Placer Peak in the Botanical Gardens Ortiz Mountain Preserve near Cerrillos, accompanied by six volunteer docent guides led by Todd Brown. It was a strenuous and wonderful hike to the peak, mostly off trail in a wild terrain of cacti, rocks and bushes. The guides were knowledgeable about the geography, history and wildlife of the region.

We learned the Preserve is in jeopardy of being lost to the public because Santa Fe County charges property taxes, which the Botanical Garden is not able to pay, even though it is tax exempt and donated land. A solution to this dilemma would be through more educational use by schools and other groups. There are easy hikes available on old mining roads. Want to schedule a group? Have any questions? Call: SF Botanical Garden 428.1684 Eliza Schmid 474.5846

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

Outings Notes - Unless otherwise noted, all outings leave from the Sierra office, 621 Old Santa Fe Trail, Plaza 621, just south of Kaune's Grocery at the corner of Old SF Trail and Paseo de Peralta. Carpooling will be arranged. Each hiker should come prepared to pay 5¢ a mile to the driver of the car in which s/he rides. Bring a lunch, water, sturdy hiking boots or shoes, and clothing suitable for the weather - leader reserves the right to turn away anyone whose equipment or experience appears unsuitable. Leader has right to alter destination of hike or cancel trip due to weather, unfavorable conditions, or insufficient numbers of participants. Unaccompanied minors must have written permission from parents or guardians to participate; permission forms are available at the Sierra Club office. Dogs not permitted on hikes unless noted otherwise. Telephone leader for details of the individual hike. To participate, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver, see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.



Real Urban Living - Coming Soon to East Downtown !

By Susan Gorman & Blair Brown

Imagine a place where shops of many kinds alternate with restaurants and coffee shops, local offices, and entrances to apartments above the stores. A wide sidewalk fronts the shops and as you walk along, there are trees to provide shade and benches for sitting to watch the street life flow. Your car is parked conveniently just up the street but other folks have walked from their apartments in the neighborhood or arrived by bus to shop or stop for a cup of coffee. Just up the street is a park where the neighborhood kids play while parents chat. Within a few blocks there are single family homes, courtyard apartments and even multi-story loft apartments - a real mix of housing choices.

Could this place be in Albuquerque? Perhaps someday soon. Where? In East Downtown, now fondly named EDO, the area along Central, east of downtown and along Broadway from Coal to Martin Luther King.

This vision of a future place was created by participants in the EDO Charrette, a five day design process organized by the Broadway + Central Corridors Partnership and Rob Dickson, developer of Old Albuquerque High Lofts. The participants were a wide ranging group - folks from the Broadway and Central neighborhoods, an assortment of residents from other areas of Albuquerque, local architects and planners, and members of the City of Albuquerque's Transit and Planning Departments. The Charrette's design team included folks described by Dickson as "Luminaries in the World of New Urbanism": architect and urbanist Stefanos Polyzoides, transit consultants Peter Swift and G.B. Arrington, retail development expert Bob Gibbs and John Norquist, Mayor of Milwaukee. The most exciting element of the Charrette Program was an evening session when we were given large maps and markers and asked to draw our vision of what could be done to transform the area. Our small group included area property owners and residents as well as other interested folks. We talked about what could be, a bit shy when we suggested that some of the

existing structures and land uses should change. The results of everyone's work will be included in the final Master Plan.

The final session was the report from the Charrette Professional Team, led by Stefanos Polyzoides, on the Master Plan. We viewed drawings on large map panels that designated locations where possible retail shops, apartments, townhomes, small businesses, offices, hotels, parking structures and parks could be. There was a landscape plan and a street plan, too. The wonderful existing neighborhoods of Hunning Highlands were left untouched, recognized by all to be an inestimable asset for the whole area. A downloadable PDF file of the presentation from the East Downtown Charrette is now available at <http://www.EDOCharrette.com/>.

The Charrette Professional Team has continued the work to complete the Master Plan and create the Codes for East Downtown from the work done at the Charrette. The Final Draft of the Master Plan and Codes should be available on the website for review prior to Thanksgiving.

We believe that the Sierra Club has an unprecedented opportunity to be involved in and possibly influence this Master Plan. We have met with Rob Dickson several times and he is most anxious for the Club to bring it's knowledge and support to this urban redevelopment initiative. In our view, this is exactly the kind of project that the Club should be supporting as an element of the National Club's Fight Sprawl Campaign.

We urge everyone to check the websites, both ours and www.EDOCharrette.org for news. We invite you to join us at the public hearings early in 2004 along with all of the residents of Albuquerque who hope for a thriving Downtown and alternative lifestyle choices in the very near future to support the visionary work that has been done.

Sierra Club Meeting in Gallup

Sierra Club folks in Gallup are excited to announce that we will be holding a local meeting Thursday, November 6th at 6:00 pm @ the Catholic Indian Center located on 506 West Highway 66.

We will be welcoming guest speakers from ENDAUM, Eastern Navajo Dine' Against Uranium Mining, to present on "Navajo Uranium Mining, Past, Present and Future".

Immediately following the presentation, we will begin organizing local efforts to address this and other issues important to Gallup.

For more information, please contact Shelley Landis at 505-879-7869 or catlandis@hotmail.com.

General Public Meetings

Monday, November 17th at 7:30PM

Hawks Aloft will come with a slide show and a few of their 'feathered friends'.

December - Holiday Season. No meeting is scheduled.

All meetings will be at the First Unitarian Church on the corner of Carlisle and Comanche, in the Social Hall.

All are FREE and open to the public. Drinks and snacks are provided.

Elections in December - Be Sure to Vote

Elections for the Executive Committees of both the Rio Grande Chapter and the Central New Mexico Group will happen next month. Ballots will be mailed to all members about December 5th. All members are encouraged to read the candidate statements and vote for the candidates they prefer.

Candidates for the Excom

Announced candidates for the Central Group Excom are Katya Hafich, Mark Doppke, Richard Johnson and Mike Puelle. We are still seeking candidates so anyone interested in running is asked to contact Michal Mudd, Richard Barish or Blair Brown by November 14th (contact info at the right).

Petroglyph Monument Threat Continues

By the time you read this, you will know whether the Street Bonds were turned down by the voters.

If they were turned down, we will be celebrating, but only for the moment. The Mayor and the pro-road folks will surely come up with another plan to build the road through the Monument and we and our friends will need to be ready to oppose them again.

