



Rio Grande Sierran

Volume 57, Issue 4 News of the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter: New Mexico & West Texas October / November / Decemberr 2019

STRIKE



Photo by Esha Chiochio

On Sept. 20, youth worldwide organized strikes to demand climate action. Thousands turned out in New Mexico and West Texas, including these Global Warming Express kids in Santa Fe. See story, Page 8.



Photo courtesy Sunrise Albuquerque

Youth activist D’Nessa McDaniel emceed the Albuquerque climate rally.



Photo courtesy J. Mackenzie


Strikers rallied then marched to U.S. Senate offices. Both senators signed on to the Green New Deal.



Photo by David McGahey

Global W.E.’s Sierra signs her speech at the Santa Fe event. See Sierra’s interview on Page 8.

EXPLORE, ENJOY AND PROTECT THE PLANET

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

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Inside:

Our national forests need your help

Forest Service’s proposed management plans for Carson, Cibola and Santa Fe are inadequate to protect forests’ treasures. **Page 5.**

New Mexico to adopt clean-car rules

The announcement came despite the Trump administration’s move to revoke California’s right to impose stricter fuel standards. **Page 7.**

Albuquerque to transition to EV fleet

The city will convert 50 of its cars to electric by 2021. **Page 7**

More: State to hold meetings on produced water: Page 7. **Central New Mexico Group:** Page 9. **Northern New Mexico Group:** Pages 12-13. **Pajarito — bears and pits:** Page 14. **Hikes and outings:** Pages 15-16

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Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy: Karl Braithwaite
Doña Ana County Coalition: Howie Dash
Environmental Alliance of New Mexico: Patricia Cardona, Melinda Smith, Brittany Fallon
Friends of the Rio Grande del Norte: Eric Patterson
Valles Caldera Coalition: Teresa Seamster
Rio Puerco Management Committee: Tom Gorman
Turquoise Trail Regional Alliance: Denise Fort
Nuclear-waste storage: John Buchser, Patricia Cardona
Chihuahuan Desert Border Coalition: Kurt Anderson, kurt@nmsu.edu

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Rio Grande Water Fund: Teresa Seamster
Cover banner photo of La Fajada Butte by Jim Klukkert

Vote for chapter, group executive committees

Five candidates are running for three open spots on the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee. Candidate statements are on Page 6 for contested races in the chapter and Northern Group races. Only Sierra Club members may vote. Please mail this ballot with the member information intact on the label on the reverse side, or vote online. Online voting will be available in November at www.riograndesierraclub.org. To vote on paper, mail this completed ballot to: Sierra Club Election Committee, 137 W. Zia Road, Santa Fe, NM, 87505. Ballots must be received by Dec. 9. Two-member households can each vote, using both boxes. Please also vote for candidates for the group executive committee where you live. **Note: El Paso Group ballots and candidate statements will be mailed separately, but El Paso members may vote for chapter executive committee using this ballot.**

Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee

There are three positions open. **Please do not vote for more than three candidates**

- ☐ Dale Doremus
- ☐ Eric Patterson
- ☐ Derrick Toledo
- ☐ Ken Hughes
- ☐ Shannon Romeling

Pajarito Group Executive Committee (3 open seats)

- ☐ Howard Barnum
- ☐ Iris Chung
- ☐

Northern NM Group Executive Committee (4 seats — vote for 4 only)

- ☐ John Buchser
- ☐ Alice Cox
- ☐ Joseph Eigner
- ☐ Susan Martin
- ☐ Shannon Romeling
- ☐ Shane Woolbright

Central Group Executive Committee (5 open seats)

- ☐ Heather Kline
- ☐ Diane Reese
- ☐ Mark Rudd
- ☐ Ray Shortridge
- ☐ David Ther

Southern NM Group Executive Committee (4 open seats)

- ☐ Kurt Anderson
- ☐ CherylI Blevins
- ☐ Dan Lorimier
- ☐

New Game Commission, old allegiances

By Mary Katherine Ray
Chapter Wildlife Chair

Hopes were high when Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham appointed a new Game Commission after eight years of wildlife policies that so often dismissed science and contradicted conservation, especially for carnivorous animals. While some welcome changes are on offer, the new Game Commission is still composed entirely of hunters. The chair and vice chair have both already had long careers as employees of the New Mexico Game and Fish Department. After several meetings, the allegiances of the new commission have begun to show.

Better policies for cougars

On the positive side, the commission may end the sport trapping of cougars and reduce the extremely high killing quotas that the previous commission enacted with almost no science-based justification. Newly published research using better sampling and improved analysis found cougar density in New Mexico to be much lower than previous estimates. So much so that in cougar zone F, for instance, the quota for female cougars was found to be higher than the entire female cougar population was estimated to be.

Fortunately, hunters have not been able to kill this absurdly high number of cougars and now, at least in some zones, the allowable numbers are being reduced to reflect the results of this study. Legal challenges to cougar management doubtless helped the commission move toward change.

Bears in the crosshairs

For bears, the outlook is not as favorable. The Department of Game and Fish is recommending no change to the bear quotas. The number of bears allowed to be killed was drastically increased, back in 2011



Photo courtesy Born Free

The NM Game Commission is restricting cougar trapping but not trapping of bobcats. But traps, like the one that caught this cougar kitten, can't tell the difference.

when the disgraced Jim Lane was department director, based on the evidence that nuisance complaints about bears were up as were the number of road-killed bears. The determination completely overlooked that increases in the number of people and not the number of bears could cause both.

As with cougars, more research has improved our knowledge about bear density in some places, but not about how the bear population in New Mexico is trending. Density studies reflect a moment in time. Even the newest data is now going on 5 years old. The oldest information, which is what NM is basing bear population estimates on in about half the state's bear-zoning area, is more than 20 years old. How is drought affecting them? What about the very young average age of mortality for so many of

the female bears being killed by hunters? Female bears in New Mexico don't have their first litter of cubs on average until they are between 5 and 6 years old. The average age of the hunted female bear is just over 6. These animals are dying before ever having even one cub. Bears can live up to 30 years. New Mexico Game and Fish and the commission are making assumptions about the bear population that have not been field-tested.

Cheerleading for trapping

The new Game Commission is also poised to accept some changes to the trapping rules. The Department of Game and Fish, in its presentation about trapping to the Commission, strangely evokes the North American Model of Conservation, though trapping

Take action to stop trapping

Please tell the Game Commission and Department of Game and Fish that these proposals are inadequate to protect the public. Traps should not be allowed on public land at all. Send comments to DGF-Bear-Cougar-Rules@state.nm.us and see www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/proposals-under-consideration to read the proposals.

is in direct opposition to the model's tenet, which strives to abolish markets for wildlife. The inconsistency extends to the position against the trapping of cougars while supporting the trapping of other species such as bobcats.

The department also cites trapping "Best Management Practices" and proposes to incorporate some of those practices into rule. But these recommendations are not based on unbiased science. Trappers themselves collected the data about traps and the injuries they cause without the participation of animal-protection interests or even the oversight of disinterested parties. The parameters used to judge animal suffering are arbitrary and allow some terrible suffering as acceptable. The whole "best management practices" scheme was in response to the threat of the European Union disallowing import of pelts from trapped animals because of the cruelty. But the devices that the EU sought to prohibit were conveniently found by those involved in the research to be acceptable. On any other stage, the Best Management Practices would be called propaganda designed to make trapping palatable to the public.

New Mexico has very little information on the population trends of the species exploited for fur yet allows their unlimited killing for more than 4 months each year. The Department claims that trapping is a "valuable wildlife management tool." But nothing is being managed when it comes to recreational and commercial trapping except the financial interests of trappers.

The state doesn't know where or how many traps are set each

year. It doesn't have a plan for how many animals can be killed without harming their populations. It doesn't even know how many non-target animals such as bears or javelina are injured or die in traps each year. When pelt prices go up, trapper effort and the number of animals that die to satisfy the market also rise. There is no plan that considers conservation, the needs of wildlife, and the integrity of the places where these creatures live.

NM Game and Fish cheerleads for trapping regardless of the public's sentiments or the lack of science to justify the killing. The Game Commission chair has repeatedly stated her desire to protect trapping as a legitimate practice.

Public disapproval has nonetheless caused the Department to propose some changes. It is recommending that some areas be closed to trapping: the Sandia Mountains east of Albuquerque, the Organ Mountains east of Las Cruces, 1/2 mile on either side of the road from Taos to the Taos Ski Valley and 1/2 mile on either side of the road from Santa Fe to the Ski Basin. Also a 1/2-mile buffer is being proposed around official trail heads. Trails themselves would still be open to trapping with only a 25-yard setback. That any closures are being proposed is an admission that the public and traps don't mix. Outside of these areas, hikers and their dogs will still be subject to the dangers of hidden traps, to say nothing of the wildlife in these places.

The comment period for these trapping proposals is still open. Please ask the Game Commission to better protect our wildlife (see box for details).

How did your commissioner vote?

Doña Ana County commissioners who reversed their own restrictions on Wildlife Services' use of traps and snares:

Chair Lynn Ellins, lellins@donaanacounty.org
Vice Chair Isabella Solis, isolis@donaanacounty.org
Ramon Gonzalez, rgonzalez@donaanacounty.org

Commissioners who voted to uphold restrictions on wildlife-killing:

Shannon Reynolds, sreynolds@donaanacounty.org
Manuel Sanchez, msanchez@donaanacounty.org

Doña Ana caves to Wildlife Services

By Mary Katherine Ray

Two county commissions have snatched defeat from the jaws of victory in Southern New Mexico.

The Doña Ana County Commission voted in April to prohibit using the county's federal range-improvement funds to pay the federal agency Wildlife Services for lethal removal of wildlife.

Wildlife Services is a euphemistically named agency whose main purpose is killing wildlife, often using cruel means, from leghold traps to snares to cyanide poison bombs to aerial gunning.

Wildlife Services was not happy with Doña Ana's decision and pressured the county commission to have another vote. In July, the county watered down its decision to concede that lethal action could

be taken, but only after the agency tried nonlethal methods of resolving problems at least twice, unless there was an imminent threat to human safety or health.

Wildlife Services was still not happy and refused to sign the contract unless language was added that made these restrictions meaningless. The contract now reads that Wildlife Services must attempt to resolve human-wildlife conflicts non-lethally, "unless the animal poses an imminent threat to human health or safety, property, livestock, companion animals and confirmed depredations." The amendment passed 3-2, with Commissioners Shannon Reynolds and Manuel Sanchez opposing.

Chair Lynn Ellins, who began the initiative to stop Wildlife Services, inexplicably

led the effort to walk it back. After three commission meetings and votes, Doña Ana County is just about where it started in enabling Wildlife Services' often senseless cycle of cruel killing.

It only took Grant County two meetings in Silver City to prohibit Wildlife Services from using traps and poisons and then to reverse itself under pressure from the agency. The final vote to again allow the use of traps and poisons to kill Grant County wildlife passed 3-2.

Thank you to the many residents in both counties who attended the commission meetings, sent emails and made phone calls. With close votes, input by constituents is vital, and can be more powerful than Wildlife Services' intimidation tactics.

Farewell to a great crew of activists

David Coss ran the nation's oldest capital city for eight years, bringing out the best of its river and its people. He's lent the same energy and vision to his leadership of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club since 2015. David has a keen eye for what's really important and how to best protect our planet. But especially he never loses sight of the people of our enchanted land. He stands up for immigrants, for workers, for young people and for all of us. He is also simply a kind, decent person we will miss dearly. Enjoy real retirement David! Carol, thanks for loaning him to us!

In 2019, our Sierra Club has been part of historic, bold progress in New Mexico and West Texas. As I complete my final term

on the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee, I want to say how thankful I am for the work of the Sierra Club in my part of the world.

With a new governor and a stronger legislature in New Mexico, we helped to pass the Energy Transition Act. Under the ETA, low-interest bonds will provide for the closing of the San Juan coal plant and for investment in northwestern New Mexico to help communities transition to a stronger economy based on renewable energy. The act also creates the pathway to a carbon-free utility system by 2045.

Our Chapter stands up against the Trump administration for strong rules to prevent methane pollution.



