

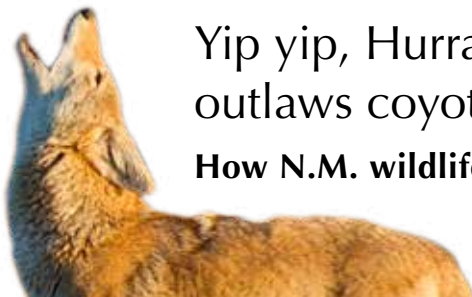


Rio Grande Sierran

Landmark laws

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Yip yip, Hurray! New Mexico outlaws coyote-killing contests
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Governor vetoes funding for Gila River diversion
Win for river: Page 10



Photo by Derrick Toledo

Supporters celebrate at the March 22 signing ceremony for the Energy Transition Act, which creates an equitable transition to 100% carbon-free electricity in New Mexico.



Photo courtesy Allyson Siwik


Dutch Salmon, 1945-2019
The conservationist and Gila River champion co-founded the Gila Conservation Coalition.
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Photo courtesy Lisa Mandelkern

Federal bill protects N.M. monuments
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EXPLORE, ENJOY AND PROTECT THE PLANET

 **Rio Grande Chapter**
Sierra Club
1807 Second St., Unit 45
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Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Contacts

riograndesierrclub.org

facebook.com/nmsierrclub

Twitter: @riograndesierra

instagram.com/riograndesierrclub

Executive Committee

David Coss, chair, dcoss1@yahoo.com
Mary Hotvedt, vice chair maryhotvedt@aol.com
Laurence Gibson, secretary, 915-309-5419, lgibson@utep.edu
Ray Shortridge, treasurer, 505-604-3908, rshortridge@gmail.com
Susan Martin, 505-670-3279, smartin31@comcast.net
John Buchser, jbuchser@comcast.net, 505-820-0201
Eric Patterson, 575-776-2833, eepatt@gmail.com
Karl Braithwaite, 505-850-3369, karl@braith.net
Shannon Romeling, 575-758-3874, sromeling73@gmail.com
Fred Houdek, Central New Mexico Group representative: fjhoudek@gmail.com, 630-809-4234
Tom Gorman, Northern New Mexico Group representative: 505-438-3932, gormantd@gmail.com
Jody Benson, Pajarito Group representative, echidnaejb@gmail.com, 505-662-4782
Kurt Anderson, Southern New Mexico Group representative, 575-646-1032, kurt@nmsu.edu
El Paso Group representative: Open

Offices and Staff

Albuquerque office
2215 Lead Ave. SE, Albuquerque, 87106, 505-243-7767
Camilla Feibelman, Rio Grande Chapter director, 505-715-8388 or camilla.feibelman@sierraclub.org
Miya King-Flaherty, Our Wild New Mexico organizing representative, 505-243-7767, miya.king-flaherty@sierraclub.org
Cecilia Chávez Beltrán, Spanish-language outings, cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org, 505-243-7767
Brittany Fallon, brittany.fallon@sierraclub.org, conservation and legislative organizer, 505-243-7767
Derrick Toledo, derrick.toledo@sierraclub.org, clean-energy organizer, 505-243-7767,
Northern New Mexico Office
1807 Second Street, Unit 45
Santa Fe, NM 87505 • 505-983-2703
Mona Blaber, communications director, 505-660-5905, monablaber@gmail.com
Claire McKnight, PAC treasurer, 646-

864-0209, claire.mcknight@gmail.com
Brintha Nathan, bookkeeper, 505-310-0595, brintha2709@yahoo.com
Vice treasurer: **Connie Huffmire Western New Mexico Robert Tohe**, Our Wild America senior organizing representative, 928-774-6103, robert.tohe@sierraclub.org
Sierra Club National
2101 Webster St., Suite 1300, Oakland, CA, 94612. 415-977-5500

Local Groups

Central New Mexico Group, 2215 Lead Ave. SE, Albuquerque, 87106
Chair: Fred Houdek, fjhoudek@gmail.com, 630-809-4234.
El Paso Group, P.O. Box 9191, El Paso, TX 79995, Chair: Laurence Gibson, lgibson@utep.edu, 915-309-5419.
Northern New Mexico Group, 1807 Second St., Unit 45, Santa Fe, NM 87505, 505-983-2703, Chair: Teresa Seamster, ctc.seamster@gmail.com, 505-466-8964.
Pajarito Group, 520 Navajo Road, Los Alamos, NM, 87544. Chair: Jody Benson, echidnaejb@gmail.com.
Southern New Mexico Group, P.O. Box 735, Mesilla, NM, 88046; Chair: Howie Dash, howiedash@aol.com.

Outings

Chapter outings chair: Odile de La Beaujardiere, odile@pitot.org, 505-433-4692
Central New Mexico: Terry Owen, teowen@comcast.net, 505-553-1664
El Paso: Laurence Gibson, lgibson@utep.edu
Northern New Mexico: Alan Shapiro, nm5s@yahoo.com
Southern New Mexico: Howie Dash, howiedash@aol.com
Inspiring Connections Outdoors: Santa Fe: Raymond Greenwell, matrng@hofstra.edu, 516-312-5751
El Paso: Ted Mertig, 915-852-3011, tcmertig@sbcglobal.net
Military Outdoors Program: Terry Owen, teowen@comcast.net, (505) 301-4349
Spanish-language outings: Cecilia Chávez Beltrán, cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org

Action Teams

Bosque Action Team: Richard Barish, richard.barish@gmail.com, 505-232-3013.
Bosquitos: Sarita Streng, saritas-treng@yahoo.com, 505-243-1173
Otero Mesa Action Team: Open

Bag-Free Team: Jody Benson, echidnaejb@gmail.com, 505-662-4782
Organ Mountains Desert Peaks: Howie Dash, howiedash@aol.com.

Conservation Issues

Conservation Chair: Karl Braithwaite, 505-850-3369, karl@braith.net
Energy/Climate Change: Chair: Karl Braithwaite
Water: Chair: John Buchser, 505-820-0201, jbuchser@comcast.net
Dairy: Dan Lorimier, dlorimier1948@gmail.com
Public Lands: Chair: Tom Gorman, 505-438-3932, gormantd@gmail.com
Nuclear-Waste Storage: John Buchser, Patricia Cardona, Richard Barish, Don Hancock
Wildlife: Chair: Mary Katherine Ray, 575-772-5655, mkrscrim@gmail.com
Four Corners: Miya King-Flaherty, miya.king-flaherty@sierraclub.org
Methane: Camilla Feibelman, camilla.feibelman@sierraclub.org
Mining, Sand & Gravel: Allyson Siwik, allysonsiwik@gmail.com
Zero Waste: Northern New Mexico Group: Joe Eigner, 505-570-0583, joseigner@gmail.com. Central NM Group: Carol Chamberland, pictografix@comcast.net, 505-341-1027

Activism Teams

Communications Team: Chair: David Coss. Members: Laurence Gibson, John Buchser, Shannon Romeling
Rio Grande Sierran Editorial Board: Laurence Gibson, Ken Hughes, Mary Katherine Ray, Jody Benson, David Coss, Shannon Romeling
Sierran Editor: Mona Blaber, 505-660-5905, monablaber@gmail.com
Web Editor: Ellen Loehman, loehman@msn.com, 505-328-2954
Elections:
Nominating:
Finance: Ray Shortridge, chair, 505-604-3908; Members: Brintha Nathan, Jim Baker, Claire McKnight, Connie Huffmire
Fundraising: Louise Jensen
Members: John Buchser, David Coss, Jim Baker
Legal: Richard Barish, 505-232-3013, richard.barish@gmail.com
Legislative: Co-chairs: Patricia Cardona, 505-469-3230, patriciacardona24@yahoo.com; Melinda Smith, smith@igc.org, 505-515-7284
Membership: David Coss

Personnel Chair: John Buchser.
Members: David Coss, Laurence Gibson, Ken Hughes, Fred Houdek
Political Committee: Chair: Richard Barish, richard.barish@gmail.com.
Members: Susan Martin; Pajarito: Jody Benson; Central Group: Richard Barish; Southern Group: Kurt Anderson; El Paso Group: Laurence Gibson; Northern New Mexico Group: Tom Gorman; David Coss; Mary Hotvedt; Patricia Cardona.
Political Compliance Officer: Richard Barish, 505-232-3013, richard.barish@gmail.com
Sierra Student Coalition: El Paso: Neysa Hardin, nrhardin@yahoo.com; Albuquerque/UNM: Keely Scheffler, kscheffler99@unm.edu, 303-217-1943

Coalitions/Working Groups

America Votes: Richard Barish
Chaco Coalition: Miya King-Flaherty, Robert Tohe, Teresa Seamster
Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy: Karl Braithwaite
Doña Ana County: Howie Dash
Environmental Alliance of New Mexico: Patricia Cardona, Melinda Smith, Brittany Fallon
Friends of the Rio Grande del Norte: Eric Patterson
Valles Caldera: Teresa Seamster
Rio Puerco Management Committee: Tom Gorman
Turquoise Trail Regional Alliance: Denise Fort
Nuclear-waste storage: John Buchser, jbuchser@comcast.net, 505-820-0201
Chihuahuan Desert Border Coalition: Kurt Anderson, kurt@nmsu.edu

National Representatives

Council of Club Leaders Delegate: Shannon Romeling
Building Healthy Communities Team Facilitator: Ken Hughes, 505-316-2278, nahatzil@gmail.com
Sierra Club Wildlands and Wilderness BLM Subteam: Tom Gorman, Miya King-Flaherty
Rio Grande Water Fund: Teresa Seamster
Cover banner photo by Mary Katherine Ray

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When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas to protect our climate, land, water and wildlife. You can donate at **riograndesierrclub.org/donate**, or send

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Contributions are welcome. Send to riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org. Submissions by Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence. Articles chosen to be published are subject to editing.
Letters to the editor may be up to 400 words, subject to editing, and are printed at the discretion of the editorial board. Editorial practices as developed and adopted by the chapter will be used in production of the *Sierran*.

To stay updated on issues you read about in *The Sierran*, go to **riograndesierrclub.org** and subscribe to the chapter e-mail list, or write to monablaber@gmail.com and ask to be added to our opt-in list.

Poetry corner

What gods are these
Who paint this land
With mystic hues of pinks and gold
Who lend their strength to all the rocks
And unless a sky of passions
Behold this land where peace must reign
Oh gods observe
Give back to man his will to blend with rocks and sky and Earth
Leave one place free where eagles fly
Where man can hear your voice and cry
“We love your Earth
Let us stay a while longer and try”
— **Ruth A. Ives**
(written in early 1970s)



Credits, clockwise from top left: Theresa Palmer, Zubin Stillings, Anni Hanna, David McGahey, Bobbe Besold

Clockwise from top left: Global Warming Express participants with Clean Energy Conference keynote speaker Destiny Watford; at the Roundhouse; U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland sitting with kids and watching Sierra at the Green New Deal Town Hall; Gov. Lujan Grisham with GWEers at the signing of her climate executive order; “We’re all in the same boat” art installation at the Roundhouse.

Albuquerque: beyond bags?

By Derrick Toledo
Rio Grande Chapter Clean Energy fellow

Environmental champions on the Albuquerque City Council are working on a Clean and Green Ordinance to end the proliferation of single-use plastic bags and straws as well as styrofoam because of the huge role they play in global pollution.

Cities around the world have already begun similar bans encouraging the use of recyclable and compostable bags. This specific ban will also include styrofoam used by restaurants in takeout containers. If passed, the ordinance will allow restaurants one year to plan and adjust to new busi-

ness practices to best serve the environment.

The Rio Grande Chapter is enlisting support for the ordinance as a similar measure has already passed in Santa Fe. Sierra Club teams have been active with phonebanking, petitions, ally collaboration and social-media outreach.

The City Council is scheduled to consider — and perhaps vote — on Clean and Green at its meeting 5 p.m. Monday, April 15, at the Vincent E. Griego Chambers in Albuquerque.

For more information of how you can help, send an email to derrick.toledo@sierraclub.org or call/text 505-401-7932.

Chapter endorses in MRGCD races

By Richard Barish
Chapter Political chair

The Sierra Club has endorsed **John Kelly** and **Barbara Baca** for the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Board of Directors.

The election will be on June 4 (but see below for information on early and absentee voting). If you own property within the boundaries of the MRGCD (essentially, the Rio Grande Valley) and if you are an MRGCD ratepayer, you can vote in this election.

The MRGCD owns most of the land that comprises the bosque and is a key player in management of the bosque. It is a major user of our limited water resources. The District is controlled by the elected board of directors. It is important that we have board members who are responsive to our environmental concerns! This is an election where your vote can really make a difference, since few people vote in this election.

John Kelly is running for re-election to a Bernalillo County seat. John has consistently been a supporter of our issues regarding the bosque, and he has been a strong voice for transparency and efficient user of water by the District. He brings his expertise as an engineer to the board. MRGCD voters in Bernalillo County can vote for John.

Barbara Baca was formerly the head of Albuquerque’s Parks and Open Space Division. Barbara was involved in bosque protection throughout her 30-plus-year career with the City of Albuquerque. She was



John Kelly



Barbara Baca

the lead planner in charge of writing the Rio Grande Valley State Park Management Plan. She states: “The Rio Grande Bosque must be protected for conservation, education, recreation, and social

equity.” Barbara is running for the “at-large” seat, meaning MRGCD voters in Sandoval, Bernalillo, Valencia and Socorro counties can all vote for her.

The election is on June 4, but you can vote early from May 20 through Saturday, June 1. Early voting is on weekdays except May 27 and on Saturday, June 1, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Locations include the MRGCD office, 1931 Second St. SW, Harrison Middle School, 3912 Isleta Blvd. SW, and Los Ranchos City Hall, 6718 Rio Grande NW, all in Bernalillo County; 800 South Hill Rd. in Bernalillo; 444 Luna Ave. SE in Los Lunas; and Belén City Hall, 100 South Main. A full list of early and Election Day voting locations can be found at mrgcd.com, along with information on how to obtain an absentee ballot.