If they were approved, we will be disappointed, but not defeated. We will be rallying our next line of defense. There are significant legal obstacles to the building of the road and the Club and our friends will be pursuing them vigorously. Look for an article in the next Sierran and check our website at riogrande.sierraclub.org/petnm3.html

Central New Mexico Group

PO Box 25342

Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87125-5342

Executive Committee (area code 505)

Alma Rosa Silva Banuelos	259-7190	almarosa6@yahoo.com
Blair Brown	842-0185	bblairb2@aol.com
Marilynn Cooper	768-1160	marilynncooper@qwest.net
Mark Doppke	277-4144	marckdoppke@yahoo.com
Richard Johnson	884-3315	rsheehan@unm.edu
Michal Mudd	301-5915	mudd_pi@mac.com
Mike Puelle	238-4535	mikepuelle@mac.com
Maribeth Theisen	254-2190	littledeer@littledernmusic.com
Sherry Wolf		wolf@libra.unm.edu

The Executive Committee normally meets on the 1st Thursday of each month at 6:30PM (new time). We meet at various locations, so please contact one of us for the meeting location, or if you have issues you would like to discuss. The meetings are free and open to all members.

Project Leaders (area code 505)

Chapter Representative		
Marilynn Cooper	842-0185	marilynncooper@qwest.net
Conservation Chair		
Mark Doppke	768-1160	marckdoppke@yahoo.com
Membership/Publicity		
Michal Mudd	884-3315	mudd_pi@mac.com
Newsletter		
Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
New Urban Issues		
Susan Gorman	259-7190	sbginabq@aol.com
Blair Brown	259-7190	bblairb2@aol.com
Outings		
David Ther	260-1553	grebik@worldnet.att.net
Political		
Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Programs		
Richard Johnson	277-4144	rsheehan@unm.edu
Sherry Wolf	254-2190	wolf@libra.unm.edu
River Issues		
Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Water Issues		
Mark Doppke	768-1160	marckdoppke@yahoo.com
Wildlife		
Sherry Wolf	254-2190	wolf@libra.unm.edu

The Central New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club depends on the efforts of volunteers. If you can help, give any of us a call.

Mexican Youth Ambassadors Speak Out

By Mark Doppke

On June 23, 2003, Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program in cooperation with Partners of the Americas and Planned Parenthood of New Mexico, organized a panel discussion at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque. Designed as an educational opportunity, activists and community members learned from the experiences of four Youth ambassadors from Mexico whose advocacy work focuses on women's reproductive rights, natural resource conservation efforts to provide family planning, and education in Mexico (see photo below). The youth ambassadors shared their stories and showed pictures and slides of Mexico, reminding participants that the money the U.S. spends on family planning affects and benefits real people.

Mexico has quietly undergone a miraculous transformation. The population rate has dropped from well over six children per couple down to 2.4. Most of this decline is a result of access to voluntary family planning initiatives through Mexican NGOs that are funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and foreign assistance programs like USAID. It is possible that many younger urban Mexican couples may be better informed about family planning options and have better access to contraceptives than young American couples do.

The Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program seeks to protect the global environment and preserve natural resources for future generations by slowing population growth and reducing wasteful consumption. The program promotes voluntary domestic and international family planning programs and reproductive health services, encourages the public to support women's access to basic rights (healthcare and education), and encourages people to reduce excessive consumption and live in ways that have less impact on the earth's resources.

The collaborative work done by Sierra Club, Partners of the Americas and Planned Parenthood New Mexico provided a great opportunity to unify our messages and bring activists together to make the connections among population, women's health and the environment beyond our own borders. The Youth Ambassadors' stories put a human face on the issues of international family planning, the impacts of U.S. policies and the need for the U.S. to continue to invest in international family planning.

For more information about Partners of the America's Partnership and Youth Ambassador Programs go to: <http://www.partners.net>. To find out more about Planned Parenthood New Mexico, go to: <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/affiliates/state-nm.html>

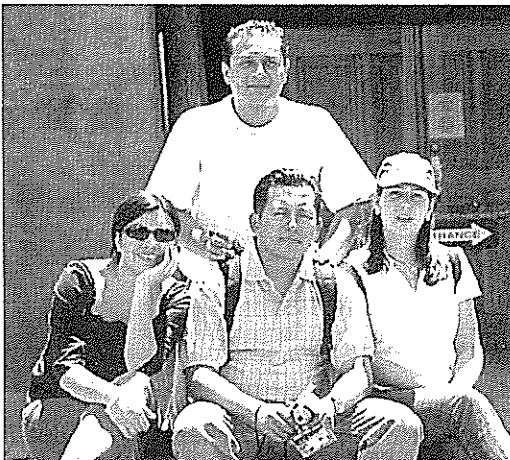
Now Here's What You Can Do!

One year ago, President Bush cut all U.S. support for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). As environmental activists and supporters of international family planning, urge your congress members to support legislative efforts that fund the important family planning programs and end policies that restrict access to the critical services provided abroad.

Tell your legislator:

- As an environmentalist, you support family planning
- Reinstatement funding for the UNFPA
- Repeal the Global Gag Rule

Sign up to learn more about the population and environment connection and to participate in the Sierra Club's Global Population and Environment Program by visiting www.sierraclub.org/population.



The Ambassadors take a moment to relax outside the National Hispanic Cultural Center.(photo by Mark Doppke)

More Transportation Choices in Albuquerque's Future

By Susan Gorman

How many vehicles are sitting in your garage or driveway? What kind of gas mileage do those vehicles get? How much are you contributing to global climate change each time you drive to work or to shop or to deliver the kids to school and other activities? For those of us who care about the future of the planet, those are really tough questions! We all depend on our personal cars and trucks for our transportation needs and for most of us there is just no other alternative.

But as we look to the future, this could change! The City of Albuquerque is studying ways to provide high capacity rapid transit alternatives to folks who live in Albuquerque and the Middle Rio Grande Region. Earlier this year, public meetings were held to present to residents the concept of adding Rapid Transit routes to the City's transit system.

The technologies being considered are Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems. LRT systems consist of electrically-powered rail vehicles operated in a dedicated guideway. The guideway can be separated from streets or integrated into the street. Stations for passenger pick-up are spaced at intervals of approximately 1/2 to 1 mile. BRT systems consist of high-technology buses operated within dedicated travel lanes. In general, BRT service operates like and resembles LRT systems; however, because they consist of individual buses, they have much lower capacities than LRT vehicles. BRT is also less costly to build than LRT.

