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Chapter goes 19-for-23 in elections
Most of our endorsed local candidates win in November. Page 11.

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Executive Committee
Susan Martin, chair
505-670-3279
smart3171@gmail.com
Diane Reese, vice chair
505-570-6416
DianeAbNM@gmail.com
Anita Gonzales, secretary
505-766-7117
anita@newmexico@gmail.com
Laurence Gibson,
El Paso Group representative
515-309-5419
brrinha279@yahoo.com
Monica Trujillo,
Northern New Mexico Group representative
575-342-1727, brrinha279@yahoo.com
Southern New Mexico
Antoinette Reyes, Southern New Mexico organizer
575-652-7550
antoinette.reyes@sierranclub.org
Luis Guerrero, legislative and political organizer
luis.guerrero@sierranclub.org
Sierra Club National
2101 Webster St., Suite 1300
Oakland, CA, 94612
415-977-5500
Local Groups
Central New Mexico Group
2215 Lead Ave. SE,
Albuquerque, 87106
Chair: Diane Reese, 505-507-6416
lgibson@utep.edu
El Paso Group, P.O. Box
9151, El Paso, TX 79995,
Chair: Laurence Gibson, 515-309-5419, lgibson@utep.edu.
Northern New Mexico Group
1807 Second St.,
Unit 45, Santa Fe, NM 87505,
505-983-2703, Char: John Buchser, johnb@comcast.net,
505-620-0201
Southern New Mexico Group,
P.O. Box 735, Mesilla, NM, 88046; Chair: Howie Dash, howiedash@aol.com,
575-452-7550
Outings
Chapter Outings chair:
Terry Owen, 505-301-3439
townen@comcast.net
Debbie Bryant, co-chair,
byrdale@aol.com
Central New Mexico
Terry Owen
El Paso: Laurence Gibson,
lgbison@utep.edu.
Northern New Mexico:
Alan Shapiro,
rmus@yahoo.com
Southern New Mexico:
Howie Dash, 575-652-7550
howiedash@aol.com
Inspiring Connections
Outdoors: San Francisco Raymond Greenwell
516-312-5751,
matmg@hofsfa.edu
Military Outdoors
Program: Terry Owen
Conservation Issues
Conservation Chair: Karl Braithwaite,
505-850-3369
karl@braith.net
Energy/Climate Change:
Karl Braithwaite
Water: Dale Doremus
doremuswater@q.com
Dairy: Dan Lorimier
danlorimier@gmail.com
Water Sentinels:
Shannon Romeling
romeling73@gmail.com
Public Lands:
Derrick Toledo
Bosque Issues:
Richard Barish, 505-232-3013
richard.barish@gmail.com
Nuclear/Waste Storage:
John Buchser, 505-983-2703
John Buchser, johnb@comcast.net,
505-620-0201
Four Corners:
Miya King-Flaherty, miya.king-
flaherty@sierranclub.org
Methane:
Antoinette Reyes, antoinette.
reyes@sierranclub.org
Mining, Sand & Gravel:
Alyson Siwik, alysorsivi@q.com,
teresa@sierranclub.org,
ttc.seamster@gmail.com
Transportation:
Ken Hughes,
bhv@hydrofamily.com
Zero Waste:
Laura Zunner
lzmzun@gmail.com
Activism Teams
Rio Grande Sierran Communications:
Chair: Shannon Remeling,
Members: Laurence Gibson,
John Buchser, Ken Hughes,
Mary Katherine Ray, Jody Benson,
Richard Barish, Reed Eckhardt.
Sierran Editor:
Luna Blaber, 505-660-5905
luna.blaber@sierranclub.org
Newspaper Production:
deborahvilladesign.com
Web Editor:
Ellen Loehman, ellenloehman.com
505-328-2954
Elections:
Chair: Claire McKnight,
Debbie Bryant, howiedash@aol.com,
505-983-2703
John Buchser, 505-983-2703
Join the Sierra Club
You can join the Sierra Club (your membership is to both the national group and the Rio Grande Chapter) for only $15! 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, 2101 Webster St., #1800,
Oakland, CA 94612.
Scan the QR code at right on
your phone cell to join the Rio Grande Chapter using our online form.
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EPA finalizes oil and gas methane standards

BY ANTOINETTE REYES
Chapter Permian and Southern NM Organizer

Atter 10 years of environmental and public health concerns, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finalized standards to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas industry. These standards are designed to reduce methane emissions by 45% by 2025, compared to 2014 levels. The final rules also include provisions to reduce volatile organic compounds, which can contribute to smog and other environmental problems.

The new rules will apply to U.S. oil and gas operations and will affect both onshore and offshore sites. The EPA estimates that the new rules will prevent 15 million metric tons of methane emissions annually, which is equivalent to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from 4 million households.

The new methane rules are part of the broader effort to reduce methane emissions in the United States. The EPA has already taken steps to reduce methane emissions from other sources, including landfills and livestock.

The new methane rules are expected to take effect in December 2021. They will require facilities to reduce methane emissions by 2024 and 2025, with the final rule taking effect in 2026.

BY ANNI HANNA
If you have hiked Petroglyph National Monument North, you know its rugged beauty and cultural significance. New Mexico Gas Company is proposing a $180 million facility for storing and regasifying liquefied natural gas (LNG) on 25 acres close to these petroglyphs, and just two miles from Venta Ranch and Double Eagle Airport.

The facility poses health and safety risks to surrounding communities and could raise the price of gas by $1 a month for the next 30 years for all gas customers.

LNG is created through an energy-intensive process to cool methane gas to −260°F, changing it from gas to a liquid that is 1/600th its original volume. The proposed facility would store about 12 million gallons of LNG, enough to power a 10-story LNG facility right next to a large metropolitan area. There have been no independent environmental impact studies... What's going to be the impact on property values? asked Russ Poggepoper, Santa Fe Village Neighborhood Association president in Rio Rancho.

State Sen. Harold Pope, along with 13 New Mexico representatives, also wrote a letter to the Public Regulation Commission outlining their concerns:

"The primary physical danger at an LNG plant is a leak forming a low-lying vapor cloud of methane gas that drifts until it hits an ignition source — even simple static electricity — igniting an inferno that cannot be extinguished with water. Depending on wind speed and topography, these vapor clouds can drift for miles. First responders require specialized training and equipment to respond to these leaks, and the risk of an explosive wildfire spreading in the arid Rio Grande Valley threatens the health and safety of our largest population center," Sen. Pope's letter to PRC said.

In February 2021, a severe storm strained the gas supply in Texas, causing technical issues at gas plants, excess demand and unprecedented price spikes as gas-plant owners capitalized on the supply shortage. New Mexico Gas contracts with Keystone storage facility in Texas, and when the company was warned of potential shortages, it incurred over $107 million in fuel costs. The PRC ordered New Mexico Gas to evaluate potential measures to prevent future extraordinary price spikes. Hence, the company's proposal for this LNG plant in Rio Rancho.

However, since 2021, improvements have been made at the Keystone facility to prevent reliability issues. The proposed LNG facility would offer just half the gas supply available through the Keystone contract. Solely relying on the proposed facility could put New Mexicans at greater risk of price volatility in the event of another major storm. The true rationale for the $180 million plant is likely the guaranteed return on equity that New Mexico Gas can charge ratepayers for its capital investments.

Residents are rightly concerned about their health and safety. Now is the time to find alternatives, not invest $180 million in more fossil-fuel methane infrastructure. The LNG proposal comes before the Public Regulation Commission on Jan. 8. Submit your concerns by emailing: public.comment@prc.nm.gov.
The Global Warming Express

BY GENIE STEVENS

School year 2023 saw the start of seven Global Warming Express programs, both in-school and after school, mentored by trained GWE volunteers and by teachers in the New Mexico school systems. Global Warming Expressers this year are spread across the New Mexico map from Raton to White Rock to Santa Fe to Las Vegas to San Antonio to Albuquerque.

