Pollution is losing to solutions, destruction is giving way to protection, and persistent activism is on a winning streak

Energy transfer

Indigenous youth led a 50-mile run to protest the June 20 BLM auction of Greater Chaco land to oil and gas drilling. Chaco protectors got lots of good news recently, including a Department of Interior leasing moratorium and a favorable court ruling. Page 8

A win for decency: Doña Ana County requires more humane control methods from federal wildlife-killing agency, thanks to wildlife proponents. Page 9

Bernalillo goes beyond the bag: County passes ordinance to end distribution of bags and styrofoam takeout containers, thanks in large part to a kid-led effort. Page 5

El Paso nature advocates save the day: Sierra Student Coalition helps win a landslide victory to protect El Paso’s Lost Dog Trail from developers. Page 6

More inside:

Governor gives thumbs-down to Holtec
Luján Grisham sends letter to NRC opposing proposed SE New Mexico storage site for all nation’s high-level nuclear waste. Page 6.

El Paso, N.M. members help stop wall
Ruling on Sierra Club lawsuit, judge orders halt to construction of border wall in Rio Grande Chapter region. Page 3.

Ill-conceived Gila diversion plans scaled back
Report shows high expense, low water yield. Page 3

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Contacts
camera@sierraclub.org

Join the Rio Grande Chapter
You can join the Sierra Club now for only $15! Just go to
riosierraninfo@sierraclub.org
Tenors @ sierraclub.org

When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by Sierra Club.

Executive Committee
Davidoss, chair, dcdoss1@yahoo.com
Mary Hotvedt, vice chair, maryhotvedt@aol.com
Laurence Gibson, secretary, 915-309-5419, lgbison@utep.edu
Ray Shortridge, treasurer, 505-604-3908
Susan Martin, 505-670-3279, smartin31@comcast.net
John Buchser, jbuchser@comcast.net, 505-620-0201

Eric Patterson, 505-776-2833, epatterson@gmail.com
Kar1 Brathwaite, 505-850-3369, karl@brathl.net
Shannon Rameing, 575-758-3874, sromeling73@gmail.com
Fred Houdrek, Central New Mexico Group representative, fhoudrek@gmail.com, 630-899-4234
Tom Gorman, Northern New Mexico Group representative, 505-438-3932, gormandt@gmail.com
Jody Benson, Pajarito Group representative, echidna@sierraclub.org, 505-662-4782
Kurt Anderson, Southern New Mexico Group representative, 505-646-1032, kurtmsu@nmsu.edu
El Paso Group representative: Open

Eric Patterson, 505-776-2833, epatterson@gmail.com
Kar1 Brathwaite, 505-850-3369, karl@brathl.net
Shannon Rameing, 575-758-3874, sromeling73@gmail.com
Fred Houdrek, Central New Mexico Group representative, fhoudrek@gmail.com, 630-899-4234
Tom Gorman, Northern New Mexico Group representative, 505-438-3932, gormandt@gmail.com
Jody Benson, Pajarito Group representative, echidna@sierraclub.org, 505-662-4782
Kurt Anderson, Southern New Mexico Group representative, 505-646-1032, kurtmsu@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
Mike Chamberland, Web Editor and legislative organizer, 505-243-7767
Northern New Mexico Office
1807 Second Street, Unit 45, Santa Fe, NM 87505 • 505-983-2703
Mona Blaber, chapter secretary, 505-660-5905, monablaber@gmail.com
Claire McKnight, PAC treasurer, 505-884-0209, claire.mcknight@gmail.com
Bmith Nathan, bookkeeper, 505-310-0595, bmitht21@gmail.com

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
facebook.com/nmsierradub
christy@sierraclub.org

Donate to the Rio Grande Chapter; it’s easy! When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by Sierra Club. Contributions are welcome.

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
1807 Second Street, Unit 45
Santa Fe, NM 87505.

When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by Sierra Club. Contributions are welcome. Send to riograndsierranclub.org/donate, or send your check to:

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
1807 Second Street, Unit 45
Santa Fe, NM 87505.

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible.

To stay updated on issues you read about in The Sierran, go to riograndsierranclub.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.

If you’d like to make a C3 charitable tax-deductible donation, write a check to “Sierra Club Foundation.” Please write “Rio Grande Chapter” in the memo line, and send to:

Sierra Club Foundation
2101 Webster St. Suite 1250
Oakland, CA 94612

Donations made to the Rio Grande Chapter are not tax-deductible.

When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by Sierra Club. Contributions are welcome. Send to riograndsierranclub.org/donate, or send your check to:

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
1807 Second Street, Unit 45
Santa Fe, NM 87505.

When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by Sierra Club. Contributions are welcome. Send to riograndsierranclub.org/donate, or send your check to:

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
1807 Second Street, Unit 45
Santa Fe, NM 87505.

When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by Sierra Club. Contributions are welcome. Send to riograndsierranclub.org/donate, or send your check to:

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
1807 Second Street, Unit 45
Santa Fe, NM 87505.

When you contribute to the Rio Grande Chapter, your entire donation stays here in New Mexico and West Texas. The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by Sierra Club. Contributions are welcome. Send to riograndsierranclub.org/donate, or send your check to:

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
1807 Second Street, Unit 45
Santa Fe, NM 87505.
Southern New Mexico

Sierra Club members help stop wall

By Amanda Munro
Southern N.M. Group

The Trump Administration will not be able to use military funds to build his border wall, thanks to a lawsuit by the Sierra Club, Southern Border Communities Coalition, and American Civil Liberties Union.

On June 28, U.S. District Court Judge Haywood Gilliam Jr. permanently blocked the Trump Administration from using $2.5 billion in military funds to construct border walls in Arizona, New Mexico, and California. The administration’s subsequent appeal was denied.

This is a huge win and a much-needed one for border communities and wildlife. For the past few years, we have been steamrolled by border-wall construction projects. The Department of Homeland Security has the authority to waive any projects. The Department of Homeland Security was steamrolled by border-wall construction projects before and on the REAL ID Act, which gives the Department of Homeland Security this unchecked authority, with no success. In fact, the suit on the Santa Teresa construction is still pending, though the wall there has been completed.

Finally, a judge has drawn the line, ruling that despite Trump’s “national emergency,” he cannot circumvent Congress and rob funds from the military for his vanity project.

As a standing declarant on this successful lawsuit, I couldn’t be more elated. This win is a glimmer of hope in a time when I and co-founder of Peaceful Uprising Haywood Gilliam Jr. permanently blocked the Trump Administration from using $2.5 billion in military funds to construct border walls in Arizona, New Mexico, and California. This was starting to feel powerless. This victory inspires me to continue fighting for my community, including our local wildlife: the javelina, mountain lions, bobcats, wolves, jaguars, and other incredible creatures that call our border home and are threatened by the wall construction.

Now we just have to gear up for the fight ahead: making sure that our members of Congress do not appropriate any more funds for border walls, as they have every year of the Trump Administration so far. For now, it’s time to celebrate this unexpected victory.

Amanda Munro is on the Rio Grande Chapter Southern N.M. Group Executive Committee and joined Liz Welch of the El Paso Group as standing declarants on whose behalf the Sierra Club’s lawsuit was filed. She is also a member of the Sierra Club Borderlands team and recently attended a DC fly-in where she lobbied to stop wall construction projects. She works at the Southwest Environmental Center in Las Cruces.

Southern N.M. Group contacts
Chair and Outings: Howie O’etz, howieoetz@aol.com, 575-652-7550
Treasurer: Cherryl Blevins, spotblev@earthlink.net, 575-524-4861
Secretary and Wildlife: Mary Katherine Ray, mksrcrm@gmail.com, 575-537-1095
Political: Kurt Anderson, kurt@nmsu.edu, 575-646-1032
Amanda Munro: amandawildmesquite.org
Mary Horveth: maryhorveth@aol.com
Nate Cote: nathancote6@gmail.com

Gila diversion scaled back after report

Allyson Siwik
Gila Conservation Coalition

After 15 years and $15 million spent on planning, engineering studies, and lawyers, proponents of a plan to divert the Gila River were given a dose of reality when they realized that the project will cost too much and yield too little water.

The latest information in the Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement shows the diversion will cost more than double the amount of money in the Arizona Water Settlements Act construction fund to build the diversion, and project water will cost significantly more than irrigators’ willingness to pay.

The Gila Conservation Coalition and Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter have been working for years to head off the ill-conceived diversion project, which could harm New Mexico’s last wild river. The diversion project would be much more costly and benefit only a couple of farmers. The diversion project water will cost significantly more than irrigators’ willingness to pay.

We have sued on border wall construction projects before and on the REAL ID Act, which gives the Department of Homeland Security this unchecked authority, with no success. In fact, the suit on the Santa Teresa construction is still pending, though the wall there has been completed.

Several suits have been filed to stop construction of the wall near the Santa Teresas, but Trump’s “national emergency” would allow him to circumvent Congress and rob funds from the military for his vanity project. For now, it’s time to celebrate this unexpected victory.