Please vote for John Kelly and Barbara Baca if you are an MRGCD voter! For more information, contact Richard Barish, richard.barish@gmail.com.

Global Warming Express

By Genie Stevens
Rio Grande Chapter Global GWE coordinator

The seventh year of Global Warming Express is shaping up to be the busiest. Below, some of what GWE has been up to:

Jan. 9: GWEers from Mountain Mahogany School in Albuquerque were invited to attend the Albuquerque City Council’s press conference on the Clean and Green ordinance (see article, above right) just a few weeks after the kids spoke to councilors about the need for the measure.

Jan 28: GWEers testified at the Finance Committee meeting of the City Council on the proposed ban on single-use plastic bags, straws and styrofoam take-out containers. The committee moved the measure to the full City Council!

On the same night, GWEers attended the Clean Energy Conference in Santa Fe. GWEer Emily introduced keynote speaker Destiny Watson, the 2016 Goldman Prize winner for her Environmental Activism. Emily stayed up super-late to hear all that Destiny had to say and to get a photo with her hero.

Jan. 29: At Clean Energy Day, over 60 GWEers from many schools descended on the Roundhouse, were officially recognized on the House floor by Speaker Brian Egolf, trained in the legislative process, and spoke at the most raucous, moving and amazing press conference.

Feb 4: Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez introduced SB459, calling for a 4-year moratorium on fracking while its effects are studied. After the senator’s presentation, Emily, Elizabeth and Sierra gave speeches, along with Eileen Shendo and Samuel Sage.

Feb. 18: 350.org and Sierra Club co-sponsored the amazing town hall with U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland! Sierra, from New Mexico School for the Deaf, signed the day’s final speech. Rep. Haaland gave GWE a Congressional Award for Outstanding Service for dedication to Climate Change Advocacy for NM and the Planet Earth.

March 15: International Youth Climate Strike! Led by GWE teen mentor Hannah of Santa Fe and Emily, 10, the kids held a rally, march and sit-in with excellent speeches by Lori, Emily, Suki, Asilah and Sierra.

Getting things done in NM

After again seeing Sierra Club folks in action during the recent legislative session, I need to say it is a very exciting time to be in the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club. As I read this issue of our newsletter, I want to thank all our volunteers, committee members, allies and staff for everything they have done the last year to earn these victories for our communities and our environment.

We should all acknowledge our fantastic Rio Grande Chapter legislative committee led by Melinda Smith and Patricia Cardona. Any committee hearing I went to was always well attended by Club members and our supporters. The endless showing up to testify, coordinate, communicate and purchase food and other supplies for special events really made the Sierra Club stand out as an engaged and effective group. My congratulations and thanks to each and every one of you that helped with the effort.

I also want to thank our amazing staff. Director Camilla Feibelman led the education efforts for the Energy Transition Act for all of us and for many others in New Mexico. She stayed calm, positive and focused during some really heated disagree-



David Coss
Rio Grande
Chapter chair

ments around the legislation. Brittany Fallon, in her first session as our legislative lobbyist, was always there, and I wondered if she ever slept. She could inform us almost immediately on the intricacies of committee referral timelines and current bill status. Her work was critical in our efforts. Mona Blaber kept the e-blasts and calls for action going on the numerous issues our Club was working on. Miya King-Flaherty and Derrick Toledo brought new voices and perspectives to the legislative session and greatly broadened the effectiveness of our work.

I should also acknowledge our allies, the organizations that were there with us and helped push so many good bills over the finish line. Organizations like Conservation Voters New Mexico, Environment New Mexico, Animal Protection New Mexico, 350.org, Amigos Bravos, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, Wild Earth Guardians, Defenders of Wildlife, the New Mexico

Wilderness Alliance and so many more New Mexicans have put their shoulder to the wheel to move us forward. Two new groups that I was excited to work with included the AFL-CIO Building Trades Council and Somos un Pueblo Unido. They helped craft an Energy Transition Act that has given New Mexico the best renewable energy portfolio standards in the country and the tools to lead to better jobs and outcomes for working folk in New Mexico as our state moves to renewable energy.

Finally, I want to thank Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, House Speaker Brian Egolf, Senate Majority Leader Peter Wirth and all the progressive legislators who got so much done for us. After eight years fighting assorted climate deniers, wildlife exploiters and other polluters, we have held our ground and we are now moving forward. I saw how hard our legislators and governor worked, and I thank them. There is a lot more we expect from our elected representatives, and I know Rio Grande Sierra Club members will continue to be working hard for social and environmental justice in our communities.

Call for nominations

Every year, Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter members elect several positions on our group and chapter executive committees.

Sierra Club chapters are run by volunteers, and our Rio Grande Chapter is divided into five regional groups: El Paso, Southern New Mexico, Central New Mexico, Northern New Mexico and Pajarito.

Those groups are led by elected executive committees. Group committee members serve two-year terms and chapter ExCom members serve three-year terms.

Three chapter Executive Committee and half of group Executive Committee positions are up this year. Candidates approved by the Nominating Committee will appear on a ballot in the October/November/December Sierran.

If you would like to be considered for nomination for group or chapter Executive Committee, or if you would like to nominate someone else for consideration, please contact Nominations Committee Chair Mary Hotvedt at maryhotvedt@aol.com. Please contact Mary with any questions about the nomination process.

El Paso students organize for wolves



Neysa Hardin

Throughout the month of February, Sierra Student Coalition students from Americas High School collected more than 800 letters to send to President Trump, asking him to maintain protection of the Rocky Mountain gray wolf and the Mexican gray wolf under the Endangered Species Act. Students also provided an informational booth during lunch periods to educate their classmates about this crucial issue.

El Paso Executive Committee

elpasosierraclub.org
Laurence Gibson, Chair,
[309-5419 laurenceagibson@gmail.com](mailto:309-5419_laurenceagibson@gmail.com)
Ann Falknor, Secretary,
[833-9162 afalknor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:833-9162_afalknor@sbcglobal.net)
Kathy Sunday, Treasurer,
[584-9301 sundayt@zianet.com](mailto:584-9301_sundayt@zianet.com)
Rick LoBello, [474-1456, ricklobello@gmail.com](mailto:474-1456_ricklobello@gmail.com)
Liz Walsh, [342-7630 ewalsh@utep.edu](mailto:342-7630_ewalsh@utep.edu)
John Walton, [539-5797, walton@utep.edu](mailto:539-5797_walton@utep.edu)
Neysa Hardin [227-5154, nrhardin@yahoo.com](mailto:227-5154_nrhardin@yahoo.com)

Celebrate five years of monument

By Patrick Nolan
Friends of OMDP

You are cordially invited to celebrate the five-year anniversary of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

On May 21, 2014, President Barack Obama signed an executive order establishing the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument. This was the culmination of the tireless work of our community and officials to protect our lands for generations to come. We raised our voices loud enough for the president of the United States to hear us, and that is a remarkable thing.

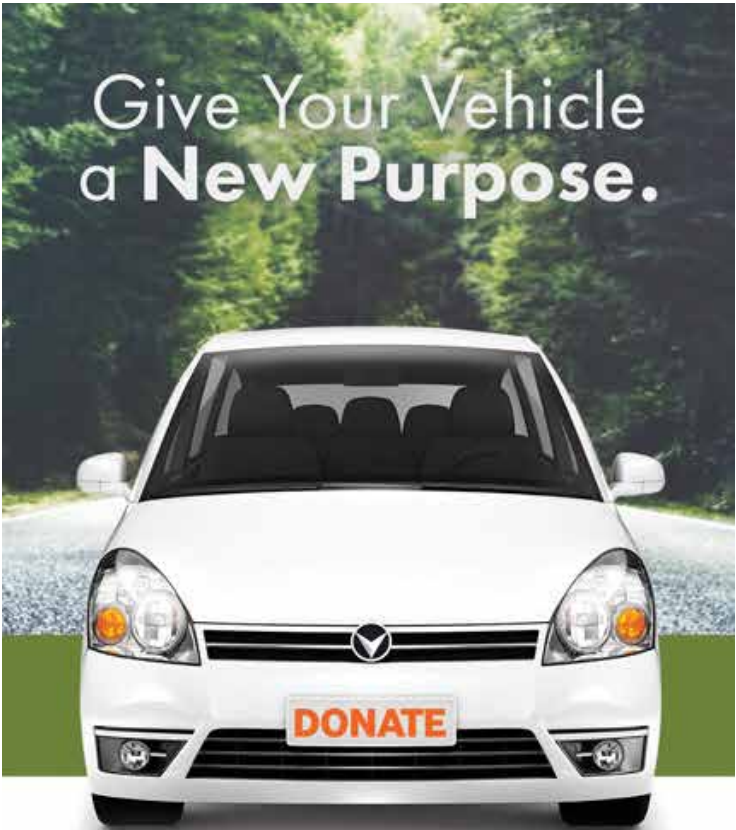
To mark the five-year anniversary, the Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks will be hosting a celebration on May 18 at the Las Cruces Convention Center to commemorate the

transformative impact the monument has had, and will continue to have, on our community. We are pleased to announce that Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham will be our keynote speaker.

In the past five years, we have seen visitation to the monument nearly double, bringing with it an increase in tourism to the Mesilla Valley.

The business community has benefitted from this new spotlight on our area, with everything from wine, food, and clothing being branded in relation to the monument. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the monument's designation has been one of the most consequential events to occur in our region both for our economy and community at large.

We hope you will be able to attend this celebration of a place we all cherish and love.



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Zero Waste recycling tour

By Carol Chamberland
Central NM Group Zero Waste
Action Team

Our group began in July 2018 with the idea of promoting a greener Albuquerque. We focused on recycling as an area where we might be able to have a positive impact, but quickly realized that we needed more information. We embarked on an educational focus by speaking with professionals and researching related topics. Our little group continued to grow.

Jill Holbert, associate director of Solid Waste Management Department, came to speak with us in October. She reported that Albuquerque has a 20% residential recycling rate. Its website still reflects the old plan and goals; the new administration hopes to review a proposed plan before adopting it. Their accomplishments to date:

- closed the city processing facility and moved comingled recycling to the Friedman facility, which has greater capacity
- initiated curbside recycling city-wide, doubling the volume to 38,000 tons per year
- offers pickup services to commercial businesses on a voluntary basis
- now focusing on outreach and education via social-media campaigns
- green waste is picked up twice annually
- Recyclothes collects and delivers used clothing to the APS homeless children's bank
- glass recycling has contamination issues and few markets
- there is currently no reporting of overall recycling volume in the city

In December, we took a tour of the city's recycling contractor, Friedman Recycling. After donning hardhats, neon vests and goggles, we watched the city trucks dumping recycled materials and workers loading it onto conveyor belts, where it is sorted automatically. When plastic bags wind up in the mix, workers do their best to pull them out as they whiz by, but inevitably, some bags get into the machinery and jam it to a standstill. The workflow stops while the machine gets unstuck and restarted.

When we asked about China no longer taking our recycled materials, we expected to hear about layoffs and the loss of jobs. On the contrary, our guide told us they hired more people to make a cleaner end product. They have no shortage of



Cecilia Chávez Beltrán

Zero Waste Team members toured the Albuquerque Friedman recycling facility to learn about its processes and how the team can help reduce waste citywide.

customers for their bales of sorted recyclables, but the increased labor costs result in virtually no profit margin for Friedman and the city. Our takeaway that day: Don't put plastic bags in your recycling bin. They can be recycled at most grocery stores. They are then made into more plastic bags. Better yet, stop using plastic bags altogether.

On a cold and windy day in January, we toured Soilutions, an organics-recycling facility in the South Valley. They process yard waste, horse manure and food waste into rich compost, which they sell for a profit. We strolled among pyramids of compostable materials in varying degrees of becoming soil. They offer pickup services for food-processing facilities so that their food waste becomes compost instead of going into the landfill and generating methane gas. Our Zero Waste Action Team envisions a time when composting becomes an official city policy and companies like Soilutions are an integral part of the process.

Kudos to the youngsters of the Global Warming Express, who appeared before Albuquerque's City Council, on a school night in January, to present their case against the proliferation of plastic bags. Their powerful testimony compelled four councilors to draft the Clean and Green Retail Ordinance, a ban on single-use plastic bags and other non-recyclable items such as Styrofoam takeout containers. The resolution went before

the Council's Finance Committee, where the youngsters appeared again to make their case. Zero Waste Albuquerque Team members were on hand to speak in support of the proposal. The ordinance is awaiting financial analysis of the issues. We will be on hand again to support the proposal April 15, when the City Council considers it.

Our research has yielded examples of cities doing things right or getting things terribly wrong. We've learned that plastics are a much bigger problem than we'd initially realized. We found other groups in town working along similar lines, and we hope to join forces with them.

We continue to educate ourselves with tours and speakers. This month we'll have a presentation by Ralph Wrons, who recently headed up the recycling program for Sandia Labs. Next month, we'll visit the city's Water Treatment facility. We hope to visit a glass-recycling plant as well as an electronics recycler in the near future.

Now we're getting into action. After much discussion, we've arrived at a list of concrete action items and designated people to work on each one. Our monthly meetings provide lively discussions and thoughtful solutions. Our group represents a wide range of ages and backgrounds. We welcome energetic volunteers with creative ideas for minimizing our impact on the planet. If you want to get involved, contact Carol Chamberland at pictografix@comcast.net.

ABQ Ride free on Earth Day

ABQ RIDE will be offering free bus rides on Earth Day, April 22.

The agency would like to encourage the public to consider commuter bus and other alternative forms of transportation such as trains, biking, walking and carpooling instead of single vehicle occupancy in order to reduce traffic congestion, air pollution and carbon emissions.