The idea is to build the first Rapid Transit line along a Central Avenue corridor to be determined by a process that is specified by the Federal Transit Administration and is intended to analyze and compare various technology and alignment alternatives within a specific corridor.

Two alignments within the Central Avenue Corridor have been recommended for further evaluation as part of an environmental impact statement. These are:

- Central Avenue from Coors Boulevard to Louisiana Boulevard and North on Louisiana to Uptown
- Central Avenue from Coors Boulevard to 2nd or 3rd Street, North on 2nd/3rd Street to Lomas Boulevard, East on Lomas Boulevard to Louisiana and North to Uptown

The next step in the evaluation process is a series of public scoping meetings:

- November 10th at 6:30PM at Alvarado Transit Center,
- November 11th at 6:30PM at Hiland Theatre,
- November 13th at 6:30PM at Jimmy Carter Middle School,
- November 17th at 6:30 PM at AmeriSuites Uptown,
- November 18th at 5:30PM at the Family Focus Center (behind Zia Elementary School, 440 Jefferson Avenue NE), and
- November 19th at 6:30PM at Sheraton Old Town.

This information is also on their website www.abqrrtp.com. The Sierra Club will continue to monitor the process and make comments as appropriate. If you would like to have a viable transit alternatives to the car or truck in your driveway, come, listen and participate! It's our opportunity to do something good for Albuquerque and the planet!

Outings

Sunday, November 2nd - Desert Exploratory Hike

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

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

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

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

Saturday, November 22nd - Desert Exploratory Hike

(See above for description)

Sunday, December 7 - Three Gun Spring Trail Hike

Sandia Mountain Wildemess. Excellent conditioning hike to viewpoints. Depending on snow conditions, may go as far as Oso Pass.

Approx. 6 miles round-trip, 1500 ft. elevation. Contact David Ther at 260-1553.

Sunday, December 7th, Saturday, December 20th and Wednesday December 31st - Desert Exploratory Hike (See above for description)

Musings About Grasslands *by Mary Katherine Ray*

This article was supposed to be about southwest grasslands so when I began to ponder how it should go, I closed my eyes to visualize the topic. What I saw was rolling hills, waving banners of blue gramma grass with yellow wildflowers bobbing in between. There are other grasses too; sidecoats, bluestem, sacaton and dropseed. Their names are like poetry. The dampness of July still felt in the springiness of the soil and the fresh air smell of the plain. Maybe there are some antelope in the distance. In a short while a meadowlark may call. But now I open my eyes and the scene is quite different. There are no gramma grass seed head flags. In fact, what grasses survive are tiny, barely green blades threaded between last year's dead brittle clumps. The ground is dry pan hard. The reason for this malaise is drought. The rains of July failed entirely, as did those of August and September. Birds built nests and laid eggs that never hatched and when they did, nestlings died before fledging. Seeds sprouted and withered before making a single flower. Rabbits became uncommon. Rabbits! No creature has escaped the hardship, the unwavering hand of drought. It has been a summer of endless June and not only in the grasslands. Statewide rainfall this year fell short, as much as half that of an average year. The dryness has permeated the entire summer like a hot breath sucking life from everything it touches. We humans go about our lives complaining about the heat and wondering when the weather will break, but at the end of the day, a home awaits, a filling meal and a hot shower. What awaits the antelope or the meadowlark? In my garden, which was hose-watered to be sure, a nice crop of grapes was developing. Some tangers showed up before the grapes were even close to ripe but they ate the grapes anyway. I stood by and watched as my grape crop disappeared. Outside the fence, there was nothing green and certainly no fruits and very few insects. My life didn't depend on my eating those grapes. I suspect the lives of those half dozen tangers did. Before it's over, the drought may still make the rest of us sit up and take notice, but not yet. Only a few years ago, there was a push to reopen the mine at Copper Flats just west of Caballo. To make mining work, several new wells would be needed. These would pump water practically from the banks of the Rio Grande and certainly from the river's water table at a rate of 600 gallons every minute of every day.

The Sierra County commission and the Truth or Consequences Chamber of Commerce thought it was a smashing idea. Think of all the jobs! Finally, it wasn't any environmental regulation or protest comment to the BLM or letter to the editor in opposition that stopped this folly. It was the plummeting of the price of Copper and the bankruptcy of the mining company. The farms along the Rio Grande growing alfalfa for livestock will do just fine as long as the silvery minnow rules don't get in the way. That damn fish could be the ruin of custom and culture up and down the river. Even people in Elephant Butte say this despite the fact that water released for the fish winds up in the reservoir. The level of the lake is stunningly low but it's such a small amount of water for the fish, it hardly makes any difference to the amount of water in the lake. Even with average rainfall in the years to come, it will be two decades before Elephant Butte gets back up to full capacity. Right now average is a lot to hope for. The minnow is a fish older than a million generations and one of the less than half of fish species in New Mexico not yet exterminated by human activities of the last 400 years. But we must irrigate the alfalfa. Our senators, with a stroke

of the pen declare alfalfa to be more important than water in the river and that after the eons, our generation is allowed to slam them behind the door of time and throw away the key. Some man bought a Van Gogh at an auction for a huge sum of money. He declares that when he dies, the painting will be cremated along with his body. Does having the money make for a right? Do some things belong to everyone? Or to no one? Doubtless, the senators still go home to filling meals and hot showers. It isn't fashionable in these times to declare oneself antigrowth. There's talk from some about planned growth or infill or curbing urban sprawl, but not no-growth. Every year more people move to New Mexico, more housing developments spring up and the center of town becomes more distant as do the wide open spaces, the forests and the grasslands. The wild places nearby get paved and covered up and you have to drive further to get out of town. I guess the idea is that growth can go on forever, that every square foot of New Mexico can have a home, a factory, a mall or a parking lot on it. That there will be enough water to supply it all until the whole state is filled up as long as its filled up smartly. To think otherwise is anti-growth, anti-capitalism, anti-custom and culture or way of life. I know someone who built a house in Southern New Mexico. It's on a parcel of subdivided ranch land and is one of several dozen. A communal well supplied water to everyone.