Amanda Munro is on the Rio Grande Chapter Southern N.M. Group Executive Committee and joined Liz Welch of the El Paso Group as standing declarants on whose behalf the Sierra Club’s lawsuit was filed. She is also a member of the Sierra Club Borderlands team and recently attended a DC fly-in where she lobbied to stop wall construction projects. She works at the Southwest Environmental Center in Las Cruces.

For more information, please go to www.gilaconservation.org

Standing up today, working toward tomorrow

It’s not every day that we win. And these days our wins are tinged by loss, a loss of humanity.

In a recent conversation among the members of the Sierra Club’s No Border Wall Program about the internment of immigrant children, we discussed whether it was appropriate to call the centers concentration camps. We discussed whether finding children in deplorable conditions, uncared for by adults in the region where we reside, could be compared to the internment of Japanese families in World War II.

Could the internment of immigrant children arrest of working people in our communities be compared to the mass arrest of Jewish people in Europe? And suddenly it occurred to me that the very fact that we are asking ourselves these questions is a sign that something is very, very wrong.

My family’s name is mentioned in a book called The Oppermanns that was written by a German Jew named Leon Feuchtwanger before Hitler began his war of extermination.

The book’s three chapters are yesterday, today and tomorrow. “Yesterday” describes the mundane lives of a family and its members whose personalities and approaches to life differ.

“Today” tells of the worrying changes, emerging fears and need to act that the family confronts and sometimes fails to. “By Tomorrow,” the worst is upon the family and their reactions to terror seem totally disassociated from what you might have guessed of the people you learned about yesterday.

As I write this column, today implicates tomorrow. We are working to stop the border wall and have even had a win when the judge stopped action on the wall in New Mexico in a lawsuit brought by Sierra Club branches of ACLU and Southern Border Communities Coalition (see Page 3).

Meanwhile, there are children cared for in internment camps, where toys and diapers are rejected by guards, where it’s a question whether kids need soap and toothpaste, where parents have no way to reach their children, where staff are not allowed to hug them.

And here I type from the safety of my home, with all the food I and my children need, with safe disconnection of a tree-lined street. And yet I remind myself that my grand-parents once fled, wrenching their very normal lives.

Tomorrow was not what they anticipated. To make it even worse, we are forced to confront the impacts of a false crisis, while our government willfully ignores and purposely exposes us to the global climate chaos that is upon us.

President Trump invets a crisis of fear of our neighbors while ignoring humanity’s end.

And yet with all the weight and sadness today brings us, we have at least our morality, our power to communicate, our conviction to act and the tools to do so. We are fighting for every win while working through the sadness and fear.

Because of our work together for tomorrow, we have a nation-leading renewable-energy requirement in our state, a kid-led ban in Albuquerque (Page 5), Chaco legislation that seeks to protect culture and communities from oil and gas destruction (Page 8), and the beginning of a process that will lead to state methane-pollution safeguards (Page 10).

Together we are making tomorrow something we can be proud of, something we can safely leave our children. Thank you for being part of that.

By Louise Jensen
Fundraising chair

We, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club members and donors, are amazing! We’re a community working around a shared vision for our New Mexico and West Texas home both today and tomorrow.

It takes our generosity in time and money to make things happen, and this new Sierran column, Rio Grande Green, will regularly recognize and celebrate that generosity!

In the future, we’ll profile donors and volunteers so we can get to know one another better throughout our far-flung Chapter. We, also, will report on specific campaigns including goals and success! So, stay tuned!

Hooray for us all!

From your very own Rio Grande Chapter Friend and Fund Development Committee, a heartfelt thank you!

Krabos for cash!
Save the date!

Saturday, Sept. 28, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Chello Grill, 5010 Cutler Avenue, NE, Albuquerque (intersection of San Mateo and Cutler). Support the Central New Mexico Group of the Rio Grande Chapter by going out to dinner on September 28, to help support the work the Central Group does to keep our main office up and running, as well as outreach in Albuquerque.

Just show them the event flier and your lunch or dinner tab will go into the fundraising till! The flier will be available for download as a PDF starting in late July, and, yes, we’ll remind you!

“Puye Cliffs,” by Jan Bartelstone.

Receive a Jan Bartelstone nature photo for your $150 donation

Enjoy our Southwest natural heritage every day! Hang one of these sublime photos by photographer Jan Bartelstone in your office or home.

Bartelstone is one of the most dynamic fine-art photographers in New Mexico. Taken over the past 20 years, his grand-scale landscape series is legendary and reflects the awe and grandeur of our vast skies, mountains, rivers and canyons.

As a Sierra Club supporter, you already know how important it is to preserve these wild spaces for wildlife and people. The Rio Grande Chapter works diligently to do that work each and every day in New Mexico and southwest Texas.

For a $150 donation to the Rio Grande Chapter, you can choose one of these 6 museum-quality, limited-edition prints. This is a special offer by the artist and is available for a limited time. Each print is 36 inches in its longest dimension.

Do not miss this opportunity to enjoy one of these iconic landscapes—a daily reminder of all that we hold precious and work so hard to preserve.

You can choose from the following prints:

Above the Volcano
Mount Taylor, New Mexico
Blue Arch
White Rock, Los Alamos

Fruitful way
Overlooking the Rio Grande from southwest Albuquerque. Many of the trees in the image burned in a fire shortly after the photo was taken.

Lady with Shawl
The Sandias—a view and perspective

“Blue Arch” requested by the Sandia Pueblo
“Puye Cliffs” (shown above) Santa Clara Canyon cliff dwellings, Española
Subtle Realms
Manzanos after a dry winter just before sunset

To make your donation, please go to sierraculbigrandedechapter.org/fundraiser, and we’ll follow up to confirm your choice of print and send it to you, carefully packaged in the mail. Thanks for supporting our efforts to protect New Mexico!
Take a walk with Bosque Action Team

By Richard Barish

Join the Central New Mexico Group’s Bosque Action Team for walks to learn why we protect this precious recreational area:

Saturday, Sept. 28, 10 a.m., bosque walk with the Sierra Club/Bosque Action Team. The cottonwoods in our bosque are senescing, that is, they are old and dying. We are likely to see large die-offs of cottonwoods in the next 5-20 years, depending on water conditions in the river. I will lead this easy walk to help us enjoy the bosque and learn about the fate of the cottonwood canopy, what we can expect in the bosque in the future, and what we can do to ensure that the bosque continues to be good habitat and a great place to enjoy nature in the middle of the city. RSVP to richard.barish@gmail.com or 505-232-3013 for hike location.

Sunday October 6, 11 a.m., Medicinal Plants of the Bosque Walk. Join herbalist and native plant conservationist Dara Saville for a stroll through the South Valley Bosque to explore medicinal plants. Meet at the Westside Community Center at 1250 Isleta Blvd SW at 10:45am for a short carpool to the trail head. This is an easy slow-paced walk, and all ages are welcome. Contact: Dara, dara@albuquerqueherbalism.com.

Central New Mexico Group

Central New Mexico Group’s Bosque Action Team for walks to learn why we protect this precious recreational area. Saturday, Sept. 28, 10 a.m., bosque walk with the Sierra Club/Bosque Action Team. The cottonwoods in our bosque are senescing, that is, they are old and dying. We are likely to see large die-offs of cottonwoods in the next 5-20 years, depending on water conditions in the river. I will lead this easy walk to help us enjoy the bosque and learn about the fate of the cottonwood canopy, what we can expect in the bosque in the future, and what we can do to ensure that the bosque continues to be good habitat and a great place to enjoy nature in the middle of the city. RSVP to richard.barish@gmail.com or 505-232-3013 for hike location.

Sunday October 6, 11 a.m., Medicinal Plants of the Bosque Walk. Join herbalist and native plant conservationist Dara Saville for a stroll through the South Valley Bosque to explore medicinal plants. Meet at the Westside Community Center at 1250 Isleta Blvd SW at 10:45am for a short carpool to the trail head. This is an easy slow-paced walk, and all ages are welcome. Contact: Dara, dara@albuquerqueherbalism.com.

Bernalillo takes zero-waste lead

By Anni Hanna

Will it be expensive when our food chains are contaminated with microplastics? asked Alex, age 11, of Bernalillo County commissioners. “Will it be expensive when birds’ stomachs are filled with bottle caps?”

Alex is part of the Global Warming Express program that teaches students climate science and advocacy. This year, it is students who have taken a lead role in asking the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County to pass ordinances banning plastics.

On a 3-1 vote, county commissioners passed an ordinance banning plastic bags and styrofoam takeout containers that will go into effect in January. Chair Maggie Hart Stebbins, Vice Chair Debbie O’Malley and Charlene Carvalho voted in favor. Lonnie Talbert and Steven Michael Pyskoty voted against and Steven Michael Pyskoty voted in favor. Lonnie Talbert voted against and Steven Michael Pyskoty voted in favor.

The ordinance is stronger than the City of Albuquerque’s version in that it also bans styrofoam takeout containers: “This is a movement, 8-year-old Athena said at the meeting. “We don’t want New Mexico to be left behind.”

Bernalillo has taken the lead in New Mexico by also banning styrofoam takeout containers. In our hot and windy desert conditions, styrofoam breaks into microplastics that harm our animals and our food chain. This is a win for our Rio Grande and Bosque ecosystem. From cradle to grave, extraction, refining, and degradation into microplastics, the plastics industry causes numerous health problems, including cancer. It is time for a global switch to compostable options.

Rachel Zulevi, founder of a Zero Waste group called WasteLess Life New Mexico, also spoke in support of the ordinance. “This bag ban is an essential tool for our community to become just a little bit more aware of our consuming habits and less beholden to single-use plastics,” Zulevi said. “It’s a good first step, of many steps we’ll need to take, to reverse the devastating impact throw-away plastics are having on the local and global environment.”

It is very heartening to see students listening to citizens leading us to our global warming change in our community. It is time for students to take the lead and lead the way.

Tips for living bag-free

By Camilla Feibelman

Rio Grande Chapter Director

In January, Albuquerque will go plastic bag free! This is a great example of individual action gone viral. If you are like me, at home you are always thinking of little ways to reduce your personal impact. Maybe it’s washing the dog in the kids’ bath water when they are done. Or putting a bucket in the shower while you wash the water up. Maybe it’s obsessively saving every mailing envelope for future reuse.

But the realities of our global crisis demand a scale of action beyond the sum of our individual, elective actions. And that’s why it’s so inspiring to see the students and kids who worked together to pass the Albuquerque ordinance ending distribution of single-use plastic bags at stores (of course we still have to get the straw and foam-container ban over the finish line.)

But when citizens move their governments to create the foundation for broad social change, we become closer to where we need to be to leave a livable planet for our little people.

Ginning bag-free will require care and thought on the part of each of us. If we turn around and buy big plastic trash bags at the store as an alternative to small grocery bags for trash, we reduce the benefits of the lower demand for petroleum. So here are a few suggestions:

1. Start composting. If you can’t do it yourself at home, you can purchase little-greenbucket.com, where Brad, a member of our Zero Waste Team, costs to pick up your compost each week. The rest of your waste will be easier to manage.

2. Recycle everything you can. Remember that cities don’t want your recyclables in bags. The bags clog the sorter and slow the system down. There’s a list of acceptable materials for Albuquerque at www.cabq.gov/solidwaste/recycling/acceptable-materials. Make sure your recyclables are clean. I suggest keeping a large bowl in your sink that captures waste when you rinse items. You can use that water to rinse your recyclables without using fresh water.

3. To collect your remaining trash, use cereal boxes, mailing envelopes, and food bags. These bags can also be used to collect animal waste.

4. And of course, behind all of this trash management is the basic need we all have to reduce what we buy while pushing companies to reduce the unnecessary waste and packaging they feed us.

Go solar and support your local Sierra Club Chapter

$1,000 rebate for you, $500 for the Chapter

SUNPOWER®

go.sunpower.com/partner/sierra-club/rio-grande/
El Paso Water Utilities. This agency administers the thou-
Paso’s mountain-biking communities promising “direct trail connections” to Franklin Mountains State Park.
1,006 acres of prime land was bought more than 50 years ago. It had been held by the city, and it was Council’s own fault for ignor-
ng the will of the people.
The Proposition A ballot had some challenges: Bonart had to fight the city for clear language, and it was combined with a school board elec-
So, when the city concocted its latest scheme to have taxpayers pay for otherwise unprofitable desert land development, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones, and set up Tax Incremental Reinvestment Zone 12, encompassing the 1,006 acres around the Lost Dog Trail, Dr. Bonart, an avid mountain biker, gathered his biking community to fight the TIRZ. When it became apparent that the City Council, led by the developers’ mayor, was not listening to open-space advocates’ protests, he began the petition process to create a ballot Proposition A.
us a few months more to come up with that second successful petition, but we bear their deadline. We sat at City Council, holding our collective breath while they went into “executive session” to strategize. They emerged, complaining that the election request we would forfeit $400,000, to which Dr. Bonart replied that it was Council’s own fault for ignor-
ng the will of the people.

By Laurence Gibson El Paso Group chair

The immediate benefit, accord-

El Paso Group’s Sierra Student Coalition was key in helping protect Lost Dog Trail from development. A May ballot question to save the trail won with a whopping 89 percent of the vote.

By Patricia Cardona Chapter Nuclear Waste Team

Governor’s letter a turning point on NM nuclear site?

Governor’s letter a turning point on NM nuclear site?

Governor’s letter a turning point on NM nuclear site?

Governor’s letter a turning point on NM nuclear site?

Governor’s letter a turning point on NM nuclear site?
PNM files to drop San Juan coal power

The next steps are to determine what replaces it — renewable energy, gas or a mix of the two?

Brittany Fallon
Rio Grande Chapter Legislative Coordinator

On March 22, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the Energy Transition Act (ETA, SB489) into state law, mandating 50% renewable energy generation by 2030 and 100% carbon-free energy by 2045. Now we must consider, how do we get there? Right now at the Public Regulation Commission, commissioners are preparing to hear the first major case relating to the ETA. The Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) recently filed a case with three parts. The first part requests the PRCs permission to abandon the San Juan Generating Station and get out of dirty coal, which currently supplies 30% or 400 MW of PNM’s energy. The second part addresses securitization, or how PNM will finance abandonment via low interest AAA-certified bonds that save ratepayers money on their monthly bills. The third part of the case, and the one that is most important for the issue of combating climate change, deals with the energy mix PNM will add to their portfolio in lieu of the abandoned coal power.

PNM has offered four replacement portfolios for the PRC to choose from, with each scenario including a mix of solar, wind, battery, and natural gas. We break down the pros and cons of each scenario below. One thing that is important to know is that PNM already has 140 MW of wind and 500 MW of solar pending before the commission as part of a prior request.

Scenario 1 (PNM’s preferred-scenario): Adds 370MW of solar, 130 MW of battery storage, and 280 MW of natural gas located in San Juan Central Consolidated School District. According to PNM, this plan has the lowest probability of a loss of a power outage.

Scenario 2 (mostly gas): Adds 476 MW of natural gas in San Juan County, 20MW of solar. Scenario 3 (Renewables and battery): Adds 500MW of solar and 410MW of battery, with 40MW in San Juan County. Scenario 4 (renewables without battery): Adds 975MW of solar and 1,199MW of wind, but no new resources in San Juan.

There are many important factors to consider, including each scenario’s overall climate impact; the number of jobs for New Mexicans; the impact on ratepayers; ensuring grid reliability to avoid outages; and environmental justice for San Juan County. Overall, we believe these proposals offer a step in the right direction. PNM is currently at 13% renewable energy; with three of the four scenarios, they would reach at least 34% RPS in 18 months.

That’s a huge victory for the climate, and it’s because people like you have been working for years to end the pollution from San Juan. That being said, we still have a lot of work to do. Replacing one dirty fuel in San Juan County with another isn’t the answer. Utilities have resisted breaking away from the outdated utility model of the past, but science and economics tell us we can and must stop burning fossil fuels now. This is an opportunity to start fresh with clean, affordable solar and wind.

PNM is looking forward to participating in the PRC process and doing our own modeling to advocate for the most equitable and cleanest possible transition from coal.

Help NM homeless shelter cut costs with solar

By Troy McGee
New Mexico Solar Group

The Rock at Noonday stands against the destructiveness of homelessness and is New Mexico’s largest feeding program, serving over 108,000 meals annually to adults and children.

After new security costs, the program’s electric utility bill is its highest monthly expense. Because of current budget shortfalls they are struggling to keep essential services like showers.

Good news is The Rock at Noonday has the perfect roof for both Photovoltaic solar and Solar Thermal energy. Troy McGee (The Solar Evangelist) has pulled together help from NM Solar Group, New Mexico Solar Energy Association, Amenergy and friends like the Sierra Club, PNM and APD to crowd fund the needed solar project. This is fundraising to buy capital equipment that will allow The Rock at Noonday to own their own electricity, saving them an estimated $700 a month. Because of solar energy’s very high return on investment, every $1 donated will save The Rock more than $3 in electricity expenses over the life of the equipment!

You don’t have to look outside New Mexico to donate and save lives. Donate to and share this important project today — www.crowdrise.com/thesolarevangelist. Thank you!
Preserving Greater Chaco

Tide finally turning Chaco’s way

By Miya King-Flaherty
Our Wild New Mexico Oil and Gas Organizer

The battle to protect the Greater Chaco region has certainly reached new heights. There is a real chance that permanent federal protections may become law after our entire New Mexico congressional delegation reintroduced the Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act of 2019 earlier this year. We can truly credit these gains to the persistent community-led effort and widespread support on all fronts.

State Land Office issues moratorium

On the heels of the reintroduced legislation, New Mexico Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard signed an executive order establishing a four-year moratorium on new oil and gas leasing on 72,776 acres of state trust lands within 10 miles of Chaco Park.

She also initiated the first of a series of Chaco Working Group meetings that included representatives from the All Pueblo Council of Governors, the Navajo Nation Council, local Navajo Chapters, the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, the offices of Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, and advocates from WildEarth Guardians, Sierra Club, Western Environmental Law Center and San Juan Citizens Alliance.

The working group is charged with advising the State Land Office on sustainable and responsible management practices on state trust lands in the Greater Chaco area.

The working group will also provide suggestions for potential land exchanges and improved land management practices in conjunction with tribal communities and the federal government.

Court win for Greater Chaco

Then in May, our coalition partners WildEarth Guardians and the Western Environmental Law Center won a partial federal appeals court ruling. The lawsuit questioned the environmental analysis of thousands of wells approved by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Farmington Field Office.

The court reversed the approval of 25 drilling permits, and the case has implications for hundreds of drilling permits that have been approved and are currently under consideration in the Greater Chaco region.

It’s clear that BLM is failing to analyze the significant impacts of oil and gas development prior to approving drill permits and leasing.

Making waves in Congress

In late May, Sen. Heinrich invited Secretary of Interior David Bernhardt to visit and tour Chaco Culture National Historical Park. Both were joined by Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Pueblo of Acoma Governor Brian Vallo. After the visit, Bernhardt imposed a one-year moratorium on new oil and gas leasing within a 10-mile buffer around the Park.

The moratorium also allows time for Congress to consider the pending legislation for permanent protections around the Park and stipulates that the BLM Farmington Field Office must complete its resource management plan for the region. However, the moratorium does not prevent the BLM from approving drilling permits on already leased lands.

Meanwhile, in June, U.S. House Assistant Speaker and U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján introduced a friendly Chaco protection amendment to a House Appropriations package that passed. The amendment prohibits federal funding from being used for further mineral development within the 10-mile buffer around the Park. It essentially codifies the Secretary’s moratorium decree into law for a year. We’re hopeful that the appropriations bill passes in the U.S. Senate.

June lease sale day of action

We’re gaining momentum must also be protected.

Unfortunately, the BLM Rio Puerco Field Office recently leased over 37,000 acres at the June 20th on-line lease sale—an area larger than the Park itself.

In keeping with tradition and holding a lease sale day of action, the Chaco coalition supported and participated in a spiritual relay run. The 50-mile awareness run, led by indigenous youth, was from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rio Puerco Field Office in Albuquerque to the BLM state headquarters in Santa Fe. The run culminated with the delivery of protest letters to the BLM and a community meal with allies, families, and advocates.

The #RunningForOurLives run symbolizes the public’s growing outrage against expanded oil and gas development throughout the Greater Chaco Landscape, and across New Mexico, while spreading awareness about climate impacts and environmental justice issues tied to fossil fuel development.

Special recognition goes to Eileen Shendo of Jemez Pueblo, the Native American Youth Empowerment runners, San Felipe Pueblo, Sierra Club senior organizer Robert Tohe, WildEarth Guardians, San Juan Citizens Alliance and others who made this a truly inspiring event.

Go solar and support your local Sierra Club Chapter

$1,000 rebate for you, $500 for the Chapter

go.sunpower.com/partner/sierra-club/rio-grande/

SPECIES IN PERIL
Along the Rio Grande
Wildlife

New wildlife management in NM

By Mary Katherine Ray

Wildlife Chair

For the first time in history, the chair and vice-chair of the New Mexico Game Commission, not both elected by their fellow commissioners, are women.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s seven appointments to the Game Commission took their seats at their first meeting June 14. Joanna Prukop, the new chair, has a long history of working in natural resource administration, having previously worked for New Mexico Game and Fish and as the cabinet secretary for the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department under Gov. Richardson. Vice chair Roberta Salazar Henry has also previously worked for many years for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

This commission sets policy for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, including important wildlife policies that matter to many Sierrans. While not a requirement to serve on the Commission, all seven commission members are hunters.

State law requires that there be one commissioner from each geographic quadrant of the state and one from Bernalillo County, accounting for five of the seats. Two seats are held at large: one who owns a farm or ranch containing at least 200 species of wildlife to be a voice for agriculture interests, and one by someone whose occupation is not at odds with wildlife conservation to be a voice for conservation interests, which is usually taken to mean not exclusively hunting and fishing based. This language dates back nearly a century to when the Commission was established in state law, despite multiple legislative attempts for reform that would make the Commission more representative for all wildlife interests.

The new at-large agriculture representative, Tirzio Lopez, refreshingly has said he supports the reintroduction of the Mexican wolf. The previous Game Commission appointed by former Gov. Susana Martinez completely withdrew the state of New Mexico from the Mexican-wolf reintroduction program and placed many obstacles in the way of success for our imperiled wild canine. There are 131 lobos left in the wild, and the reintroduction program includes introducing captive-bred lobos to sustain genetic diversity. Members of the public have urged that one of the first orders of business for the commission be to rejoin the wolf program, and indications are that this possibility will be placed on a future agenda.

The new at-large conservation member, David Soules, also serves on the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance board of directors and is a co-author of “Exploring Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument,” lending credibility to his ability to represent conservation interests. This is a far cry from the previous commission, where this seat was held either by a trophy hunter or an oil and gas lawyer — the previous administration would not clarify to which commissioner the seat even belonged.

At the first meeting, the new commissioners indicated they will be examining the rules for hunting of bears and coyotes, as well as for trapping, thereby completing all changes to existing rules prior to the next legislative session in January. Not only are trappers allowed to kill animals like bobcats, foxes, coyotes, and badgers, but the previous commission allowed the trapping of mountain lions. Population information for these species is sparse at best. These rules, because they impact endangered species, which we know to be essential to the integrity of biotic communities, are crucially important, to say nothing about safety concerns regarding the allowance of trapping on public lands.

At the first meeting, the commission indicated its commitment to increasing the transparency of its work and improving public engagement, which would be welcome developments.

Comments from the public included the reminder that wildlife, under the public-trust doctrine, belongs to everyone, not just the purchasers of hunting and fishing licenses.

You can read more about each game commissioner at www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/meet-the-commissioners.

Please also note the details and agenda items for upcoming meetings. Consider going to see your Game Commission at work. Wildlife is a treasured asset that belongs to all New Mexicans. Public participation is crucial to help guide their future — and ours.

Counties attempt to rein in animal-killing agency

By Mary Katherine Ray

As we know, the Wildlife Services, the euphemistically named federal agency, kills native wildlife that come into conflict with people. Often the people who benefit are private, for-profit, agricultural businesses that can save on maintenance and construction of secondary roads. Killing wildlife is not the exclusive purpose of this funding.

Two counties in Southern New Mexico, Grant and Doña Ana, are examining their contracts with Wildlife Services. In April, the Doña Ana County Commission passed a resolution directing that these funds, when used to address wildlife conflict, be used only on non-lethal methods. Wildlife Services and its allies in the county vehemently opposed this action. County commissioners were led to believe that devices like leg-hold traps are effective and humane despite voluminous evidence to the contrary. So much pressure was brought to bear that six weeks later, the Commission repealed the resolution and opted instead to require modest quarterly reports detailing what work was done. Tellingly, Wildlife Services opposed even this requirement. County wildlife advocates, including many Sierra Club Southern New Mexico volunteers, pushed the commissioner to, at a minimum, adopt the provisions in a newly conceived “People’s Contract” that would require Wildlife Services using non-lethal measures first, prohibit all aerial ginning, leg-hold traps and M-44 cyanide poison, and require detailed and publicly available accounting of actions taken based on the contract. At the end of the commission’s July 9 meeting, which supported on both sides attended, an amended contract was signed.

Wildlife advocates didn’t get everything we wanted, but significant progress was made. The quarterly reports must contain information about where Wildlife Services is responding, what species are involved, how the situation was handled and how often entries make repeat requests. Even more, Wildlife Services will now be required to try two separate non-lethal measures before resorting to killing offending wildlife.

The Wildlife Services contract is also under scrutiny in Grant County. In the past two years, Silver City wildlife advocates have garnered a modest requirement for quarterly reports from Wildlife Services under the Grant County contract. In a surprise vote June 27, the Grant County Commission amended its contract to prohibit the use of leg-hold traps and cyanide poison bombs. But the victory was short-lived. Less than two weeks later, commissioners under pressure from Wildlife Services and its allies voted to repeal this amendment.

Public testimony ran 2-to-1 against repeal and larger questions include why a federal agency has so thoroughly inserted itself into local governance and how the county spends its own funds ethically contrary to local opinion. This interference happened in both counties. One thing is certain, the practices of Wildlife Services are under scrutiny. Sunshine is the best disinfectant. Change, as we have seen with legislation about traps and poisons from all public lands in New Mexico is requiring a long and difficult course to disprove the status quo. We should remain confident that compassion and scientific reason will eventually prevail.

Wildlife

Upcoming Game Commission meetings:

9 a.m. July 24: Socorro at New Mexico Tech
9 a.m. Aug. 22: Santa Fe at the Roundhouse
9 a.m. Sept. 18: Cloudcroft at The Lodge, Pavilion room
9 a.m. Oct. 25: Farmington at Civic Center, Exhibition Hall
9 a.m. Nov. 21: Roswell at the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish office
9 a.m. Jan. 17: Santa Fe
we continue to fight in court, Climate Agreement. Though their own profit. resource from public lands for state, especially because compa-
force industry to take basic, Administration would national rules that were perspective. Our hope was climate, health and waste of Delaware over the Four now, with existing technology, it’s a problem we can solve Chaco and Carlsbad produces, term impacts as 22 coal-fired power plants or 28 million automobiles. While that’s only part of the total climate pollution that extraction in greater Chaco and Carlsbad produces, it’s a problem we can solve now, with existing technology, improving health conditions for people living in close proximity to oil and gas operations. When NASA discovered a methane cloud the size of Delaware over the Four Corners region in 2014, an array of groups convened to address the issue from a climate, health and water perspective. Our hope was that national rules that were later enacted by the Obama Administration would force industry to take basic, good-neighbor actions in our state, especially because compa-
nies are removing a public resource from public lands for their own profit. But the Trump Administration has gutted these rules, undermining our commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement. Though we continue to fight in court, Trump’s EPA is now challeng-
ing its own authority to regulate methane after reversing leak, detection and repair require-
ments in the original rule. So now, our New Mexico communities are confronted with not only the climate impacts of wasted methane oil and gas leaks, vents or flares but also the hundreds of thousands of tons of smog-producing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can trigger asthma attacks and worsen other respiratory diseases such as emphysema. Rural counties including Eddy, Lea, San Juan, Rio Arriba and Chaves — home to 97 percent of the state’s oil and gas wells — are at all risk of violating federal ozone stan-
dards. A recent study funded by Environmental Defense Fund, Diné CARE, Native American Voters Alliance and Grand Canyon Trust showed that tribal communities suffer from disproportionately high pollution levels.

Oil and gas operations also release hazardous air pollutants such as benzene and tolu-
en that are proven to cause cancer, putting those living close to oil and gas operations at the greatest risk. More than 130,000 New Mexicans live within a half-mile of oil and gas development. But there is hope. In January, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced her intent to make New Mexico a national leader in curbing methane waste and pollution by adopting rules “to eclipse states that are successful-
ly doing this work.” In June her administration announced the beginning of the process to create methane-reducing rules. Republican- and Democratic-
leaning states across the U.S. have proved these solutions are a win for the environment and economy. Colorado, Wyoming, Pennsylvania and Ohio all have state rules.

Make your voice heard for strong methane safeguards by attending any of three stake-
holder meetings the state is hosting in July:

- **1-5 p.m. July 21:** San Juan Community College, Farmington
- **1-5 p.m. July 29:** University of New Mexico School of Law, Albuquerque
- **8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Aug. 7:** Nuclear Waste Partnership Building, Carlsbad

In Farmington and Albuquerque we’ll provide lunch and orientation for those who are interested. In Carlsbad there will be an orientation on Aug. 5. Please email miya.king-flaherty@sierraclub.org if you’d like to attend or for more information.

By Camilla Feibelman
Rio Grande Chapter
director

Earthworks uses infrared cameras to detect methane leaks from fracking and drilling. Oil and gas facilities leak and flare enough of the climate-damaging gas to heat every home in New Mexico.

**Signs of progress on cleaning up methane**

By Brittany Fallon
Legislative coordinator

Even though New Mexico’s 30-day legislative session is months away, the wheels are turning for new laws and bills now. The interim legis-
lation runs from June to November, and it consists of joint House-Senate commit-
tees that travel the state to hear about issues that will likely show up as legislation in 2020. Often, the interim is used to introduce new legislation concepts and work out the kinks, as well as learn about issues. The first June meeting is for planning locations and discussion topics. Agencies release briefs a few weeks before each meeting.

You can see workplans for each committee at nmlegis.gov/ Committee/Interim.

Here is a list of committees that typically hear environmental issues:

- **Revenue Stabilization and Tax Policy Committee.** This commit-
tee sometimes discusses incen-
tives and barriers to bringing additional industries to rural New Mexico and tax struc-
tures on oil and gas and other industries. (Meetings: July 25-26 in Santa Fe; Aug. 28-29, Red River (joint meeting with Legislative Finance Committee); Sept. 26-27, Santa Fe; Oct. 23-24, Santa Fe; Dec. 17-18, Santa Fe.)

- **Economic and Rural Development Committee.** This committee discusses ways to boost economic develop-
ment to rural New Mexico, which this year includes energ-

gy-sector topics from fracking to electric vehicles to econo-

tism. (Meetings: Aug. 14-16 in Las Vegas/Taos; Oct. 28-30, Farmington; Nov. 12-14, Santa Fe.)

- **Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee.** This commit-
tee discusses everything from uranium to produced water to WIPP. (Meetings: Aug. 23 in Las Cruces; Sept. 25-26, Hobbs; Nov. 4, Santa Fe.)

**Water and Natural Resources Committee.** This committee covers a wide variety of envi-
ronmental issues, from wildlife to energy to water. (Meetings: July 30-31 in Truth or Consequences; Sept. 5-6 in Ruidoso; Oct. 17-18 in Silver City; Nov. 7-8 in Santa Fe.)

**Legislative Finance Committee.** This committee covers budget-related topic and meets frequently. (Next meeting: Aug. 28-30, Red River.)

**Science, Technology, and Telecommunications Committee.** This committee plans to address renewable-energy technology, STEM education and electric vehicles. (Meetings: Sept. 3-4 in Alamogordo/Sunspot; Sept. 25-24, Albuquerque; Oct. 7, Albuquerque; Oct. 15-16, Las Cruces; Nov. 5-6, Santa Fe.)

**The Water and Natural Resources Committee** is a particularly important commit-
tee for the Sierra Club because it focuses almost entirely on environmental resources. Their workplan includes a long list of issues, from wildfire to energy to water. (Meetings: July 30-31, Truth or Consequences; Sept. 5-6, Ruidoso; Oct. 17-18, Silver City; Nov. 7-8, Santa Fe.)

If you plan to attend an interim committee, call or email me! I would be delighted to introduce you to legislators who work on the issues you care about.

**Chapter’s MRGCD candidates win big**

By Richard Barish
Chapter Political Team chair

All three candidates endorsed by the Rio Grande Chapter in the June 7 Middle Ras Grande Conservancy District election were victorious. Barbara Baca defeated incumbent Board Chair Glen Duggins in the race for the “at-large” seat, representing Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia and Socorro counties, by a vote of 1,858 to 1,384. Barbara’s win was driven by strong support in Bernalillo County.

Stephanie Russo Baca prevailed in a three-person race for the Valencia County seat. Stephanie received more votes than the other two candidates combined, garnering 460 votes to 418 for her opponents.

John Kelly was unopposed in his bid for reelection to the Bernallillo County seat. This is an election where voting and volunteering by Sierra Club supporters can really make a difference, and did make a difference, since so few eligible voters actually cast a ballot. Congratulations to all the candidates, and a big THANK YOU to all of you who voted or volunteered in this important election.
Where does the water go after it drains down your sink (or toilet)? Water is shunted along a fast-flowing maze at South Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant, through bar screens, grit chambers, clarifiers and aeration tanks (left) before going through an ultraviolet disinfecting chamber (middle). Cleaned water is released to the Rio Grande (right).

**Zero Waste Team goes with the flow**

By Carol Chamberland
Central New Mexico
Zero Waste Team

ike most city dwellers, I pay my monthly water bill with scarcely a thought for what happens downstream after each flush of the toilet. When Central Group staffer Cecilia Chávez Beltrán suggested we take a tour of the local wastewater treatment facility, I told her it was beyond the scope of our Zero Waste focus. But if she wanted to organize a tour, I’d go along. So, she did, and I(696,643,801,890)(817,643,922,890)(939,643,1044,890)(1112,643,1217,890). Many thanks to Cecilia.

We lucked out with a sunny day in an otherwise rainy week. The odor hit me before I exited my car at the South Valley Wastewater Treatment plant. We assembled in a classroom for an overview of the operation and to don regulation hard hats and safety vests. The ABCWUA (Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority) is a political subdivision of the state, with board members representing Albuquerque's City Council, Bernalillo County Commission, the Albuquerque Mayor's Office, and the village of Los Ranchos. They have stringent EPA guidelines to observe as they treat 55 million gallons of wastewater per day.

As Chief Engineer Jeffrey Rowinski guided us around the base, we observed the process of filtering out solids and cleaning the water. I’d imagined lots of chemicals involved, but I was wrong. Gravity is a big factor and mechanical means predominate.

Wastewater flows through bar screens, grit chambers, clarifiers, aeration tanks, and final clarifiers, then passes through an ultraviolet disinfecting chamber. In a large, open-air chamber before being released into the Rio Grande. Sludge removed from the wastewater is concentrated and collected in anaerobic digesters, where it produces methane gas. The on-site co-generation plant uses the methane to meet 70 percent of the facility's electrical needs. The methane to meet 70 percent of the facility's electrical needs. The on-site co-generation plant uses the methane to meet 70 percent of the facility's electrical needs.

Meanwhile, the brown stuff is treated in anaerobic digesters, where odors are reduced. The digester effluent from the aeration tanks is concentrated and collected in anaerobic digesters, where it produces methane gas. The digester effluent from the aeration tanks is concentrated and collected in anaerobic digesters, where it produces methane gas. The digester effluent from the aeration tanks is concentrated and collected in anaerobic digesters, where it produces methane gas. The digester effluent from the aeration tanks is concentrated and collected in anaerobic digesters, where it produces methane gas. The digester effluent from the aeration tanks is concentrated and collected in anaerobic digesters, where it produces methane gas. The digester effluent from the aeration tanks is concentrated and collected in anaerobic digesters, where it produces methane gas. The digester effluent from the aeration tanks is concentrated and collected in anaerobic digesters, where it produces methane gas.

The odors, most of these pools have been covered with metallic domes, giving the plant the semblance of a UFO parking lot. Water moves between successively cleaner pools, is shunted along a fast-flowing maze and subjected to UV light for disinfection. As we headed west, the odors diminished, and by the time we reached the Rio Grande, the smell was gone. It was a refreshing sight to behold, gallons of cleansed city water flowing into the high, muddy waters of the Rio Grande.

Meanwhile, the brown stuff is processed into a substance described as “the color and texture of chocolate cake” — an unfortunate analogy for cake-lovers. These biosolids are eventually loaded onto trucks and delivered to their sister facility on the West Mesa for composting. Some of the re-use water is sold to corporate and government customers for landscape Irrigation. This product is not available for private citizens.

Now that they had my attention, I booked us a tour of the Compost del Rio Grande. Supervisor Joe Bailey gave us an intro and handed out hard hats and safety vests. I expected this site to smell like the wastewater facility, but I was wrong again. There’s an odor, but it’s the earthy smell of mulch, not human waste.

The compost facility accepts truckloads of untreated wood, food scraps, yard waste, horse stable bedding, and biosolids from the south valley plant. There is no charge to drop off materials, but the standards are high. If the load is unacceptable, the truck is reloaded and sent down the road to the city landfill, where they must pay to dump. Between 35 and 40 percent of the trucked-in biosolids are mixed with other amendments to make compost, and the remainder is spread out to amend on the open land. Dumped matter is exposed to the elements and aged for months in the open air. When preparing a new batch of compost, these ingredients are mixed in proper proportions and piled into great windrows in the shelter of a huge warehouse. They cook for months more, reaching temperatures that are precisely calculated to kill microbes and not create a microbial feeding frenzy. A large machine appropriately called the Scarab routinely turns the compost piles until they are cooked to perfection.

The end product is offered for sale by the truckload. The resulting certified biosolids compost typically consists of 50% animal-stable bedding, 30% biosolids and 20% green waste. It sells for $25 per ton and may be used in the production of crops for human consumption.

The Department of Transportation uses a special form of the compost to line highway shoulders. This product is heavy and does not blow away, so they seed it with grasses and flowers.

Local wildlife loves this place. On chilly nights, coyotes burrow into the composting heaps to sleep in their warmth, then retreat into the surrounding desert when employees arrive in the morning. A nesting pair of great horned owls lives a comfortable life in the rafters of the giant warehouse, raising chicks and sending them on their way once they’ve fledged. There’s a plentiful supply of rodents, lizards and snakes to keep the owls and coyotes happy and the employees on their toes.

Clockwise from top left: The Zero Waste Team observes the South Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant aeration tank. Compost del Rio Grande produces another finished product of our wastewater; the team donned hardhats for the compost tour; the scarab turns compost as it cooks.
Northern New Mexico

Project aims to prevent catastrophe

Teresa Seamster
Northern Group Chair
The Sangre de Cristo Mountains behind Santa Fe look green this summer, with more growth and ground cover than usual due to early and heavier-than-average rainstorms. The dry timber and deadfall left by the long and still-present drought is hidden in the new green, but a few weeks of hot, windy weather will quickly dry out the tall weeds and tree stands.

For more than two years, Santa Fe National Forest, the city and county of Santa Fe, Tesuque Pueblo and collaborating groups in the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition, have strategized and reached out to the public with a growing sense of urgency on how to prevent an unnaturally high-intensity fire in this potential tinderbox. There are many steps that forest professionals and the public agree need to be taken, and there are others where opinions are divided.

The Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Project is the proposed action the firehshed coalition is working on “to improve the resilience of a priority landscape to future disturbances such as high-severity wildfire, drought, and insect outbreaks by restoring forest structure and composition.”

According to the proposal, to increase the resilience of the forests, watersheds, and communities of the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed, there is a need to:

• Move forests and woodlands (including ponderosa pine, dry mixed conifer, aspen, and prionon-juniper) in the project area toward their characteristic species composition, structure and spatial patterns to improve ecological function;

• Reduce the risk for high-severity wildfire, create safe, defendable zones for firefighters in areas of continuous fuels and near valued resources that are at risk, and avoid negative post-fire impacts;

• Improve the diversity and quality of habitat for wildlife; and

• Improve soil and watershed conditions.

Today, the public is used to seeing densely forested slopes, with 500 to 1,000 or more trees per acre in some areas, and fewer grassy meadows and valleys. The proposed thinning and burning of selected areas in the 50,000-acre moun- tain project to 50-100 trees per acre is a concern for many residents, as they have seen thinning projects that have produced unsatisfactory results.

This spring, the Santa Fe Board of County Commissioners looked closely at the project and the years of work that have gone into identifying its need and purpose. Commissioners listened to public concerns and forestry staff presentations. The wording of their subsequent March resolution falls short of asking the Santa Fe National Forest to conduct an Environmental Impact Study but requests reasonable alternatives before further actions are taken in the Fireshed.

Local conservation groups, including Northern New Mexico Group of Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife and WildEarth Guardians were encouraged to propose a Santa Fe Conservation Alternative. The SFC Alternative has been submitted to the Santa Fe National Forest and contains several measures starting with these recommendations:

1. Educate the public, especially those who live near the forest, to make fireproofing changes on their properties and become “Firewise Communities,” and

2. Inform residents about emergency and wildfire preparedness. These are two critical areas the National Forest and fireshed coalition have been extensively involved in the past few years.

The conservation alternative also makes additional recommendations:

• Require a site-specific plan for each project within the SFMLRP that strategically targets fire prone areas to treat, creates buffered boundary areas to protect property and access roads, and safety zones to protect lives;

• Require that riparian areas and critical wildlife habitat receive additional restoration monitoring and mitigation procedures developed in collaboration with the Department of Game and Fish;

• Encourage public input regarding preservation of places, landscapes, cultural sites and landmarks of local significance;

• Restore/reseed streamside areas, replant native vegetation, return beavers to appropriate areas and decommission nonessential roads.

To protect areas with acres of smaller trees, the conservation alternative recommends thinning up to 9 inches diameter instead of up to 24 inches, and to leave a higher amount of understory to maintain cover and forage for wildlife. To avoid attracting beetle infestation and spread, no slash larger than 3 inches (chip size) should be left on the ground during dry season. To evaluate the success of project treatment areas, it recommends test plots to monitor progress and type of post-fire re-vegetation and return of species.

The Santa Fe National Forest Preferred Alternative has been completed and is available to the public. Residents are encouraged to read the provisions carefully and make suggestions that they feel will ensure forest resiliency and improve the project.

The mountains behind Santa Fe are the watershed and environment that sustains the city and surrounding communities today. We are all deeply invested in the success of this project.

For more information: Santa Fe Conservation Alternative here and the Santa Fe Mountain Landscape Resiliency Project: link

Top photo: 2017 project site visit to Cougar Canyon rim before thinning treatment (see marked tree in center)

Bottom photo: 2019 project site visit to Cougar Canyon rim (same marked tree) after treatment

Northern New Mexico Group

Contacts

Executive Committee
Chair: Teresa Seamster, 505-466-8964, ctc.seamster@gmail.com
Vice chair: Tom Gorman, 505-438-3932, gomandy@gmail.com
Treasurer: Jim Baker, 505-473-0457, bakerjim.sw@gmail.com
Alice Cox: 505-780-5122, auntiealice@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 Knazpky
Outings: Alan Shapiro, 505-424-9242, nm5s@yahoo.com
Phone Support: Jerry Knazpky
Publicity: Open

Book Sales: Janet Peacock 505-988-8929, sfdayhike@gmail.com
Sales backup: Ann Anthony, anrasca@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, gsprenger@cybermesa.com
Taos: Eric Patterson, 575-776-2833, eepatt@gmail.com

For more information: see website.
Sentinels kick off testing season

By Shannon Romeling

Water Sentinels

Rented high-school chemistry teacher, devoted Sierra Club member and activist, mentor, father, husband, friend, and many more terms could be used to describe Eric Patterson.

However, none of these things would fully explain the influential person and personality that is Eric. I’ve had the privilege of working with Eric for six years. As lead of the Water Sentinels, Eric trained me to manage the program, including organizing volunteers, choosing sampling locations and coordinating with the water-sampling lab, Eric and I also did field trips and in-class presentations/trainings together, and he helped me learn how to effectively speak to different ages about water quality.

After more than a decade of running the Water Sentinels Rios De Taos, Eric will be stepping down this year. Thanks to his hard work, we have a strong volunteer base and funding to keep the program going. On May 29, 10 volunteers gathered at the annual Water Sentinels Training to learn the citizen science techniques necessary for our program. After a great session of interactive learning, we celebrated Eric and thanked him for his tremendous commitment to water quality, the Sierra Club, and education.

Water Sentinels Rios De Taos is a Sierra Club and Amigos Bravos joint project whose mission is to monitor four rivers in Taos County three times a year and to use the data to bring attention and funding to impaired rivers.

To become a Water Sentinels Rios De Taos volunteer or to create a Water Sentinels group in your town, call 575-758-3874 or email stromeling@amigosbravos.org.

Volunteer profile: Alice Cox

Our volunteer interview this issue is with Alice Cox, the Northern New Mexico Group membership chair, who organizes terrific even large and small, writes letters to the editor and makes everyone around her feel special.

What is your role with the Sierra Club Northern New Mexico Group?

I am the Membership Chair going on 16 years. What’s your work and career background? How does that help your role?

The hospitality industry. My work in hospitality and restaurants taught me the importance of making connections with people to achieve great results, whether with a memorable meal, or a celebration of achievement. Experience definitely helps with organizing successful parties.

The Northern New Mexico Group has incredibly high member engagement and volunteer activity level. How do you get people involved?

Since we’re in Santa Fe, we’re lucky to have many local members ready to contact their legislators on sustainable energy-transition issues. Our staff and volunteer lobby team welcome “new blood” and provide training. Our Northern New Mexico members are very aware that environmental CHAMPIONS are necessary to protect and enhance our world and turn out to canvas for Sierra Club-endorsed candidates at every level, including city, county and soil conservation districts.

What do you like about volunteering?

My favorite thing about volunteering is knowing I made a difference and working with incredibly dedicated and accomplished staff and volunteers. What would you tell someone who wants to get involved but doesn’t know how?

For those who want to get involved I would say take a hike (if you are able) and experience the beauty of Northern New Mexico. It may lead to a desire to protect it. Follow what the state legislature is doing, go to the training sessions for lobbyists, and make a difference. Go to Facebook (facebook.com/NMSierraClub) and see what we’re doing. Right now you can go to public meetings on our methane danger (see Page 10).

What’s your favorite Sierra Club memory?

My favorite SC memory is attending the first-ever Sierra Club summit in San Francisco in 2005. Marshall Ganz (who organized agricultural workers with Cesar Chávez) gave great classes on leadership ladders and training for organizing. We had invited Al Gore to speak, but he had a prior engagement at a conference on global warming in New Orleans. Then Katrina happened. It was a real “woke” moment for the looming climate disaster.

Young leaders head to SPROG

By Eric Patterson

The Río Grande Chapter will be sending three young people to the week-long Student Sierra Club leadership training camp (SPROG) in Sausalito, Calif., this summer. Stefanie Sorros and her husband farm in Taos County. She has been working the past 5 years to establish sustainable perennial gardens in Taos Valley for pollinator resource availability and aesthetics and is focusing on food sovereignty as she develops a sustainable homestead with chickens to provide for her family. She has a background in anthropology and sociology studies. She is a master gardener and the mother of two lovely children.

Alice Vigil will be a junior in a joint environmental program offered by UNM-Taos and New Mexico Highlands University. She is majoring in Forest Management with a minor in Archeology. She is employed by the Forest Service, supervising members of the Youth Conservation Corps. Patrick Payne is a physicist at Los Alamos National Laboratory. He is doing a two-year appointment at LANL before graduate school, where he hopes to earn a doctorate in astrophysics.

These outstanding young people are already involved in our state’s environmental activities. Their experience at SPROG should enable them to become outstanding environmental leaders.
Green Earth Club asks board to green schools

By Ravijit Khalsa

eHello, my name is Ravijit Khalsa, and I am representing the Green Earth Club at the Middle School.

Our mission is to keep the Middle School a more sustainable place to positively impact our planet. Our main focus this year was improving the eco-friendliness of our cafeteria.

We implemented recycling in the cafeteria and are hoping to spread education about recycling. To further our goal, we need to implement metal trays and silverware to reduce waste and pollution.

The main concern associated with this change would be the cost of the new utensils. While this is a difficulty, it should be among high priority, as the cost of pollution certainly outweighs this monetary cost. Yes, financial struggles can hurt our goals of a cleaner school, but we must strive past this temporary roadblock and look for solutions. For example, the company that works with our school cafeteria, Chartwells, has already expressed interest in our idea. By arranging budgets in the new contracts with them, we can find some aid to our problems.

Also, monetary loss from waste costs can be cut by removing the need for unrecyclable trays and utensils.

I understand it is a struggle to budget and financially organize everything in the middle school from the teachers’ pay to renovations and to other fees. But this adversity should not be a cause to throw away our ambitions!

Have adversities ever stopped the likes of Edison, who famously failed 1,000 times before the invention of the light bulb, or Howard Schultz, who was rejected for a loan from 242 banks before he went on to found Starbucks? Or Jack Ma, who was rejected from KFC and is now the richest man in Asia, or Malala Younasfai, who was shot in the head by an extremist before becoming the youngest Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, or 16-year-old Greta Thunberg, who is leading the student environmental movement?

These persevering spirits are held within all of us, and I think we should use them to move past our issues and develop our goals. This goes for a cleaner cafeteria and for a cleaner school and for a cleaner community and for a cleaner world. Thank you.

No plan for shortcut to Santa Fe

By Jody Benson

Pajarito Group chair

At an Employees All Hands presentation at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Triad Director Thomas Mason brought up the idea of bridging the Rio Grande in order to shorten the commute from Santa Fe and south to Los Alamos.

The Pajarito Group’s subsequent inquiry to Los Alamos National Laboratory’s Communication Office brought the response that the director was just sharing an informal idea and that LANL, in any event, doesn’t build roads or bridges on its own and is in no position to forge ahead with such a plan.

We will keep our membership informed in case action is required.

Meetings and events

Genie Stevens presents: “How Kids Make Policy—the Global Warming Emergency,” Tues., Aug. 20, 11:45, Mesa Public Library. The Pajarito Group and League of Women Voters are cohosting Genie at Lunch with a Leader. GWE is the free, afterschool program that teaches kids about the environment, and then guides them on how to lobby to save the Earth. This is the group that got the single-use plastic shopping bag banned in Santa Fe, and started the process of eliminating single-use plastic in Albuquerque.

Volunteers needed for Adopt a Tree at the PEEC Bear Festival, Sat., Aug. 24. We’ll need volunteers again for an hour or two from 10 a.m. to 2 to inspire kids about the secret lives of trees and lead them on a short walk toward Kinnikinnick Park. Contact Jody at echidnaejb@gmail.com.
Delayed gratification

Here’s an account of hiking Embudito Canyon Loop Trail with our Spanish-language hiking program, Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico, from a recent participant:

By Darcy Brazen

C all me Perpetual Lateness. I am always running a few minutes shy of expectations and, arriving for the June 9 Excursiones hike was no different. I pulled my sputtering 20-year-old Mazda truck into the last available space at Embudito Trailhead, the dirt cut-out alongside the bike rack. Fortunately, the Excursion leader, Cecilia, and a couple other trekkers were still there, passing out minneola tangerines, checking on supplies of water, and signing consent forms. Cecilia, and a couple other trekkers were still there, passing out minneola tangerines, checking on supplies of water, and signing consent forms. When the fifth hiker of our group ambled along, I felt blantly postponed of my transgression of lateness. We trudged up the well-worn path of Embudito Trailhead, a pack of six to include my dog, June. We were as warriors in the path of the sun’s direct and blatant eastern rise of heat in the month of June. Other warrior hikers bounded down past us, their mountain sojourn now wisely over, before the sun had baked them into expired spent cakes of mud. My sense of lateness and urgency ground into me further. This is me when beginning any “longish” hike: a burning sense of regret that I have started out “too late,” and I am further hampered by doubt that my aging body (58) can carry me 100 yards, let alone up a mountain.

The gentle charter of my hiking cohort surrounded me as we commented admiringly upon the blossoms of thistle, barrel cactus, and cholla, and we soon had climbed east and slightly south to the first open plateau. Veins of granite and limestone shone like mica-infused charcoal and rose in sheets across the canyon, but closer up, these same geologic formations are riotously infused with dabs of lime-green, sky-blue and fire-orange furry lichens. I had finally found my stride as our group continued upward.

The 3.9-mile Embudito loop trail gains 1,200 feet in elevation and returns through an arroyo marked by a downed Ponderosa pine. We ate here for a bit, soaking in the whis- tle of the wind rocking these giant coniferous beauties and eating some truly slice-of-paradise Vietnamese ‘green coconut bread’ one of the Excursionesistas shared with us. We followed the arroyo’s path. Water sluiced placidly down and followed its well-known route across emerald isles of glittering greens. We wet our faces and necks. My dog bounded about, jubilant and child-like, with her enduring uneven gait. We greeted fellow humans and dogs, returning to the trailhead around 1:30.