ABQ Ride says it hopes the event will familiarize commuters with the bus system. Go to www.cabq.gov/transit/routes-and-schedules for more information.

Central New Mexico Contacts

Chair: Fred Houdek, fjhoudek@gmail.com, 630.809.4234
Vice Chair: Ray Shortridge, rshortridge@gmail.com
Treasurer: David Ther, grelbik@gmail.com
Secretary: Heather Kline, heatherjkline78@gmail.com, 505.577.2798
Outings: Terry Owen, teowen@comcast.net, 505-301-4349
Carol Chamberland, pictografix@comcast.net
Mark Rudd, mark@markrudd.com
Peter Kelling, cloudsandwater@juno.com

Other Responsibilities

Political/Bosque: Richard Barish, richardbarish@gmail.com
Art showings: Peter Kelling
Volunteer coordinator: Keely Scheffler, kscheffler99@unm.edu, tabling. Patty Duncan, pgnm@comcast.com, Volunteer Wednesdays
Wildlife: Leslie Chavez, chavezles99@gmail.com
Military Outings: Terry Owen
UNM Sierra Student Coalition: Keely Scheffler, kscheffler99@unm.edu

Central NM Group needs you!

By Fred Houdek
Central New Mexico Group
chair

The Rio Grande Chapter's Central New Mexico Group is seeking a few volunteers to fill some important leadership positions.

If you are interested or want more detailed information on the responsibilities, contact Fred Houdek at (630) 809-4234 (text or call) or fjhoudek@gmail.com.

Membership/volunteer Chairperson: Reach out to new and old members and volunteers to educate them on the Central Group

activities and determine their points of interest.

Volunteer Coordinator: Register the Club for community events at which to table and rallies to attend. Schedule volunteers to table at events.

Set-up crew: We also need volunteers to set up and take down our tabling displays at community events.

All these positions will work closely with Keely Scheffler, our intern, and me, Fred. Join us — you'll have fun, meet new people, and make a difference for the planet!

FREE EVENT
Is this our future?

CLIMATE DISRUPTION: HERE! NOW!

FILMS & CONVERSATION

Saturday, April 13, 9:00 am - 5:30 pm
South Broadway Cultural Center (SBCC)
1025 Broadway Blvd. SE, Albuquerque
(Please bring water in a sustainable container)

Federal environmental policy

What the Dirty Water Rule means for New Mexico

By Rachel Conn
Amigos Bravos

On Feb. 14, the EPA released a draft rule that reduces the amount of waters that are protected under the Clean Water Act. The comment period on the draft rule is only 60 days and ends on April 15.

This Dirty Water Rule has serious impacts for New Mexico's waters.

Water is precious in New Mexico. This move by the Environmental Protection Agency reverses years of work to ensure that New Mexicans have the clean water they need for drinking, irrigating, and recreating.

The proposed 2019 Dirty Water Rule would negatively impact New Mexico more than any other state in the nation.

The proposed rule would remove Clean Water Act protections for ephemeral and maybe intermittent waters.

The New Mexico Environment Department Estimates that 96% of New Mexico's surface waters would be left unprotected.

Below is a list of some of the impacts:

- The *entire* Gila River and other interstate waters would lose Clean Water Act Protections. The rule proposes to get rid of interstate waters as a category protected under the rule, and because the Gila runs dry at the bottom stretch, it does not connect to a traditional navigable water.

- Wetlands with no apparent surface connection to other nearby water bodies would lose protection as well (this is well over half of New Mexico's wetlands).

- Important New Mexico tributary streams such as the

Santa Fe River, Gallinas and Rio Fernando provide water for our acequias, wildlife and recreation, but do not always flow year-round. These waters need protection from unregulated dumping and pollution!

- Twenty percent of the state's vertebrate wildlife depend upon waters that would no longer be protected.

- At least 280,000 people in New Mexico receive drinking water from sources that rely at least in part on these tributaries.

- New Mexico is a non-delegated state, meaning that EPA administers and issues pollutant-discharge permits in New Mexico. Unlike many other states we do not have a state program in place to control surface-water discharges into state waters.

The Clean Water Rule was developed in 2015 by EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to clarify what waters are protected by the Clean Water Act in response to confusion after Supreme Court rulings in 2001 and 2006. It was finalized after more than 200 days of public comment (as opposed to only 60 for the proposed Dirty Water Rule).

The Clean Water Rule restored protections that once existed for a variety of water bodies, including tributaries to traditionally navigable waters.

This rule ensures that the tributaries to these river systems are protected under the law.

The proposed Dirty Water Rule would replace the Clean Water Rule nationwide.



Charles Mann

U.S. Sens. Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall championed a law that protects habitats in Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument, above, and Río Grande del Norte National Monument as wilderness.

Historic legislation for our public lands

Nearly 100 years ago, a forester working in New Mexico named Aldo Leopold recognized the beauty and irreplaceable value of protecting the untrammeled landscapes that we have grown to treasure as wilderness. More than 50 years ago, New Mexico's Sen. Clinton Anderson led the effort to pass the Wilderness Act into law.

I am so proud to announce that we have successfully passed a landmark package of bipartisan legislation that I championed to build on that legacy. The public-lands package that passed Congress in February establishes 13 new wilderness areas in New Mexico on a scale we have not seen since the New Mexico Wilderness Act of 1980.

We advanced community-driven conservation visions for New Mexico's two newest national monuments: the Río Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. These two monuments protect places New Mexicans have long recognized as national treasures. We are now protecting the most rugged and unique habitats in each monument as wilderness. We also established the Ah-shi-shle-pah Wilderness and added to the Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness in northwestern New Mexico.

The public lands package also includes my bipartisan bill, the Every Kid Outdoors Act, which will allow every fourth-grader in America to visit our nation's parks, forests, wildlife refuges and public lands free of charge — and bring their families along with them. I am so excited that we are encouraging a new generation of youth to explore the rich natural and cultural history on display in our parks, forests and monuments.

We also permanently reauthorized what I believe



**Guest column
U.S. Sen.
Martin
Heinrich**

has been one of America's most successful conservation programs: the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In New Mexico, LWCF has used a portion of the revenues from offshore oil and gas drilling to protect iconic landscapes like the Valles Caldera, Ute Mountain, and Valle de Oro, without costing taxpayers a single dime. It has also provided for community projects like baseball and soccer fields, playgrounds, and picnic areas. Now we will no longer need to worry year after year about renewing this clearly successful program.

In a state that proudly calls itself the Land of Enchantment, we all know how much our public lands mean to us. These are the places where generations of families have gone to explore our natural wonders and learn about our rich history and culture. They also fuel a thriving outdoor recreation economy that supports nearly 100,000 jobs in our state. That's why this legislation is so important.

In a frustrating political time in Washington, when it can be difficult to find any areas of agreement, I am pleased that we have found a way forward on these measures. And I am so thankful to all the New Mexicans who played a role in getting these conservation victories over the finish line. I have no doubt that these measures will go a long way toward ensuring that the outdoor places we all treasure will be protected for future generations of Americans to enjoy.

Udall will leave legacy of conservation

By Camilla Feibelman

After 10 years in the Senate, Tom Udall announced his retirement last month. Sen. Udall has been a true defender of public lands and a champion for native people.

Sen. Udall took the lead in creating and defending Obama-era monuments, including Organ Mountains Desert Peaks and Río Grande del Norte, in addition to Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah.

He also filed federal legislation to

withdraw lease availability near Chaco Culture National Historical Park, a sacred site for Navajo and Pueblo nations.

Sen. Udall has stood in strong defense of common-sense methane standards and was instrumental in the fight to stop an attempt to nullify the BLM Methane Rule in 2017.



As ranking member of the Interior, EPA and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, he has defended key programs, fending off anti-environmental riders and deep budget cuts to environmental programs.

He is one of the original cosponsors of the Arctic Wilderness Bill and helped lead the fight against including language in the Senate budget bill to allow drilling in the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge. The coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge is one of America's last wild places and

sacred to the Gwich'in, Alaska Natives who live adjacent to the area.

Sen. Udall was a key voice in opposing the nomination of Scott Pruitt for EPA administrator, and has continued to lead on the response to the scandals surrounding Pruitt during his tenure.

Sen. Udall was also very proactive in opposing ransoming the lives of DACA recipients for President Trump's \$25 billion border wall and continues to be an outspoken advocate for Dreamers and border communities.

2019 New Mexico Legislative Session

Big win for decency, ethics, coyotes

Killing contests outlawed, but legislation to end trapping on public lands stalls in House

By Mary Katherine Ray
Chapter Wildlife chair

What happened to all the wildlife bills in the 2019 New Mexico legislative session? Before we begin, it is worth reflecting that of the 1,370 bills introduced, only 309 actually passed both chambers to go to the governor for her signature — a rate of 22.6%.

No matter who is in charge, passing a bill is still not easy. Most bills didn't make it, and this was true of the wildlife bills as well.

House Bill 366, Roxy's Law, sponsored by Reps. Matthew McQueen, Christine Chandler and Roberto Gonzales, banning traps and poisons from New Mexico public lands, regrettably did not pass. But it did make significant progress! For the first time ever, it passed two House committees, reaching the House floor. So many people came to testify in support, a dream team of outdoor and wildlife enthusiasts, wildlife biologists, veterinarians, artists, canine search-and-rescue teams, hunters, farmers and professionals of many backgrounds. Many more made phone calls and sent emails. Every single action taken by every person who participated helped to get the bill as far as it did! For that, thank you!

Once it got to the full House, advocates worked to secure positions from New Mexico's 70 state representatives but could not find support from enough lawmakers for the bill to pass.

We are working to gain support of those who are hesitant. And because of the progress made this year, we know which legislators and House districts on which to concentrate for the next go-round. Because the bill has never gotten out of committee, most representatives have never had a chance to even think about the issue of trapping. We've made sure it's now on their radar!

The fight to stop reckless, cruel, commercialized, recreational trapping on New Mexico's public lands is feeling very similar to the effort to end cockfighting, which took 17 years. We are now seven years into the trapping bill and hope it won't take that long! Once



Photos by J E Newman

New Mexicans responded in record numbers to support a ban on coyote-killing contests. Your activism mattered: Gov. Lujan Grisham signed the ban into law in April.

Below: New Mexicans jammed Roundhouse committee hearings to speak out against trapping, but while the bill progressed further than previous years, it never got a vote on the House floor.

the needle starts moving (and it has now, thanks to all of our efforts including yours), it's hard to stop.

Senate Bill 76, banning coyote-killing contests, thrillingly and gratifyingly did pass! Sponsored by Sens. Mark Moores and Jeff Steinborn, it is one of the 281 bills that Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has signed into law. Coyotes, as the victims of both traps and killing contests, occupied a great deal of the discussion about both bills, revealing how much misinformation about our native and charismatic song dog is believed by some, including legislators. Scientific evidence shows us that coyotes are not controlled in any beneficial way by random mass killing. This fact will need to be repeated often in the next couple of years!

The killing-contest legislation, a simple two-page bill that prohibits organizing or participating in coyote-killing contests anywhere in New Mexico, was also a multi-year effort. It had previously passed both houses, but not in the same year. Nevertheless, passage was still hard-won. The hearings went on late into the day, and so many of you sat through them to make this happen. Given the odds against passing any bill, we are enormously proud and heartened that this one did get through. We will no longer have to suffer the terrible images of stacks of dead coyote carcasses often dumped in the desert after the contest is over. Coyotes won't have to suffer such senseless and wanton violence taking their lives for momentary entertainment or



so a killer can win a prize.

SB 228, the Wildlife Corridors Act, sponsored by Sen. Mimi Stewart, also passed both chambers and has been signed by the Governor. It directs New Mexico Game and Fish and the New Mexico Department of Transportation to examine where roadways and wildlife travel corridors overlap and to develop an action plan to mitigate obstructions to wildlife passage.

SB 383, allowing the state Game Commission to consider fair-chase principles for hunting when setting policy, was sponsored by Sen. Pete Campos and is the third and final wildlife bill that passed the legislature and has been signed by the governor.

HB 263 would reform the Game Commission. This bill, sponsored by Rep. Matthew McQueen, defined the qualifications for people who serve

on the commission to make it more diverse and representative of the New Mexico public. It also gave some of the appointments of the seven-member board to the Legislature in order to diffuse the political nature of this body. The bill passed the House and Senate Conservation Committee, but was voted down in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Even so, Gov. Lujan Grisham, who has the authority to appoint all seven members, has asked the current Game Commission — appointed by her predecessor — to resign.

She will be appointing a new commission soon, and hopefully even without new legislation they make decisions using scientific integrity and the values held by most New Mexicans, not just trophy hunters and profiteers.

SB 417, sponsored by

Sen. Jeff Steinborn, would have provided legal protection to all wildlife species in NM not just the select few game species — most with antlers and hooves — covered in statute now. This is the second try for this bill, but it did not get past its first Senate committee. SB 203, also sponsored by Sen. Steinborn, met the same fate. This measure would have renamed the Department of Game and Fish to the Department of Wildlife. It's worth noting that state senators were not elected last fall. The green wave hasn't reached this body yet, but it may in 2020, which is when all senate seats will be up for election.

SB 38, the Wildlife Trafficking Act, sponsored by Sen. Mimi Stewart and Rep. Gail Chasey, would prohibit buying or selling animal parts from threatened and endangered species inside our state. This bill passed the entire Legislature two years ago with almost no objection, only to be pocket-vetoed by Gov. Susana Martinez.

This year, it passed the Senate and House committees, but when it reached the House Floor, it was stopped by a Republican filibuster the last day of the session in a move that was entirely politically motivated to stymie progress.

It can be frustrating that we have to wait another two years to try again on bills that didn't pass. But try we will! Before then, we will have another election.