David Coss
Rio Grande
Chapter
chair

We will continue the work to transition our economy away from oil and gas. We will also work to protect families and workers from air pollution and other dangers in the oil and gas fields. Younger generations will accept no less.

Rio Grande Chapter activists lobbied passionately in 2019 and, after years of laying the groundwork, finally passed a ban on coyote-killing contests in New Mexico.

Club members work and organize around the year to protect wildlife and tirelessly advocate for scientific and humane wildlife management. They review forest plans, write, call and show up for our public lands, our watersheds and our wildlife.

Our staff work with our volunteers to produce this positive progress on our issues. I want to thank especially Camilla Feibelman, Mona Blaber, Miya King-Flaherty, Brittany Fallon, Cecilia Chavez-Beltrán, Genie Stevens and Antoinette Reyes for all their excellent work. We could not be effective without you, and I admire your work so much.

Finally, I have always

admired the Sierra Club's commitment to environmental justice and diversity. The diversity and quality of individuals putting themselves forward for positions on the Executive Committee this year is also bold. This issue of the Rio Grande Sierran has information and biographies for the individuals stepping up to serve. I urge all our members to vote for their local and chapter leaders.

Change is coming in our region and in our Club. The Rio Grande Chapter, 57 years old, continues to create a proud record. It has been an honor to serve and I wish the best of success to the Executive Committee and the Rio Grande Chapter.

Rio Grande Green: Online auction coming

By the Friend and Fund Development Committee

Thank you New Mexico and West Texas members, donors and supporters of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club! You continue to be amazing.

As the current federal administration rolls back environmental protections, it is even more critical for us all to be working on local and state elections, laws and policies to curb the impacts of climate change and protect the air, lands and water where we live. We have and continue to set an example for other states and cities throughout the country. We have become leaders!

Working together, through our membership, giving and volunteering, supports that leadership.

By the numbers

Membership: 1,544 new members
Remember that when you join or renew your Sierra Club membership through the Chapter's website, it brings more money back to New Mexico! Go to riograndesierraclub.org and click "Actions" and then "Join."

Donations: \$181,390

These are gifts above and beyond annual membership. If you aren't already a monthly donor, consider becoming one. Those gifts help our Chapter's work steadily throughout the year. A gift of \$10 or more each month, which is about the cost of having a coffee at your favorite shop two days each month, can make a real difference. Go to www.riograndesierraclub.org and click 'Donate' and then 'Regular Donation'. Be sure to check the box for monthly donations.

Volunteers: 739 hours (3rd quarter)

Sierra Club is a grassroots organization! Our volunteers make the wheels turn with the support and leadership of our outstanding staff.

Starting this quarter, many of our volunteers have begun tracking their



Enjoy a day cross-country skiing in the Santa Fe Mountains with lunch. Or win this exquisite scrimshaw pendant (above right) for yourself or as a holiday gift for someone special in the Nov. 3-17 Rio Grande Chapter online auction.

hours. This quarter's total is just a fraction of the time donated to planning and having a presence at events, phone calling, and working with partners and our elected representatives to pass policies that will protect our climate, wildlife, land and water. If you'd like to get more involved, please give us a call at (505) 243-7767 or email riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org.

Volunteer hero

This month, we are sad to see our Chapter Outings chair, Odile de la Beaujardiere, and her husband Jean Marie move to Colorado to be closer to family. Odile helped revitalize the Central New Mexico Group's outings program. She led dozens of outings in her time with the Sierra Club, and she has been one of our most active volunteers, writing letters to the editor, showing up at City Council meetings, legislative committee hearings and chapter meetings as well as taking on

the role of Chapter outings chair when Norma McCallan passed away. Odile's outings were always capped off by a special meal and drinks at her home.

Odile has been a pleasure to work alongside, and we will truly miss her, but wish her well in Colorado!

Action Auction

Make Action Happen: Support the Rio Grande Chapter by participating in our on-line auction.

Navajo rugs, wildlife paintings, a cabin retreat, a stay at the Hotel Santa Fe Resort and Spa, REI gift cards and so much more have been donated to the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club for our first live, on-line auction. Why on-line? We want all of our members, donors and supporters to have the opportunity to join in.

The bidding will be open from Nov. 3 to 17. What a great opportunity to do some special holiday gift shopping.

Watch your email and our Facebook



Skiing photo by Dave Gabe

page for the preview and announcements to set up your bidder account. Just go to www.riograndesierraclub.org and click the Action Auction button.

Giving Tuesday

There's Thanksgiving, Black Friday, Cyber Monday and then there's Giving Back on Tuesday, Dec. 3. The Rio Grande Chapter is looking for volunteers. Join us! Call (505) 243-7767 or email us at riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org.

Saving Our Enchanted Lands

Do not miss this opportunity to receive a rare print of Jan Bartelstone photographs of iconic New Mexico landscapes as a thank-you for your donation of \$150 or more. Go to www.riograndesierraclub.org/fundraiser/ to participate.

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PRC puts coal-to-clean path in doubt

By Camilla Feibelman
Rio Grande Chapter
Director

Unexpected obstacles could derail implementation of New Mexico's landmark clean-energy law, relief funds for coal workers and even the amount of renewable replacement in the retirement of coal-fired San Juan Generating Station.

Since Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the Energy Transition Act in March and it became law in June, a lot has happened.

The ETA set a requirement for 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050 with 50% renewables by 2030 and 80% renewables by 2040. The law also establishes a pathway, through low-rate debt financing called securitization, to lower rates and create an energy transition in the Four Corners by providing \$40 million in relief to the coal workers and surrounding communities.

But in a blow to a speedy and equitable transition to renewable energy, some commissioners on New Mexico Public Regulation Commission are

The Energy Transition Act

- Requires New Mexico utilities to generate 50% of electricity from renewables by 2030, 80% by 2040 and **100% from carbon-free sources by 2045**
- Allows utilities to refinance the plants' remaining debt with low-rate bonds
- **Lowers ratepayers' bills** (ratepayers are currently paying off San Juan at about 10% rate of return to PNM; bonds will reduce that rate to around 3%)
- **Creates severance and retraining funds** for displaced workers (\$20 million) and for community reinvestment (\$20 million).
- Requires all new electricity construction to provide **registered apprenticeships** with priority given to disadvantaged and impacted communities

What ETA does that PRC can't

- Provide compensation for workers, especially mine workers, who are employed by Westmoreland, not PNM
- Provide community reinvestment funds

questioning whether they need to apply the law to PNM's case. PNM filed its case to abandon the coal plant in July, along with four suggested scenarios for replacement power, two of which are all or almost all renewable energy and the other two have different amounts of new gas. All parties are now required to file two sets of testimony, one as if the law applied and one as

the ETA's strong renewables requirements. Plant and mine workers, tribes and impacted communities lose access to the \$40 million for job training, severance pay, economic development and assistance if the commission doesn't apply the Energy Transition Act. New Energy Economy, which opposes securitization, sought a writ at the state Supreme Court to declare the ETA unconstitutional, saying the PRC should decide how the plant shutdown will be paid for, among other arguments. On Oct. 1 the Supreme Court denied NEE's petition. Unfortunately, on Oct. 3, the state Supreme Court also denied a request by the ETA coalition of groups asking the court to clarify that the PRC should apply the ETA to the abandonment proceedings. The mine will start laying off workers earlier than the plant because of accumulated coal. Workers and their families need assurance that there will be a safety net for them when the coal jobs are no longer available. Tax credits for renewable and batteries are higher for projects that begin before the end of 2019 than for projects that begin in later years. The indecision and wasted time put renewable projects at risk by threatening the credit rating of PNM and solar projects. The Sierra Club has intervened in the commission case, and our attorneys are working to make sure the PRC carries out its responsibility to implement laws passed by the Legislature. We also continue to carefully track PNM's proposals for replacement. The utility has put forth four portfolios and recommended one (a "compromise" that sites a 280-megawatt gas plant in San Juan County, along with 490 MW of solar and wind and 130 MW of battery storage), and we are conducting our own modeling. The Sierra Club will push hard for as much of the replacement power to be provided by renewables and storage as possible. We'll continue to keep you posted on the news and opportunities to participate.



Santa Fe National Forest photo by Larry Lamsa/www.flickr.com/photos/larry1732/10504876403

Forest plans need your input

By Miya King-Flaherty
Our Wild New Mexico

The U.S. Forest Service has released draft management plans and Environmental Impact Statements for Carson, Cibola, and Santa Fe National Forests. Unfortunately, all three plans fail to protect New Mexico's wildlands, wildlife, water and cultural heritage.

The Forest Service's preferred alternatives largely disregard recommendations for expanding wilderness areas. Their preferred alternatives could lead to more land fragmentation, jeopardize at-risk species, degrade water quality and impact riparian areas.

Carson National Forest

A coalition that includes the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter has proposed a 120,000-acre expansion of the Pecos Wilderness and a 5,240-acre addition to the Cruces Basin Wilderness. The Pecos Wilderness spans both the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests and provides critical habitat for elk, deer, bear, turkey, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and fish species.

The Cruces Basin Wilderness Area is a beloved destination for outdoor enthusiasts and is an important habitat for elk, deer,

black bears and coyotes.

Cibola National Forest

A coalition of groups has proposed a nearly 300,000-acre expansion of Wilderness areas, and less than 10 percent of that total is included in the Cibola's preferred forest management plan. The preferred management plan leaves wildlife and our public lands vulnerable to development operations like mining and logging that will cause irreparable harm to our natural ecosystems.

Santa Fe National Forest

Our coalition has proposed a 120,000-acre expansion of the Pecos Wilderness and for greater protections for the Caja del Rio that encompasses more than 80,000 acres of lands. The Pecos Wilderness is home to centuries of culture and tradition and is cherished by local communities, nearby tribes and pueblos, acequia and land grant communities, sportsmen, and more. The Forest Service deadline for comments is Nov. 7. **For links to comment and info on each forest's plan, go to riograndesierraclub.org/forest-planning.**

Please take the time to submit a comment for each forest. Thank you!

US moves back, NM forward on methane

By Camilla Feibelman
Chapter director

On Aug. 29, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler proposed to eliminate direct regulation of methane, a dangerous greenhouse gas. This is the latest in a series of efforts to dismantle safeguards against oil and gas pollution and environmental protections in general. In New Mexico, this would mean that 4,700 new and existing oil and gas wells would no longer have to reduce their methane emissions, endangering our climate and our families' health.

Methane is 80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas, but it disappears from the atmosphere much faster when emissions are reduced, giving us one of the best chances we have of protecting our children and grandchildren from the disastrous consequences of runaway climate change. With methane, other smog and asthma causing substances are emitted that methane rules would also prevent.

New Mexicans have commented in huge numbers in support of safeguards to reduce methane pollution, first in 2015, when 27,000 residents commented in favor of these common-sense, climate-protecting, health-improving rules when they were first considered as part of U.S. commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement. New Mexicans opposed the first, limited reversals earlier this year and are standing up to ask why



Antoinette Reyes

Residents testify at a New Mexico stakeholder hearing. The state is creating protections to reduce methane waste and pollution.

the EPA would challenge its own authority to protect their families from a dangerous pollutant. The public now has until Nov. 25 to oppose these rollbacks and can attend a public hearing in Dallas on Oct. 29. To comment and learn more please visit riograndesierraclub.org/methane. Despite the rollbacks of these rules that were the legs of this country's Paris Climate agreements, we have some hope here in New Mexico given that the State Government has initiated a state methane rule-making. We'll keep you posted when it's time to comment in favor of the strongest rules possible.

Executive Committee candidate statements

Rio Grande Chapter (ballot on Page 2)

Dale Doremus

I have lived and worked in New Mexico for 32 years as a hydrogeologist and environmental scientist.

For most of my professional career, I managed water quality and water resource programs for the New Mexico Environment Department and Interstate Stream Commission. My educational qualifications include a BS degree in Geology and an MS in Hydrogeology.

Currently, I serve on the Legislative Committee and Water Committee of the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter. I also served on the Santa Fe River Commission for eight years and am a volunteer for the Randall Davey Audubon Center.