Now a bad thing has happened. The rancher drilled a new well nearby. Apparently, the new well went through the aquifer of the old communal one, punched a hole in it and now the water has drained away. These people are now learning what minnows, meadowlarks and antelope already know. Water is more than hot showers. Back to the grasslands which are evidently in the sights of energy developers too. The terrain is level and easy to build on. Roads, drilling pads and compressor stations can go anywhere and everywhere. Get ready to trade the fresh air smell for petrochemicals and the call of larks for the drumming roar of compressors. Trade the ground water too. Contamination is highly likely. Right here, right now this place is goin' boys and it ain't comin' back. Despite these assaults and the absence of a growing season, the cattle are still out grazing the parched grasslands I see. They are chomping away at the few blades of grass that did manage to grow, exposing the dirt to more sunlight and heat, and drying out the soil even more; an insult to an already injured land. The calf crop wasn't so great this year.

I find some cow bones that appear to have seen the light of day some time last summer. Did that cow eat something bad in desperation or was she just worn out by the heat and the trying to find food anywhere? Maybe she was just thirsty. Pity the antelope. A rancher puts out a hummingbird feeder. He knows how bad the drought is. Maybe hummingbirds could use a little help. Black-chinned and broad-tailed hummingbirds come and gratefully partake. Then the migration south begins and orange backed rufous hummingbirds arrive, stopping over on their way to Mexico. Anyone who has fed hummers knows how territorial the rufous variety can be. They hog the feeder and chase off other birds. It's what they do. But this behavior so incensed the rancher that he got out his .22 and shot that rufous hummingbird. Boom! - an explosion of feathers, a wadded, mangled body, one less hummingbird to feed. I think the drought may be getting to him. But for the rest of us, with gas in our cars, steak on our plates, mails to go to and water for our showers, we don't have to notice. No, not yet.

OUTINGS

November 8: Check out the birds of the Nutt Grasslands complex with NMSU's Martha Desmon, ornithologist and specialist in Chihuahuan Desert birds. Meet at the General Store at 8:00 AM, with binoculars and a sack lunch for a morning of tracking and observing resident and migratory birds. We will also have access to the Heritage Ranch ...call Margot at 744-5860. We will meet for breakfast at 7:30 if you would care to join us.

December 6: Birder's Breakfast. Sponsored in collaboration with Elephant Butte State Park and supported by the Friends of Elephant Butte State Park. This event will begin at 7:30 AM and continue 'til noon. Expert birders will be on hand to assist those who might need some help. The Paseo del Rio Park is located 3.1 miles east of the 3rd Street stop light in Elephant Butte. The Park is graciously waiving their day use fee. For additional information contact Margot Wilson at 744-5860 or Amy Claesson at 744-9998. **December 6:** Birder's Breakfast. Sponsored in conjunction with Elephant Butte State Park and supported by the Friends of Elephant Butte State Park, will begin at 7:30 AM lasting 'til noon. This event will take place at the Paseo Del Rio Park, 3.1 miles east of the 3rd Street stop light in Truth or Consequences. Expert birders will be present to help those who are less than expert! The Park is cordially waiving the day use fee. Call Margot at 744-5860 or Amy Claesson at the State Park at 744-5998.

December 13: Join the Forest Service in a tour of the Boiler Fire, Poverty Creek and other areas, with the Black Range District's Les Dufour. See examples of the National Fire Plan in action. Meet at the Black Range District office in the Food Basket shopping mall south of the 79 exit to Truth or Consequences at

8:00 AM, or meet us at the General Store in Winston at 9:00 AM. There will be some walking. Bring what you need to be comfortable in the way of food and clothing. We will be in the mountains in December. We can expect to see some game. If you have a four wheel drive or truck please bring it. We will use some Forest Service vehicles, but might need additional transportation. Call Margot at 744-5860

PLANNING MEETINGS

Tuesday, November 11: The Southern Group ExCom, interested members and guest will meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Southwest Environmental Center at 275 North Downtown Mall., south of Las Cruces Avenue on the mall. Enter through the west door, off the parking lot, and south of Day's Hamburgers. Come and join the Campaigns to protect Otero Mesa, the Nutt Grasslands and assuring that the current representative to congress from District 2 is retired after one term. Your participation can make a difference! We need activist who are willing to volunteer for sitting at tables at the Farmer's Market and at fairs, making calls and writing letters. If you can not attend please call me, Margot Wilson at 505-744-5860.

Group Directory

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

Margo Wilson
Chair, Conservation Chair
744-5860
margotwilson40@hotmail.com

Cathy Mathews
Secretary, Publicity
541-5003
cathy_burr@hotmail.com

Cheryl Blevins
Treasurer
524-4861
spotblev@earthlink.net

David Farrell
National Forest,
Legislative Issues,
Endangered Species
895-3352
daffarrell@hotmail.com

Cathy Mathews
Secretary, Publicity
541-5003
cburr@hotmail.com

Michael Grisbaugh
Global Warming
895-5349
mhaleygr@nmsu.edu

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

Anthony Hyde
ahyde@nmsu.edu

Otero Mesa

Needs Your Help!

Write Senator Domenici!

- Otero Mesa is the largest remaining Chihuahuan Desert Grassland on our public lands and is home to important native species.
- 95% of our public lands are already open to oil and gas development.
- Otero Mesa should be protected as a National Conservation Area.
- There is enough fresh, drinkable water in the aquifer beneath Otero Mesa for over 800,000 people. The ground water could be contaminated for oil and gas.

Write and call:
Senator Pete Domenici
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3101
202-224-6621

Hot El Paso Issues

- With the recent Rio Grande Chapter approval of Jose Escobedo's work on our Asarco proposal we need only a few more grants to be able to hire a coordinator for this project. Jose met locally recently with national's *Beyond the Borders* program director Jenny Martinez to promote our proposal. We appreciate the help of the SW Region's Lawson Legate on this and all the chapter projects. The most recent news on the Asarco issue was a by-invitation-only meeting at City Hall between the EPA and residents of the most affluent affected areas on this side of the border. Even though the EPA can only afford to clean up about 300 of the 800 most heavily contaminated homes without Superfund designation, these neighborhoods want to avoid listing. According to the El Paso Times, the City and State health people raised "no major health concerns," and advised parents to have children wash their hands after playing outside and to control the amount of dust and dirt in their homes. Residents want annual, comprehensive blood testing of children ages newborn to 6 years old to begin immediately. The City-County Health and Environmental District Director said he may do more blood testing on children ages 1 to 3 years old. EPRG activist Taylor Moore has long advocated that we, the EPRG, offer testing and build our own database to expose this situation.