The students range in age from 7 to 12 and are a diverse, passionate, curious group of 70-PLUS kids completing the reading, studying, research and exploration portion of their program.

Next up for the new year is learning public speaking, letter writing and civic engagement, while setting their group’s Big Goals and Small Goals for the rest of the school year.

You will see them in action at the Roundhouse on Feb. 9, Environment Day, for their 1st year! GWE kids from all over the state will come together to attend the Senate or House sessions, have a mock Senate committee meeting in a real committee room with state Sen. Liz Stefanics and, of course, headline the noon press conference with their speeches and performances.

As usual, our GWE program includes both outdoor and indoor activities. Their GWE sessions this semester have included science, climate science, resilient solutions, arts, advocacy and action – all taught in a context of mindfulness as individuals in the world.

call for Volunteers!

We are looking for motivated volunteers for our informational tabling and fundraising teams! The Rio Grande Chapter hosts tables at events to share information about ongoing campaigns and to ask for people to sign action items. It’s fun. It’s social. And, mostly, it’s outside! If you have weekends and sometimes evenings free, we can train you how to be a tabling activist and provide supplies and swap. Looking for a leadership role? We really need a tabling leader to run the tabling program. Have an idea where Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter should/could table? Let us know!

If you like talking to people, running events, or have experience in development and advancement, our chapter could use your help! Our fundraising includes released programming like taking to people interested in the same issues we worry about, and more intense programming like planning and running events. Our actions for conservation of air and water for our communities rely on robust and positive relationships with donors and foundations. This is engaging and important work, and no matter what your skills, we’d be glad to have your help.

We are also looking for graphic designers to help with maps, social-media graphics and the Sierra Club’s digital publication. Thank you, Mona.

Join us!

Members elect group, chapter leaders

The Rio Grande Chapter, like all the Sierra Club’s 63 chapters around the nation, is run by elected volunteer leaders of our executive committees, “excoms.”

The chapter has a 13-member excom. After the Pajarito group joined the surrounding Northern Group this year, the chapter has four regional groups: Northern New Mexico, Central New Mexico, Southern New Mexico and the El Paso Group, which includes El Paso, Hudspeth and Culberson counties in Texas.

Chapter excom members serve three-year terms; group terms are two years. Members serve staggered terms. Chapter and group members vote each fall to elect or re-elect excom members. The following excom members were elected and begin their terms in January:


The Global Warming Express

Relationships made it a successful year

A s the holidays approach, I’m thinking about my relationships. With my kids and how we celebrate the season. With my husband and how we tend our home. With my parents and what their legacy to their grandchildren will be. With my neighbors and how we build our neighborhood and our community. With my colleagues and how we navigate this moment of the ever-increasing urgent need for change. And with you and how we are at the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter can help you feel the power of the change you are helping to achieve.

For my kids, this season, we’re teaching them to celebrate together and to speak up and out. My little boy decided he wanted to testify at the State Capitol on Feb. 9, Environment Day, while setting their group’s Big Goals and Small Goals for the rest of the season. With my colleagues at the Sierra Club, partners, you are tireless. Mona Blaber, our long-serving and deeply loved communications director, is taking a new role with the national Sierra Club’s digital organizing team. We are so sorry to see her go, but take joy in her opportunity for growth and the fact that she’ll be assigned to work with New Mexico. This will be her last edition of the Sierran, which she’s so ably made into a professional publication. Thank you, Mona.

To my parents and all of our Sierra Club members, I thank you for all you do. Joining, giving, volunteering, calling, writing, advocating. Your kids, grandkids, families, and neighbors owe you thanks, and I do too.

Thank you for choosing us as your eBike for change.

Thank you all of you for joining together in striving always for healthy families, thriving communities and a living planet.

Left, Students watch a video about the GWE. Right, Learning how to view the solar eclipse. Below, The Blanket Experiment — always a favorite — how it feels to be the Earth heating up!

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Join us!

The following excom members were elected or re-elected to serve on the 2022-23 excom: Kurt Anderson, Cheryll Blevins, Dan Lorimier, Mona Blaber, Diane Reese, Ray Shortridge, John Bucher, Susan Martin, Shannon Romeling.

Relationships made it a successful year

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Join us!
ETA credits lighten PNM bills for 2024

BY MONA BLABER
Chapter Communications Director

I f you're a PNM customer, check the line item on your bill titled “San Juan ETA Settlement Credit” for a credit of around $9. The credits come as compensation for PNM’s delay in issuing Energy Transition Act (ETA) credits to customers to reflect the savings the bonds would have brought, but PNM appealed and won a stay at the state Supreme Court.

In September, PNM settled with many environment and consumer groups (including our Coalition for Clean, Affordable Energy) to deliver about $115 million back to customers, resulting in bill credits of $9.28 for the average household. Those credits are appearing now!

The ETA bonds, enabled by the 2019 Energy Transition Act, were also to fund about $40 million in worker severance and community investment funding. PNM distributed $20 million to plant workers and to Westminster for mine workers’ severance, though the mining company and the associated labor union are in a dispute at the Labor Relations Board, so those workers have not yet received their funds.

The utility also sent $20 million to the state agencies in charge of what to do with it to community projects and other types of worker support. The Workforce Solutions Department has now distributed most of its $13 million in direct checks of $20,000 each to plant and mine workers.

A committee of Four Corners-area industry, tribal, and government representatives, called the ETA Committee, was tasked with recommending projects to be funded by the Economic Development Department and Indian Affairs Department ETA money.

Jason Sandel, chair of the ETA Committee, is operator of Aztec Well Co. and a booster of hydrogen and liquefied natural gas as ways to prop up the gas industry. After almost a year of silence since the November 2022 meeting (the first since 2020), Sandel called a committee meeting in October, with no public notice but a proposed resolution with recommended projects already written.

Unfortunately, at that hastily called meeting, the ETA Committee voted 5-2 to accept Sandel’s recommendation that the Economic Development Department fund four high-budget, low-employment projects that potentially violate the spirit and letter of the ETA. Two of the projects, Big Navajo and Libertad, had proposed manufacturing methane-derived hydrogen, but after learning that the ETA prevents funding for projects related to fossil fuels, both companies claimed they would instead produce electrolytic “green” hydrogen, with no specifics on how. Big Navajo is based in Utah, and Libertad in Santa Fe. A third project is Kinetic Power, a pumped hydro project rumored to be intended for hydrogen-manufacturing facilities. The fourth recommendation was SonoAsh, a Canadian company with little to no track record, proposing reclamation for coal ash.

Claims of job creation fall flat. SonoAsh says it will create six permanent jobs. Big Navajo predicts only 10-20 permanent jobs. Libertad, 40. Kinetic, 50.

And these jobs would only come after years of funding searches, permitting and construction if the projects come to fruition at all.

There has been confusion over whether agencies must issue formal requests for proposals before awarding funds. The Indian Affairs Department initially announced funding awards to Shiprock Traditional Farmers Cooperative, Native Renewables, Diné Introspective, Northern New Mexico Indigenous Farmers and Diné Centered Research and Evaluation — but temporarily rescinded the awards after learning the agency and applicants may have to go through this additional step.

There’s still time for the Economic Development Department to invest its $6 million on smart community-driven projects like Native Renewables’ plan to install solar for off-grid Navajo families or the indigenous regenerative farming cooperatives — the types of projects the Energy Transition Act was meant to support.

PRC guidance: PNM made bad bet on coal

BY MONA BLABER
Chapter Communications Director

On Dec. 8, New Mexico Public Regulation Commission hearing examiners recommended that the commission adopt a roughly 3% rate cut for PNM customers, thanks to Energy Transition Act savings, the move to renewable energy, and a disallowance for PNM’s “imprudent” decision to extend its ownership stake in coal-fired Four Corners Power Plant beyond 2026.