My interests and priorities are:

- Developing state water policy that establishes the connection to climate change;
- Increasing emphasis on statewide water quality issues;
- Restoring and improving New Mexico’s environmental protection statutes and regulations;

Preservation and protection of our public lands;

Educating the next generation of environmental stewards.

Ken Hughes

I’m wrapping up 26 years working for the State of New Mexico, the last 12 as Clean Energy Specialist, to return to my environmental activist roots, which included 6 years as a Sierra Club lobbyist in DC and Santa Fe and 25 years as chapter conservation chair. It would be an honor to serve with others on the board to lead the Chapter past Trump-induced turbulence and work at the state and local levels for land, air and water safe and sufficient for all species.

Eric Patterson

I am a retired high school and community college chemistry teacher, a resident of Valdez, NM, since 2005, and a Sierra Club member since 1971.

I chaired the Northwest Cook County Group (about 1,500 members) in the Illinois Chapter.

I started and coordinated Water Sentinels — Rios de Taos

2006-2019, monitoring water in the streams of Taos County.

The national Sierra Club awarded me the Special Service Award in 2016.

I have been a member of Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee since 2015.

I have been able to apply for and receive grants from the Grassroots Network of the Sierra Club for the last four years. This has enabled me to work with Taos County students, (middle school, high school and college) not only on water monitoring and general environmental issues, but also to send students to weeklong SPROG summer camps where the Sierra Club trains young people to become enabled environmental activists and future leaders.

Shannon Romeling

I am an employee of Amigos Bravos, whose mission is to protect and restore the waters of New Mexico. I am responsible for researching, writing, submitting, and tracking proposals and reports regarding grants from foundations, government agencies, and other contractual

funders. I also conduct outreach and water-quality related projects. I completed my Master’s in biology at Missouri State University in 2012 and wrote my thesis on the effects of wind turbine-caused mortality on the future of the federally endangered Indiana bat.

I have been working on water-quality projects for 7 years as a part of Amigos Bravos. One of the first projects delegated to me was to work with the Sierra Club Water Sentinels Team. I learned more about Sierra Club and became more involved in outreach to environmental clubs and students in Taos. Eric Patterson, leader of the Water Sentinels, suggested I get involved in Sierra Club at a higher level a couple of years ago. The Sierra Club’s values, projects, and track record are inspiring. As a member of the chapter Executive Committee for the last year, I would be thrilled to continue this work.

Derrick Toledo

I am the Indian Country Organizer for Western Leaders Network but was formally the Clean Energy Fellow for

the Sierra Club: Rio Grande Chapter. I am a former tribal official in Jemez Pueblo and a 2015 graduate from the University of New Mexico, where I studied Multimedia Journalism and Marketing Management. Before going to Washington D.C. to join the Institute for Policy Studies in 2017, I was the audio engineer for the award-winning and nationally broadcasted Native America Calling and National Native News. I established my career in journalism through positions with the *Daily Lobo*, a news outlet serving the University of New Mexico, the *Rio Rancho Observer*, a locally owned and operated newspaper in midwest New Mexico, Generation Justice and the New Mexico News Port. I have also worked as a news producer, reporter, and on-air talent for public radio stations in New Mexico at KUNM and downtown Washington D.C. for WPFW. More recently I was awarded the 2018 New Voices Scholarship by Air Media and a position on the Native American Voters Alliance board.

Northern New Mexico Group (ballot on Page 2)

John Buchser

My interests broadly expressed are in sustainability and governance. Of particular interest to me are two local changes that are happening in Santa Fe, the de-watering of the ponds created by the remains of Two-Mile reservoir above town (with the help of some beavers), and plans for re-use of the City’s effluent to meet long-term City/County needs. The Mayor and City Water Utility are showing some interest in the concerns of the community. We need the City Council engaged too.

The Club has long been involved in political endorsements, and we have momentum here in NM, and I want to maintain that. Many of the decisions about transitioning to renewable energy are dependent on having good politicians who understand the challenge we face.

Alice Cox

Membership Chair for NNMG for 15 years. My commitment comes from living next to the National Forest for 30 years and observing firsthand the devastating impacts of changes to our climate which has precipitated the current climate crisis.

In that capacity I organized social and public events to educate the public about the mission of the SC and engaged new members to become active.

The most challenging thing we’re facing is the climate crisis. The current administration presents a huge challenge so support of our grassroots activists is vital to our goals of protecting and preserving our precious natural environment.

Joseph Eigner

As an employee of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Solid Waste Division, I created the Hazardous Waste Program, drafted the state’s first hazardous-waste law, organized support for it, lobbied for it, and saw it passed in its first submission to the legislature. I next ran a solo environmental consultancy focused on assisting clients in meeting EPA and OSHA regulations applicable to their operations.

On retirement to Santa Fe, with Karen Sweeney I founded and led Eldorado/285 Recycles, a citizen group devoted to promoting zero waste, reuse, and recycling. Highlights were a backyard vermicomposting campaign, persuading Santa Fe County to reopen a ReUse facility at the Eldorado

Convenience Center, converting local events with food service to zero waste, and operating a drop-off site for recycling unusual items.

The three most important challenges facing the Sierra Club are the climate crisis, the climate crisis, and the climate crisis. All of the club’s wonderful programs to protect air, water, health, wildlife, natural resources, wilderness areas, forests, public lands and more are threatened, and their accomplishments over many years are being reversed by the climate crisis. Bold action, by the club, ourselves, our nation, and the world is needed.

Susan Martin

I’m a member of the Sierra Club’s National Political Team, which directs the Sierra Club candidate endorsement process, a member of the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee, and am appointed to the Santa Fe County Planning Commission.

My professional experience includes counsel to the US House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee, Senior Project Attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Planner Director, NM

Environment Department.

Climate change and its contributors are the three most important challenges facing the Sierra Club, including support for a just transition to the use of renewable energy, and a development of political power to achieve the transition. Our water resource, both quality and quantity, will be stressed from warming, as will our wildlife and human habitat. Grassroots political action by SC members and supporters is vital to achieve political wins, from local to federal-level races. In order to “explore, enjoy, and protect” our world, we must cultivate and support local environmental leaders. I pledge to do this as a member of the Northern Group Executive Committee.

Shannon Romeling

See Chapter statements above.

Shane Woolbright

Shane is a lifelong Sierra Club member and avid birder, who participates in international outings and has served as Rio Grande Chapter vice chair and for several years as Northern Group Energy Chair.

‘Rio Grande Sierran’ publication information

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Contributions are welcome. Send them 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*.

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You can join the Sierra Club (your membership is to both the national group and the Rio Grande Chapter) for only \$15! Just go to **riograndesierraclub.org/join** or send a \$15 check with your name, address **and the code 1700 in the memo line** to:

Sierra Club
Attn: Member Services
2101 Webster St., #1300
Oakland, CA 94612

Do you have a membership question? Call 415-977-5653 or e-mail membership.services@sierraclub.org



Photos by Melinda Smith

The first of Albuquerque’s electric fleet, a Chevy Bolt, is plugged in and charging in Civic Plaza.

Albuquerque goes electric

**By Melinda Smith
Chapter Legislative Co-Chair**
On a warm September morning, Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller drove a shiny new blue Chevy Bolt into Civic Plaza, accompanied by five Global Warming Express (GWE) members.

The kids scurried out of the car and the mayor demonstrated how to plug the car into a normal socket. Keller said it would be charged up in just a few hours. The range of the new Bolt is 238 miles on a single charge. The Chevy is the first step in implementing the mayor’s Executive Instruction to electrify its fleet.

Nola, a 9-year-old member of GWE in Albuquerque, took the podium at the press conference that followed. She thanked Mayor Keller for his past efforts to fight climate change — supporting the ban on single-use plastic bags and installing solar panels at the Zoo, the Biopark and other buildings.

Nola then thanked Mayer Keller for his efforts to help Albuquerque reduce carbon-dioxide emissions by using electric cars. “These are great steps to a cleaner Albuquerque and world,” Nola said before introducing the mayor.

Keller thanked the Sierra Club and 350 New Mexico for their advocacy in transitioning to electric vehicles, saying, “We can’t afford to wait for someone else to take the kind of bold action on climate



A member of the GWE signs a mock-up of the Executive Instruction by Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller, right, to transition the city’s fleet to low and no-emissions vehicles.

change we need to protect our community.”
The city plans to transition 63% of its eligible light-duty vehicles to electric or hybrid electric as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropies’ American Climate Cities Challenge. By the end of 2020, Albuquerque will transition 50 vehicles.
The Executive Instruction will add to that commitment, taking additional gas-powered vehicles off the road as they come up for replacement or when new vehicles are purchased. The result will be

a city fleet in which every eligible gas vehicle is replaced by low or no-emissions vehicles. This will reduce carbon emissions, save taxpayer money on fuel, improve Albuquerque’s air quality and public health outcomes, and reduce the city’s reliance on fossil fuels.
At the event, Keller went to an easel next to the podium and with GWE students looking on, signed a mock-up of the Executive Instruction to shift all eligible vehicles to electric, hybrid, and alternative low-emission fuels.

NM to adopt clean-car rules

**By Mona Blaber
Communications coordinator**
On Sept. 24, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced that New Mexico will join 14 other states in adopting clean-car standards requiring new cars sold here to emit fewer greenhouse gases. They also mandate an increasing percentage of cars to have zero emissions.

Lujan Grisham made the announcement at Climate Week in New York City, joining other U.S. governors to discuss states advancing ambitious climate action in the face of federal inaction.

The move came on the heels of the announcement that the Trump

administration is revoking California’s authority to set fuel-efficiency and greenhouse-gas standards stricter than federal standards. California and nearly two dozen other states are suing the administration over the attack.
“We applaud Gov. Lujan Grisham for standing up against the Trump administration’s indefensible attack on climate, clean air, and consumers,” said Rio Grande Chapter Director Camilla Feibelman. “The clean-car standards and the right of states to protect their residents from pollution enjoy overwhelming support and are backed by sound science; defending them is common sense.”

Your chance to speak up about fracked water

**By Mona Blaber
Rio Grande Chapter Communications**

The New Mexico Environment Department has announced public meetings across the state on the topic of treating fracking wastewater for use outside the oil and gas industry.
While reusing this wastewater on the oil fields can reduce the industry’s use of fresh water, using it off the oil fields in agriculture or in rivers is of great concern — and since industry stands to make big money from selling this water, it’s important to raise our voices for the need for extreme caution.

The state meetings are in anticipation of a process to create regulations over the reuse and treatment of “produced” water, which is the water that is produced by the fracking process. The agency is seeking feedback from the public before writing a rule that will then be subject to formal public comment.

Produced water can contain a wide range of potentially toxic chemicals that companies add to water before fracking — many of which they are not required to disclose. An area in Texas called the Texon scar has been barren for nearly 100 years after produced-water was applied to the land. While reuse on the oil fields can prevent waste of our fresh-water resources, regulators must be extremely careful about even considering use off the oil fields, whether for crop irrigation, livestock, or discharging into rivers.

Proponents in the oil and gas industry may tout re-use of produced water as a new opportunity for water-scarce regions, but the risks are significant and compounded by the fact that we do not fully understand what’s in produced water. There has been little research on New Mexico produced water and its impacts on human health and the environment. We lack EPA-approved testing methods for around 77% of potential produced-water chemicals. Until we have thorough science, any reuse outside the oilfield could allow industry to profit off of their waste at the expense of public health.

Your voice matters. Please see the box below, attend a meeting near you, and see riograndesierraclub.org for more info.

N.M. meetings on use of fracking wastewater
6-8:30 p.m. Oct. 15: National Hispanic Cultural Center Grand Hall, 1701 4th St. SW, Albuquerque, 87102
6-8:30 p.m. Oct. 30: St. Francis Auditorium, 331 Sandoval St., Santa Fe, 87501
6-8:30 p.m. Nov. 14: Pecos River Village Conference Center, 711 Muscatel Ave.
6-8:30 p.m. Nov. 19: San Juan College Little Theatre, 4601 College Blvd., Farmington, 87402
6-8:30 p.m. Nov. 25: New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road, Las Cruces

JOIN the Global W.E. solution onboard the Global Warming Express!
Join us in teaching kids climate science and how to become part of the solution with leadership training, public speaking, letter-writing and performance skills. **Our kids are changing public policy in New Mexico**, but they need you now.
Apply **TODAY** to the Global W.E.-Global Warming Express program now in its 7th award-winning year! Now in partnership with the Rio Grande Sierra Club! Train to mentor 9- to 12-year-olds once a week for the 2019-20 school year. Small stipend, tremendous fun and guaranteed results :)
To apply, email Genie Stevens at genie@theglobalwarmingexpress.org.

learn. dream. do. inspire.
kids change the world

Activist spotlight: Anni Hanna

Anni Hanna is a volunteer for both the Sierra Club's Global Warming Express program and 350 New Mexico.