- Franklin Mountains State Park is protected on the Northeast by Castner Range, a former military firing range still contaminated with unexploded ordnance which would cost many millions to clean up. The US Border Patrol wants a chunk of Castner for its new headquarters even though there are several other sites in Northeast that could be used without spoiling open space adjacent to our treasured Franklins. We feel that approval of the Border Patrol's Castner alternative would trigger a domino effect ultimately resulting in the piecemeal destruction of yet another El Paso treasure. As members of the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition we've gotten an extension of the comment period, attended meetings, commented to the officials, and written impassioned letters to the editor. The comment period ended October 26. Now it's wait and see.

- With the election of a developer-financed mayor and city council, the 3-year hiatus on sale of public land for development is finally over. We are presently witnessing the masterplanning by Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, Inc. of 2000 acres of prime open space adjoining Franklin Mountains State Park on the west side, land that we've been coveting since 1999 for inclusion into the state park. A similar process for northeast El Paso led by another national firm, Kimberly-Horn and Associates, began in August. We can thank ex-Mayor Raymond Caballero for introducing professional masterplanning of our public lands. Problem is, some of this land shouldn't be developed. Which brings us to our final issue...water.

- After spending the '80s suing New Mexico for water, the '90s planning to meet El Paso's needs with Rio Grande water, and more recently angering West Texas ranchers by buying their neighbors out in order to get their water for a 5-foot diameter pipeline to El Paso, our water utility has begun to drill and desalinate. This is not to say pumping water out from under West Texas has been forgotten. Efforts are underway to create a water market for anyone wanting to sell instead of grow. Most recently legislators even brought up the idea of financing schools by selling the water out from under the state lands used to fund education, much as they do with oil and gas leases. Nevertheless, small-scale desal units have been purchased and construction planned on a large desal project with Fort Bliss. So we're going with desal in the short term. The good news about drilling and desalinating our own basin is that we will be faced with depleting and selling our own backyard, not someone else's. This may force people to realize there is a limit to what this desert can sustain. Our children would thank us for this!

-Laurence Gibson

Selected Outings

Nov 8-9: Guadalupe Mountains Backpack

Place: Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Class: Strenuous

Length: 14 miles round trip

Elevation gain: 2300 feet

Leader: Harry Newman 588-7192 swtraveller@aol.com

After carcamping at Dog Canyon, we will ascend to the Blue Ridge campground to spend the night. The next day, we will descend to the cars using the Bush Mountain Trail. This trail should offer a scenic vista if conditions are right. Participants must carry all water needed for 2 days. Be prepared for a moderate pace but long daily distances.

Nov 15: Guadalupe Peak Dayhike

Place: Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Class: Strenuous

Length: 8 miles

Elevation gain: 3000 feet

Leader: Mike Episcopo miepisco@episd.org

Hike to the top of Texas and enjoy our nearby National Park on what should be a cool fall weekend.

November 22-23: Bush Mountain Trail Backpack

Place: Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Class: Moderate+

Length: 7.4 miles

Elevation gain: 800-900 feet

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

We will depart early Saturday morning for the scenic drive through Delf City over to Dog Canyon Campground. After arranging for our backcountry permit, we will hike over to Marcus campground on the Bush Mountain Trail. Once in camp participants may take advantage of dayhike opportunities to places such as PX Flat or the Brokeoff Mountains. Participants must carry all water for two days.

Dec 19-21: Little Creek Early Winter Backpack

Place: Gila Wilderness near the Visitor Center

Class: Moderate+

Length: 10 miles roundtrip

Elevation gain: 800-1000 feet

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

We will depart El Paso Friday evening and drive to our car camp spot at Grapevine Campground. Saturday morning we will drive to our trailhead at Woody's Corral and hike trail 160 to Little Creek, where we will set up camp. On Sunday, we will return to the West Fork drainage via EE Canyon. There will be one crossing of the West Fork, which may have ankle-high flow. Participants should be prepared for cold, windy, winter weather with possible snow. Recommended equipment includes a sturdy tent, a sleeping bag rated to 20 degrees or below, wool or polyester pile clothing, a wool or pile hat, wool socks, and warm gloves. Come enjoy the solitude of the Gila in winter.

Liability Waiver Reminder

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing, please go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Dept. at (415) 977-5528 for a print version.

2003 El Paso Regional Group Directory (Area Code 915)

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

Chair

Laurence Gibson: * 594-7342
lgibson@utep.edu

Vice Chair

Jim Gibson: * 593-0506
jgibson932@aol.com

Secretary

Ann Falknor: * 833-9162
afalknor@whc.net

Treasurer

Kathy Sunday: 584-9301
sundayt@zianet.com

Editor

Laurence Gibson: 594-7342
lgibson@utep.edu

ExCom Members *

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

Chapter Delegate

Jose Escobedo: 751-1834
escobedo@hotmail.com

Chap Delegate Alternate

Liz Walsh: 584-1471
ewalsh@utep.edu

Inner City Outings

Ted Mertig: 852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net

Outings

Laurence Gibson: 594-7342
lgibson@utep.edu

Outings

Rollin Wickenden: 855-6697
rwickgila@aol.com

Membership

Ted Mertig: 852-3011
tmertig@earthlink.net

Webmaster

Terry Sunday: 584-9301
sundayt@zianet.com

Watch for Your Ballots and Join in Chapter and Group Elections

The Election Calendar printed in the September/October 2003 issue of the *Rio Grande Sierran* was inaccurate. Therefore, the Election Committee, with the concurrence of the Executive Committee of the Rio Grande Chapter, has revised the calendar as follows:

October 31—Nominating Committee slates announced to the Executive Committees, published in the *Sierran*.

November 14—Nomination or issue petitions submitted to the Election Committee for verification of signatures.

November 28—Ballot goes to the printer.

December 5—Ballots mailed to all members.

January 2, 2004—Ballots returned, postmarked on or before this date.

January 9—Ballots counted by the Election Committee, results reported to the Executive Committees.

Four of the five Groups of the Rio Grande Chapter have elected to name the Chapter's Election Committee as their election committee. These are:

- the Northern New Mexico Group,
- the Central New Mexico Group,
- the Southern New Mexico Group, and
- the Pajarito Group.