The hearing examiners recommended a roughly $84 million disallowance from what PNM is allowed to charge customers for its previous investments in the Four Corners plant. PNM had proposed what would amount to about a 0.9 percent rate increase overall, but with that disallowance and others, the hearing examiners’ recommendation would lead to a small rate reduction for PNM customers.

PNM had asked the commission to approve rates that include more than $200 million in costs associated with operating Four Corners after 2016. PNM incurred those costs when it decided to renew its stake in the coal-fired power plant after 2016, when the prior coal-supply agreement expired.

Sierra Club’s attorneys and expert witness Dr. Jeremy Fisher demonstrated that ratepayers are entitled to significant disallowance for PNM’s bad decision-making with the coal plant, providing financial calculations and analyses that PNM was unable to effectively refute.

This issue was first litigated in PNM’s 2016 rate case. Back then, the hearing examiners also found the expenditures to be imprudent, but the commission ultimately deferred a decision on prudence until the next rate case and approved a settlement that allowed PNM to recover a reduced amount for Four Corners in rates.

The current case regarding more than $200 million in Four Corners costs comes after PNM’s 2021 proposal to transfer its 13% stake in the plant to NTEC, the owner of the mine that feeds the plant. The commission rejected that transfer, and Sierra Club and commission attorneys successfully defended that decision at the Supreme Court this year.

The Sierra Club’s priority is to get the Four Corners plant retired as soon as possible and end its deadly carbon and health pollution. That effort includes preventing ownership by NTEC, which wants to keep the plant running as long as possible.

PNM had also proposed to depreciate its gas plants more quickly, which would smooth the way to retiring the polluting facilities faster, but some parties objected, saying that would raise rates (though the increase would be tiny). Hearing examiners recommended rejecting the faster depreciation, but Western Resource Advocates has filed exceptions to that finding, arguing that speedier depreciation would ease the path for PNM to go carbon-free by 2040.

The commission will make the final decision on Four Corners prudence and other rate issues within the next few months.

COAL AND CLIMATE

ETA Settlement Credit

The San Juan Solar and storage facility, above, is now under construction. Solar panels are the dark areas, and energy storage is to the left. The retired San Juan coal stacks and Shiprock can be seen in the background. San Juan Solar is employing hundreds of workers and is predicted to replace the property-tax base of San Juan Generating Station.
New Mexico adopts Clean Cars

BY MONA BLABER
Chapter Communications Director

I
n November, after four days of hearings and dozens of hours of testimony and public comments, New Mexico took a major step for climate protection by adopting Clean Cars II, Clean Trucks and Heavy-Duty Omnibus standards. “Clean Cars and Trucks Standards will literally save lives in New Mexico,” said Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Director Camilla Feibelman. Sierra Club was part of a coalition that joined the state in supporting the standards at the rulemaking hearing before the state Environmental Improvement Commission and Albuquerque-Bernalillo Air Quality Control Board. “We heard from experts who pointed out that EV owners save at least $14,000 over the life of the car,” Feibelman said. “Most had to go out of state to buy their cars. These standards will allow everyone to find the clean cars they want in New Mexico and support local businesses.” New Mexico was the 10th state to adopt the updated Clean Cars standards, but Delaware and New Jersey have since joined us to make it 12. An analysis this summer found that by 2050, these standards will have prevented about as much climate pollution as New Mexico emits in an entire year and could prevent 136 premature deaths and more than 76,000 health incidents like asthma attacks and heart attacks. The boards said ‘yes’ to one of the most effective climate policies New Mexico could adopt,” Feibelman said. Advanced Clean Cars II regulates companies that manufacture cars and light-duty trucks. Starting in model year 2027, automakers must ensure that 43 percent of the new vehicles they send to New Mexico are zero-emission (electric or plug-in hybrid). Automakers have flexibility to comply by earning “extra-action” credits with sales before model year 2027, or by purchasing credits from manufacturers that exceed their target. The standard ends in model year 2027 and increasing to between 40 and 75 percent in model year 2035. The Low NOx, or Heavy Duty Omnibus, is a separate program that establishes stronger emission standards for new gas and diesel commercial trucks. A Big Oil-backed campaign spent thousands on mailers, social media and ads to drive negative comments, but of 100 public comments, 92 were in favor of Clean Cars and Trucks. More than 1,000 of you submitted written in-person comments in support. Comments shared stories of saving thousands of dollars owning EVs, and several people described using the 3-cent/KWWh whole-home overnight rate New Mexico utilities offer to EV drivers. We highlighted utility rebates of up to $2,500 to buy and install home chargers and up to $25,000 for chargers in multi-unit housing in lower-income neighborhoods.

We’ll also work to ensure that New Mexico accelerates its recent impressive progress at installing fast charging stations in locations like Socorro, Española, El Rito and Elephant Butte, going from 546 public charging ports to 720 in just the last two months. Sales are increasing. New Mexico passed its previous record for EV sales in October. Colorado EV sales hit 17 percent of the market last quarter, 25% of new sales in California are EVs. According to Bloomberg, “global sales of new internal combustion engines peaked in 2017, and net growth for car sales is now driven entirely by EVs...[globally], the EV tipping point was passed in 2021. If the trends hold true, the rest of this decade will be remembered for doing for electric cars what the 1980s did for the microwave oven.” Gov. Lujan Grisham has promised to propose significant state tax credits for EV purchases in the legislative session. Please advocate for those! Contact camilla.feibelman@sierracclub.org to learn more or join our activist listserv.

Frequently asked questions and EV consumer guide

**Will I be able to keep my gas car?** Of course. Clean Cars standards require manufacturers to provide New Mexico dealers with increasing percentages of EVs, giving buyers more choice. Many drivers have had a hard time finding new EVs in New Mexico and had to buy out of state. You can keep your gas car as long as you like, and buy a new one if you want, even when these standards reach their peak in 2027, but you probably won’t want to.

**Are EVs affordable?** Yes, prices are approaching the price of comparable gas cars, and with federal and potential state and utility rebates and credits, they can cost a lot less. Most importantly, they are much cheaper to operate and can save drivers thousands of dollars a year on gas and reduced maintenance.

**What are the federal tax credits?** The Inflation Reduction Act includes $7,500 credits for new SUVs, vans and cars, and $4,000 for used cars. Check in.gov for qualification information.

**What cars qualify?** Check fueleconomy.gov/reg/tax2023. shen or Kelly Blue Book for the latest list of qualifying models. The list changes as automakers add manufacturing facilities in the U.S. to qualify.

**Do I have to owe taxes to use the federal tax credit?** No! Starting Jan. 1, the tax credit is transferrable to dealers, so you can transfer your credit to the dealer at point of purchase and take it off the price of the car.

**What other purchase credits are there?** Gov. Lujan Grisham has promised to introduce state credits for EV purchases and PNM is also proposing up to $4,000 purchase credits, depending on your income. If approved, those could add up to $15,000 off the price of your EV when federal credits are included.

**Is there enough charging infrastructure?** The state’s public charging infrastructure is rapidly improving (see graphics). New Mexico was the first state to submit a plan to use $38 million in national funding to install charging stations statewide. The required first phase is ensuring charging stations every 50 miles along interstate highways. The second phase focuses on tribal and rural roads. A 2019 New Mexico law requires utilities to create plans to incentivize charging infrastructure in homes and multi-unit housing as well as in public. About 80% of charging happens at home. You can charge with a regular outlet, but to upgrade your charger, incentives are available.

**How much is a home fast charger?** Around $350 to $500, though a Level 2 charger may require an electrical upgrade — rebates are available for both the charger and the upgrade.