We would never have passed the coyote-contest ban without all the hard work we did to elect environmental champions.

Between now and 2020, talk with your legislators and with candidates. Tell them wildlife is important to you and that you care about responsibly, compassionately and ethically managing the many creatures with whom we are so fortunate to share our state. You might also express thanks to sponsors mentioned above (visit <http://www.nmlegis.gov> for their contact information) and thank Gov. Lujan Grisham for signing the wildlife bills that made it to her desk. (www.governor.state.nm.us/contact-the-governor)

The legislature is a complicated and sometimes perplexing institution. But we made progress for wildlife this session, and we vow to keep making it!

Landmark energy law puts NM first

By Mona Blaber

Communications director

What a difference a year and an election make. When Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the Energy Transition Act on March 22, New Mexico emerged from eight years of backward-looking energy policy to commit to 100% carbon-free electricity and the nation's strongest renewable-energy law.

With coal the worst climate offender among energy sources, it was a big victory two years ago when PNM announced it was no longer economical to run the coal-fired San Juan Generating Station power plant after contracts expire in 2022.

But the closure would mean a community that has sacrificed so much for energy extraction would lose the source of 425 jobs and millions in taxes.

Then there's the problem of "stranded" debt — the money PNM has already spent on the plant that customers have been paying back (plus a rate of return). Who would pay for the debt left over when the plant closes?

A policy tool called securitization emerged: The state would allow PNM to sell low-interest bonds to recover the remaining debt at a much lower rate than customers are currently paying (2-3% compared to 10%). PNM gets its principal back but no longer receives the profits on it; customers get lower rates in line with the best-case scenario from a Public Regulation Commission decision, and the savings are used to create funds for community reinvestment and worker compensation, reducing the negative impacts of plant closure.

After PNM last year tried to float a securitization bill that mostly benefited PNM, environmental, labor and community groups negotiated transformational progress to create the Energy Transition Act, an equitable transition to 100% carbon-free energy. With support from the governor and a huge and diverse coalition, including labor unions AFSCME and Building Trades Council and community and social-justice groups such as Somos Un Pueblo Unido, Prosperity Works, Native American Voters Alliance and New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light, the bill passed the Legislature in March and is now the law of the land.

Here's what the ETA does:

- Requires our state's investor-owned utilities (PNM, El Paso Electric and Southwestern Public Service) to provide



Top: Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham served coffee before a Senate committee hearing on the Energy Transition Act to show her support. Above: Rio Grande Chapter chair David Coss testifies for the clean-energy legislation at a packed committee hearing. Thousands of New Mexicans contacted legislators to urge passage.

50% renewable electricity by 2030; 80% renewables by 2040; and 100% carbon-free electricity by 2045. Rural electric co-ops get five years longer to comply.

- Stops the pollution from coal-fired San Juan Generating Station for good.

- Directs \$20 million to San Juan County economic development and requires 450 megawatts of replacement power in the same school district as the San Juan plant to replace the community's lost property-tax base.

- Provides another \$20 million in severance payments and job training for San Juan plant and mine workers.

- Creates an apprenticeship program for all new energy development, prioritizing diversity and representation of frontline communities.

- Lowers rates. The costs that are refinanced in the bonds are costs PNM customers are already paying and would continue to pay until 2053 if San Juan didn't close. Under any scenario of San

Juan closure, fuel costs and other plant expenses will also go down considerably.

- Makes it much more likely PNM will replace San Juan's coal power with renewable energy rather than natural gas.

- Closes massive loopholes in the current Renewable Energy Act. Those loopholes allow big users to pay less for renewables than residential customers and allowed PNM, for example, to provide only about 12% renewable energy, despite the current law requiring 15%.

Sponsors, including Sens. Jacob Candelaria and Mimi Stewart and Rep. Nate Small, deserve thanks for shepherding this landmark bill and acting on community input. This is rare legislation that is a win-win-win-win for our children's health and safety, for ratepayers, for workers, and for the Four Corners community. Thanks for being part of a big moment of hope for New Mexico.

ETA coalition

An array of organizations worked to pass and improve the Energy Transition Act. The Building Trades Council achieved increased funding for worker severance and training and for increased apprenticeship opportunities in all new energy projects. Indigenous leaders, concerned that the impact of fossil fuels on frontline communities had not been fully addressed, worked with bill sponsors to add language on meaningful tribal consultation and funding to address these issues. Environmentalists won unprecedented clean-energy mandates.

A few quotes from supporters:

"Thanks to Rep. Angelica Rubio, the legislature also approved \$200,000 for a workforce development study to identify barriers and opportunities for underrepresented workers in the industry. Somos members in south-eastern New Mexico have worked hard to ensure that our familias are not left behind in the emerging green economy."

— **Marcela Díaz,**

Somos Un Pueblo Unido

"For New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light, work on the Energy Transition Act was a collaborative opportunity to address climate-change public policy in a way that will have many positive ripple effects.

Care of our Sacred Creation, care of our communities and our neighbors who are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and just transition for workers and communities must be at the core of our energy policies as we move forward. No one can be left behind."

— **Sister Joan Brown,**

N.M. Interfaith Power and Light

"San Juan Citizens Alliance (SJCA) was able to contribute to the energy transition funding piece (\$30 million for clean up and decommissioning, and \$40 million for economic diversification) for the Four Corners to be routed through state workforce agencies and New Mexico Environment Department. The bill also requires replacement power in NW New Mexico in the school district impacted by closure.

We are committed to the ETA implementation and look forward to continued work with our partners on reducing climate-change-inducing pollutants and moving to sustainable energy sources."

— **Mike Eisenfeld,**

San Juan Citizens Alliance

Building foundation for victory from grassroots

By Camilla Feibelman

The Sierra Club's Grassroots Lobby Program has steadily grown to help our members, partners and supporters become highly effective advocates for environmental legislation at the Roundhouse.

This year, we worked for several months with a large coalition of organizations and people to plan the Clean Energy Conference in Santa Fe at the beginning of the legislative session. More than 400 people

attended, ready to learn about legislation, give feedback to legislators and practice talking about complex issues. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham spoke. Twelve legislators attended and workshopped their legislation with participants.

The next day, dozens of participants attended the Clean Energy Lobby Day at the Roundhouse. In addition to speaking to legislators about key bills, grassroots lobbyists "Sounded the Alarm" on

climate change. Participants set their alarms to ring at 12:12 p.m. The Rotunda filled with sound as 60 Global Warming Express kids dropped "climate ribbons" from the gallery above. The ribbons had been gathered by 350NM over the years from people who'd written on each about what they love and hope never to lose to climate chaos.

That same morning, the governor signed one of the strongest climate executive orders in the United States

since Donald Trump took office. It sets a target of 45% greenhouse-gas reduction from 2005 levels by 2030 and orders a state methane rule, new building codes, increased renewable portfolio standard, and reducing auto emissions.

This year's Lands, Water and Wildlife Day featured a panel headlined by Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard and others who primed grassroots lobbyists on our bills. The noon

event featured a workshop on freeing your pet from wildlife traps. Partner lobby days, from Witness for the People to Uranium Workers Day to Environmental Justice Day, all helped bring a huge array of critical issues to light for legislators.

Your Roundhouse presence and calling and writing to legislators make a real difference to passing game-changing legislation. We hope you'll continue to participate.

Legislative Session in Review

By Brittany Fallon
Rio Grande Chapter
lobbyist

Imagine a 100% carbon-free future, where New Mexican homes are powered largely by renewables, with reduced energy demand due to efficiency measures, and where increased access to charging stations means we can drive electric vehicles all over the state. The 60-day 2019 New Mexico legislative session paves the way to realizing that vision, and I want to congratulate each of you on our historic climate wins. Of 1,370 bills introduced, only 281 were signed into law this year, and we had some HUGE wins among them!

New Mexico is the third state in the nation to pass 100% carbon-free legislation, with perhaps the strongest mandate of the three, and I hope you all can truly feel how significant that is. I thank you, wholeheartedly, for every call and e-mail on every bill. You have built one of the most powerful grassroots forces in New Mexico.

Below, I've included our wins and future wins – just because something didn't pass this year doesn't mean it never will. It can take several years to pass game-changing legislation, as was the case for many of the bills passed this year. Sometimes legislation needs time to mature, both in content and in the way it might dovetail with current law (or even with other bills going through the process at the same time). For example, some legislation didn't pass but was heard in committee and amended in ways that make it stronger for the future. And some complicated legislation requires a multiyear process to engage all stakeholders – especially this year, where agencies were getting new cabinet secretaries and new staff.

Additionally, legislators need processing time for new ideas. Your activism causes the wheels of change to turn. That's why the truly important work becomes following up and building relationships with your legislators – and, in cases where minds cannot be changed, why elections are key.

So what's next? The interim legislative session starts in late summer, and I am looking ahead at legislation we want to support again — for example, community solar — and new legislation. Do you have ideas for ways to improve our state law? Contact me at brittany.fallon@sierraclub.org.

Celebrate!

Energy Transition Act (SB489): Forging a path for the closure of the San Juan coal plant, creating a safety net for coal workers and the impacted community and requiring 100% carbon-free electricity by 2045 – making New Mexico



Photos by David McGahey

Above: At the March 14 Climate Strike, students converged on the New Mexico Roundhouse and held a sit-in to urge bold climate action.

one of the first states to do so, along with Hawaii and California. This is momentous legislation that sets a benchmark for our neighboring states and paves the way to a liveable planet for future generations.

Energy Efficiency Act (HB291, SB136): Removes disincentives for utilities to invest in energy efficiency, the cheapest and most effective way to reduce carbon pollution. It's a wonky issue but a very big deal for greenhouse emissions from electricity. The law requires utilities to carry out programs that benefit ratepayers like home energy audits, and it increases utilities' requirements for saving energy.

Electric-vehicle Infrastructure (HB521): This clears the way for companies to install EV-charging stations across New Mexico and requires investor-owned utilities to develop transportation electrification plans, increasing access to EV-charging infrastructure in the state, a critical step in accelerating adoption of electric vehicles. The tax credit for buying EVs did not pass, but getting the infrastructure in place makes the path a lot smoother for that legislation.

Oil Conservation Division Fees (SB553): This establishes rules to create a new schedule of administrative filing fees, application fees, and permit fees, helping to increase badly needed funding to the Oil Conservation Division, which regulates oil and gas drilling in New Mexico.

Produced Water and Oil Conservation Division fines (HB546/SB186): HB546 pertained to liability and jurisdiction for produced water. We were still evaluating the implications of this bill when, in a surprise late-session move, Senate Judiciary added in language from SB186, a bill we had strongly supported which died in committee. We strongly supported SB186 because it restores the Oil Conservation

Division's authority to penalize oil and gas violations. Now, for the first time in a decade, the Oil Conservation Division will be able to assess penalties. We'll work on raising the fine limits in the next session.

Ending coyote-killing contests in New Mexico (SB76): More than 1,000 of you wrote to Gov. Lujan Grisham to ask her to outlaw coyote-killing contests. Your years of activism are what finally got this bill over the finish line. **See Mary Katherine Ray's article on Page 7** to read more about this and all wildlife legislation this year.

Water Data (HB651): Improves water-data integration, transparency, and tools for state water planning. Allows state agencies to collaborate on water data.

Outdoor Recreation (SB462): Creates an Office of Outdoor Recreation and Outdoor Equity Fund, as well as infrastructure and plans for getting all New Mexico kids outside. A huge deal for the future of New Mexico tourism and for equity in outdoor recreation.

Healthy Soil Act (HB204): Promotes soil-health stewardship by creating a program to provide ongoing trainings and facilitate workshops, grants, and educating the public about the importance of soil health stewardship.

Solar Energy Improvement assessments (HB440): Improves the framework for counties and cities to work together in order to pay the upfront costs of for solar for individuals, which is then paid back through property tax assessments.

Not yet:

A few of the following bills had a good chance to become law this year, so their loss is disappointing, but our proactive new governor and progressive freshman legislators produced a massive volume of

bills, and there just isn't time to pass them all in 60 days. Other bills were blocked by intransigent legislators, a reminder that state senators weren't up for election in 2018, but they will be in 2020 ...

Study energy-extraction impact on tribal people (House Memorial 73): This memorial requested a study of the economic, health, environmental and social costs of extractive and fossil fuel impacts to indigenous communities. The study proposed in the memorial can still go forward if we and partners can find funding for it.

Climate Resilience for New Mexico (HB28), requiring state agencies to make sustainability, energy-efficiency and climate-resiliency plans, died in the Senate Finance Committee, but sponsor Rep. Melanie Stansbury included a salary for a chief sustainability officer in the final budget, implementing key aspects of this bill.

Solar Tax Credits (SB518): Restoring expired tax credits for residents and businesses who install solar, this bill sailed through committees only to stall out on the last day on the House floor due to Republican filibustering. Many positive bills died on the House calendar in the final day or so because of this spiteful tactic.

Competitive procurement (SB456): SB456, which would require utilities to issue requests for proposals on all new energy sources to ensure they are providing the lowest-cost solutions for new sources of electricity, was tabled by the Senate Corporations Committee. The Public Regulation Commission has an open inquiry on how to require such competitive procurement of utilities.

Community Solar (HB210): This legislation, which Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero has sponsored for several years, would make solar accessible and affordable to more New Mexicans by clearing the way

for local entities to build and sell power from community solar gardens. That allows people who rent or can't install solar rooftops to still buy into solar power. This bill died after delayed hearings and weakening amendments that gave utilities more power to crowd out competition by building their own solar gardens. It will be a top priority in the next session.

Wildlife Trafficking (SB38): Was withdrawn from near-passage on the last day when it became clear House Republicans would have filibustered all progress with only a few hours left to hear many important bills.