What's your role with GWE?
I enjoy sharing how Global W.E./GWE students are creating change in their schools and communities, through social media, outreach, and event planning. This year Global W.E. has been active at so many forums, from bag-free city initiatives to Green New Deal town halls, tree plantings, the Climate Emergency Resolutions and the Global Climate Strike. What's exciting is Global W.E. students are using their voices to ask us all to protect our earth. I am honored to start serving on Global W.E.'s board to help bring the program to more students who are raising their voices!

What motivates you to volunteer?
Being a mom motivates me every day to help organize in New Mexico to protect our earth — I want all children to have clean air, clean water. I want all



children to still have a Bosque, butterflies, and bees. As the IPCC report makes clear, we have a very short time within which to draw down emissions, requiring a massive shift to running everything on renewable energy. This is particularly relevant in NM, as we are the third-largest oil and gas producing state, which is having long-term health

impacts on frontline, rural communities and fueling the climate crisis. It is time to listen to the science and to our youth! Children are very clear on what needs to happen, and they are not afraid to ask elected officials tough questions.

What's your favorite environment-related experience?
The September Global Climate Strike was the biggest mobilization for climate in New Mexico, with over 5,000 people from across Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Las Cruces, Silver City, Española, Taos, Farmington and Indigenous Nations in the region. What was exciting to me is to see diverse, intergenerational groups of people coming together. Global W.E. students spoke in Albuquerque and Santa Fe calling for New Mexico to declare a climate emergency and implement legislation to draw down emissions. We need everyone's help to ride that momentum of the Global Climate Strike so that these calls to

action become a reality.
What would you tell people who want to get involved but don't know how?
There are so many ways to get involved! For example, volunteering to help the Global W.E. administration, becoming a GWE classroom mentor, giving a guest presentation to students, organizing in your church, school or neighborhood association around climate action, following and supporting the GWE civic initiatives and public engagements.

Small things you can do every day: calling your local elected officials, talking with your friends and family about climate, writing letters to the editor and showing up to support events and candidates who will protect our earth. I know there are so many moms, dads, aunts and uncles and grandparents who feel as concerned as I do about our children's future and who want to get involved. Now is the time, before it's too late!



Activist spotlight: Sierra

Sierra, 10, is a Santa Fe student and serves on the board of the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter's Global WE kid-led climate-activism program.

How did you get involved with Global Warming Express?
I read Marina Weber's book, 'Global Warming Express,' and became curious. After meeting the author, I had several discussions with people about the environment and joined GWE. I became inspired and enjoyed it.

Why did you decide to become a climate activist?
There are so many reasons. Children deserve a future and we want to take charge of our lives. I also feel very connected with mother earth. I grew up on several small farms. I also love camping, hiking, climbing, and harvesting wild plants. I love the earth we live on so much and want to fight to protect it.
What message do you want adults to most hear?

from it. When we destroy it, we destroy ourselves."
What do think is the most important climate action for our state or country to take?
Switch to renewable energy. Switch to local, sustainable businesses. Focus on community resiliency. Start with community first, then state, and then country.
If other kids want to get involved but don't know how, what should they do?
They should read more, research, and ask lots of questions. Learn the facts, but don't feel scared — they are not alone. There are many of us. We are diverse.
What's your favorite environment-related experience?
I got a tree planted at my school and met Congresswoman Deb Haaland.
What else would you like people to know?
I hope adults can recognize what children are going through. I hope grownups can become more thoughtful of Earth and the diversity that comes with it. This is an emergency, and we need to change the world. I want everyone to understand this, every word of this.



Students march at the Albuquerque Youth Climate Strike on Sept. 20. Photo by Camilla Feibelman

Kids lead the way

By Camilla Feibelman
Chapter director
On Sept. 20, New Mexico students led thousands of people who walked out of their classrooms and workplaces to strike for their future and to call for urgent implementation of climate action at every level of government.

Strikes in New Mexico were part of a global demonstration of solidarity and mobilization to address the climate crisis head on. In the days leading up to the strike, youth in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Taos persuaded their city councils to pass Climate Emergency declarations to create a path to reduce our climate impact. Youth organizers also established calls to action for U.S. Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich to sign on to the Green New Deal, and on Climate Strike day, both senators announced they would sign on. Youth also called for Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and the New Mexico Legislature to create a Just Transition Fund from oil and

Global WE update

The Global W.E./GWE has started the school year off with a bang! We have 15 school programs in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Dixon and Los Alamos, with pending programs in Taos and Española.

GWEers jumped into Albuquerque's first EV with Mayor Tim Keller to announce conversion of the city fleet to EVs (see Page 6). On Sept. 18, the GWEers urged the Albuquerque City Council to declare a Climate Emergency, and it passed! And on Sept 20, GWEers were back, speaking and marching in the Youth Climate Strikes.

All this education, outreach, work and coordination would not be possible without the assistance of many volunteers and students. Check out the profiles of two of them on this page.

gas revenues to build a sustainable, carbon-neutral economy; achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030; declare a moratorium on fracking; and pass community-solar legislation in 2020.

"All my life I've heard about the impending climate collapse threatening my future, and for the very first time, someone is finally taking serious action. But it isn't the adults, it isn't the politicians who we elected to work for us, it's the kids — scared for their future and fed up with the inaction of those who came before us," said Jonathon Juarez-Alonzo, Native American Community Academy senior and President of Fight For Our Lives

"We are all here because we are tired of being put down by politicians, being told that we are too young to understand what is 'really' going on," said Valeria Martinez-Hernandez of Amy Biehl High School. "But no, I say that we all understand perfectly! We are here to make them understand that we are not just the future! We are the now!"

Zero Waste: Landfill adventures

By Carol Chamberland
Zero Waste chair

With visions of Dante’s Inferno in mind, I joined a group of Zero Waste Team members for a tour of Albuquerque’s Cerro Colorado landfill. We met our guide, Jake Daugherty, Environmental Compliance Coordinator, and were given an overview of the massive city-owned facility. Operating since 1989, the site is designed to last another 50 years. Once it is closed, it will be monitored for an additional 30 years.

We donned our safety vests and bundled into a truck, making our first stop at the glass-recycling facility. It’s temporarily out of operation while a new contract is being pursued. Meanwhile, the city collects, grinds and compacts the glass into the ground. From here we could see Cerro Colorado – a small reddish hill, for which the whole area is named.

Our next stop featured a pile of used tires. When the collection reaches capacity, they are loaded onto a truck and transported to a processing facility in Arizona, where it is crumbled into bits for road construction and other uses.

By this time, we could see the man-made mountain that is the actual landfill. At its base is a leaching pond constructed of alternating layers of liners, stones and sand. At times of heavy rainfall or other overflow, excess water is piped here to be later poured back onto the landfill. Birds lingered nearby, and a young cottonwood looked healthy sprouting in the pond. Along the road were piles of yard waste composting for use in capping the landfill.

We stopped at the station where methane is flared. On a sunny day we couldn’t see the flame, but we could feel the heat and see the heatwaves.

“Why isn’t this used for some good purpose?” we asked. Jake told us 5 percent of it is piped to the nearby detention center for heating their water, but city laws forbid selling the excess methane to non-city users.

We lumbered up to the top of the mountain and got in line with vehicles waiting to unload. From there we could see the action. A truck is directed to a specific spot where it dumps the trash onto the ground. As it drives off, a bulldozer swings into action, pushing the load into position for the compactor to drive over it and over it, punching it into the ground. Then comes a layer of dirt to finish off that load. The next truck is directed into position and the process is repeated. All day long. Seven days a week.



The Zero Waste Team toured Albuquerque’s glass-recycling facility, which is temporarily out of operation. Meanwhile, the city collects, grinds and compacts the glass into the ground.

Carol Chamberland

I was gratified to see no flying bits of trash escaping into the wind. The work is so efficient it seems that nothing gets away. Rows of crows line the fences, monitoring the progress. We were pleased to see the truck drivers hosing down their tires and loading mechanisms before trundling back into town for another load. My visions of hell never materialized, but we noticed a distressing amount of recyclable materials being added to the mountain.

As we descended the dirt road, Jake told us the landfill pile is currently 70 feet high, with an additional 40 feet below ground. To the casual observer, it is simply a huge, rectangular dirt mound with desert plants sprouting where they please.

“What would happen if people recycled more of their trash?” I asked. Jake looked thoughtful. “Well, I guess that would mean fewer jobs here,” he said. We speculated that more jobs would open up in the recycling industry, but that is currently not a city-owned operation, so it wouldn’t involve a direct transfer of employees.

We peppered Jake with questions throughout our two-hour tour. My final question was directed at him personally. “What could the public do to make your job easier?”

“They could stop throwing compressed-gas canisters and paint cans into the trash. They sometimes explode and catch fire. They should dispose of those items properly at hazardous-waste sites,” he replied.

I had an unpleasant vision of the artificial mountain catching fire. On our drive home, we chattered and debated all that we’d learned. Things were better — and worse — than we’d thought.

Some of us decided to take the Plastic Challenge and face up to our own contribution to a global problem. It was simple — just collect every scrap of plastic you were tossing out — recyclable and not — for one week. The result is graphic and disturbing. I asked people to

send me a photo of their week-long collection and share any insights they’d gained along the way.

“It’s embarrassing to see how much plastic I’ve used.”

“I shop smarter now. If I have a choice, I’ll choose the non-plastic packaging.”

“When I was growing up, we never had so much plastic wrapping.”

“For food items, it was depressing. I don’t see alternatives for what I bought.”

“I was afraid I’d have more — maybe this was a light plastic week.”

“It raised my consciousness about the type of food items we use.”

“If we can put caps on carbon emissions, why can’t we put brakes on the overproduction of plastics?”

Just when I was despairing that nobody was doing anything about this, I learned that Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) and Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.) were introducing an important bill in Congress. It will address obligations for the producers of plastic, nationwide container deposit requirements, carryout bag fees, bans on certain plastic products, a ban on Styrofoam in foodware, labeling requirements, and more. Read the details at <https://www.tomudall.senate.gov/news/press-releases/udall-lowenthal-release-outline-of-legislation-to-tackle-plastic-waste-pollution-crisis>.

Still on the recycling theme, we had one more tour this quarter. We met owner Megan Fitzpatrick at the New Mexico Computer Recyclers on Edith Boulevard in Albuquerque for a tour of the compact facility where electronics are refurbished for resale or dismantled into components for recycling.

There is no charge to drop off unwanted electronics, and mostly everything is ultimately sold — for reuse or for recycling. Plastics are problematic, though. When China stopped importing our recyclables, Friedman Recycling could no longer handle the excess electronics plastics. Your old keyboards go directly to the

landfill, but other materials are shipped to a California facility where they are broken down into precious materials for reuse.

This is the only facility in New Mexico with a GSA-certified hard-drive shredder. Watching this machine in operation was worth the whole trip for me. Crunch, crunch go the hard drives, tumbling off the conveyor belt in chunky bits. For a \$10 fee, your data is completely and irretrievably destroyed. This small, for-profit enterprise fills an important niche in Albuquerque recycling.

Starting this fall, the Zero Waste Action Team will be offering free public tours to many of the sites we’ve visited. Check out the Outings page for dates and times, or contact ZWAT Outings Leader Laurie Zunner at lmzunner@gmail.com or 505-440-5337. Join us! You’ll be amazed!