**What credits are available for chargers and installation?** A 30% federal tax credit offers up to $1,000 for charger and installation costs. And for those in the three major utilities’ service areas: PNM customers: Up to $2,500, depending on income, for purchase and installation of high-speed chargers.

**$5,000 per Level 2 port for multi-unit housing in low- and moderate-income communities;**

**Up to $50,000 for commercial and public chargers;**

**Overnight discount rates.** These rebates may cover the entire cost of your charger and installation. The PNM proposed 2024 plan includes a rebate of up to $4,000 for EV purchase.

**Web links:**


Southwestern Public Service customers: Up to $500 for home recharging; Up to $2,500 for recharging and chargers for located in your neighborhood; Overnight discount rates. You probably have lots more questions about charging, range, prices and cars. We have plenty of information, resources and links at riograndesierraclub.org/advanced-clean-cars.

JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH 2024
**JANUARY**

- A female Mexican wolf named Asha roams almost to the Colorado border before being taken back into captivity. The US Fish and Wildlife Service hoped she could be paired with a mate to have pups that could be released to the wild.
- Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter’s Pajarito Group, including Los Alamos and Jemez Springs, rejoins the Northern New Mexico Group, which surrounds it. “We’re still working together. Only the name has changed,” says Pajarito Chair Jennifer Benske.

**FEBRUARY**

- The Fish and Wildlife Service’s annual count shows that the wild population of Mexican gray wolves in the American Southwest increased from 196 to 241 in 2022, with 136 wolves in New Mexico and 105 in Arizona.
- After residents of Mountain View, a South Valley Albuquerque neighborhood of primarily low-income people of color, band together with help from the New Mexico Environmental Law Center to stop a hot-mix asphalt plant from being built in their neighborhood, the Albuquerque-Bernalillo Air Quality Control Board votes unanimously to deny further action on the plant’s permit.

**MARCH**

- The Legislature handily passes a bill to resize the state Game Commission that would have, if signed, set better qualifications for who could serve and split appointments to the seven-member board between the governor and legislature. Unfortunately, it is not signed by the governor.
- President Biden announces the USDA plans to spray an area of the 180,000 acres in Castner Range near El Paso, along with Nevada’s Ari Kwa Ame, as the nation’s newest national parks. Meanwhile, the Rio Grande Chapter’s El Paso Group worked for years with a local coalition to protect the range and its historical beauty and rare and endangered wildlife.
- A successful Improvement Board votes to overturn the Environment Department’s denial of Bumper Construction’s permit to build a concrete batch plant near homes and protected spaces in Alto, NM. Alto residents vow to protect their neighborhood, the Albuquerque-Bernalillo Air Quality Control Board votes unanimously to deny further action on the plant’s permit.

**APRIL**

- Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham issues line-item veto of most of the legislative tax package, including state, home energy storage and heat pumps, as well as a gothroom center and fund. The Sierra Club and partners call on the governor to retain the state’s climate leadership by passing Clean Cars and Trucks standards and supporting comprehensive and equitable climate-justice policies.
- Outgoing leader Rose Rowan leads 12 chapter members on a service trip at City of Rocks State Park, completing trail maintenance on over 2 miles of mountain trail. A Bureau of Land Management proposes its “Public Lands Rule” allowing the agency to manage lands for health and resiliency by placing conservation on the same level as other uses, like resource extraction and grazing, that have historically been prioritized by the agency.
- American Lung Association State of the Air Report gives Eddy, Lea and San Juan Counties, the state’s biggest oil and gas producers, F grades for oil and gas smog pollution.

**MAY**

- El Paso’s “Climateulate” supported by a broad coalition of community-justice climate activists, is defeated after oil and gas interests spend more than a million dollars on deceptive mailers and ads opposing it.
- NRC issues a license to Holtec for an “interim” nuclear storage facility despite state opposition. Sierra Club and partners retain court.

**JUNE**

- Mexican wolf Asha gets along with, but refuses, all potential suitors as mates in captivity; so she is released back into the wild along the Apache National Forest of southeast Arizona.
- Interior Secretary Deb Haaland issues a final decision to ban new oil and gas development on unleased federal lands within a 30-mile radius of Chaco Culture National Historical Park for 20 years. The ban does not include existing leases or private, tribal, allotted or state lands.
- Dozens of organizations, including Sierra Club, write to the Department of Energy and Treasury Department outlining strict requirements that should be imposed in order for developers to qualify for lucrative new hydrogen-production tax credits. The groups warn that, without robust guardrails, billions of dollars could be spent incentizing increased climate pollution.
- News emerges that the USDA plans to spray an insecticide that is also a potent neurotoxin over 39 square miles in the Rio Chama watershed on June 26 to kill native grasshoppers that are competing with cows for grass.

**JULY**

- The BLM, which controls much of the 25,000 acres of Rio Chama land to be sprayed, halts the USDA’s plan to release the toxic insecticide. The decision follows a powerful community mobilization when wildlife and air-quality proponents learned of the planned spraying just weeks before it was to happen. Sen. Martin Heinrich and Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard supported hundreds of activists’ requests to the BLM to block the spraying.
- A New Mexico- and Utah-based conservation organization Té'ezhú’ání oni announces that 35 Navajo Chapter’s Pajarito Group, show that fox kills and a mate to have pups that could be released to the wild in the official Summer she can be released into captivity, where wildlife officials say they will try again back to the wild in the official

**AUGUST**

- Kill reports from trappers for the previous winter, the first in which traps could not legally be set on New Mexico public lands thanks to the passage of Roxy’s Law, show that fox kills were down by 56% and bobcat kills were down by 31%.
- The Bureau of Land Management proposes its oil and gas rule, with long-overdue provisions to update the agency’s leasing program, including raising royalty rates, lease rates, minimum bids and bonding requirements.

**SEPTEMBER**

- Environmental organizations and the New Mexico attorney general announce a settlement with PNM requiring the utility to issue water protection credit averaging $9.28 per month after PNM delayed issuing new water protection credit Act bonds that would have reduced bills thanks to the closing of San Juan Generating Station. See Page 5 for more.

**OCTOBER**

- The Department of Energy releases its selection of regional “hydrogen hubs” to receive $7 billion in federal funding. New Mexico’s hub is not selected.
- New federal tax credits and other state funds could potentially direct billions of public dollars toward fossil-fuel hydrogen, which presents significant, climate, pollution and safety risks. We will continue to oppose public funding for harmful hydrogen development in 2024 and beyond.

**NOVEMBER**

- After traveling back into New Mexico from Arizona and spending several months roaming slowly, Asha crosses 1-40 again and reaches the Jemez Range.
- In a major step for climate and health in New Mexico, the state Environmental Protection Agency in conjunction with New Mexico Supreme Court unanimously upholds the Public Regulation Department’s denial of PNM’s transfer of its ownership share in Four Corners Power Plant to Navajo Transitional Energy Company. See Page 7.
- Eighteen of 23 endorsed candidates and balloting measures win in the November local elections, including important wins for one: Albuquerque’s trash pickup on the Caja Mesa. See page 11 for details.
- Northern New Mexico Group members join the Caja del Rio Coalition for trash pickup on the Caja Mesa near the shooting area, filling two huge county trailer-dumpsters with close to 10,000 pounds of junk.
- The Environmental Law Center modernizes its oil and gas methane-reduction rule. Thousands of New Mexico submitted comments supporting strong safeguards. See Page 5.