Thank you to the people of Sandia Nation for the honor of sharing the joys of Sandia’s ancestral land base.

Hikes and events from Page 16

2.5-mile hike that incorporates a one-hour outdoor yoga and mindfulness break midway. Includes 200 feet of elevation gain and amazing views of the mountains.

Sponsored by the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program, and everyone is welcome. Limited to 15 participants, and children over the age of 12 are welcome when accompanied by parent or guardian. To preserve the solitude of the occasion, only certified service dogs meeting ADA guidelines will be permitted. Contact leader by Sept. 10 to RSVP and obtain location.

Trip leader: Terry Owen, 505-301-4349, teowen@comcast.net Level: Easy Location: East Mountains of Albuquerque Sign up: riograndesierrach.org/calendar (click on event and fill out form to register).

Sunday, Sept. 22: Autumnal Equinox sunset hike at Tome Hill (Easy Space)

Meet at 6:30 p.m. at Mountain View Community Center, 201 Prosperity Ave. SE, to carpool. This three-hour hike, including drive time, is on steep, rocky trail to the crosses on Tome Hill with an elevation gain of 1,800 feet in less than half a mile. The return trip is more gradual but still lose and rocky. Entire hike is 2 miles. A headlamp or flashlight is required since this is a sunset hike.

Join us at this popular open-space area near Los Lunas for a therapeutic dose of spirituality and sunset beauty, the perfect way to recognize the Equinox. Bring writing materials for introspection, journaling or your gratitude list. This steep uphill hike is appropriate for youth 8 and up accompanied by an adult. No dogs allowed. Recommended carpool driver donation is $3. Contact leader no later than Sept. 20 to RSVP.

Trip leader: Carrie Ann Drinville, 505-369-9450; text is best, or email drinville@hotmail.com. Level: Easy Location: South of Los Lunas Sign up: riograndesierrach.org/calendar (click on the event and fill out the form to register).

Saturday, Sept 28: Monuments to Main Street Hike, Picacho Peak

We will hike the Western Ridge trail to the top of Picacho Peak. At the top of Picacho Peak you will enjoy 360-degree views of the entire National Monument as well of views into Texas and Mexico. We will return via the original trail route. 3-4 miles round trip with 700 feet of elevation gain. Call trip leader for meeting time and place. Limited to 15 people.

Trip leader: Howie Dash, 575-652-7750, howiedash@aol.com Level: Moderate Location: Las Cruces, NM

Monday, Oct 4: Easy/moderate hike along Las Conchas Trail in the Jemez Mountains.

Carpooling recommended. No dogs or children under 12. After the hike, we will all gather at Los Ojos in Jemez Springs. Details at Meetup site: meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Rio-Grande-Chapter. Sign up and RSVP by Oct. 1.

Trip leader: June Parsons, comucsilver@gmail.com Level: Easy/moderate Location: North of Jemez Springs
July-August-September outings

Saturday, July 13: High-altitude hike 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, 7521 Carmel Ave. NE in Albuquerque to leave promptly at 7 a.m. Drive time to the trailhead will be 2 hours. This in-and-out hike will be 7.1 miles roundtrip with an elevation gain of 783 feet and a total uphill of 306 feet. The minimum elevation will be 9,269 feet. The grade will be 5% at times. A raincoat or poncho are required in case there is a storm. The hike leader will cancel the hike if a thunderstorm is forecast. RSVP to the hike leader by phone or text. This hike will be limited to 15 hikers, including the hike leader. Seniors, please bring your National Park passes. Please no dogs or children. 

Trip leader: Diane, 505-917-0596
Location: Moderate/STrenuous
Location: East of Cuba, NM
Sign up here: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar (click on the event and fill out the form to register).

Saturday July 20: Piedra Lisa Canyon Trail-White Wash, meet at the trailhead at 13225 Menaul Blvd., Albuquerque, NM 87111 at 7 a.m. with an approximate end time of 10 a.m. No dogs please. Distance: 2.1 miles with an elevation gain of 954 feet. Excursiones le invita a venir a disfrutar de las áreas naturales cercanas — en convivio, en Español — protección y conservación, y en la naturaleza. Monitorea la información natural e histórica. Las excursiones son en español.

Trip leader: Cecilia Chávez Beltrán, 505-243-7767, cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org
Level: Moderate
Location: East side of Albuquerque
Saturday, July 20: Carlito Springs Resort hike. Meet at 8 a.m. at Hobby Lobby on Juan Tabo to carpool. Join us to tour this oasis on the south slope of the Sandia Mountains. Great for beginners, and children over 10 years of age if accompanied by parent or guardian. Two miles round trip with a 350-foot elevation gain in under 1.5 hours. Locales has interesting historical significance. Dogs on leash OK. Carpooling encouraged (limited parking). Recommended carpool driver donation is $5. Sponsored by the Military Outdoors Program and we welcome everyone. Contact leader by July 18 or sign up at the link below to RSVP.

Trip leader: Terry Owen, 505-301-4349, teowen@comcast.net
Level: Easy
Location: East Mountains of Albuquerque
Sign up at: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar (click on event and fill out the form to register).

Sunday, July 21: Woodys, Meadows Cedro Peak Loop hike. Meet at 7 a.m. at Hobby Lobby on Juan Tabo to carpool. This four-hour outing which includes drive time, is a 5.7-mile loop with 363 feet of elevation gain. Join us for this piton-juniper-ponderosa woods hike, looping near historic Cedro Peak Lookout. This hike has significant thunderstorm risk. RSVP to the hike leader by phone or text. This hike will be limited to 15 hikers, including the hike leader. Seniors, please bring your National Park passes. Please no dogs or children.

Trip leader: Cecilia Chávez Beltrán, 505-243-7767, cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org
Level: Moderate
Location: East Mountains of Albuquerque

Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico. Sign up at riograndesierraclub.org/events-calendar/ -- click on the event and fill out the form to register. Sunday, Aug 4: Armijo Trail hike. Meet at Sprouts Farmers Market parking lot, 13150 Central Ave SE, Albuquerque, NM 87123 at 8 a.m. with anticipated end time of 12 p.m. Near Cedar Crest, this is a lovely shaded area with a dry riverbed. Approximate roundtrip distance is 4.5 miles with an elevation gain of 790 feet. Drivers bring $3 cash for Forest Service parking/amenity fee, or have appropriate pass. No dogs please. Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico. RSVP to leader by Aug 2.

Trip leader: Cecilia Chávez Beltrán, 505-243-7767, cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org
Level: Moderate
Location: East Mountains of Albuquerque
Saturday, Aug 10: Armijo Trail and Cienega Spring Trail hike. Meet at 8 a.m. at Hobby Lobby on Juan Tabo to carpool. Come to admire the beautiful ponderosa pines and mountain wilderness right in our backyard. Suitable for children over 12 if accompanied by a parent or guardian. Five miles round trip with a 900-foot elevation gain over about five hours. Dogs on leash OK. Carpooling encouraged; recommended carpool driver donation is $3. Service parking/amenity fee in cash or Cibola Wilderness pass or other federal service pass is required. Sponsored by the Military Outdoors Program, and we welcome everyone. Limited to 10 people. Contact leader by Aug 7 or sign up at the link below to RSVP.

Trip leader: Terry Owen, 505-301-4349, teowen@comcast.net
Level: Moderate
Location: East Mountains of Albuquerque

SUBSCRIBE RIO-NORTH-OUTINGS. Send an email to Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org with the subject line ‘subscribe riograndesierraclub’ to receive outdoor information such as trail conditions.

Excursions a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico. Our Spanish-language outings program promotes the enjoyment of natural spaces nearby. Nuestro programa de Excursiones le invita a venir a disfrutar de las áreas naturales cercanas — en convivio, sin costo, y en Español! We update outings listings in English and in Spanish, offering inclusive opportunities to explore the beauty of nature nearby.

Trip leader: Diane
Trip leader: Cecilia Chávez Beltrán
Trip leader: Terry Owen
Trip leader: Susan M. Farmer
Trip leader: Diane
Trip leader: Cecilia Chávez Beltrán

Participants scale up Kitchen Mesa Trail at Ghost Ranch this spring on a moderate hike. Each outing listing includes difficulty rating, and we offer hikes at all levels, from beginner to difficult.

Everything you need to know about Sierra Club 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.

All outings 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. The Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program organizes outdoor trips for veterans, active-duty service members, reservists and their families, because we know that time spent in nature provides a unique opportunity to foster mental and physical health, emotional resiliency, and gives you the ability to spend time with others who understand. We welcome all, regardless of whether you served or not, and choices are, there’s an outing that’s just right for you.

Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico is our Spanish-language outings program; promotes the enjoyment of natural spaces nearby. Nuestro programa de Excursiones le invita a venir a disfrutar de las áreas naturales cercanas — en convivio, sin costo, y en Español! We update outings in Facebook: Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico.

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.

Continued on Page 15