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Volunteer coordinator: Keely Scheffler, kscheffler99@unm.edu, Patty Duncan, pgnm@comcast.com, Volunteer Wednesdays
Wildlife: Leslie Chavez, chavezles99@gmail.com
Military Outings: Terry Owen
UNM Sierra Student Coalition: Keely Scheffler

Sierra Club art exhibition

ArtStreet, a community studio of Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless, has teamed up with the Sierra Club for an exhibit of work by homeless artists.

Where: Middle Rio Grande Sierra Club Office 2215 Lead Ave. SE, Albuquerque

When: The office is open Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 1-5 p.m. for viewing the exhibit. The exhibit will be up through November.

Sales benefit ArtStreet and the Sierra Club Central New Mexico Group.



6th Annual

Acequia Celebration & Fun Run



Sunday, October 27th at 9 am

Route starts at Sanchez Farms • 1180 Arenal Rd SW

Honoring of Acequias • Activities for Kids • Raffle

8:30-9 am Onsite Registration
9:15 am 5K/1K Begins

Honoring of Acequia Begins Immediately After Fun Run

CESOSS is an organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of traditions connected to land and water.
If you have any questions or would like to become a sponsor for the event, please contact us:



505-304-8724
info@cesoss.org
www.cesososs.org

Register Online

cesossfunrun2019.eventbrite.com

Discounts for Early Registration!
Registration includes cool t-shirt, tamale, and champurrado!

\$25

Suggested Donation for Adults 5K or 1K

\$20

Suggested Donation for Students

\$10

Suggested Donation for Children

All proceeds directly support the CESOSS Leadership Institute —Proudly on its 7th Cohort—

CESOSS is proudly a 501(c)3 organization

New Mexico needs water reforms

Guest column by Denise Fort
Our state received another dubious honor recently, this time for being the most water-stressed state in the United States, paired with the United Arab Emirates.

There is so much that should be done in New Mexico, like charging for all water use, and so much that shouldn't be done, like exporting our water in the form of dairy products. It's way too much to cover here, so I will just focus on some of the environmental issues that are key.

The Trump Administration is moving to strip protections from rivers and other waters, the so-called Waters of the U.S. rule. As you've heard, New Mexico is one of the hardest-hit states from this rollback (see amigosbravos.org for more information).

My conclusion, based on several decades of battles over the reach of the federal Clean Water Act, is that we need to seize the initiative and build our own program for protecting all waters in the state.

One important caveat. Much of the discussion in the state has been over the state getting "primacy" over the permit program that EPA now runs. The acronym is "NPDES" and it is the

program under which permits are given to companies that discharge pollutants to waterways. Hence, with the Trump people rolling back the waters that are protected, there will be plenty of polluters who will no longer need federal permits.

But fixing this problem doesn't go far enough. We need to recognize that our waters need protection from a variety of threats, as well as restoration where flows have been disrupted and riparian areas destroyed. We should, as a state, protect all of our waters, including intermittent streams, prairie potholes, groundwater dependent ecosystems, wetlands. As one group of water policy advocates has put it:

Natural infrastructure should be part of the State's water strategy. Protection of source waters and ecosystem restoration can address multiple objectives, including increased flows and resilience in light of climate change, fire, and other disruptions. The State should invest in headwaters protection; appropriately reviewed forest and fire management; and restoration of riparian, wetlands, aquatic, and floodplain systems and should manage flow regimes for these benefits. The Office of State Engineer (OSE) must further these goals through policies that further

instream flows.

What should we ask of the governor and state legislators?

The Interstate Stream Commission, the New Mexico Environment Department, the Department of Game and Fish, and the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department should develop plans to restore native species and protect our living rivers. To that end, the Legislature should establish and fund a Restore the Rivers Task Force to develop a plan to support ecological functions in our rivers, using mechanisms such as protection of instream flows and protection of riparian systems. We can fund water for rivers by using non-recurring revenues. These monies can be directed to agricultural interests who wish to temporarily lease or retire water rights. The Strategic River Reserve is an existing mechanism that can help protect many of the state's rivers. A corollary program, the "River Stewardship Program," is a well received means of protecting the recreational and tourist values of riparian areas." (From A White Paper; An Environmental Agenda for the New Governor and Legislature, December 2019, <https://sites.google.com/view/environmentalagendanm/home>)

Water quality in New Mexico's rivers should be protected by a more comprehensive program than the current EPA program. Too many exemptions, such as the exemption for irrigated agriculture and for other types of pollution ("nonpoint source pollution" is the term) mean that many of New Mexico's waters are still polluted, years after the passage of the Clean Water Act, Cleaning up pollution so that we have "fishable, swimmable" rivers is going to take boldness on the part of our community, as we press for legislation that comprehensively addresses the environmental condition of our rivers.

So, from an environmental perspective, we have to protect the water in our rivers, as well as the quality of these waters, which is the focus of the EPA's and the NM Environment Department's programs. Taking on environmental flows, or natural infrastructure, means that the water agencies need to be given a larger mission. Reconciling the split between quantity and quality management is part of Rep. Melanie Stansbury's focus. (Our own Karl Braithwaite is helping out, if you want more information.) Let's protect and restore our water.

Denise Fort is UNM School of Law Professor Emerita and a longtime Sierra Club activist.

Sierra Club implementation of land acknowledgements

By Sergio Avila, Local Outdoors Coordinator, Sierra Club

The following is a modified version of a Land Acknowledgement Norm established by the Sierra Club's Our Wild America Campaign:

As the Sierra Club strives to center our work around equity and justice, it is important to acknowledge the past from which we are emerging. We can help lead the way in forming a more just society by acknowledging our own movement's problematic roots, as well as the colonialist history of the United States. The Sierra Club's Our Wild America Campaign is establishing a new norm to begin all gatherings and planning meetings with a land acknowledgement.

A land acknowledgement is a recognition of the original inhabitants of an area. It is designed to show respect for Native peoples and to surface often-suppressed colonial history of our country. It is a way to recognize that Native societies spanned the entire continent, and that we now reside on occupied and often stolen native territories. Countries like Australia, New Zealand and Canada commonly practice the use of land acknowledgements, opening government functions, sporting events, and even school days with such acknowledgements - but the

United States has yet to widely adopt this norm.

These acknowledgements can raise awareness about this part of our past that is too often ignored, while showing respect for the indigenous people still living here today. We encourage teams to give a land acknowledgement at the start of any meeting for which the majority of attendees traveled to participate, or whenever it feels appropriate to your team. Land acknowledgements are also a challenge to our teams to ensure indigenous communities and leaders have agency in decision-making and resource-allocation decisions about environmental-protection efforts. Through this, our efforts to protect the natural and human environment can be guided by the leadership and wisdom of indigenous communities. Meeting hosts should identify a volunteer to conduct research about the original inhabitants of land where you are gathering, prior to the meeting, and share the acknowledgement at the start of the agenda.

To find more resources, we recommend searching the following pages and documents:

■ Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement, U.S. Department of Arts and Culture.

■ Guide to Acknowledging First Peoples and Traditional

Territories, Canadian Association of University Teachers.

■ "Indigenous Land Acknowledgement, Explained," Teen Vogue, Feb. 8, 2018.

■ "What is the Significance of Acknowledging the Indigenous Land We Stand On," CBC, July 17, 2017.

■ "The Map of Native American Tribes You've Never Seen Before," NPR, June 24, 2014.

For help with specific language, please reference Sierra Club's Equity Language Guide

Examples of land acknowledgements:

University of British Columbia

Northwestern University

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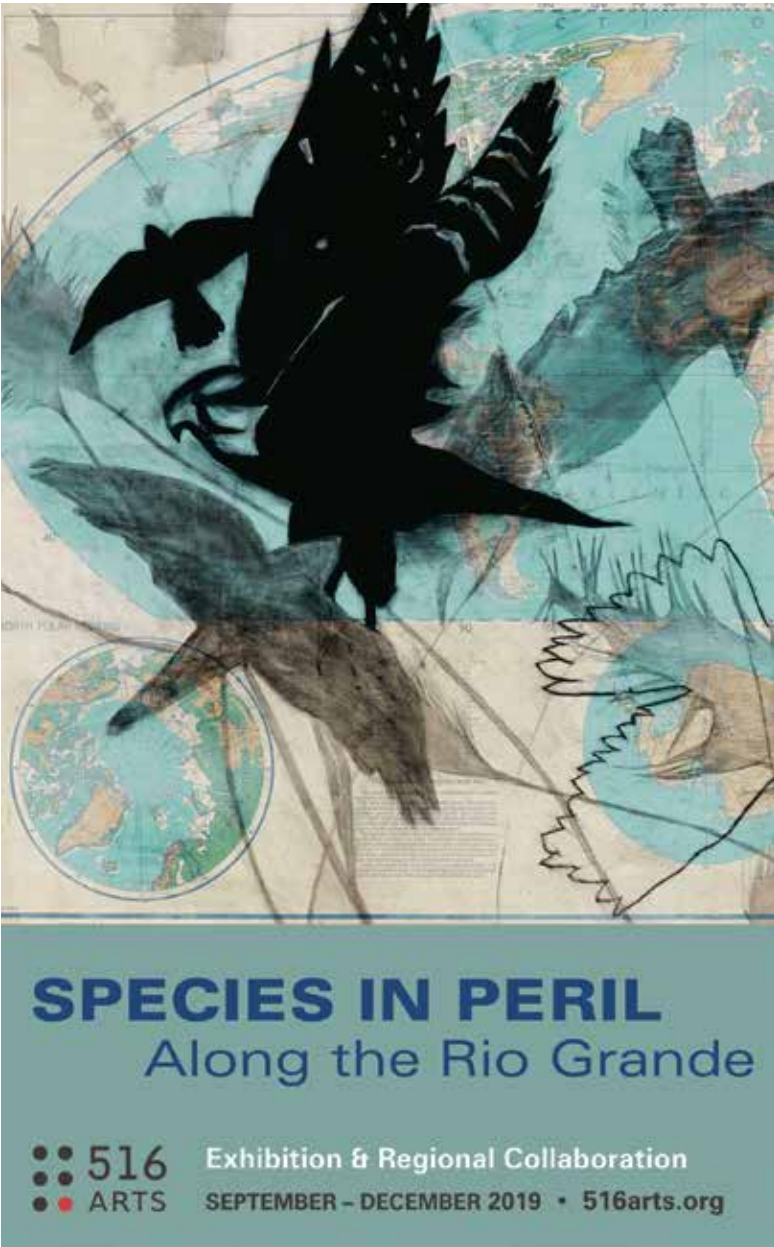
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Local elections: Where the action is

By Richard Barish
Chapter Political chair

On Nov. 5, there are municipal elections in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces, as well as soil and water districts and several school boards. Here are the Sierra Club's endorsements in the municipal elections and Doña Ana Soil and Water Conservation District.

Off-year elections typically have poor turnout, despite their importance to climate, water and other issues. Your vote can make a big difference! Check riograndesierraclub.org for new endorsements before you vote, and if you can donate a few hours to help elect great candidates, please email richard.barish@gmail.com.

Las Cruces

Note: In two multi-candidates Las Cruces City Council races, we endorsed two candidates. With ranked-choice voting, you can vote for both.

Ken Miyagishima

Mayor: Ken has been a strong advocate for environmental policies. Under his leadership the City of Las Cruces has installed 1.1 Megawatts of solar energy on city buildings and is currently adding more. The City is committed to receiving 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2050. It uses methane gas released by its Waste Treatment Facility to power operations, and it has converted all city streetlights to LED. Ken was vocal supporter for establishing the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, and he has championed the development of bicycle and walking paths throughout the city.

Kasandra Gandara

District 1: Kasandra spent her professional career as a social worker with the state, and she has expanded her concerns with the well-being of the community as a city councilor. She is the founder of the resilience leaders program to ensure safe childhoods; she initiated the Mano y Mano program that employs the homeless and founded the suicide-prevention task force. She supports a sustainability plan for the city that includes reaching 100% clean energy usage by 2050, including by the utilization of electric buses and cars and by installing solar panel on city facilities.