**DECEMBER**

- Nichole Rogers wins her 2023 election to become the 19th of 23 candidates endorsed by the Rio Grande Chapter who won their elections in 2023.
- The tracking collar of Mexican wolf Asha shows she’s roaming around the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Scientists have already determined that this is suitable habitat for Lobos. But on Dec. 11, Asha is taken back into captivity, where wildlife officials say they will again breed her to breed in hopes that next summer she can be released back into the wild over the official wolf recovery area, perhaps with pups.
- The back-to-back pressure from the fossil-fuel industry, the U.S. Treasury Department releases draft guidance on qualification for 45V hydrogen-production tax credits. The guidance includes many of the strict requirements that Sierra Club and other climate advocates had requested.

Hart Pierce led a group of enthusiastic participants to Angel Peak to view the October eclipse with coffee, food and camaraderie.

Photo by Susan Pierce
Air Board persists despite Council drama

BY DIANE REESE  
Central Group Chair

On Dec. 11, the Joint ABQ–Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board concluded a weeklong public hearing on clean-air safeguards called the Health, Environment and Equity Impacts regulation. The safeguards represent decades of work to control pollution that most impacted by toxic emissions from polluting industries in low-income communities of color. Caring experts and community members from the Mountain View Coalition, New Mexico Environmental Law Center, Los Jardines Institute, the Pueblos of Isleta and the Friends of the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge petitioned for adoption of this air-quality standard and have shown strength and persistence making sure the proscribed legal process continues. However, in October, Albuquerque City Councilor Dan Lewis led an attempt to block this legal rulemaking. He introduced two bills, one to replace the current city-appointed members of the Air Quality Board and one to effectively suspend their ability to act until February, in a blatant, last-ditch attempt to undermine the community-driven clean-air regulation. The council praised how Councilor Lewis’s bills with full support of the Republicans on Council and Democrat Louise Sanchez. Councilor Pat Davis voted in favor of the resolution to effectively suspend action until February, but opposed replacing the board members. However, Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller vetoed both controversial bills in November. Then, in a profoundly disappointing move, Councilor Klarissa Peña, who had originally opposed the bill to replace the City Board members, switched her vote to become the deciding sixth vote necessary to override the mayor’s veto of that bill. Councilor Peña also voted to override the veto of the resolution to effectively suspend Board action until February, along with Councilor Davis. Bernalillo County commissioners reminded the City Council that this is a joint board. Members represent both city residents and residents of the unincorporated county. But the council ignored the county commission’s request to put off their efforts to undermine the Board. The air board persisted and provided space for technical experts and more than 100 members of the public to testify. Monied industry voices, such as the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce and the University of New Mexico, testified against the safeguards — stating increased regulations would be unfriendly to business, in some cases totally misrepresenting the rulemaking process and what the rule would have ultimately done. But others testified that “clean air must be put ahead of profits!” The Rio Grande Chapter has supported the community air protections from the start. Standing with the coalition, providing action opportunities for our members, speaking at and recruiting supporters to speak at the hearing or to write to the Air Board, we have represented our members’ voices in this struggle for environmental justice. The hearing ended with a lack of clarity. The exact rule passed by the air board was not made public, and the legal ramifications of the City Council’s override of the mayor’s veto are yet to be determined. However, we did witness the professionalism and dedication of the appointed Board members. We thank the Board for their service and their perseverance under unprecedented pressure. The Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter will continue to follow the process and support clean-air safeguards and please stay engaged! “What happened last week was incredibly important. For the first time, we saw a regulatory body seriously consider the needs of those most impacted by bad decisions,” said Maslyn Locke, New Mexico Environmental Law Center senior staff attorney, after the Board meeting. “While we don’t yet know in detail the end result, what we do know is that the Air Quality Board understands that there are certain areas in Bernalillo County and Albuquerque that continue to suffer the greatest impact of air pollution and that the existing regulatory scheme does not meaningfully protect public health.”

Albuquerque companies reduce by reusing

BY DEBBIE BRYANT  
Outings Co-Chair

Recently I visited two Albuquerque manufacturing firms: Submaterial, which makes efforts to reuse, or recycle their waste byproducts from their interior architectural products, and Solutionist, which takes organic materials that might otherwise end up in a landfill producing methane and turns them into prime topsoil. Founded in 2006 in Seattle, Submaterial relocated to Albuquerque in 2012 and now employs 32 people. They manufacture architectural acoustical panels using natural and sustainable materials such as wool felt, cork, and wood. Submaterial uses byproducts from their industrial projects in the local market. A lot of their cork and felt byproducts go to local schools, artists, makers, and become dog toys for Animal Humane’s Doggie Dash and Daddle event. Biodegradable leftover waste goes to solutions, another local firm that produces mulch, compost and topsoil. Submaterial Marketing Director Brigd Harmon says they submitted the specification for their glue to Solutions to ensure there would be an impact on the quality of Solutions’ compost. Visiting Solutions meant driving through the south side of Albuquerque, surrounded by industry. At their office, I was struck by how much of a sense of place they and you can smell the warm dirt and hear the Sandhill cranes at the Rio Grande. I met with co-owner Dewey Dewey and Wendy Blair of Soils and Marketing. Both are passionate about what they do, which is lovely and often missing from the working world. Wendy is a Master Gardener and Dewey grew up in the business. Solutions is New Mexico’s largest private compost company and soil company and was started by the Brooks family 28 years ago. In 2021, Justin and Dawn Dewey bought Solutions and are very enthusiastic about the future. The business is also a “carbon sequester” and is helping to reduce our carbon load. Solutions diverts tons of organic waste from landfills each year, and their intake fees are lower than the dump’s. Their green waste suppliers include businesses (such as Bueno Foods green chile peels), Little Green Bucket, which does home and business compost pickup, grocers, restaurants, hotels, and even Sandia Labs. They use these materials to produce mulch and compost using carefully controlled processes and temperatures. Various piles of in-progress materials have to be turned, mixed and temperature-controlled over about a year. The soils are tested to ensure their quality is high. The richly colored soils they produce smell as if you are going on a bike through the woods. End-use customers include landscapers, contractors, gardeners, and farmers throughout the state. Solutions products are carried by other local companies, such as Osuna Nursery, Rehm Nursery, and Los Poblanos Lavender Farm uses their compost.

Central New Mexico Group contacts

Executive Committee  
Chair: Diane Reese  
DianeReese68@gmail.com, 505-305-6416  
Vice Chair and Treasurer: David Ther, grelbik@gmail.com  
Secretary: Jessica O’Callahan, jessicaeoc@gmail.com  
Transportation: Patrick Burton, patrickburton84@icloud.com  
Outings: Terry Owen, terryo@comcast.net  
Zero Waste: Laurie Zurrer, luzurrer@gmail.com  
Other Responsibilities: Political/Bosque: Richard Barish, richard.barish@gmail.com  
Volunteer coordinators: Open Wildlife: Open Military Outings: Terry Owen  

Sierra Club and Beers

BY DIANE REESE  
Central New Mexico Chair

Ready to get back together? Up for a little social time and educational talks? The Central New Mexico Group is right there with you! In September, we returned to in-person “Sierra Club and Beers” meetings and have been so pleased with the response. We’re going bimonthly in 2024, so block your calendar for the next Fridays starting in February. Feb. 2’s theme will be outdoor safety with world traveler and our guide, extraordinaire, Rob Simonsky, just back from skiing in Antarctica (no, really — you have to see the pics of that!) The meeting starts at 7 p.m. and ends at about 8:30 p.m. RSVP at riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.

Location: St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 431 Richmond Place NE, Albuquerque.