These Groups will, therefore, be following this calendar as well. This article presents election information for all four of these Groups as well as for the Chapter.

Rio Grande Chapter

The Nominating Committee for the Rio Grande Chapter has nominated the following people as the 2004 candidates for the Executive Committee:

- Richard Barish
- Ilse Bleck
- John Buchser
- Nelson Denman
- Mark Doppke
- Laurence Gibson
- Margot Wilson

Accordingly, the Nominating Committee advises the membership of the following:

Any member in good standing of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club as of 1 September 2003 may run for election by a petition presented to the Nominating Committee no later than 14 November 2003. The petition must contain the signatures of at least 100 members in good standing of the Rio Grande Chapter as of the date of signing the petition. Petitioners must also include a statement to be included with the ballot, detailing their conservation philosophy and goals for the Chapter.

If you have questions, contact the Nominating Committee Chair, David Farrell in Hillsboro (895-3352; dafarrell@hotmail.com), or the Election Committee Chair, Michal Mudd in Albuquerque (884-3315; micmud@aol.com).

The Northern New Mexico Group

The Nominating Committee for the Northern New Mexico Group has nominated the following people as the 2004 candidates for the Executive Committee:

- Linda Buchser
- Nelson Denman
- Gregg Lower
- Norma McCallan
- Paul Paryski
- Julia Takehashi
- Gwen Wardwell

Accordingly, the Nominating Committee advises the membership of the following:

Any member in good standing of the Northern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club as of Septem-

ber 1 may run for election by a petition presented to the Nominating Committee no later than November 14 of this year. The petition must contain the signatures of at least 70 members (3% of the 2,104 members) in good standing of the Northern New Mexico Group as of the date of signing the petition. Petitioners must also include a statement to be included with the ballot, detailing their conservation philosophy and goals for the Group.

If you have questions, contact the Group Nominating Committee Chair, John Buchser in Santa Fe (jbuchser@comcast.net; 820-0201), or the Election Committee Chair, Michal Mudd in Albuquerque (884-3315; micmud@aol.com).

The Pajarito Group

The Nominating Committee for the Pajarito Group has nominated the following people as the 2004 candidates for the Executive Committee:

- Ilse Bleck
- Jody Benson
- Carole Jacobson
- Kim Manley

Accordingly, the Nominating Committee advises the membership of the following:

Any member in good standing of the Pajarito Group of the Sierra Club as of 1 September 2003 may run for election by a petition presented to the Nominating Committee no later than 14 November 2003. The petition must contain the signatures of at least 15 members in good standing of the Pajarito Group as of the date of signing the petition. Petitioners must also include a statement to be included with the ballot, detailing their conservation philosophy and goals for the Group.

If you have questions about the election, contact the Election Committee Chair, Michal Mudd (see above).

The Central New Mexico Group

The Nominating Committee for the Central New Mexico Group has nominated the following people as the 2004 candidates for the Executive Committee:

- Mark Doppke
- Rick Johnson
- Mike Puelle

Accordingly, the Nominating Committee advises the membership of the following:

Any member in good standing of the Central New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club as of 1 September 2003 may run for election by a petition presented to the Nominating Committee no later than 14 November 2003. The petition must contain the signatures of at least 25 members in good standing of the Central New Mexico Group as of the date of signing the petition. Petitioners must also include a statement to be included with the ballot, detailing their conservation philosophy and goals for the Group.

If you have questions, contact the Group Nominating Committee Chair, Blair Brown in Albuquerque (bblairb2@aol.com; 259-7190), or the Election Committee Chair, Michal Mudd (see above).

The Southern New Mexico Group

The Nominating Committee for the Southern New Mexico Group has nominated the following people as the 2004 candidates for the Executive Committee:

- Cheryl Blevins
- Don Dearholt
- Michael Gritzbaugh

Accordingly, the Nominating Committee advises the membership of the following:

Any member in good standing of the Southern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club as of 1 September 2003 may run for election by a petition presented to the Nominating Committee no later than 14 November 2003. The petition must contain the signatures of at least 10 members in good standing of the Southern New Mexico Group as of the date of signing the petition. Petitioners must also include a statement to be included with the ballot, detailing their conservation philosophy and goals for the Group.

If you have questions, contact the Nominating Committee Chair, David Farrell (see above), or the Election Committee Chair, Michal Mudd (see above).

—Barbara Johnson

[Un]-Healthy Forests Bills In Conference

The U.S. Senate is set to vote by the end of October 2003 on a slightly altered version of the Bush Administration's ill-named Healthy Forests Initiative. The plan would do little or nothing to reduce the risk of wildfire to western communities, yet would do much to remove citizen participation, interfere with the judicial system, and increase commercial logging. The backroom deal, which could still be subject to changes in Conference Committee, stands in sharp contrast to a proposal by conservation groups that focuses aid in communities at risk from wildfire.

Over the past year, hundreds of nationally- and locally-elected officials, scientists, and homeowners from across the country have spoken out against the Bush plan. They warn that it does not provide the funding needed to help communities protect themselves from wildfires and is instead a stalking horse for more subsidized commercial logging. In fact, during a recent fundraising swing through the West, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert boasted that the Healthy Forests Initiative is "an important bill for the forest industry" and called it "a common sense approach to make sure we can build the roads we have to build so this industry can start to come back." That's a far cry from reassuring communities that help is on the way.

Take Action!

Call your legislators to express your desire to protect communities first. Please call the U.S. Senate Switchboard (202/224-3121) and urge your senators to oppose the Healthy Forest Initiative because:

- the Administration's proposal fails to protect currently healthy forests such as mature and old-growth forests and roadless areas,
- cuts citizens out of decisions affecting their public lands, and
- does not ensure increased protection for communities from wildfire.

For more information, see the Sierra Club web site (www.sierraclub.org/forests), or contact Mary Wiper in Albuquerque (243-7767; mary.wiper@sierraclub.org).

Don't Ignore Population Growth and Overconsumption Any Longer

Dear Editor,

Most environmental organizations' leaders have retreated from national and global population stabilization efforts even as the destruction of the biosphere caused by population growth has been escalating. Activists are working to expose and oppose this.