Tessa Stuve

District 2 (dual endorsement): Tessa, a mother of three, has been an advocate for children, healthcare, and the environment. She was selected by Moms Clean Air Force to participate in a "Play-In for Climate Action" this year in Washington, D.C., where she spoke with congressional



Ken Miyagishima



Kasandra Gandara



Tessa Stuve



Jack Valencia



Antoinette Reyes



Johana Bencomo



Kurt Anderson



Christopher Cardenas



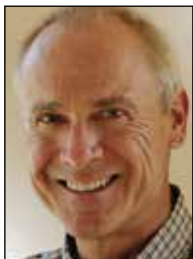
Renee Villareal



Michael J. Garcia



Jamie Cassutt-Sanchez



Ike Benton



Ane Romero



Pat Davis



Maureen Skowran

representatives and staff about the threat that a changing climate poses to the wellbeing of our youngest and oldest citizens. Tessa is a member of the Board of Directors of the Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce and was an advocate for the formation of the Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument.

Jack Valencia

District 2 (dual endorsement): Jack has a long history as a public servant and in transit and waste/recycling issues. He was involved in the startup of the Las Cruces Roadrunner Transit System; the creation of the Hazardous Household Materials collection for the City; and the startup of the South Central Solid Waste Authority and its recycling program.

Antoinette Reyes

District 4 (dual endorsement): Antoinette Reyes has been advocating and lobbying corporations and the government to protect, preserve, and conserve the environment and natural resources since she was 15. She worked in the Las Cruces Sustainability Office, and she worked for a group that helped grow the NM Environmental Public Health Network. In her spare time, she has volunteered to organize events, marches, and rallies that supported human health (clean air and water), wildlife, and wild places.

Johana Bencomo

District 4 (dual endorsement): Johana is a long-time community organizer working with historically marginalized communities. In the last two years she has focused on bridging the gap between social

justice and environmental justice, shown through her work on the Energy Transition Act and fighting the border wall with an intersectional lens. Johana is committed to making Las Cruces a model in the Southwest to address climate change, ensuring that the city stays on track for 100% clean energy and investing in innovative ways to allow all residents to have access to clean energy.

Doña Ana Soil and Water Conservation District

Kurt Anderson

Supervisor Position 1: Kurt is a retired NMSU professor with a strong interest in sustainable water use. He is on the Board of the Doña Ana Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association and served on the Lower Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Steering Committee. A member of the Sierra Club Southern New Mexico Group's Executive Committee, he also represents the Sierra Club on the Paso del Norte Watershed Council. He is particularly concerned with regional groundwater supplies, water conservation, watershed protection, and rangeland issues.

Christopher Cardenas

Supervisor Position 5: Born and raised in Las Cruces, Christopher is a local attorney who is committed to sustainability. He believes in responsible land stewardship and educating community members on the positive effects we can have on our world. Through innovative conservation policies such as grassland restoration, water preservation, and erosion prevention, he believes Doña Ana can be on the cutting edge

of addressing local consequences of poor resource management and climate change.

Santa Fe

Renee Villareal

District 1: Renee is a program co-director at New Mexico Women, where she continues her nonprofit community and urban planning focus. Her main commitment as an incumbent city councilor has been social justice and equity, and her thoughtful style has been an asset to the council. Her priorities are affordable housing, infrastructure improvements like better stormwater management, efficiencies of government (for example a new financial management system), and addressing what to do with the former College of Santa Fe campus (a major budget drain).

Michael J. Garcia

District 2: Michael started his career in AmeriCorps Vista and is the state program director for the Corporation for National and Community Service. His priorities are housing, infrastructure improvements, and friendlier constituent services. In his candidate interview, Michael addressed questions directly and thoughtfully. He believes we need to add more electric-vehicle charging stations, convert to LED streetlights, and improve rainwater capture. Michael is very committed to listening and responding to people's needs.

Jamie Cassutt-Sanchez

District 4: Jamie gave thoughtful and clear answers both to our questionnaire and at her interview. Her priorities are establishing a Health Alliance Committee (cross-entity focus on community health and social needs), addressing the affordable-housing crisis, and combat-

ing climate change by making Santa Fe a leader in sustainability. Her example of something she was proud of, reducing food waste at the Escondido school district, exemplified her analytical abilities and personal interaction skills. Jamie sees climate change through a public-health lens and believes the city's budget must reflect this.

Albuquerque

Ike Benton

District 2: Ike has been supporting good environment measures for almost as long as anyone can remember. Recently, he co-sponsored the measure declaring a climate emergency and creating a climate plan for the City, a measure limiting the use of single-use plastic bags, and a memorial urging Congress to reauthorize and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Ike was our go-to guy on all things about the bosque. He has a tough, six-person race, but with his record of accomplishment on the environment, he deserves another term.

Ane Romero

District 4: Ane comes from a farming family in Northern New Mexico. She has significant expertise in behavioral health issues. She was a staffer for Sen. Martin Heinrich and now for Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, where she worked with us on passing important environmental legislation.

Ane is concerned that many residents do not understand the gravity of the impacts of climate change on Albuquerque and the planet, and she would like the City to work with organizations like the Sierra Club on a city-wide awareness campaign.

Pat Davis

District 6: Pat is another incumbent with a strong record of support for environmental measures. He co-sponsored the City's plastic bag ban and supports extending the ban to Styrofoam takeout containers, and he co-sponsored the measure declaring a climate emergency and creating a city climate plan. He also sponsored the bill approving Renewable Energy Financing Districts and a memorial opposing transportation of high-level nuclear waste through Albuquerque to Holtec's proposed interim storage facility.

Maureen Skowran

District 8: Maureen first got involved in politics through the Sierra Club. In 2016, she went to Farmington to speak at the BLM hearing to urge stricter regulation of methane emissions. She plans to continue fighting climate change, including by gradually replacing city vehicles with EVs, updating the building code to current environmental standards, and requiring disclo-

Northern Group action items

By Teresa Seamster
Northern NM Group chair
Keep up with what your group is working on and let us know how and when you wish to become involved! Contact ctc.seamster@gmail.com.

Environmental health and justice
(Chaco) Counselor HIA-HNDA: The Counselor Health Impact Assessment has been completed and approved by the Navajo Nation Health Research Review Board and will be presented at an upcoming health conference in Window Rock by Teresa Seamster.
State Land Office Chaco Working Committee: Acoma Pueblo meeting on Cultural Resources Inventory. We submitted wildlife corridor maps for overlay of traditional migration paths.
(Tererro) San Miguel County Resolution and Ordinance: We testified at San Miguel County Commission in support of a resolution to halt permits to mine in the Pecos Canyon, and to support a county-wide mining ordinance to ensure county authority for monitoring, permits and financial assurance for reclamation, accidents and abandonment by mining companies (See Page 13).
Ozone hearing: We submitted a comment to Environment Department on ozone impacts in San Juan Basin oil/gas areas and targeting volatile organic compounds, including widespread use of formaldehyde, which creates toxic and health-impacting ozone levels.

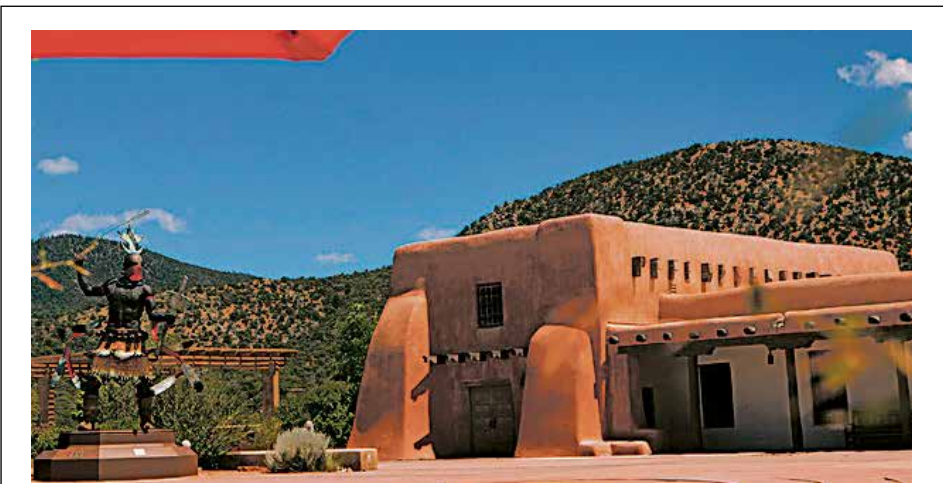
Wildlife
Game Commission: We submitted three letters to the new commission: Public Stream Access, new Trapping Rule and Watchable Wildlife. The commission placed a 90-day moratorium on granting permits to deny public access until the attorney general rules on the legislation. Regulations do not prohibit trapping on public lands yet.
Bear Fest: We tabled at the Bear Aware event at Los Alamos Nature Center with the Pajarito Group.

Sensitive Species Relocation & Trapping Violations: We are working with People for Native Ecosystems to relocate 30-40 Gunnison's prairie dogs from Santa Fe Place Mall to a private location in La Cieneguilla to avoid conflict with planned development. We are working with Santa Fe National Forest on documenting trapping violations on the Caja del Rio. BLM and the state Department of Game and Fish have investigated and charged a trapper for violations.

Public Lands
Santa Fe/Carson/Cibola National Forest Revision Plan — Santa Fe/Carson Coalition is submitting comments on the three forests as the proposed management plans have been largely streamlined and address similar areas in the same way (see Page 10). We are working with a consultant from The Wilderness Society with oversight from Western Environmental Law Center to produce comments on all three forests. The Northern NM Group will submit comments on wildlife corridors and the proposed Cultural Interpretive Area and Special Use Management on the Caja del Rio near Santa Fe.



A hiker points out the location of a leghold trap that a hiker stepped into this summer, next to two illegally set additional traps.



Join us for an inspiring holiday celebration
Under the portal and inside the Museum Hill Café
Sunday, December 1, 2019
4 to 7 p.m.
Buffet & Desserts – Cash Bar
Museum Hill Café
Special Guests and Presentation: Senate Majority Leader Peter Wirth & State Representative Matthew McQueen
“Winning the argument and how to lead the community”
SAVE THE DATE!!
RSVP by November 10
Alice Cox, Membership Chair
auntiealice@cybermesa.com, 505-780-5122
\$25/person

Santa Fe Mountain Landscape Resiliency Project: We collaborated with Defenders of Wildlife and WildEarth Guardians in writing an alternative to the LRP, which has gotten attention through the county commission, Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition and an online petition by WildEarth Guardians.
Santa Fe County Mining Ordinance: The Hard Rock Mining Ordinance passed the Santa Fe County Commission in August. We testified in support of strict regulations that supersede federal and state permits for new mines in a new ordinance that passed unanimously primarily due to the Comexico application to open a mine in Tererro (see Page 13). This is a fast-developing situation with 30-plus pueblos, business alliances, conservation and outdoor recreation organizations collaborating to halt the Tererro Mine.
Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument: We co-sponsored the Upper Rio Grande Wildlife Corridors Summit in Taos on Aug. 20. Presentations on a) Traditional Land Use in the Upper Rio Grande, b) Federal Agency and NM/CO Assessment of Corridors, c) Corridor Conservation on Tribal Lands, d) Private Landowners and Corridors, and e) Federal/State Initiatives.

Addresses by: U.S. Assistant House Speaker Ben R. Luján, U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland, and Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard.
Caja del Rio: Pajarito Group and Steve Doorn have shared information on possible development on the Caja that could affect Santa Fe National Forest plans for cultural preservation and special use of forest land. Additional plans for a four-lane highway, bridge across the Rio Grande and two building complexes on the LANL side of the river are proposed but have not been presented to the county or public yet.
Water
Next Gen Water Summit: Tabled at water summit with display of documented produced water-oil spill incident that occurred in Counselor. We wrote handout called Produced Water 101.
Rally at the Rio: Tabled at the Rally put on by Amigos Bravos highlighting otter restoration in the river system. Our table displayed Produced Water issues.
Visit www.riograndesierraclub.org/northern-new-mexico/ for more info and to contact us!

Progress on protecting Chaco

By Miya King-Flaherty
Our Wild New Mexico Organizing Representative
As we move to another chapter in the effort to protect the Greater Chaco Landscape and living culture, oil and gas development in the region continues to threaten residents' way of life and divide communities.
Some community members benefit economically from oil and gas development by leasing their mineral rights, which generate royalties, but many community members do not benefit in this way.
Poor air quality at well sites is a daily battle, and so are the physical and social health impacts that community members report, such as increased rates of asthma, upper respiratory problems, irritated skin, increased rates of cancer, loss of cultural connection, and safety concerns.
But there has been some favorable movement despite the fact that the Bureau of Land Management is still selling off public and ancestral tribal lands throughout New Mexico to oil and gas leasing.
In August, the Sierra Club joined a lawsuit with Diné Citizens Against Ruining our Environment, San Juan Citizens Alliance, WildEarth Guardians, and Western Environmental Law Center. It targets the BLM Farmington Field Office's approval of more than 250 oil and gas wells since 2016. Many of the wells are within 10 miles of Chaco Culture National Historical Park and close to Navajo homes. The suit points to the BLM's failure to account for and address the cumulative environmental and health impacts of Mancos Shale oil and gas extraction in the region, which has ramped up considerably in recent years. The lawsuit was accompanied by a motion for a temporary restraining order that called on the court to halt further development of the wells at issue in the case.
Meanwhile, a U.S. Senate subcommittee passed an appropriations bill that includes a Chaco-friendly amendment preventing funding to the BLM for further oil and gas development on unleased lands within 10 miles of Chaco Park. The spending limitation does not affect existing oil and gas activities. It only prevents further development on unleased lands for one year. The bill also includes \$1 million for the Department of Interior and New Mexico's pueblos to jointly conduct an ethnographic survey of the Greater Chacoan region. The survey will explore the vast cultural resources that exist outside the park and in the broader region.
The next step is for the Senate Appropriations bill to move to a floor vote. If passed, the bill will guarantee the assurances from Secretary David Bernhardt's order that imposes a 1-year moratorium on oil and leasing within 10 miles of the Park until the BLM Farmington Field Office completes its review and Resource Management Plan for the region.

Pecos business owners and concerned residents meet with San Miguel County Councilman Max Trujillo (center) on a hike up to the new proposed mine location.

Photos by
Teresa Seamster



Terrero Mine 2.0 in Pecos

**By Teresa Seamster
Northern NM Group Chair**

It started in February when representatives from a small mining company called Comexico met with Santa Fe National Forest officials to discuss their proposal to explore for precious metals in the Upper Pecos Watershed. The project area is on Jones Hill close to the Superfund site of the old Tererro Mine in Pecos Canyon at the confluence of Willow Creek and the Pecos River.

Like an old deep wound with scar tissue barely in place, the old mine and El Molino mill tailings now have a thin impermeable liner covering recontoured hillsides and underlying the now restored Willow Creek and Alamitos stream beds. The toxic impoundment ponds have been drained, and a thin covering of rocks, grasses and other vegetation hide the mine's legacy of acid-rock drainage and heavy-metal contamination.

In the mine's heyday, nearly 1.3 million tons of copper, lead, zinc, gold and silver were extracted, and the Tererro Mine and El Molino combined was the largest employer in New Mexico. Large-scale mining slowed in 1939, and disposal of tailings and other waste was becoming a significant problem.

For decades until 1970, mine waste was used as a fill material for local roads, campgrounds, trailheads and around the Lisboa Springs Fish Hatchery. In 1991, a report released by US Fish and Wildlife Service documented fish and small mammal tissue samples that showed lead levels above the human consumption criterion. Surface water contained lead, iron, manganese and cadmium exceeding state and federal levels. Sediment in streambeds contained elevated heavy metals, and groundwater-monitoring wells contained sulfate, manganese and total dissolved solids exceeding state standards.

Also in 1991, the impounded tailings ponds along Alamitos



The old mine site is still too toxic to allow any wells to be drilled on it, and the liner and restoration planting is too fragile to allow any trespassing or livestock use.

Creek flooded during the spring runoff and caused a massive kill of more than 90,000 trout at the fish hatchery.

The perfect storm

The federal report and flood unleashed what the New Mexico Environment Department called "a perfect storm" for Pecos Canyon and the surrounding communities. The town of Pecos suffered a significant loss of recreational visitors, and the local businesses were severely affected.

While the situation called for a Superfund-level cleanup, industry, government and community stakeholders worked on an agreement to conduct a thorough cleanup without listing it as a Superfund site that could create additional costs, delays, and negative publicity for the area.

The original mine owners had moved on, so successor owners, along with federal and state agencies, were liable for the land that contained the mine waste and contaminated runoff. This brings our story to today, with the same concerns about a new mine in the same place.

What has changed?

In a word – nothing. The problems caused by the old mine are precisely what are being considered by state and federal permitting agencies now. Santa Fe National Forest is responsible for setting condi-

tions of land use for any mine applicant, but is not allowed to prohibit the application. The state's Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) is equally responsible for processing the application and conditions before granting a permit for exploration or eventual mine development. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is responsible for granting easements on its land to grant road access to the high-elevation mine.

None of these agencies has the authority to deny the mine application; however, they have the responsibility to protect the lands they manage and the wildlife and water resources under their purview, which allows them to set conditions of use.

In today's crumbling regulatory environment, small mine holdings are once again exciting speculators to search for gold and rare-earth minerals. However, the long-term economic and environmental costs of such ventures are finally being reckoned before any permits are granted.

The Mining and Minerals Division of EMNRD has announced a public meeting in the closest town of Pecos BEFORE any permits are granted to begin exploratory drilling. This is an unprecedented move by the state agency in charge of mines, as public outcry has grown and county resolutions opposing

the mine have been passed.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has sent a letter to the head of the National Forest Service requesting no action on the mine application be taken without a full Environmental Impact Study and stating that the Pecos River is a highly valued natural resource for fishing, hiking, and sightseeing with a new multi-million dollar Pecos Canyon State Park.

A June 27 resolution passed by the San Miguel County Commission reads in part: "Whereas, clean water is essential for the health and well-being of San Miguel residents:

"Whereas, many residents and visitors depend on the Pecos River Watershed for recreational activities such as fishing, camping, swimming and hiking;

"Whereas, the local economy is dependent on clean water to support farming, ranching and recreation based economic activities...

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that the County work with Santa Fe County for protections of the watershed, the Pecos River and associated tributaries:

"Be it further resolved that San Miguel County directs its County Manager to review and revise all ordinances which apply to water resources and regulation of mining related industries as may be necessary."

Strong steps by both Santa Fe and San Miguel will be needed to fight this threat to local residents and the area's economy. Over 30 organizations, including Sierra Club, are working together to prevent another disaster on the Pecos River.

Learn more at the Tererro Mine Bash, 1 to 4 p.m. Oct. 26 at Hondo Fire Station No. 2, 654 Old Las Vegas Highway. County commissioners have been invited to discuss public concerns and the new mining ordinance.

Visit pecoswatershed.org for coalition events and further information.

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Bears, bags and pits for Pajaritans

By Jody Benson
Pajarito Group chair
Los Alamos High School Eco Club is back for the bag. In September, the 2019 Los Alamos High School Eco Club restarted its pursuit of a 10-cent fee on single-use plastic shopping bags. At the Sept. 10 County Council meeting, co-President Lillian Peterson presented a petition with 160 mostly student signatures garnered in one short session at the high school. The Eco Club will meet to discuss its goals with the Council's Subteam on Plastics Reduction: Pete Sheehey, Katrina Schmidt and James Robinson.

Please contact the Council at countycouncil@lacnm.us and tell them that, counter to councilors' own myth that only a few people in Los Alamos want a bag reduction (yes, the council continues to cite that negativity from a single on-line survey answered more than four years ago by about 460 Save-the-Baggers), this plastics reduction will help maintain the living Earth these committed kids are working hard to save.

Update on LANL pit production

"Pit" production is the manufacture of cores for nuclear weapons. Contrary to what Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) representative Kevin Roark told the Sierra Club in April, the effort to turn LANL into a pit-production factory is, indeed, ramping up.

An initial \$13 billion is budgeted for the factory to update the aging infrastructure to accommodate the mission that National Nuclear Security Administration, in a February meeting at DOE, declared critical to pit production and national security. A disappointing champion for this accelerated nuclear-weapons mission is Sen. Martin Heinrich, who worked with Sen. Lindsey Graham (of South Carolina, home of Savannah River National Laboratory) to put the requirement for more pits — 80 per year split between LANL and SRNL — into the National Defense Authorization Act. Pit production is now law.

According to the *Los Alamos Monitor*, experts in both national security and arms control dispute the idea that nuclear cores for the arsenal need updating, and since currently even if only 50% of our 4,018 nukes ready for deployment incinerate as designed, we have enough impact to detonate a nuclear holocaust ... the question is: What is the purpose of ramped-up pit production?



At the Pajarito Environmental Education Center Bear Festival, families learned about bears: safety, the shape of their skulls and scat, what they eat, where they live, and what the black bear's life is like. The Northern New Mexico Group table featured wildlife safety — both for humans and the wildlife interacting with us. For the Pajarito Group's game "It's All About Hibernation," kids made drawings and scattered acorns they brought from scrub oak trees.



Jody Benson

Presumably, jobs.

So what's going to happen in Los Alamos? The Los Alamos Study Group website (lasg.org) has a copy of Deputy Director of Operations Kelly Beierschmitt's "Overview of Los Alamos National Laboratory" with its options for building out infrastructure for LANL's projected 30 to 80 pits per year. You can scroll through the many slides to see an image of the bridge over White Rock Canyon with a dog-leg over Ancho Canyon that would link a road to either I-25 or N.M. 599. The bridge is one alternative for a shortcut to bring the factory workers to Los Alamos from Rio Rancho. Why Rio Rancho? The 1,200 new workers per year over the next several years require someplace to live. Rio Rancho has housing. Los Alamos does not.

Thus far in the planned

expansion, NNSA has not confirmed whether the project will require a new site-wide environmental impact statement, or merely an update on the 2009 SWEIS. It is essential that we-the-people demand that LANL initiate a new SWEIS for the massively expanded effort.

The meeting between Los Alamos County and LANL to discuss this issue is proposed for sometime in October.

The LANL Mission

Here is the supreme irony: The worldwide Climate Strike bookends the terrors of two generations: Millennials to Gen Z-ers are looking at the scientific data related to climate change and realize that human life as we are living it has a little more than a decade before our lifestyle trashes the Earth.

Their grandparents remem-

ber a different threat—that of nuclear war. They remember ducking under desks and against concrete walls. And just as hiding under a desk won't save a life, neither will sticking a governmental-head-in-the-sand-over-climate save the Earth.

The question in this vortex of terrors is why would the federal government, as well as that of New Mexico, work together to invest 13 billion tax dollars to make LANL's primary mission one of creating new weapons cores to update our current stockpile of 4,018 nuclear weapons? As people worldwide protest climate change, our current Federal Government has decided to invest in nuclear

holocaust rather than in dealing with the more complex but equally deadly outcome from unmitigated climate change.

How about, rather than investing in pits, we maintain the Laboratory as the center of science in service to the nation? We had a Manhattan Project to make the weapon that ended World War II. How about a Manhattan Project to reverse climate change? How about investing the \$13billion in science to support the Earth on which climate-strikers of whatever age can continue to live? Let's invest in a living planet. It's our money. We will tell Congress and POTUS how to use it.



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Pajarito Group Directory

riograndesierraclub.org/pajarito

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

Join the Pajarito Group:

Contact Jody Benson at echidnaejb@gmail.com or 505-662-4782.

Outings, continued from Page 16

Carpooling is recommended. Sign-up no later than Oct. 20.

Leader: June Parsons, comic-silver@gmail.com and Terry Owen, teowen@comcast.net

Level: Easy/Moderate

Location: North of Socorro, NM

Sign up: riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.

Saturday, Oct. 26: Climb up Cienega Spring Trail and Proceed Down Pino Canyon Trail. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Smith's parking lot situated at the intersection of Tramway and I-40. Elevation gain 1,660 feet, trip length 7 miles. A car will be left at the Elena Gallegos upper parking lot. You are invited to lunch-dinner at Odile's and Jim's house after the hike. Please RSVP in advance and provide your name and a phone number. Hike cancelled if it rains.