E-Bike Fair a success

The Sierra Club Central New Mexico Group and Free-to-Roam elBike, CARC, Central New Mexico Environmental Law Center, Municipal Development, and Transit, Look For Me, Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization, BikeABQ, and Bike Thru Burque hosted the second E-bike Fair on Oct. 28 in Snow Park. Public input was taken on the Bikeway and Trail Facilities plan (www.bikewayandtrail.com). The fair also offered e-bike test rides from Free-to-Roam’s e-bikes to fit different riders and locations. No max ridership was set, and all bike participants chose to ride, they all had the same glorious expression! Central New Mexico Group collected signatures in support of the Clean Cars and Trucks, discussed volunteer programs and complex reusable bags, T-shirts, hiking books and copies of the latest Sierra. We also raffled sets of bike lights for safe riding at night. If you missed it, we hope to see you next year!
Bears and Cougars lose with new hunting rules

BY JERRY KURTYKA
El Paso Group

Ten Sierrans, three from our Rio Grande chapter, gathered from near and far at the Valles Caldera in the first week of October to assist Park Service biologists with a fish census project. Permission for our visit was touch-and-go until the last minute, as the Preserve would have been closed had Congress not passed a continuing resolution on the federal budget. Fortunately, it worked out and we all made it on Oct. 1, just north of Jemez Springs.

A fish census begins with closing a 100-meter stretch of stream (a “reach”) with nets at either end, then doing upstream sweeps with a shock wave then netting the temporarily stunned fish for weighing, measuring, logging and release. Three sweeps of the reach are made to catch as many fish as possible. At one reach, we shocked and netted about 100 fish. Many were brown and rainbow trout, considered to be an invasive species to the native Rio Grande cutthroat. Other native species include Gila and Apache trout (not common), chubs, dace, and suckers. In our service week, we surveyed six river reaches with three sweeps of each one — 18 sweeps in total. The Park Service told us that these and other reaches are surveyed twice a year. This has been an ongoing project for 10 years, building a longitudinal profile of how the fish have responded to climate change and disasters, like the recent wildfires.

The fires devastated the fish population, but, interestingly, the native species bounced back quicker than the invasive fish. The Valles Caldera is also threatened by Illegal grazing by “trespass cows” from nearby ranches. We saw much evidence of this, but we also saw herds of elk and mule deer families. So it’s not all bad, and the astounding vistas and natural beauty of the Valles Caldera are still a reason to hope.

Nor was it all work for us Sierrans. We had perfect autumn weather for hikes in the Sierra Blanca basin and the Caldera along a canyon stream. And we enjoyed a soak in the celebrated Jemez hot springs.

The next trip is to the Sacramento Mountains of New Mexico.

BY MARY KATHERINE RAY
Wildlife Chair

In October, the New Mexico Game Commission unanimously voted to approve new bear and cougar hunting rules that will be in place for the next four years. The Commission failed to consider the effects of the massive Black Fire, the second-largest in state history, and its destruction of habitat in the Gila as it allows 50 more black bears to be killed in that hunting zone. The season to pursue black bears with dogs will start in mid-August rather than the first of September in the Sacramento Mountains of Southern New Mexico.

Bears and Cougars lose with new hunting rules

Dr. Ken Logan, a wildlife research biologist who spent 10 years studying cougars and documenting his work in peer-reviewed scientific journals with his wife, Dr. Linda Swenand, sent written comments and testified that even if the cougar population numbers were accurate, the proposed 17-24% harvest rates would likely cause a decline in cougar populations. If cougar declines are not the intent, the science indicates that the harvest should be no more than 14% of the overall population. Because of the minimal information provided by the department, the public has no way to know if declines are the intent. Dr. Logan noted that most other western states have detailed statewide cougar management plans and that New Mexico should too. But he was thoroughly ignored. Also ignored were the thoughtful comments from more than 1,000 of you who emailed and testified in open meetings.

New Mexico is no New Mexico needs game commissioners who have the ability to critically review scientific information, see beyond the narrow goal of providing “hunter opportunity” and understand the significance of large carnivores to the biotic community and the negative impacts that recreational hunting has on them. This will have to be remedied by the state legislature. Stay tuned.

OUTDOORS AND WILDLIFE

10 Sierrans, 6 reaches and 18 sweeps

BY TERESA SEAMSTER
Soil Research Project Coordinator

Take a match and apply it to a collection of natural fuels from around your home — leaves, twigs, a scoop of dry tops, sage, grasses, pine needles and even cacti. They all burn when there is enough heat, oxygen, airflow and lack of moisture.

The devastation left after the northern wildfires last year has changed ways of thinking about what can burn and under what conditions. Prescribed fires lit in Santa Fe National Forest when there was snow on the ground in Calf Canyon continued to smolder below ground until low soil moisture combined with wind and a prescribed fire at Hermits Peak caused ignition — scorching a third of a million acres before it was put out. Historically, needed pile burns could be successfully conducted in Black Canyon during winter without fear of a fire smoldering until windy spring weather could re-ignite it. Those conditions have changed.

This year, scientists at the National Soil Moisture Monitoring Network Conference determined that fire managers must evaluate more factors, particularly the correlation between soil moisture and plant moisture, to adequately predict fire risk and conditions of advanced drought. Ideal prescribed burn “windows” will be fewer.

State Forester Laura McCarthy, speaking at the November International Association of Wildland Fire Conference, mentioned that “Soil moisture is on my mind” as a key gap in data collection and an important factor in evaluating fire. While other agency leaders from BLM, USFS, FEMIA and Bureau of Indian Affairs emphasized their regret along with the “lessons learned” from the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon fire, McCarthy focused on the “unforeseen realities” of this fire and the need to learn and respond to those new realities.

In response to these new needs, Lisa Markovchick, PhD (WildLand Guardians) and I recently formed the Santa Fe Mountains Soil Research Project to monitor soil health, with lab support from St. John’s College Evans Scientific Lab, and permission and staff time from Santa Fe National Forest.

During a November visit to a proposed prescribed burn area in Black Canyon, the Soil Research team looked at ground conditions that showed poor results in previously treated areas, with large slash piles and dry and non-native vegetation. Testing of soil moisture levels, soil biota and fuel moisture should help determine what impacts thinning and prescribed burn treatments are having on the ability of treated forests to resist fire.

The team is checking locations for spring monitoring in 2024. Santa Fe National Forest has provided assistance with mapping and treatment schedules, and St. John’s College has kindly donated space at their Evans Scientific Lab. For more information: cseamster@gmail.com.
**NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHAPTER**

### Groups seek Mimbres Peaks monument status

**BY LUIS GUERRERO**
Chapter Legislative Organizer

T he Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter has joined a few other organizations in supporting a bill that was introduced in the New Mexico legislature on Feb. 16 to add the Mimbres Peaks to the National Monument.

The proposed legislation is **H.B. 242**, sponsored by Rep. Melanie Stansbury and Sen. Martin Heinrich. It would give the federal government control over lands in the Mimbres Range, including the Mimbres Peaks, and would provide for the area’s designation as a National Monument.

The Mimbres Peaks, located in the Mimbres Valley near Deming, N.M., are a significant natural and cultural resource. The area is home to diverse wildlife, including black bears, mountain lions, and numerous bird species. The peaks are also an important part of the area’s cultural history, with archaeological sites dating back thousands of years.

The Sierra Club and other organizations are working to ensure that the Mimbres Peaks are protected and preserved for future generations. They are encouraging their members and the public to support the bill and attend legislative hearings to show their support.

### Plan would block mining near Placitas sacred sites

**BY MIYA KING-FLAHERTY**
Our Wild New Mexico

A fter 25 years, efforts to protect more than 4,000 acres of public lands from mineral and oil and gas extraction have finally gained traction.

The Bureau of Land Management held a meeting in November to hear from the public about the agency’s action to initiate a 30-year mineral withdrawal that would protect a significant portion of public lands near Placitas, N.M., from mineral and oil and gas extraction.

The meeting was also attended by Tribal representatives from San Felipe Pueblo, New Mexico State Sen. Brenda McKenna, and Eddy County Commissioner Katherine Bruch. They all encouraged the public to speak out in support of the proposed mineral withdrawal.