The U.S. threat was described by Roy Beck and Leon Kolankiewicz in a highly praised report, "Forsaking Fundamentals: The Environmental Establishment Abandons U.S. Population Stabilization" (www.cis.org/articles/2001/forsaking/release.html). On the first Earth Day (1970), "environmentalists heartily embraced stabilization of America's population," without which they believed harm to the natural world unstoppable. The ending of stabilization work leads the report to conclude, "... the environmental bureaucracy and the federal government today are failing to stop the destruction of the nation's natural environment."

The Oregon Sierra Club's Chapter's newsletter, *The Conifer*, recently printed an article by Greg Jacob, "Time to Reassess Our Neutrality Policy on Immigration" (July/September 2003; www.oregon.sierraclub.org). Our borders have been opened wide. Immigration now causes 87% of U.S. population growth, and the population growth causes 52% of sprawl, according to a new study by Beck, Kolankiewicz, and Steven Camarota ("Outsmarting Smart Growth"; www.SprawlCity.org). Also, Club members, please visit Sierrans for U.S. Population Stabilization's web site (www.susps.org).

Negative population growth (www.npg.org) has been running excellent advertisements in *E The Environmental Magazine* (www.emagazine.com) and other publications. The latest points out that, unless fertility and immigration are reduced, U.S. population will grow to 500 million or more by the end of this century (other estimates go up to over one billion.) And, "... our present

scale of economic activity is so large relative to the biosphere that all three measures [reducing population (the most critical), cutting overconsumption, and increasing energy and materials efficiency] are needed in order to reduce it to a sustainable level."

The environmental bureaucracy has run away from addressing the most important cause of environmental harm despite decades of calls-to-attention from such luminaries as Bertrand Russell, Martin Luther King, Paul Ehrlich, David Brower, Edward O. Wilson, and prominent scientific groups (they issued important public statements in 1992 and 1996).

And despite decades of environmental degradation to the present dire situation, world population at its current consumption level already exceeds by more than 20% Earth's long-term carrying capacity ("Ecological Footprint Accounts; www.RedefiningProgress.org). Environment-consuming economic growth will continue, globally, until long after the end of population growth (or until it is thwarted by depletion). That's because policymakers will determine that the needs of five billion poor people, hundreds of millions of unemployed, and 77 million more consumers per year must be met by such growth. Consequently, a mass extinction is well under way (www.massextinction.net; <http://cces.org/cc/> "Earth Crash").

Thus, by their neglect and avoidance of birthrate-reduction efforts, the responsible environmental, governmental, and international entities have brought us far beyond the stage where population stabilization would have sufficed. Now, we must reverse population growth as soon as possible, if we are to avert the ruin of the biosphere and a die-off of humankind.

—Raymond M. Reddy
Albuquerque, NM
raymired@hotmail.com

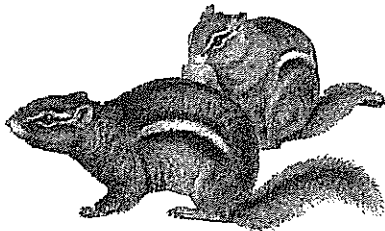
License Plates Support New Mexico Wildlife

You can now order a Wildlife License Plate, featuring a Gambel's quail, for your car. These plates, created as a result of legislation sponsored by Representative Mimi Stewart in early 2003, support the state's Share with Wildlife program. Share with Wildlife funds research, public education, habitat protection, and wildlife rehabilitation exclusively

through donations. Endangered and threatened species, as well as non-game species benefit greatly from this program.

Order forms can be obtained from the NM Motor Vehicle Division (888/683-4636; www.state.nm.us/tax). Select "Motor Vehicle Forms," and scroll down to "Wildlife Specialty Plate." Or see the NM Department of Fish and Game web site (www.gmfish.state.nm.us). Scroll to the bottom of the page to "New Feature In the Spotlight," then click on "Order Wildlife License Plate."

—Animal Protection of New Mexico
apnm-news@apnm.org • apnmnews@www.apnm.org
P.O. Box 11395, Albuquerque, NM 87192



Rio Grande Chapter Quarterly Meetings

The Rio Grande Chapter will meet next on 17-18 January 2004* at the Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge just south of Socorro. The Conservation Committee will meet on Saturday; the Executive Committee will meet on Sunday morning.

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

* This meeting was previously scheduled for 6-7 December 2003.

Organic Food (continued from page 6)

7:00PM at the Main Library on Washington Street in Santa Fe. For interested groups, we are taking our series on the road and will show at your location for a small donation to continue our work in education, providing food for the community, and research.

Another film available through Tierra Azul is *Heartbreak in the Heartland*.

For more information, contact Ann Peters in Santa Fe (501-3233; voicesofchange@hotmail.com) or Lane Hartzell (501-3233).

—Ann Peters
Tierra Azul Projects

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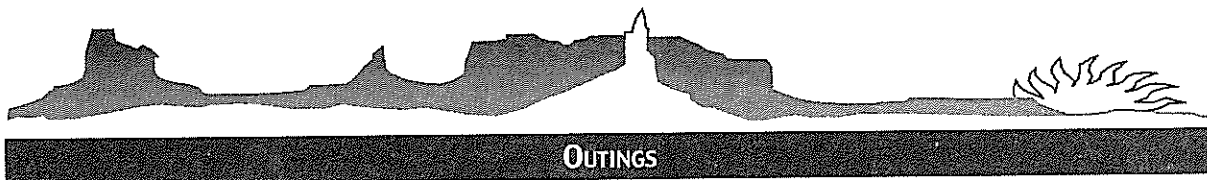
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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletter.



OUTINGS

Connectedness

I have just returned from Arches National Park, where I spent a week on a National Sierra Club service trip. Being immersed in redrock country is always special, but I was struck on this particular outing by the connectedness of the participants. We came from all over the country: New Hampshire to California, Texas to Maryland, and a local Utahian who joined the Club only when signing up for it. We worked with the ranger responsible for vegetation issues, sawing down tamarisks in Salt Creek Wash branch by branch, and exalting each time we got a large spreading tree down to a stump, upon which the ranger sprayed the herbicide that hopefully kills the roots. No one knew anyone else before the trip; during the last morning's goodbyes there were tears in some eyes, and the hugs were long and heartfelt.