Trip leader: Odile De La Beaujardiere, Odile@pitot.org, 505 433 4692

Level: Strenuous

Location: Albuquerque, Cibola National Forest

Sign up: riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.

Sunday Oct. 27: Excursión: Copper, toward Ojo de las Sandias. Meet at 8 a.m. at 15000 Copper Ave NE, 87123, east of Tramway. We will hike as far as the group decides, about 3 to 4 hours with an elevation gain of 1,200 feet. Facebook: Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico

Trip leader: Cecilia.chavez. beltran@sierraclub.org, cell 505 319 7556

Level: Moderate/Strenuous
Location: Foothills.

Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.

Saturday, Nov 2: Autumn in the Bosque walk. Meet at the Sculpture Garden parking lot just south of the Montano Bridge, west side of the Rio Grande at 9 a.m. This is a 1.5- to 2-hour walk on a level path along the drain and past the Oxbow housing area. Join us to celebrate our majestic cottonwoods and the change of seasons in our beautiful bosque. Bring hat, water, snacks and any other health



Photo courtesy Sylvie

An observer checked in on the August hike to the summit of Wheeler, New Mexico's highest peak.

and comfort items you may need. RSVP with trip leader by Oct. 31.

Level: Easy

Location: Albuquerque

Trip leader: Margaret DeLong, mardel18@aol.com, 505-321-5931 and Julie Hudson, assistant

Sign up at www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/

Saturday, Nov. 2: The Park to Tool Box Spring, San Mateo Mountains. Meet in Magdalena, NM, at 8:30 a.m. This is a rare short route from East to West Red Canyons, with three curious features along the way. Nine-mile round trip with 1,900 feet elevation gain over approximately five hours. We'll carpool to FR 478 which is moderately high-center, from NM 107 into the East San Mateo foothills and walk down into East Red Canyon and up over a ridge to the spring in upper West Red Canyon. As everywhere offroad in these mountains, the route is rich in solitude and amazing views. One dog, no children under 15 years of age. RSVP by Oct. 28.

Trip leader: Jim Nelson, 575-854-2259, jcnelson@gilanet.com

Level: Moderate-Strenuous

Location: West of Socorro

Sign up: riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.

Sunday, Nov. 3: Excursión, Michael M. Emery and Trail 305 Loop. Meet at 9 a.m. at

High Desert St NE, 87111. From Tramway Blvd NE, turn right toward Spain Rd NE. It is a 3-mile loop with elevation gain of 334 feet. Dogs on leash welcome. Facebook: Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico.

Trip leader: Cecilia.chavez. beltran@sierraclub.org, 505-319-7556

Level: Easy

Location: Sandia East Foothills

Sign up: riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/

Saturday, Nov. 9: Excursión: Embudito Canyon. Meet at 9 a.m. at Trailhead Rd NE. East on Montgomery Blvd NE, pass Tramway Blvd., left on Glenwood Hills Dr. NE, right on Trailhead Rd NE. We will hike as far as the group decides. Facebook: Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico

Trip leader: Cecilia.chavez. beltran@sierraclub.org, cell 505-319-7556

Level: Moderate

Location: Sandia Foothills

Sign up at www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.

Saturday, Nov. 9: Elena Gallegos to Tram Loop Hike. Hikers can meet at 8:45 a.m. at the Albertson's parking lot at the corner of Academy and Tramway to carpool to the Elena Gallegos picnic area or at 9 a.m. at the far Northeast corner parking area for the Pino Trail at Elena Gallegos picnic area. There is a fee of

\$2 cash, per vehicle on weekends. It is recommended that carpoolers contribute to the \$2 fee. This 3.5- to 4-hour hike, which includes a rest stop at the tram, will be 6 miles round trip with 305 feet of elevation gain. The hiking pace will be about 2 miles per hour. This outing is appropriate for children over the age of 12 if they can maintain the hiking pace, and if accompanied by parent or legal guardian. Well-behaved dogs on leash at all times, are allowed. RSVP by Nov. 6.

Trip leader: Diane Owens, (505) 917-0556.

Level: Moderate

Location: Sandia East Foothills

Sign up: riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/

Saturday, Nov. 9: Calabacillas Arroyo bosque walk. The cottonwoods in our bosque are senescing, that is, they are old and dying. We'll enjoy the bosque and see some magnificent cottonwoods and wintering birds while learning about the fate of the cottonwood canopy and what we might do to ensure that the bosque continues to be good habitat and a great place to enjoy nature in the middle of the city. This is in conjunction with the 516 Arts exhibit "Species in Peril Along the Rio Grande" and will include an art-related surprise!

Trip leader: Richard Barish, richard.barish@gmail.com or

505-232-3013 for directions.

Tuesday, Nov 12: Zero Waste Tour to the South Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant 10 a.m. to noon. Contact trip leader to RSVP no later than Nov. 10.

Trip leader: Laurie Zunner 505-440-5337 or lmzunne@gmail.com

Level: Easy

Location: Albuquerque, NM

Sign up: riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/

Saturday, Nov. 16: Hudson Canyon scramble, San Mateo Mountains. Meet in Magdalena, NM, at 8:30 a.m. After carpooling to Grassy Lookout, which overlooks the south San Mateo mountains, we'll descend to Hudson Spring by trail. We'll then scramble out of Hudson Canyon to the Northwest, ending in Spring Canyon without the help of trails or winding, rocky 2-tracks. Round trip 4.5 miles, elevation gain 1,800 feet over about 4 hours. One dog. Children 15 years of age or over with parent or legal guardian are permitted. RSVP by Nov. 12.

Trip leader: Jim Nelson, 575-854-2259, jcnelson@gilanet.com.

Level: Moderate

Location: West of Socorro

Sign up at www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/

Friday, Nov 22: Excursión: Pino Trail. Meet 9 a.m. at Elena Gallegos Open Space at 7100 Tramway Blvd. NE, 87122. We will hike as far as the group decides for approximately 3 hours. \$3 parking/amenity fee per vehicle, bring cash. Facebook: Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico

Trip leader: Cecilia Chávez Beltrán, Cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org, cell 505-319-7556

Level: Moderate

Location: Sandia Foothills

Sign up: riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.

Northern New Mexico outings Meetup site: www.meetup.com/Santa-Fe-Sierra-Club-Outings
Albuquerque Meetup site: www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Rio-Grande-Chapter.



Photo courtesy Terry Owen

Participants enjoy a Military Outdoors Program hike of Wheeler Peak in June. The program is expanding from the Albuquerque area to the Four Corners this month.

Military Outdoors expands to 4 Corners

**By Terry Owens
Military Outings coordinator**

The Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program will be expanding to the Four Corners area this fall.

Hart Pierce of Aztec will lead the program for the Rio Grande Chapter Northern New Mexico Group. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam and is a Purple Heart recipient.

With extensive backpacking, hiking, and cycling experience in the Four Corners and Colorado Plateau, Hart is planning some inviting activities. Easy and more challenging outings will be scheduled in New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona.

The Military Outdoors program, which began in the Albuquerque area, is geared toward military veterans, active duty, reservists and their families. Many veterans miss the sense of camaraderie,

teamwork and trust they felt while on active duty. Spending time outdoors with others who appreciate the unique experience of military service provides a healthy outlet, a renewed sense of belonging and friendships that can last a lifetime.

The physical, mental and emotional benefits provided by spending time in nature are well documented, and those suffering from the invisible wounds of war often benefit the most. Most outings are at no cost.

The first Military Outdoors outing in the Four Corners will include camping, hiking and bicycling in Chaco Culture National Historical Park on Oct. 18-19. This includes time to enjoy the night sky and make new friends. Check outings listings on Page 16 or riograndesierraclub.org/military-outdoors-fall-2019 for RSVP and more info.



Photo courtesy CK

The Pajarito Canyon Nail Trail loop hike on Sept. 15, rated “easy,” featured stunning views.

October-December outings

October
Friday, Oct. 4: Hike along the Las Conchas Trail in the Jemez Mountains. We will meet at 9 a.m. at the farthest NW 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, NM. Details, updates and sign-up for this Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter event at Meetup Site [meetu.ps/c/2P1j/Cw6zc/a](https://www.meetup.com/ps/c/2P1j/Cw6zc/a).

Leader: June Parsons, comic-silver@gmail.com
Level: Easy/moderate
Location: North of Jemez Springs
Sign up: [riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/](https://www.sierraclub.org/calendar/)
Saturday, Oct. 5: Excursión Armijo and Faulty Trail. Meet at 8 a.m. at Sprouts parking lot 13150 Central Ave SE, ABQ 87123 at the corner of Tramway Blvd. NE, to carpool or caravan from there. Beautiful 5-hour hike in shaded forest, great views with an elevation gain 790 feet. There is a parking/amenity fee, please bring cash. Facebook: Excursiones a la Naturaleza de Nuevo Mexico

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 chances 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](https://www.sierraclub.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/.

Trip leader: Cecilia.chavez.beltran@sierraclub.org, cell 505 319 7556
Level: Moderate
Location: Cedar Crest, NM
Sign up: [riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/](https://www.sierraclub.org/calendar/)
Saturday, Oct. 12: Roberts Fire aftermath and interior San Mateo Mountains. Meet at Springtime Campground at 8:30 a.m. Participants from points North of Socorro are strongly advised to camp Friday night. Round trip 12 miles, 3,000-foot elevation gain over six hours. After a 2,250-foot ascent along a good trail we’ll go off-trail to explore part of the burned area, assessing the extent of fuel removal and forest regenerative potential following this July lightning-caused fire. This outing is appropriate for children 15

years of age or older who are accompanied by parent or legal guardian. No dogs please. RSVP by Oct. 8.
Trip leader: Jim Nelson, 575-854-2259, jcnelson@gilanet.com
Level: Strenuous
Location: Southwest of Socorro
Sign up: [riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/](https://www.sierraclub.org/calendar/)
Wednesday, Oct. 16: Zero Waste Tour to the Rio Grande Soil Amendment (composting) Facility on the West Mesa. 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. RSVP with trip leader by Oct. 14.
Leader: Laurie Zunner (505) 440-5337 or lmzunne@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: Albuquerque, NM
Sign up: [riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/](https://www.sierraclub.org/calendar/)

Oct. 18-19: Easy-moderate camp, hike and bike at Chaco Culture National Historic Park. Join the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program to experience this center of Puebloan culture. We will begin meeting up at 4 p.m. Friday evening at Chaco Canyon to camp, enjoy the dark night sky and make new friends. Saturday at 8:45 a.m. meet at the Tsin Kletzin trailhead to hike the Tsin Kletzin trail. This three-hour hike will cover 4.5 miles with 550 feet of elevation gain. After lunch, we meet at the visitors center to bicycle the Canyon Loop Drive. This relatively flat ride covers nine miles and will include stops at many of the major Chacoan sites including Pueblo Bonito and Chetro Ketl. Participants may join any or all activities based upon avail-

ability and ability. This outing is appropriate for children over 14 years of age who are accompanied by parent or legal guardian. No dogs please. Due to road conditions into the park, a vehicle with adequate clearance is recommended. Refer to the Chaco Culture National Historic Park website for campsite information. Participants who plan on camping at Chaco should make campsite reservations as soon as possible due to limited space. Contact leaders no later than Oct. 14 to RSVP, or sign-up via Meetup or Sierra Club Outings Calendar; provide the activities in which they will participate (camp, hike, bike); and obtain recommended gear list.

Trip leaders: Terry Owen, 505-301-4349, teowen@comcast.net; Hart Pierce, 505-320-1055, shpierce@q.com
Level: Easy-Moderate
Location: Nageezi, NM
Sign up at www.sierraclub.org/calendar/
Friday, Oct. 25: Hike San Lorenzo Canyon. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Lowes parking lot, 2001 12th St. This 2-hour hike is 2.5 miles round trip with 150 feet elevation gain. San Lorenzo Canyon contains beautiful arches, slot canyons and other interesting geological formations. Bring cameras and binoculars. This outing is appropriate for children over 10 accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Round-trip travel is 140 miles to the trailhead. Although there is parking space at the trailhead, the last two miles from I-25 to the trailhead is rutted road and best reached by 4-wheel or all-wheel-drive vehicle.