The BLM's public comment period ended on Dec. 19. Sierra Club members and supporters submitted comments on behalf of the public, highlighting the importance of the area and expressing concern with the BLM's processes.

The meeting was held at Placitas Community Library, and it was packed — every seat was full, and many were standing. Issues and concerns raised by community members included the potential for disturbance to cultural sites, wildlife, and water resources. The BLM is expected to make a decision on the proposed mineral withdrawal in the near future.

### Los Alamos High EcoClub: effective activism

**BY JODY BENSON**
Chapter Executive Committee

Fifty years ago, many students in the world protested for civil rights for both humans and the Earth by marching, sitting-in, and staging protests. We also assumed saving the Earth would roll on just fine.

They are creating collaborative relationships and gathering ideas from local and regional entrepreneurs, scientists, and activists to take to the leadership. These EcoClub activists expect no excuses. Their lives depend on our leaders committing at every level to science-based solutions.

Los Alamos EcoClub co-president Charlotte Butcher met with GWE members at Chamisa Elementary as part of their shared work to make Los Alamos Public Schools fully electrify their schools.

A local coalition is seeking monument status for about 245,000 acres in Luna County, including Cooke's Range, above.

Los Alamos High EcoClub (LAHS EcoClub) is an active student organization at Los Alamos High School. Their mission is to educate students and the community about the importance of sustainability and to encourage action towards a more sustainable future.

They are working with the school board and county council to end the school’s fossil-fuel use by fully electrifying the school and county bus system. They have also been working with local businesses to reduce their impact on the environment.

Los Alamos EcoClub recently met with undergraduate students from the Global Warming Express to discuss their project. The Global Warming Express is a national organization that educates young people about climate change and inspires them to take action.

The meeting was held at the High School, and it was well attended. The students discussed their projects and shared ideas on how to make a difference in their communities.

The meeting culminated with a group picture taken in front of the High School, symbolizing the collaboration and unity among students and organizations working towards a sustainable future.

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**NEWS PAGE 10**

Rio Grande Sierran

**JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH 2024**
Endorsed local candidates kick butt

BY RICHARD BARISH
Rio Grande Chapter Political Chair

Our endorsed candidates did extremely well this election cycle. Overall, 20 of our 24 endorsed candidates and ballot measures won their races! Equity has become increasingly prominent in how we look at issues and candidates, and it was particularly noteworthy that the Santa Fe Affordable Housing Trust funding ballot measure (the “mansion tax”) passed and that all of our endorsed school board candidates won, including Ronalda Tome-Warito, a Navajo woman, who ousted an incumbent “Mama Defend Liberty” culture-war conservative.

In Albuquerque, we held strong, winning in the two progressive districts, by losing in the more conservative District 4. It’s frustrating that we are able to elect so many great progressive candidates to the state legislature from Albuquerque, but that we are saddled with what is, despite a few great councils, a decidedly conservative city council overall. We’ve got our work cut out for us in 2025 to turn that around!

In Santa Fe, all of our endorsed City Council candidates won, while Las Cruces was a split decision, with Kasandra Gandara losing her mayoral bid and Tessa Abeyta losing her bid for re-election to City Council, but incumbent Johana Bencomo and newcomer Cassie McClure winning their Council races.

I want to give a big shout-out to all of you who helped with campaigns, whether in big ways or small! Without you, good candidates would not get elected, and without you, our influence with our elected representatives would not be what it is. Here are the complete results for our endorsed candidates:

**Santa Fe**
- City Council 1: Alma Castro WON
- City Council 2: Randy O’Neal WON
- City Council 3: Pilar Faulkner WON
- City Council 4: Jamie Cassutt WON
- County Taxpayer Initiative: WON

**Las Cruces**
- Mayor: Kasandra Gandara LOST
- City Council 1: Ciselli McGee WON
- City Council 2: Tessa Abeyta LOST
- City Council 4: Johana Bencomo WON
- Las Cruces Public School Board District 1: Lavenia Clay WON
- Las Cruces Public School District 4: Teresa Tenorio WON
- Las Cruces Public School District 5: Edward Frank WON

Climate, water on agenda for ‘budget season’

BY RICHARD BARISH
Rio Grande Chapter Political Chair

New Mexico’s proposed codes also include requirements for EV charging infrastructure at a small percentage of parking spaces at new residential and commercial buildings.

Automakers like GM and Ford are planning to produce 100% electric vehicles by 2035, and New Mexico’s currently passed Clean Cars standards ensure we get there. Making sure builders are including charging infrastructure at some parking spaces in new multi-unit housing and workplaces is critical to giving all New Mexicans access to the cost-saving benefits of electric vehicles by allowing them to charge at home or work. EVs are cheaper to operate and maintain compared to gas-powered vehicles, and EV sales are expected to increase each year, so more and more New Mexicans will be looking for apartment and condominium complexes where they can charge.

The codes would require most new construction to include EV chargers at 5% of parking spaces, and another 5-15%, depending on the building type, must have the electrical infrastructure to accommodate future chargers.

New Mexico’s major utilities already offer incentives that could cover most or all of the cost of these improvements: PNM, for example, offers up to $5,000 for installation costs for each charger. Your support of these proposed changes is critical. You can show your support in person or submit written comments. An in-person public hearing will be held at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 3, at the Regulation and Licensing Department, 5500 San Antonio Drive NE, Suite F, Albuquerque, NM 87109. Written comments can be sent to: Construction Industries Division, Regulation and Licensing Department, 5500 San Antonio Drive NE, Suite F, Albuquerque, NM 87109. Email comments to: Quindi.Otero@rld.nm.gov.

The Green Amendment will also be reintroduced. This joint resolution aims to amend Article II of the state constitution to declare that all New Mexicans are entitled to clean and healthy air, water, soil and environments and a stable climate and includes provisions for equity and accessibility to a clean environment.

Our annual Environment Day at the Roundhouse is Friday, Feb. 9, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. We will host nearly 40 of our partner organizations and as many grassroots lobbyists as can make it – so come to Roundhouse and talk with your legislator, how to navigate the maze we call the Roundhouse and what our legislative priorities are for the session and what we need to do make a difference at the Legislature!

The Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter lobbyist will keep you up to date during the session. As we do every year, we will be holding weekly meetings and trainings. If you’d like to be added to these trainings, please reach out to luis.guerrero@sierraclub.org.
January • February • March outings

TUESDAY, JAN. 9
Easy Hike to Explore the Valle de Oro
Meet at the Visitor's Center at 11. Refuge staff will tell us the history and plan for these undeveloped acres in the South Valley. We will then board the electric shuttle to access the bosque for a 2-mile stroll and check on the Rio Grande. Our easy amble back will include stops at the mural and mosaic artwork. Plan on stopping at the gift shop for a few unique items and support the Friends of the Valle de Oro. No dogs.
Trip leader: Diane Reese, DianeAbq@Gmail.com
505-507-6416
Level: Easy (mix of shaded-unshaded, flat trail, root trail hazards)
Location: Valle de Oro, 7851 2nd St SW, Albuquerque.
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

THURSDAY, JAN. 11
Zero Waste Tour of BARCO Recycling Facility (formerly Freimans).
1 to 2:30 p.m. Come see how all of our blue bin recycling is sorted. Find out how much is actually recycled and get answers to other recycling questions. Must be able to climb stairs and not be bothered by a very noisy environment. Wear: vests, helmets, eye protection and ear plugs will be provided. Dress warmly as buildings are not heated. Register early. Space is limited to eight adults. Deadline to register is Jan. 9. Meet at 12:50 at 5021 Edith Blvd. NE, Albuquerque.
Contact trip leader if you need or can give a ride.
Trip leader: Laurie Zunner, 505-440-5337, lmzunner@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: 5021 Edith Blvd. NE, Albuquerque
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