What had happened in this short span of six and a half days to achieve such connectedness? For starters, we all shared the awe of this magnificent sandstone landscape, its haunting arches and cool, shadowy passages—those of us who already loved slickrock country, and those who had never been to Utah before. We had ample time to relax and play, hiking up to nearby Corona Arch on BLM land, sharing rides to cranky showers in Moab, making the pilgrimage to Delicate Arch. And we worked together, side by side under the hot sun and the dust from thick layers of duff, feeling good about making a small dent in this fast-spreading invasive species which crowds out the native vegetation.

While all outings create a sense of camaraderie, help us to stay fit and healthy, and give us a deep-

ened appreciation of our public lands, a work trip adds an additional dimension of hard physical labor undertaken for a shared goal of making the land healthier. I urge you to try out a service trip, be it a national or local Sierra outing, or one sponsored by another group, such as NM Volunteers for the Outdoors. And if you are aware of a need for volunteer labor, such as clearing burned trees off a favorite trail, suggest a project to your Group Outings Chair. Usually, public land managers are delighted with an offer of volunteer help, our leaders are happy to add a further dimension to their schedules, and you will feel good about making another contribution to the ongoing process of sustaining our environment.

—Norma McCallan

Selected Sierra Club Outings for November, December and January

Saturday, November 8 • Watershed-Thinning Field Trip—Easy/moderate hike to view the thinning project along the Santa Fe Watershed boundary with guest leader Paige Grant, Santa Fe Watershed Association. Bob McKee (471-0003-SFe).

Saturday, November 8 • Cochiti Canyon/Bland Canyon Bike Loop—16 miles. 1,300' elevation gain. Mike Di Rosa (663-0648-Los Alamos).

Saturday, November 8 • Birding Walk in the Nutt Grasslands Complex—Observe migratory birds with NMSU ornithologist Martha Desmond. Margot Wilson (744-5860-TorC).

Saturday-Sunday, November 8-9 • Guadalupe Mountains Backpack—14 miles. 2,300' elevation gain. Dog Canyon Campground to Blue Ridge Campground; return via Bush Mountain Trail. Harry Newman (915/588-7192-El Paso).

Saturday-Sunday, November 8-9 • White Sands Moonlight Backpack—Easy 2-mile trek, suitable for beginners. Sleep on the dunes under the full moon. Laurence Gibson (915/594-7342-El Paso).

Saturday November 15 • Guadalupe Peak Dayhike—Strenuous hike in Guadalupe Mountains National Park up the highest peak in Texas. 8 miles. 3,000' elevation gain. Mike Episcopo (mlepisco@episd.org).

Saturday, November 22 • Queen Mary & Otowi Mesas below Los Alamos—Strenuous hike, mostly off-trail over volcanic tuff, with rock scrambling. 10 miles. 1,500' gain. Stephen Markowitz (797-5833-Abq).

Saturday-Sunday, November 22-23 • Bush Mountain Trail Backpack—Moderate backpack in Guadalupe Mountains National Park. 7+ miles. 900' elevation gain from Dog Canyon Campground to Marcus Campground. Opportunities for dayhikes. Rollin Wickenden (915/855-6697-El Paso).

Friday-Sunday, November 28-30 • Bosque del Apache Birding/Camping Weekend—Stay at Riverside Group Campground. View the thousands of Canada geese, sandhill cranes and ducks that migrate here each winter. Rainer and Ilse Bleck (662-2368-Los Alamos).

Saturday, November 29 • Tent Rocks near Cochiti—Easy hike to this rock wonderland. Eliza Schmid (474-5846-SFe).

Sunday, November 30 • San Miguel Ruins, Bandelier N.M.—Strenuous hike, some off-trail. 11 miles. 2,000' elevation gain. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354-SFe).

Saturday, December 6 • Birders' Breakfast—Sponsored in collaboration with Elephant Butte State Park and its Friends Group. Meet 7:30 AM at Paseo Del Rio Park. Expert birders on hand until noon. Margot Wilson (744-5860-TorC).

Saturday, December 6 • La Bajada to Tetilla Peak—Strenuous off-trail hike to this prominent landmark. 12 miles. Stephen Markowitz (797-5833-Abq).

Sunday, December 7 • Three Gun Spring Trail, Sandia Mountain Wilderness—Excellent conditioning hike to viewpoints. 6 miles. 1,500' elevation gain. David Ther (260-1553-Abq).

Saturday, December 13 • Tour of Boiler Fire, Poverty Creek and other areas—Join F.S. Black Range District Ranger Les Dufour, and see examples of the National Fire Plan in action. Some walking. Margot Wilson (744-5860-TorC).

Saturday, December 13 • Mitchell Trail to Guaje Ridge—Strenuous hike near Los Alamos. 10-12 miles. Mike di Rosa (663-0648-Los Alamos).

Saturday, December 13 • Santa Fe River Cleanup & Vegetation Maintenance—9:00 AM-noon. John Buchser (820-0201-SFe). Also scheduled for January 10.

Saturday, December 20 • Otowi Peak/Buckman Mesa—Moderate hike, some off-trail. 6 miles. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354-SFe).

Sunday, December 21 • Snowshoe up Ravens Ridge—Strenuous and steep, though short. Hike if no snow. Les Drapela (438-3306-SFe).

Thursday, January 1 • Snowshoe Trek to Celebrate New Years—Moderate. Hike if no snow. Marcia Skillman (474-7414-SFe).

Saturday, January 3 • Cerrillos Hills Park—Easy hike, some off-trail, with guest mine historian Bill Baxter. Norma McCallan (471-0005-SFe).

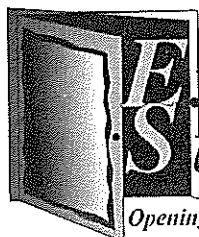
Sunday, January 4 • Sierra Negra WSA near Abiquiu—Moderate/strenuous hike in the badlands around the peak. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354-SFe).

Saturday, January 17 • Morindad Canyon, near Los Alamos. Moderate off-trail hike to look at petroglyphs. 6-8 miles. Mike di Rosa (663-0648-Los Alamos).

Saturday, January 18 • Beginners' Snowshoe Outing—Wherever snow is good. Marcia Skillman (474-7414-SFe).

Saturday, January 31 • Ojito Wilderness Study Area, near San Ysidro—Moderate off-trail hike in these beautiful badlands, hopefully soon to be designated as Wilderness (see page 1). Stephen Markowitz (797-5833-Abq).

Please check the five Groups' pages for more information on these trips, and for additional activities. All area codes are 505, except as noted.



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