Raising oil and gas royalties (SB500, HB398): This legislation would bring New Mexico oil and gas royalty rates from extraction on state lands in line with neighboring states. The House version died, despite strong support by Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard, and the Senate version passed Senate Conservation but was never scheduled in Senate Corporations. This is the first year for this legislation, and Garcia Richard's support gives it a better chance next year.

Environmental Review Act (HB206): Would have required a review process before permitting major projects or going through rulemaking, so state agencies would need to involve and inform the public, conduct environmental analysis, and consider possible alternatives to their proposals before making a decision.

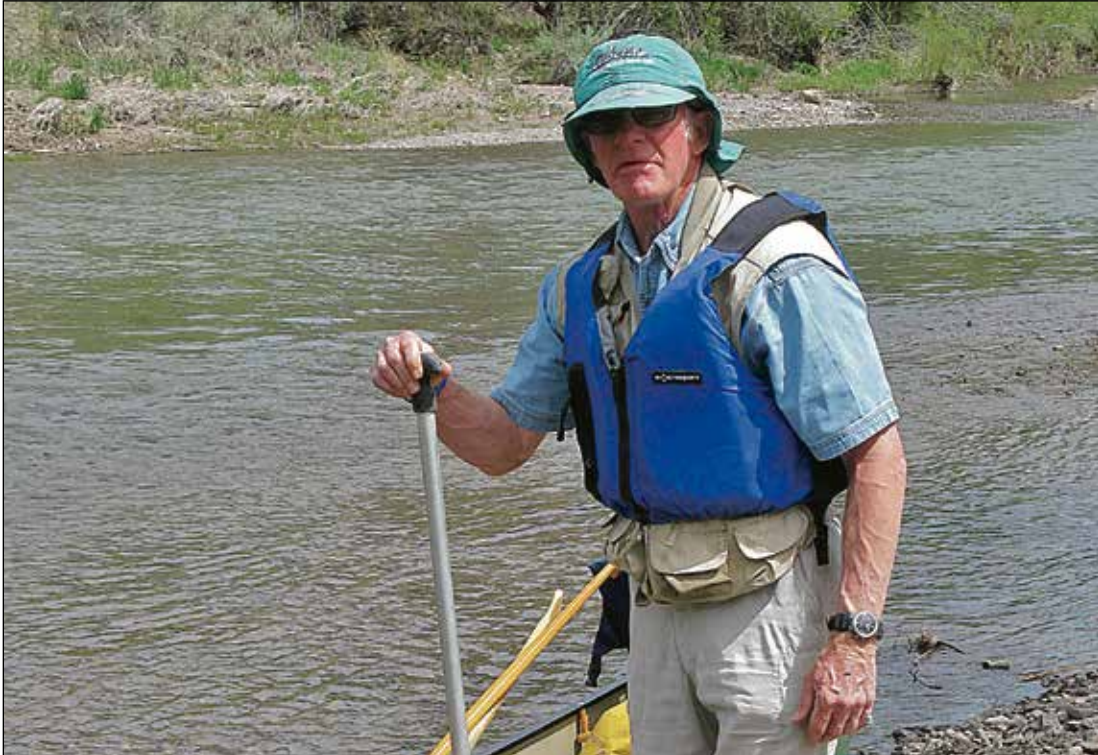
Fracking moratorium (SB459): Would have stopped fracking for four years while state agencies studied the impact of fracking on public health and state waters and land. Th was heard in Senate Conservation Committee but never voted on.

HB220, amending the New Mexico Water Quality Act to clarify that groundwater-quality standards must be met throughout the aquifer, therefore protecting all groundwater in the state. It would have effectively overturned provisions in the Martinez administration's Copper Rule that gave mining companies a license to pollute groundwater.

HB255, amending the New Mexico Mining Act to phase out the use of risky corporate guarantees from affiliated companies (such as parent corporations) as financial assurance to ensure proper closure and reclamation of hard-rock mines.

There isn't room to list all the important environmental legislation that passed or will pass in the future. Persistence, preparation and strategy in the long term are key. We can and must use the power we have as constituents and voters to change our world.

M.H. “Dutch” Salmon March 30, 1945-March 10, 2019



Cherie Salmon

Dutch Salmon, who died in March at 73, was a co-founder of the Gila Conservation Coalition as well as an author, fisherman and homesteader.

Conservationist, Gila River champion

**Allyson Siwik
Gila Conservation
Coalition**

The conservation community lost one of its long-time heroes in March with the passing of M.H. “Dutch” Salmon at 73 after a brief illness.

Dutch’s storied career spanned more than 35 years in the Southwest. His professional and personal pursuits were many: author, publisher, hunter, fisherman, homesteader, and conservationist.

Dutch’s name is synonymous with the Gila Conservation Coalition, the organization he co-founded and chaired for more than 35 years to protect the free flow of the Gila and San Francisco rivers and the wilderness characteristics of the Gila and Aldo Leopold

Wilderness areas.

Dutch and his fellow advocates were successful in defeating the Hooker and Conner dams and Mangas diversion in the 1980s and 1990s, closed the San Francisco River to motorized-vehicle use, and also kept the East Fork of the Gila River closed to motorized vehicles. Since 2001, he had been a leader in the fight against the current Gila diversion threat under the Arizona Water Settlements Act.

His books and innumerable magazine and newspaper articles have been an inspiration to many far and wide who have shared in his love for New Mexico’s last free-flowing river and our state’s special natural places. People have lived vicariously through his writings of his many adventures, including the book *Gila Descending* about his epic

1983 trip down the Gila River from the headwaters at Bead Spring to Safford, Ariz., with his dog and his cat.

Dedicating his life to conservation and environmental protection, Dutch also served on the boards of the Quivira Coalition, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, New Mexico Wilderness Coalition, Water Dialogue and Gila Resources Information Project. He was also a member of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and the New Mexico Game Commission.

Dutch’s steadfast commitment to the protection of the Gila River and his unending love for our wild river and wild places have been an inspiration to all of us. He will be remembered always for his tireless work to protect and conserve New Mexico’s

Governor vetoes diversion funds

By Allyson Siwik

On April 5, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham took a big step toward protecting the wild Gila River when she vetoed \$1.698 million in funding requested by the Interstate Stream Commission for diversion planning and design.

A hearty thank-you to the governor for taking this major step forward to fulfill her pledge to end work on the Gila River diversion project.

In her plan for managing the state’s water, released last year,

the governor stated she will “end work on the Gila River Diversion Project” given that “there is little to show for the millions of dollars spent on staff, lawyers and studies” with only one year left to secure approval of the project. She supported use of the Arizona Water Settlements Act funds for conservation projects.

We encourage Gov. Lujan Grisham to take the additional steps to finally end work on this wasteful diversion project and instead fund community water projects to ensure a secure water supply for everyone in south-west New Mexico.

Club sues to stop Southern NM wall

**By Kurt Anderson
Southern NM Group**

A brief update on issues the Southern New Mexico is involved in:

The Wall: A Department of Homeland Security document revealed in late March requests for billions of dollars in military funds to build new border walls as part of the Trump Administration’s emergency declaration at the border. According to the document, 213 miles of new and replacement walls, floodlights and surveillance equipment are planned for the “El Paso sector” in New Mexico (Luna, Hidalgo, and Doña Ana counties).

Southern New Mexico Sierra Club members are acting as declarants in the Club’s legal case against Trump’s emergency declaration.

Monuments: The Sierra Club co-sponsored the March 21 celebration of the recently passed federal wilderness designations in the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks Monument (see Page 6) that was held at La Cueva picnic area. Sen. Tom Udall was the

Southern NM Group contacts

Chair and Outings:
Howie Dash, howiedash@aol.com, 575-652-7550
Treasurer: Cheryll Blevins, spotblev@earthlink.net, 575-524-4861
Secretary and Wildlife:
Mary Katherine Ray, mkrscrim@gmail.com, 575-772-5655,
Political: Kurt Anderson, amanda@wildmesquite.org, kurt@nmsu.edu, 575-646-1032
Mary Hotvedt: maryhotvedt@aol.com
Nate Cote: nathan-cote46@gmail.com

guest of honor and spoke about the Act.

Lincoln National Forest: The 45-day notice/comment period for the South Sacramento Restoration Draft Environmental Impact Statement was initiated March 15. The project website is www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51146

Sierra Club awaits legal ruling on Holtec nuke site

**By Patricia Cardona
Nuclear-Waste Team**

The Rio Grande Chapter is engaged in many activities regarding nuclear energy and storage:

— We are waiting for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s Panel of Judges to determine which of the 89 legal issues raised by our attorney, Wally Taylor, will be considered as part of the licensing of the consolidated storage site proposed by Holtec in the Carlsbad/Hobbs area. A decision is expected in May.

— A second set of public meetings on the content of the draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be held in the fall in Roswell, Hobbs, Carlsbad, Albuquerque, and Gallup.

— Reactor communities in states like California and New York are creating the Citizen Advisory process for decommissioning plants. The utilities and the citizen advisory boards are lobbying their elected officials to remove their waste from their communities.

— In April and May, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will be writing energy and water appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2020. The Trump administration budget includes \$9.9 million to support consolidated interim storage and \$106 million for the proposed Yucca Mountain repository in Nevada. There are only two sites being considered for interim storage licensing: the New Mexico site (Holtec) and

a Texas site about 40 miles from the New Mexico site. For several years, the Senate has supported funding for interim storage and the House has not, so no funding has been provided. However, more House members, especially from California, are now supporting funding for consolidated storage.

It is important that New Mexico’s congresspeople, especially Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, because of his leadership position, advocate for no funding for consolidated storage. Sen. Tom Udall is on the Appropriations Committee. Please ask them to continue to oppose funding.

Existing law does not allow the Department of Energy to support interim storage (one of the legal objec-

tions raised by Sierra Club to the Holtec and WCS licenses) until a permanent storage site is secured.

The Sierra Club Nuclear Waste Task Force is vigilant about these issues. However, we need our members’ economic support for staff, expenses, and litigation costs to stop high-level radioactive waste from all the nation’s nuclear reactors from being imported into New Mexico. Our state has done its fair share in carrying the country’s radiation burden with the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, the waste stored at Los Alamos, and Trinity-test downwinders. Enough is Enough. Basta ya. Go to bit.ly/nonukedump to donate. Thank you!



Nathalie Eddy/Earthworks

New Mexico Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard looks through an infrared camera to view leaks of methane and volatile organic compounds from oil and gas operations in southern New Mexico.

PNM may join energy market

By Chuck Noble
Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy

On Aug. 22, PNM filed a request with the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission asking for approval to make expenditures necessary for it to join the Energy Imbalance Market (EIM).

The Energy Imbalance Market is a real-time energy-trading market that allows participating utilities to sell excess energy into a broad market, or to purchase from that market as needed at market prices. Participation in it will allow PNM, and all the utilities who participate, to integrate higher levels of renewable generation on their systems, because they will be able to readily sell excess wind or solar generation rather than curtail it. They will also be able to purchase energy when it is cheaper than their own production costs. As a result utilities will be able to integrate higher percentages of renewable, sustainable generation in their resource portfolios, reducing greenhouse-gas emissions throughout the West. Eight western utilities are members of the market, and five more are going through the steps necessary to join.

PNM expects a net benefit of \$15.1 million over the first five years of participation, which would benefit customers. The Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, Western Grid Group, Natural Resources Defense Council, Union of Concerned Scientists, Western Resource Advocates and Interwest Energy Alliance supported PNM joining the market.

In its request, PNM asked for a finding from the PRC that it is reasonable to join the EIM and expend necessary funds to do so. Unfortunately, though the Commission approved PNM's request to set up a regulatory asset for future cost recovery, the commission's order did not state that it would be reasonable for PNM to make the necessary expenditures to join the EIM. As a result, PNM could not be assured of cost recovery and is expected to ask the commission to reconsider its decision. Without some indication that it will be able to recover its costs, PNM may be unwilling to make the investment.

The actions of public utilities are often adverse to our goals of increasing clean energy and reducing emissions from fossil fuel. However, when a utility acts consistently with our environmental goals, we believe it is important to support that effort, just as we oppose efforts that are adverse to our goals. In this case, we support a finding by the commission that it is reasonable for PNM to make the necessary expenditures to join the EIM.

Up close and sickening

By Nathalie Eddy
Earthworks NM Field Advocate

Carlsbad, NM — In late March, New Mexico Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard used optical gas imaging to see normally invisible air pollution from oil and gas operations in New Mexico's Permian Basin with Earthworks.

Our latest fieldwork in the Permian was another round of intense and shocking pollution from all types of oil and gas sites — from brand-new to ancient facilities, from major operators to small independents, from public (both federal and state) and private lands.

Our group visited 12 sites on state lands. Garcia Richard was joined by Assistant Commissioner of Mineral Resources Jordan Kessler and Assistant Commissioner of Surface Resources Howard Gross.

Our group experienced sore throats, nausea and headaches as they recorded video evidence of air pollution. Optical gas imaging videos from sites operated by Devon Energy, Concho Resources and Oxy USA and images of the group in the field are available for download at earthworks.org.

This was my fifth time in the New Mexico Permian working with an Earthworks ITC-certified thermographer to expose the all-too-common

Our tour with Commissioner Garcia Richard was particularly alarming in terms of the emissions and the number of sites where we all smelled strong, gassy odors and often experienced headaches and nausea.

emissions of health-harming volatile organic compounds and climate pollutants like methane from the latest oil and gas boom.

I can't believe the growth in oil and gas drilling I witnessed in just the last 12 months. More new sites are getting drilled near homes and farms just south of Carlsbad, and more of our public lands are being drilled farther south of Carlsbad (just to the east of the Caverns).

Following our day in the field with Commissioner Garcia Richard, we returned to sites south of Carlsbad on federal BLM lands where new drilling recently took off. Our thermographer, Sharon, and I found unlit flares, open and/or leaking thief hatches, and leaks at most sites.

Our tour with Commissioner Garcia Richard was particularly alarming in terms of the emissions and the

number of sites where we all smelled strong, gassy odors and often experienced headaches and nausea.

"We have viewed methane emissions as a lost revenue stream for our school children, but they also pose significant public health and safety issues for our communities," Commissioner Garcia Richard said. "We've minimized the environmental impacts for far too long and have missed repeated opportunities to pass meaningful regulation to stop methane leaks and waste. With the impacts of climate change knocking on our door, now is the time to act. My office is committed to working with industry to find proactive solutions while fighting to guarantee that real actions are taken to solve this crisis."

Earthworks uses the same FLIR GF320 camera that regulators and oil and gas operators use to find and document pollution at wells and facilities. Our thermographers have taken industry-standard training to interpret the images. The camera detects 20 climate- and health-harming pollutants associated with oil and gas, including methane, a climate pollutant 86 times more powerful than carbon dioxide, and other volatile organic compounds like benzene, a known carcinogen.

A full list of our findings are available on YouTube at bit.ly/CEP-NM.

For more information, please contact me at neddy@earthworks.org.

Navajo Nation drops bid to buy coal plant and mine

By Diné CARE, Tó Nizhóní Ání and Black Mesa Water Coalition

On March 21, the Naa'bik'iyati' Committee (Committee of the Whole) of the Navajo Council voted down a resolution to support Navajo Transitional Energy Co.'s proposal to buy and operate Navajo Generating Station and Peabody Energy's Kayenta coal mine, which supplies the power plant.

The 11-9 defeat of the resolution led to an announcement by Navajo Transitional Energy Corp. that it was dropping its bid to buy the plant and mine.

With the legislation's defeat, new legislation was introduced that proposes rescinding the Navajo

Nation's current energy policies, which are focused on coal, and replacing them with a vision that "declares the intention of the Nation to move beyond coal source revenues and forward to sustainable and renewable energy sources."

Groups that have spent many years fighting for a sustainable future free of coal called the defeat and new legislation "historic developments."

"It's been known for a long time that coal isn't the future, but this final certainty is crucial," said Diné CARE's Lori Goodman. "For anyone who's been hesitant about moving strongly for renewable energy development, for building our economy in ways that will benefit our communities and our Mother Earth and Father Sky, now there is no reason or excuse to

hold back. This moment is why our new council and president were elected. The legacy they will leave for the transition from coal starts now."

"This is an important time to remember that vast resources were once spent to install coal operations on Navajo Nation, and that vast wealth and benefit was extracted for decades over the heads of so many Navajo communities," said Percy Deal, former Navajo Council member and former Navajo County Supervisor. "Remembering this past shows the path ahead: full corporate responsibility for affected coal workers, full restoration of damaged land and water, and full commitment now from utilities to be customers for clean energy resources from Navajo land in ways that benefit Navajo people."

Where the wind blows no good

By Teresa Seamster, Counselor Health Impact Assessment Committee

The strong winds of spring usually bring clear, warming skies and the “breath” of new growth and green grass to the high desert of the San Juan Basin.

This past year, the odor of new drilling rigs and flaring stacks blew across the central grasslands of the Navajo Nation Counselor Chapter, next door to Chaco Culture National Historical Park, and started moving down the U.S. 550 highway corridor toward the Navajo chapters of Ojo Encino and Torreon.

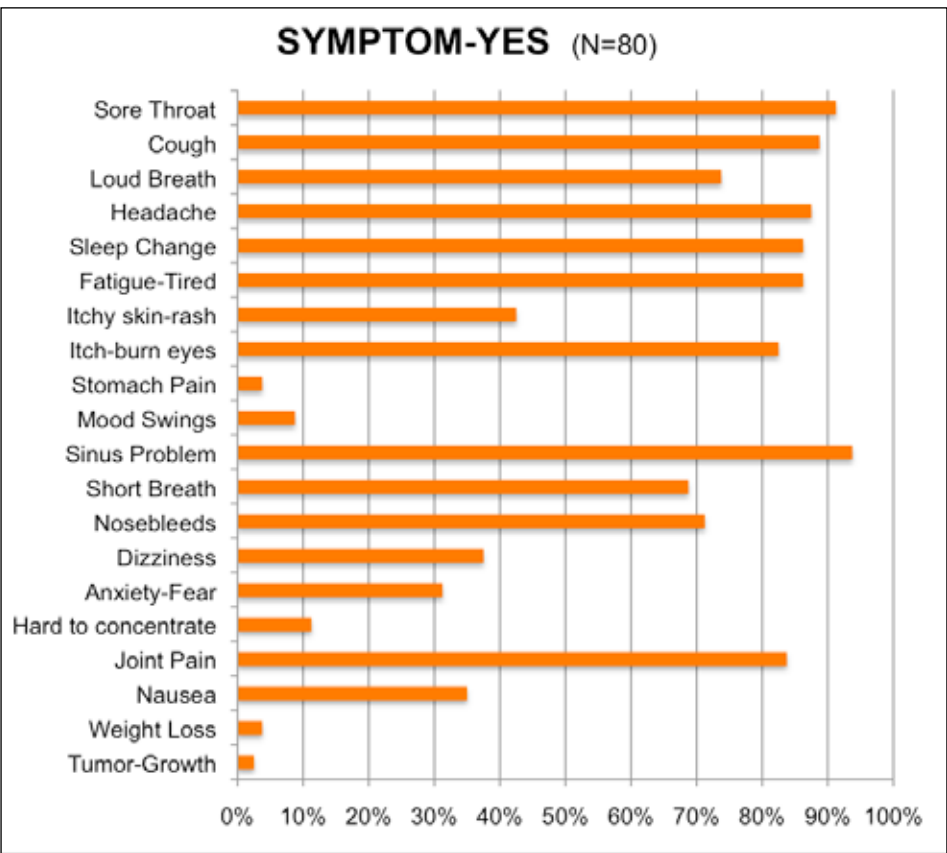
The Counselor air-monitoring team, Samuel Sage, Kendra Pinto, Marlene Thomas, Mario Atencio, Dr. Val Wangler and I, hit the road in early April 2018, delivering air monitors to community residents interested in measuring their local air quality and taking a survey to identify if their health symptoms were similar to residents of other oil and gas communities. Six homeowners, a resident church ministry, and the Chapter House participated in the project. In May, the monitors were picked up and shipped to the Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project for downloading and analysis by Celia Lewis, Ph.D., and Sujit Joginpally, M.D., members of the project team. These results have been compared to others that the Health Project has reviewed in communities near shale gas and oil operations in New York, Ohio, California and Pennsylvania. The results from Counselor were different in several ways and showed overall higher levels.

When the team members were asked to give some of the reasons for the higher levels of both PM2.5 (particulate matter in the air that are 2.5 microns in size) and formaldehyde, they replied:

“Many homes in Counselor are located closer than a mile to one or more operating oil and gas wells. The recommended setback distance between occupied structures and wells is now 6,600 feet, or 1¼ mile. Many homes are “downwind” of wells that emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and formaldehyde, which can be formed from methane emissions in the presence of sunlight. Counselor has areas of open plains with numerous homes situated where the wind tends to blow towards the houses from a nearby pollution source. On sunny days with no wind, pollutants will rise quickly upward away from houses. On cloudy days with no wind, pollutants move and mix slowly with the air, keeping emissions closer to the ground and more hazardous for residents. On windy days (over 12 mph), pollutants from nearby wells can reach downwind homes quickly, staying in a concentrated plume, before chemicals can disperse.”

The highest concentrations of polluted air were recorded at a home on an open sagebrush flat about a quarter of a mile from an active oil well. Wind directions show hazardous concentrations of pollutants (in red) blowing from the southwest and southeast.

Evidence of exposure to hazardous levels of VOC concentrations is very short-lived in the bloodstream, and



Above: Of the 20 symptoms listed in a health survey taken by Navajo Counselor Chapter members, 80% of respondents said they experienced sore throat, cough, headache, sleep change, fatigue, burning eyes, sinus problems and joint pain.



Teresa Seamster

An active well stack flares methane and other volatile organic compounds in Counselor Chapter. Many Counselor residents live within a half-mile of fracking wells. The Health Impact Committee tested air quality at eight homes for 32 days.

blood samples must be taken within hours of the onset of a symptom. Most communities have no facility that can provide this highly specialized blood test, and residents who cannot take time to take a sample are unable to provide this crucial evidence if they try to file a formal complaint.

There are some 600 chemicals that can be used in the production of gas and oil, and sites can use different types of chemicals and combinations. However, there are several pollutants common to unconventional oil and gas development, such as volatile organic compounds, PM2.5, and formaldehyde. The Environmental Health Project uses these three as “indicators” because scientists have measured and estimated the amounts of these chemicals emitted from unconventional oil and gas development sources. If these indicators are present in air samples, it is likely that other chemicals of concern are present.

The air samples were tested for 125 chemicals. Three VOCs were detected on May 23 and seven on May 30, 2018. All chemical levels were at “Permissible

Exposure Limits” except for formaldehyde, which was at elevated levels (requiring mitigation) at all sites.

Impacts from long-term chemical exposure

When a source of air pollution is nearby, high levels of PM 2.5 and formaldehyde combined with varying levels of VOCs can cause increased health symptoms in residents. Chemicals from the source may combine with the particulate matter and travel to the deep regions of the lungs to cause respiratory problems or gain access to other parts of the body through blood-gas exchange.

Inhalation of toxic particles is the most common form of exposure and has the greatest impacts on the head and respiratory system. Children are more severely affected as they have higher respiratory rates and breathe in more toxins per pound of body weight than adults. Their brains are still developing, and many toxic volatile organic compounds are known to interfere with developmental processes within the brain.

80 respondents were asked to indicate if they lived within 5 miles or within sight, hearing or smell of wells (84%) or gas and oil pipelines (66%). Respondents then recorded all the health symptoms they experienced in the past year.

Short-term exposure to VOCs can cause eye and respiratory-tract irritation, headaches, dizziness, visual disorders, fatigue, loss of coordination, allergic skin reaction, nausea, and memory impairment or inability to concentrate. Long-term effects include loss of coordination and damage to the liver, kidney, and central nervous system.

All the above symptoms caused by short-term exposure to volatile organic compounds were recorded by the majority of Counselor residents who participated in community health surveys conducted from May through August 2018 by the Counselor Health Impact Assessment Committee.

80 respondents were asked to indicate if they lived “near” (within 5 miles) or within sight, hearing or smell of wells (84%) or gas and oil pipelines (66%). Respondents then recorded all the health symptoms they experienced in the past year since drilling began “near” their home.

Of Counselor’s population of 700 members, 11% percent participated in the health survey. Out of the 20 listed symptoms, 80% of respondents said they experienced sore throat, cough, headache, sleep change, fatigue, burning eyes, sinus problems and joint pain. Surveys conducted by the Environmental Health Project nationally in similar communities showed less than 50% of respondents reported these same symptoms.

The Counselor Health-Impact Assessment is a community project undertaken to provide local data and to answer local questions about how safe the open air is and what is causing the increase in health complaints and chronic illness. What it tells us is that emissions are constantly changing, and if you average contaminant levels over a day, you will miss the high and more dangerous peak levels of emissions. For instance, over a 24-hour period recorded on P567, the average particulate exposure was 29 ug/m3, but there was a period just before dawn that was 398 ug/m3 — high enough to cause an asthma attack.

A young father-to-be asked at a chapter meeting before the monitoring started: “How is our younger generation going to survive? Is the open air going to be safe? Will it cause birth defects or not?” This report attempts to answer these questions and many others, and to reveal how little is yet known about gas and oil development’s ultimate impacts on human health and the environment.

Greater setbacks, monitoring, and prompt treatment of acute symptoms can help residents now, but the long-term damage and cost to these lives are yet to be reckoned.



Photos by Miya King-Flaherty

Participants held a peaceful event at the Sante Fe BLM headquarters to protest thousands of acres in Greater Chaco and Greater Carlsbad being leased for expanded oil and gas development.

Greater Chaco parcels spared, sold

By Miya King-Flaherty
Our Wild New Mexico organizer
In February, and only days before the start of the 10-day protest period to oppose another selloff of lands in the Greater Chaco region, the Bureau of Land Management Farmington Field office removed nine parcels (about 1,500 acres) from this year's March lease sale.

However, this move is perplexing, because it is the third time in two years that the office has nominated parcels within close proximity to Chaco Culture National Historical Park only to pull them before the sale. Although some parcels in the region have been spared from development, the Bureau of Land Management has still not completed a thorough cultural review or analysis of cultural resources in the region — the reason former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke deferred the March 2018 lease sale.

Meanwhile, the neighboring BLM Rio Puerco Field Office has started up its oil and gas leasing program. Both offices are still in the process of updating their regional Resource Management Plans, which fail to account for the cumulative impacts of multi-stage horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracking.

During the Obama Administration, BLM New Mexico offices rotated their quarterly lease sales so that each office was responsible for holding at least one lease sale a year. Since the Trump Administration has taken over, development on public lands has become a priority and now each BLM office is under pressure to hold four lease sales a year. Furthermore, the formal period to protest and comment on the lease sales has been substantially reduced from 30 to 10 days.

On Feb. 20, environmental and indigenous grassroots groups, tribal leaders, and allies rallied together with hunters and anglers at the Roundhouse on Public Lands Day to celebrate the value of public lands and highlight how oil and gas development impacts the environment, public health and safety, and cultural resources. Feb. 20 also marked the end of the 10-day protest period for the March lease sale. Environmental, citizen and indigenous grassroots groups collected more than 33,000 protest comments that we hand-delivered to the BLM state office in Sante Fe. Food and Water Watch submitted more than 27,000 protests, helping to triple the 10,000 protests opposing the December 2018 lease sale.

The BLM did press forward with the March 28 lease sale. In all, 37 parcels of land



Chaco Coalition groups presented 33,000 protest comments to the BLM.

were sold in the Greater Chaco and Greater Carlsbad regions. In protest, the Sierra Club, along with allies and members of the Chaco Coalition, peacefully demonstrated in front of the BLM state headquarters striking for the climate, while drawing connections between oil and gas leasing and climate change.

The lease sale also included some parcels in Oklahoma. In all, the sale resulted in an anemic \$15 million — nearly half of what the December 2018 auction drew.

Although the lease sales have been relentless, 2019 presents new opportunities to address the impacts of fracking in the Greater Chaco region. Newly elected New Mexico Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard announced on Public Lands Day that she plans to issue an executive order for a moratorium on leasing state trust lands in Greater Chaco. She is working closely with the Navajo Nation, All Pueblo Council Governors, community leaders, environmental groups, and congressional delegates to ensure that cultural and pristine resources on state trust lands are protected from expanded development.

At her Green New Deal town hall, U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland recognized the work of the Greater Chaco coalition and committed to working with tribal leaders to address the impacts of expanded oil and gas development in the region.

On April 9, Haaland, U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan and U.S. Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich re-introduced federal legislation to protect the Greater Chaco area. The Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act of 2019 is a much-improved version from the 2018 original, acknowledging the Greater Chaco landscape spanning four states, affirming the need for meaningful tribal consultation, calls for additional public health measures, and expands the mineral withdrawal to include additional oil and gas leases.

Volunteer profile: David McGahey

Each issue we feature volunteers who contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter in different ways. David McGahey has been photographing events for us since 2016. You can see many of his photos around this issue.



1. What is your volunteer role with the Rio Grande Chapter?

I photograph various Sierra Club events for social media sharing, press releases, and the chapter newsletter.

2. What do you do for a living?

I'm mostly retired from a position as a product manager in a technology company north of Boston, although I continue to blog on technology topics for my former employer.

3. How did you get involved with the Sierra Club/Rio Grande Chapter?

My wife and I are both originally from New York state and relocated to Santa Fe in 2016. I was a long-time member of the Sierra Club chapter in New England and transferred my membership here, then responded to a request for volunteers in the first chapter newsletter I received.

4. What are some of your hobbies/favorite things to do?

Outdoor landscape photography, especially of the many dramatic locations in the western states. I am also on the board of directors of the Santa Fe affiliate of Habitat for Humanity.

5. Why do you care about the environment?

I grew up hiking and camping

in the Adirondacks and other upstate New York locations. After college, a couple classmates and I drove a beat-up van on a summer-long camping tour of the western U.S., where I gained an appreciation for the variety and vast size of our national landscape.

6. What do you like best about volunteering?

It feels like we're actually making a difference! I also enjoy the camaraderie with other chapter members and friends.

7. What's your favorite environmental memory/story about volunteering.?

Most recently, I was very proud to be asked to shoot for the Sierra Club in the Governor's office for the energy proclamation on January 29.

8. What would you tell someone who would like to get involved but doesn't know how?

Follow the Rio Grande Chapter website and on social media and just jump in when you have a chance.

Northern New Mexico Group Contacts

Executive Committee

Chair: **Teresa Seamster**, 505-466-8964, ctc.seamster@gmail.com
Vice chair: **Tom Gorman**, 505-438-3932, gormantd@gmail.com
Treasurer: **Jim Baker**, 505-473-0457, bakerjim.sw@gmail.com
Alice Cox: 505-780-5122, auntialice@cybermesa.com
Paul Paryski, pparyski@aol.com
Sandrine Gaillard, sandrine.gaillard@gmail.com
Shane Woolbright, 405-323-2569, mesoinc@hotmail.com
Joseph Eigner: joseigner@gmail.com

Conservation

Chair: Tom Gorman
Public lands: Tom Gorman, Teresa Seamster
Water: John Buchser, 505-820-0201, jbuchser@comcast.net
Wildlife: Teresa Seamster
Solarize Santa Fe: Sandrine Gaillard, sandrine.gaillard@gmail.com
Energy Team: Shane Woolbright, 505-474-2870, mesoinc@hotmail.com; Elliot Stern, 505-989-9486, sternwcs@comcast.net

Zero Waste: Joe Eigner, 505-570-0583, joseigner@gmail.com; Karen Sweeney, 505-466-9797, ksweeney99@comcast.net

Other responsibilities

Chapter Representative: Tom Gorman
Membership: Alice Cox
Volunteers: Open
Office: Jerry Knapczyk
Outings: Alan Shapiro, 505-424-9242, nm5s@yahoo.com
Phone Support: Jerry Knapczyk
Publicity: Open
Book Sales: Janet Peacock 505-988-8929, sfdayahikes@gmail.com.
Sales backup: Ann Anthony, anrascal@gmail.com, 505-795-7472. Hiking book: Aku Oppenheimer
Book mailings: Gail Bryant, 505-757-6654.

Regional Contacts

Las Vegas: Joann Sprenger, 505-454-0551, gisprengr@cybermesa.com
Taos: Eric Patterson, 575-776-2833, eepatt@gmail.com

Zero Waste efforts all over Los Alamos

By Jody Benson
Pajarito Group chair

While the whole world lives in the whiplash of the American administration's moods — while POTUS is like the kid pulling the cloth off the Thanksgiving table, ruining everybody's hard work just to be the center of attention — Los Alamos is working to create a sustainable community.

The Los Alamos County Environmental Sustainability Board created a Zero Waste Team to help reduce, reuse, and recycle all the trash in town. A lot of Pajarito Group members are on that Team.

Here's what's going on:

The bag-free effort: Los Alamos High School EcoClub leaders and members of the Zero Waste Team met with local Smiths manager Isaac Chavez to discuss banning the bag — as well as decreasing food waste — at Smiths.

Kroger has a corporate goal of zero waste by 2025 in both food and single-use plastic shopping bags. The second-largest general retailer in the nation realized that their responsibility to the Earth also helps their bottom line.

Although this is a stated goal, the only food-zero-waste locations are in Kroger Headquarters towns — Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, where churches and local service organizations created food banks to which Kroger stores donate the food.

As for the bag, corporate Kroger says, "The best partner is the customer as we ease the transition" to reusables. "It will take customer education." Neither Los Alamos Smiths has the guidance or resources to initiate the zero-waste program. It's up to us to help bring the vision to Los Alamos.

To those ends, the LAHS EcoClub plans to help educate shoppers about the absolute stupidity of using life-suffocating plastic. The Pajarito Group can help with providing reusable bags to the students in their campaign. And of course you can help by (1) eschewing plastic bags (if you forget them, just roll the loose stuff in your cart to your car), and (2) reminding people why they need to extinct the bag before bags extinct everything else.

As for food waste? If you are part of a church or service organization with ideas for distributing the waste, contact Jody Benson and the Zero Waste Team to brainstorm your ideas.

Restaurants: The team visited many of the 26 Los Alamos/White Rock restaurants to understand how to help reduce (primarily) food waste. Again, the monetary bottom line compels restaurants to order food and measure portions for least waste, but many would also like to both donate food and to compost.

All businesses (and, dare we add, households?) need education as to what's recyclable and what's not. As Tiffany Pagoda says, "Wish-cycling is not recycling!" Just because you want something to be recyclable doesn't mean it is. "When in doubt, throw it out" rather than contaminate the entire recycle stream.

Restaurants are eager for the county's



Paulina Burnside

Los Alamos High School students took part in the worldwide Climate Strike in March. The LAHS EcoClub is helping to establish local governmental policy. They say: "Change is coming, whether we like it or not."

proposed food-waste composting; for now, if you have pigs, goats, or chickens, you can arrange with a restaurant to pick up their food waste. Many want the county to re-offer energy audits to give them a measure of current energy use as a baseline for comparing progress.

As for food waste, most don't have much uneaten portions, but if there were, they'd like a service organization or church to arrange for daily food pickup. Currently one Los Alamos Living Treasure picks up leftover Ruby K bagels for the High School.

Restaurants want: more recycle dumpsters more conveniently located; cardboard recycle for every business; near-site glass recycling for bars; and more frequent pickup of all recycling. The county charges for recycling; dedication to green costs the business money.

Plastic/disposables waste? Blue Window owner Melissa Paternoster has recommendations for restaurant managers. Starting with education, reduction, and replacing plastic with biodegradables: (1) proper food purchasing, (2) attention to portions, (3) menu flexibility to repurpose tomorrow what isn't cooked today, (4) no unrequested straws (so far, any straw solution costs five-times more than plastic), (5) biodegradable takeout boxes and utensils, and ask if the patron needs utensils. (7) Initiate the county-wide composting ASAP.

Restaurants would like a county-specific Green Restaurant Certificate to announce their commitment to the expensive, complicated, and strenuous requirements of being an Earth-friendly eatery.

Fast-food restaurants? The team didn't tackle any yet. But we can bring our own kit with cup, plate, cutlery, and leftover box everywhere.

Schools: Kids in all the schools understand that there is no Planet B.

Elementary schools: Chamisa in White Rock is the Green Team Queen. They revamped their entire lunch

Meetings and events

The Pajarito Group is partnering with Pajarito Environmental Education Center, 2600 Canyon Road, for our Sierra Club presentations.

Do you have one you'd like to give? We know many of you do amazing science, exotically travel, hike remarkably, and can name every New Mexico bird, or have other skills that could be shared. Do you want to tell us about it? Contact Jody Benson. She'll put you on the summer/fall schedule.

program by exchanging disposable Styrofoam trays and plastic single-use utensils for reusables, and providing recycling and compost bins. Most importantly, their teachers and students volunteer at trash stations to sort waste, reduce contamination and promote diversion.

Other schools want this model. It requires champions, education, and the leadership to sustain the program.

Los Alamos Middle School Green Earth Club: The eighth-grade Green Earth Club members have plans — make the LAMS cafeteria waste-free: (1) stop using disposable food trays, plates, cutlery, (2) initiate recycling, (3) eliminate bottled water. These GEC goals were, in fact, what initiated the county's involvement with the schools. Their sponsor called for mentors; the ESB's Schools Team showed up; the team heard the goals and took them to county and schools leadership.

Consciousness is rising faster than global warming. Chartwells, the contractor for all the schools' cafeterias, say "Yes please! We very much want to go green — we already serve the Chamisa Green Team cafeteria!" But, for the Chamisa model to be everywhere, the schools-wide contract must

Pajarito Group Directory

<http://pajarito.riograndesierra-club.org/node/13>

Executive Committee

Chair:/Secretary: Jody Benson, echidanaejb@gmail.com, 505/662-4782

Howard Barnum, hnbarnum@aol.com

Cheryl Bell, bellrancho@gmail.com, 505/672-9655

Iris Chung, itlchung@hotmail.com

Michael DiRosa, mddbbs@gmail.com

Nona Girardi, nonamg@aol.com

Carene Larmat, carenelarmat@gmail.com, 505/920-5675

Committee Chairs

Bag Ban; Treasurer: Mark Jones, Jonesmm1@comcast.net, 505/662-9443

Conservation: Michael DiRosa, mddbbs@gmail.com

Endangered Species/Wildlife: Cheryl Bell, bellrancho@gmail.com, 505/672-9655.

Global Warming: Charles Keller, alfanso@cybermesa.com, 505/662-7915

Mining: David Torney, dtorney@valornet.com, 575/829-3433

Newsletter editor, Publicity, Sprawl, Transportation: Jody Benson, echidnaejb@gmail.com, 505/662-4782

Open Spaces, Caldera Issues: Howard Barnum, hnbarnun@aol.com

Water Issues: Barbara Calef, bfcalf@yahoo.com, 505/662-3825

Mailing Address: 520 Navajo Road, Los Alamos, NM, 87544

include requirements for sustainability. The initial investment to implement green cafeterias in every school would be approximately \$200,000 for dishwashers and reusable serving items. Superintendent Kurt Steinhaus is definitely on board, but — it's always the money thing. We supporters can help find money lacking in the schools budget to initiate the program.

Los Alamos High School: Students are working Big Picture through establishing governmental policy. They say: "Change is coming, whether we like it or not."

In everything we do, from reducing consumption to establishing smart building codes to establishing life-supporting global energy policy, let's make this change one that values life over corporate profit, because we all agree, the lives of these kids are worth the effort. Along with The Bag Ban, they're joining millions of students worldwide to tell governments The Time is Now.

You. Do you want to get involved in zero waste, plant a tree, lead a hike, write an article, teach a kid? Contact any of the Pajarito Group (see box). We will join you with your life-changing, life-enhancing project.



Clara Grebel (front row, right, in straw hat) found a welcoming group on her first hike with Excursiones a la Naturaleza, the Rio Grande Chapter’s Spanish-language outings program.

My first Excursion

Clara Grebel
Excursionista

It all started at the library, where I saw a flyer announcing an excursion to the Piedras Marcadas Canyon; intriguingly, it was written both in Spanish and English. Since moving to Albuquerque around a year ago, I have tried to find a hiking group without much luck. Sometimes they focus on strenuous hikes (I am in not-so-stellar shape); sometimes they hike too far from where I live. And almost always they meet at the trailhead; without a car, and given how limited public transportation is in Albuquerque, this is hard for me to do. But the excursion sounded so appealing that I contacted the organizer, Cecilia Chávez Beltrán, and explained my predicament. She kindly offered to give me a ride, and so I found myself at the Piedras Marcadas Canyon Trail on a Saturday morning. I have hiked with other groups before—I lived for many years in Portland and Seattle, where hiking is very popular—and my fellow hikers had been ... not very diverse. But this group included people of color, people who only spoke Spanish, young and young at heart, and people who, like me, weren’t wearing expensive outfits.

Since moving to Albuquerque around a year ago, I have tried to find a hiking group without much luck. Sometimes they focus on strenuous hikes; sometimes they hike too far from where I live.

Cecilia welcomed us all warmly, and effortlessly switched from English to Spanish when providing information or requesting feedback, thus keeping everybody in the loop. The petroglyphs, carved by ancestral Puebloans and others, captured our imagination, their meaning unclear but haunting. We spied rabbits and hawks, and gazed in awe at the Sandia Mountains across the river. Ancient history and austere natural beauty, intertwined in this park, invited us to go deep and leave our busy city lives behind for a while. “This message is for you,” the petroglyphs seemed to whisper. Transformed, we circled back to the trailhead after a couple of hours and said goodbye—hopefully, *hasta la vista*.

Military Outdoors Program wants you!

By Terry Owen
Military Outings Program chair

Are you a military veteran or on active duty or in the reserves or a family member? Did you enjoy or perhaps you now long for the special bond of those who’ve served? Then the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program wants you! Join us for monthly outings to some of the most beautiful wild areas in the Southwest. Regardless of your background or fitness level, there’s an outing that’s right for you. Additionally, most outings are free! I’m a retired U.S. Navy officer who plans, organizes and leads outings of varying lengths and skill levels each quarter and can assist you in choosing the right outing; advise you on what you should

bring; offer tips on how you should prepare and how to maximize your enjoyment by moving efficiently and safely. Co-chair and former U.S. Air Force physician John Link said, “the safety and well-being of participants is first and foremost on each of our outings, and that includes the sense of mutual trust that is felt among the participants.” The objective of this program is to give our military and former military personnel the opportunity to feel the healing effects of nature while in the company of other people who have shared the same experiences. In the past year, the program has featured a range of activities, including snowshoeing in the surrounding mountains, hikes in Petroglyph National Monument and easy walking tours of museums and sculp-

ture gardens. Upcoming events include easy hikes in the Albuquerque Open Space, full-moon night hikes and an opportunity to climb the highest peak in New Mexico. Later in the year, we’re planning an introduction to backpacking where participants will have the opportunity to embark on a short overnight backpacking trip in the wilderness. Tips for packing light, trip planning and navigation will be combined with fun and awe-inspiring beauty. If you’d like to learn more about the Military Outdoors Program, contact Terry Owen, teowen@comcast.net. Upcoming outings are found in this issue of the *Sierran* and also found at the Rio Grande Chapter website www.riograndesierraclub.org and on Meetup.

Outings Leader Summit!

Mark your calendar! If you are a current or prospective Sierra Club outings leader or you’re curious about what being an outings leader entails, we hope you’ll join us on May 4 for a Sierra Club Outings Leader Summit. Outings leaders from across the entire Rio Grande Chapter are encouraged to attend. Beginning at 8:30 a.m., we’ll start by giving back by perform-

ing light trail maintenance and trash pickup in the Albuquerque Open Space. After lunch, we’ll be meeting at the Open Space Visitors Center for networking, a refresher on wilderness first aid and tools to help plan safe, fun and inspiring outings. Contact Terry Owen, 505-301-4349, or teowen@comcast.net no later than May 1 to RSVP.

Hikes and Events

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Hikers from Santa Fe can meet the group at the trailhead before or at 9:30 a.m. Contact the hike leader telephonically or by text no later than June 5 to RSVP. Seniors, please bring your National Park passes. Please no dogs or children. Trip leader: Diane, (505) 917-0556 Location: north of Santa Fe **Sunday, June 9. Excursiones moderate hike to Embudito Canyon loop** trail. 8 a.m. to noon, off Montgomery in the Sandia Foothills. We will walk as much as the group chooses, then back. Fantastic & magical spot. Adventurous children welcome. No dogs please. Facebook. Trip leader: Cecilia, cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org, (505) 319 7556 Location: Albuquerque area **Saturday, June 22. Easy early-summer hike in the Bosque.** We’ll enjoy a leisurely walk on a trail that is flat and fairly even that will take about 1.5 hours. Meet at 8:30 at the tree sculpture garden just off the Montañito Bridge on the west side of the Rio Grande (turnoff is just before Coors if you’re going west on Montano). Bring water, hat, snacks, sunscreen, and favorite summer poem to share! Trip leader: Margaret, mardel18@aol.com Location: Albuquerque **Saturday, June 22. Strenuous hike of Wheeler Peak.** Join the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program to climb the tallest peak in New Mexico. Active duty, retirees, dependents and civilians are all welcome, must be in good physical condition and tolerate high altitudes. This very challenging hike starts near the upper ski area at 10,000 feet and proceeds to the summit at 13,161 feet. It passes a beautiful alpine lake, winds through towering ponderosa pines and offers unforgettable views of the surrounding mountains. We’ll be camping the evening before (June 21) at Taos Ski Valley. We’ll then meet at Williams Lake trailhead parking lot at 6:30 a.m. for the trailhead briefing. We’ll then celebrate the first full day of summer on the summit at noon with a high-altitude lunch. Children

Outings updates

Northern New Mexico outings Meetup site: www.meetup.com/Santa-Fe-Sierra-Club-Outings/ Albuquerque Meetup: www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Rio-Grande-Chapter/. **Know before you go:** For status of fire restrictions and burn bans across New Mexico, visit firerestrictions.us/nm. Updates are also in our weekly email; send an email to Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org with any subject and a message that says SUBSCRIBE RIO-NORTH-OUTINGS.

over 16 years of age only and no dogs, please. Contact leader no later than June 18 to RSVP and obtain recommended gear list. Trip leader: Terry Owen, 505-301-4349, teowen@comcast.net Location: Taos area

July

Saturday, July 13. Moderate/strenuous hike at high altitude in the San Pedro Parks region traveling past the San Gregorio Reservoir, crossing creeks, and through evergreen and aspen forests, marshes, and open areas. Meet at 6:45 a.m. at North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center located at 7521 Carmel Ave. NE in Albuquerque to leave promptly at 7:00 a.m. Drive time to the trailhead will be 2 hours. The in-and-out hike will be 7.1 miles roundtrip with an elevation gain of 783 feet, and a total uphill of 806 feet. The minimum elevation will be 9269 feet. The grade will be 5% at times. A raincoat or poncho is required in case there is an afternoon storm. The hike leader will cancel the hike if a thunderstorm is forecast. Contact the hike leader telephonically or by text no later than July 10th to RSVP. This hike will be limited to 15 hikers, including the hike leader, due to the group size limit. Seniors, please bring your National Park passes. Please no dogs or children. Trip leader: Diane, 505-917-0556 Location: Cuba area

April-May-June outings

April

Saturday, April 20: Easy Earth Day hike in the John A. Milne & Gutierrez Canyon Open Space. Meet at 9 a.m. at Hobby Lobby on Juan Tabo to carpool. This two-hour outing is approximately 2.5 miles round trip with 250 feet of elevation gain. Join us in this piñon-juniper-covered canyon near Cedar Crest for a dose of nature, solitude and camaraderie. Children over 12 and maximum of two dogs. This is the perfect way to celebrate Earth Day. Sponsored by the Military Outdoors Program, and we welcome everyone. Contact leader no later than April 18 to RSVP.

Trip leader: Terry Owen, (505) 301-4349 or teowen@comcast.net

Location: Albuquerque area

Saturday, April 20: Excursiones Earth Day Hike. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Embudito Canyon Loop Trail. Montgomery Blvd. NE toward the mountains, past Tramway Blvd. NE, left on Glenwood Hills Drive NE to Trailhead Road NE. *Guerreros* (adventurous children) welcome. No dogs please.

Trip leader: Cecilia, cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org, (505) 319 7556

Location: Albuquerque area

Saturday, April 20: Strenuous hike of Vicks Peak, San Mateo Mountains. Meet at Springtime Campground at 9 a.m. and you may prefer to camp overnight. We'll hike up to Myers Cabin on the Shipman Canyon trail saddle and then scramble 900 feet up Vicks Peak for views far over southern New Mexico. Round trip 10 miles, 3,000 feet elevation gain, 6 hours. One dog, no children under 15. RSVP by April 17, 2019.

Trip leader: Jim Nelson at jcnelson@gilanet.com or (575) 854-2259

Location: west of Socorro

May

Saturday, May 4: Albuquerque Open Space Cleanup. Come join us as we partner with the Albuquerque Open Space Division to pick up trash, maintain trails and celebrate our amazing open spaces. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the designated open space area. Bring water, sunscreen, gloves, hat and a snack, and wear closed-toed shoes. This is a great activity for families with children. Contact leader no later than May 2 to RSVP and obtain location or view our Meetup page.

Trip leader: Terry Owen, 505-301-4349, teowen@comcast.net

Location: Albuquerque

Saturday May 4: Outings-leader summit. The objectives of the Outings Leader Summit



Jane Frederick

Participants take a break on a moderate hike up Kitchen Mesa Trail at Ghost Ranch in March. Difficulty levels are included on each outing listing.

About these hikes

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter outings are free and open to the public. Level of difficulty is listed in hike descriptions. All mileages are round-trip.

Participants must sign a liability waiver. Bring water, lunch, sturdy hiking boots or shoes and clothing suitable for the weather. Leader reserves right to turn away anyone whose experience or equipment appears unsuitable.

Leader may alter destination or cancel trip due to weather, conditions, or insufficient number of participants. Unaccompanied minors need written permission from a parent or guardian. Ask leader for form.

Dogs permitted only if noted in write-up.

Always contact leader before the outing to confirm participation and details. Please see riograndesierraclub.org/outings for up-to-date hike information.

Our **weekly outings e-mail**, Sierra Trail Mix, provides outings updates plus useful outdoor information such as trail conditions. Send an email to Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org with any subject and a message that says SUBSCRIBE RIO-NORTH-OUTINGS. You can also visit the Northern New Mexico Group Meetup page for updated outings: www.meetup.com/Santa-Fe-Sierra-Club-Outings/.

are to give us the ability to meet one another and collaborate, and share new information, knowledge and ideas. It will also include a community service project. More information to follow as the plan unfolds.

Trip leader: Terry Owen, 505-301-4349, teowen@comcast.net

Location: Albuquerque office, 2209 Silver Ave SE, Albuquerque

Friday, May 10: Easy/moderate hike along the Las Conchas Trail in the Jemez Mountains. We will meet at 9 a.m. at the

farthest northwest area of the Home Depot parking lot at 7700 US Hwy 550, Rio Rancho, NM. Carpooling is recommended due to limited parking at the trailhead. Round trip hike is 2.5 miles with about 100 feet total elevation gain. Beautiful mountains in the pine forest along the trout-filled Jemez River. We will also pass through the hewn-through-the-mountain Gilman Tunnels on the way to Las Conchas. Trail is not handicap accessible. Cameras and binoculars are recommended. Dress in layers, bring water, snacks,

and we encourage water resistance footwear. No dogs. No children under 12 years old. After the hike, we will return and have lunch at Los Ojos Restaurant in Jemez Springs. Details, updates and sign-up for this Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter event at Meetup Site. Sign-up and RSVP no later than May 5, 2019.

Trip leaders: June Parsons and Terry Owen, teowen@comcast.net or (505) 301-4349

Location: south of Los Alamos

Saturday, May 11: Excursiones easy walk along the Rio Grande. 9 a.m. to noon, starting at Rio Bravo Riverside Picnic Area (south side of Rio Bravo Blvd, east side of the river). We will walk north as much as the group chooses, then back. Shady, peaceful pleasant walk. Children welcome. No dogs please. Facebook.

Trip leader: Cecilia, cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org, (505) 319 7556

Location: Albuquerque area

Saturday, May 11: Easy loop hike at the top of the Sandias. Meet at 09:30, on the East side of the Albertson parking lot at Tramway Blvd. and Academy Road; or, at 10:30, at the Sandia Crest Parking lot (close to the antennas). Note that the hike will be changed to a different one if conditions are bad. Optional pot-luck after the hike for those who are interested.

Trip leader: Odile, odile@pitot.org or (505) 433 4692

Location: northeast of Albuquerque

Saturday, May 18. Easy hike and tour of a portion of the Army Corps of Engineers' bosque restoration project in the South Valley. This is different area than was visited in February. Meet at the Valley High Street SW access to the bosque at 8:30 a.m. which is 1.5 miles south of Rio Bravo off Second Street to see an excellent example of successful restoration of our beloved bosque. If we're lucky, this year the restored area may be flooded, so prepare for a somewhat muddy trail. This outing is approximately two miles and 50 feet of elevation gain over 2 hours. For more information and precise directions, contact leader.

Trip leader: Mark Rudd, mark@markrudd.com or 505-270-5449

Location: Albuquerque

Saturday May 18: Moderate hike of Pine Tree Loop, Aguirre Springs. Let's celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument with a hike on the Pine Tree Loop Trail in the newly created Organ Needles Wilderness Area. Spectacular views of the Organs Mountains and the Tularosa Basin to the east. This is a moderate hike with elevation gain of 1,000 feet. 4.5-mile loop. Day-use fee required for Aguirre Springs.

Trip leader: Howie Dash (575) 652-7550 or howie-dash@aol.com

Location: Las Cruces

June

Saturday, June 8: Moderate/strenuous hike at high altitude in the Pecos region to view wildflowers on the mesa. The hike will pass through pine and aspen forest. Meet at 6:45 a.m. at North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center located at 7521 Carmel Ave. NE in Albuquerque to leave promptly at 7:00 a.m. Drive time to the trailhead at Iron Gate Campground will be 2 1/2 hours. There will be four miles of dirt road to the campground. High-clearance vehicles are recommended although not a necessity. The in and out hike will be 5.7 miles roundtrip with an elevation gain of 737 feet, and a total uphill of 1070 feet. The minimum elevation will be 9,370. The grade will be 6% at times. Great views of the Pecos Wilderness peaks from the mesa, where we will eat lunch. A raincoat or poncho is required in case of a storm. The hike leader will cancel if a thunderstorm is forecast and/or the four-mile road to the trailhead will be impassable.

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