SATURDAY, JAN. 13
Dirty Bosque bike ride to Valle del Oro.
Meet at the Hispanic Cultural Center parking lot in Albuquerque at 9:45 a.m. We will depart promptly at 10 a.m. and return at about 1 p.m. We’ll be riding on a flat and smooth trail in the bosque for about 20 miles on all dirt trails and ditch banks. We will see the river, cranes and geese, and maybe even porcupines. This is not difficult riding, but distance on dirt trails is definitely challenging. If you ride a mountain or dirt bike is needed due to sand and possible mud. Please have your bike in good order. You will need the tools and knowledge to fix flats on your bike. Sealant in the tires will prevent flats from going through the whole tire. We will have a place to have a snack and warm up if needed. Children 12 and up allowed with pared legal guardian. Register by Jan. 11.
Trip Leader: Rose Rowan, rose.rowan7@gmail.com
Trip Level: Moderate
Location: Albuquerque
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

SATURDAY, JAN. 20
Coffee-tasting tour through Downtown and Bosque
Chase the cold away with a bike tour through Downtown Albuquerque coffee shops! We will visit local coffee roasters, tea shops and cafes in the vicinity of the bosque. Meet at the Hispanic Cultural Center at 9:30 a.m. for this 1.5-hour ride. Find out how easy it is to get around Albuquerque neighborhoods by bicycle. The route is about 10 miles and relatively flat. Participants should be able to maintain a speed of 12-15 miles per hour on their road, mountain or gravel bike. This is not recommended for cruisers or smaller single-speed bikes and is appropriate for ages 14 and up. Bike helmet, pump, tools, and patch kit or sealant in tires are required. RSVP by Jan. 18 at the link provided below.
Leader: Patrick Burton, 505-530-5334
patrickburton@icloud.com
Level: Easy-Moderate
Location: Albuquerque
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

FRIDAY, JAN. 26
Sierra Club and Beer: Winter outdoors safety.
Do you venture into the mountains, climb, hiking, snowshoeing, skiing or snowboarding? Great! Did you know that hypothermia is one of the primary risks to those of us that spend time outdoors in New Mexico? Do you know if you’re in a avalanche terrain? Do you know how to recognize and avoid avalanche hazards? If you answered “well, kinda… sort of…” then here’s your chance to tune up your awareness. Our guest speaker, Rob Suminsby, is a long-time backcountry skier who has sought out unskied snow on four continents. He’ll provide you with the tools you need to stay safe this winter as well as some resources to help you learn more. You don’t have to be a member to join us for a beverage, snacks and camaraderie. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. and ends at about 8:30 p.m. RSVP to the link below.
Leaders: Susan German, sbginabq@aol.com and Diane Dzuree dianeabqnm@gmail.com
Location: St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 431 Richmond Pl NE, Albuquerque, NM
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

TUESDAY, FEB. 13
Easy Hike to Explore the Valle de Oro.
Meet at the Visitor's Center at 11. Refuge staff will tell us the history and plan for these undeveloped acres in the South Valley. We will then board the electric shuttle to access the bosque for a 2-mile stroll and check on the Rio Grande. Our easy amble back will include stops at the mural and mosaic artwork. Plan on stopping at the gift shop for a few unique items and support the Friends of the Valle de Oro. No dogs.
RSPV by Jan. 22 at the link provided below.
Leaders: Debbie Bryant bryantdy@gmail.com and Terry Owen, towen@comcast.net
Level: Moderate
Location: Sandias Mountains
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

FRIDAY, FEB. 2
Sierra Club and Beer: Winter outdoors safety.
Do you venture into the mountains, climb, hiking, snowshoeing, skiing or snowboarding? Great! Did you know that hypothermia is one of the primary risks to those of us that spend time outdoors in New Mexico? Do you know if you’re in a avalanche terrain? Do you know how to recognize and avoid avalanche hazards? If you answered “well, kinda… sort of…” then here’s your chance to tune up your awareness. Our guest speaker, Rob Suminsby, is a long-time backcountry skier who has sought out unskied snow on four continents. He’ll provide you with the tools you need to stay safe this winter as well as some resources to help you learn more. You don’t have to be a member to join us for a beverage, snacks and camaraderie. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. and ends at about 8:30 p.m. RSVP to the link below.
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FRIDAY, FEB. 9
Sunset and full moon snowshoe hike.
Look forward to glistening snow, a chill in the air and the crunch of snow under your feet while we celebrate the rising of the full Wolf Moon. Snowshoeing under a full moon is magical. The leader will cover techniques to help you safely traverse in an alpine environment while exploring the beautiful Sandia Mountains. About 3.5 miles round trip with 500 feet of elevation gain. Snowshoeing is not difficult but the middle of winter is actually about 1.5 to 2 times as much effort as walking. We’ll depart promptly at 5 p.m., going along the crest for views of the setting sun, the full moon and the city. Participants must be in good physical condition and relatively flat. A road or gravel bike should be fine; wider tires would be more comfortable. We may see porcupines and other wildlife. Be prepared with warm clothing and a small pack to carry clothes. Helmets are mandatory. Please have your bike in good order. You will need the tools and knowledge to fix flats on your bike. Bring water and a snack. Meet at the west parking lot of the Hispanic Cultural Center. We will look for a place to have a snack and warm up if needed. Riders age 12 and up with parent or legal guardian.
Trip Leader: Rose Rowan rose.rowan7@gmail.com
Trip Level: Easy
Location: Albuquerque
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 14
Bosque Walk at Durand Open Space.
10 a.m. to noon. Welcome to the beautiful South Valley! Duran Open Space provides excellent access to forest paths and river views. We’ll do a 2- mile loop and visit the covered picnic area. Meet at the Durand parking lot by 9:55 a.m. No dogs.
Trip leader: Diane Abq@Gmail.com
505-507-6416
Level: Easy (no elevation gain; mix of shaded-unshaded, flat trail, root trip hazards)
Location: Duran Open Space, 4750 Isleta Blvd SW, Albuquerque
FRIDAY, FEB. 16
Winter ride along the Rio Grande.
10 a.m. to noon. About 10 miles on paved bike trail and compressed gravel in the bosque and relatively flat. A road or gravel bike should be fine; wider tires would be more comfortable. We may see porcupines and other wildlife. Be prepared with warm clothing and a small pack to carry clothes. Helmets are mandatory. Please have your bike in good order. You will need the tools and knowledge to fix flats on your bike. Bring water and a snack. Meet at the west parking lot of the Hispanic Cultural Center. We will look for a place to have a snack and warm up if needed. Riders age 12 and up with parent or legal guardian.
Trip Leader: Rose Rowan rose.rowan7@gmail.com
Trip Level: Easy
Location: Albuquerque
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

TUESDAY, MARCH 13
Zero Waste E-Recycling Tour.
10-11:30 a.m. Visit the Recycling Facility and compost yard to gain insight on what can be recycled and composted, questions and learn about the many types of compost and soil that we make in this facility. Tour is outdoors, so dress for the weather. Comfortable footwear recommended. Join us for standing the whole time. Parking is very limited, please contact Laurie if you need a ride. No dogs. Register by Feb. 23. Limit 12.
Trip Leader: Laurie Zunner 505-507-6416, lzunner@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: 9008 Bates Road SE, Albuquerque
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

TUESDAY, MARCH 20
Zero Waste E-Recycling Tour.
10-11:30 a.m. At Albuquerque Computer and Electronics Recycling Company. Find out what you can recycle beyond just computers and cell phones and what happens to them. We will be standing the whole time, so wear comfortable clothing. Register by March 10. Limit 12 people. Contact Laurie if you need or can give a ride.
Trip Leader: Laurie Zunner 505-540-5337
lmzunner@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: 3736 Hawkins St. NE, Albuquerque
Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar