



Sustainability Resolution Signed!



Advocates and City of Albuquerque leaders at the Barelás Senior Center Community Garden on June 4, where the new sustainability resolution led by City Councilor Tammy Fiebelkorn was signed. Rio Grande Chapter Zero Waste Chair Laurie Zunner (front left) and Chapter Chair Diane Reese (front right) joined the celebratory signing. See story page 3. Photo by Maia Rodriguez



Photo By Alissa Keny-Guyer

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Photo by Debbie Bryant

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Photo by Al Braden

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ban rule supported
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Page 1 banner: Caroline Funk

Expert perks for monthly donors

The Rio Grande Chapter has launched a new speaker series for our Green Giving Circle. Once a quarter, monthly donors to the Chapter have exclusive access to online presentations and discussions by subject matter experts in topics central to ongoing issues.

Rio Grande Chapter’s Green Giving Circle is a dedicated group of Sierrans who come together to make New Mexico

and West Texas the best we can. Members of the Green Giving Circle give a monthly contribution that supports our collective work.

Our first expert presentation was in June, and we hosted Sharon Selvaggio from the Xerces Society. She presented information about our New Mexico pollinators and pesticides that threaten them. The Xerces Society is an international nonprofit focused

on conserving invertebrates and their habitat.

Join The Green Giving Circle and get access to the second presentation in this series in September. Baker Morrow, a renowned southwest landscape architect, will present on plants for the southwest garden. Email caroline.funk@sierraclub.org to learn how to become a monthly donor.

Thank you, everyone, for your support!

Rio Grande ‘Sierran’ publication info

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Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by

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Contributions are welcome. Send them to riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org. Submissions by Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence.
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Editorial practices as developed and adopted by the chapter will be used in production of the Sierran.

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SIERRA CLUB

RIO GRANDE CHAPTER

Your Support Helps Us Blossom



Your used car makes an impact! Donate today.

Support our efforts to protect and preserve water, wildlife, lands and climate in New Mexico and West Texas by making a contribution to our vehicle donation program. It’s easy, pick up is free and your donation is tax deductible.

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Albuquerque resolution updates keep up with climate change

BY ANN SIMON
CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

Mayor Tim Keller signed the city’s New Sustainability Resolution on June 4, after it passed unanimously by the City Council last month. The resolution replaces multiple, decades-old sustainability resolutions with modern progressive initiatives in alignment with the City’s 2021 Climate Action Plan.

The new resolution outlines the city’s commitments to sustainability in sectors including economic development, energy, transportation, the built environment and beyond.

In this iteration of the resolution, the city is addressing sustainable materials management and nature-based sustainable practices for the first time.

Keller touted this multifaceted, cross-departmental approach to climate change at the signing ceremony. It is a commitment to the climate that the city has not seen to this date and one that assures all residents benefit from sustainability in Albuquerque.

Some of the highlights include: incentives for more green jobs,



Mayor Tim Keller (center) signs R-24-34, sponsored by Tammy Feibelkorn and Renée Grout. To read the full resolution visit the City of Albuquerque Legislation Detail page at <https://tinyurl.com/readR-24-34> Photo by Maia Rodriguez

encouraging City departments to buy from local vendors when possible, a commitment to install more electric vehicle charging stations and aid with weatherization upgrades for those bearing a disproportionate energy burden.

Some of the nature-based solutions include the use of green stormwater infrastructure and enhancing the

tree canopy, especially in low-income neighborhoods. For the first time, the city is addressing food waste by committing to increase access to food waste prevention and reduction strategies and new composting programs.

To address some of the hottest temperatures on record, the city will identify alternative building materials,

such as “cool pavement” and “cool roofs.” And, as the majority of the greenhouse gas emissions come from our buildings and homes, the city is committing to powering the government with renewable energy, primarily solar, and prioritizing electrification for all renovations and new facilities.

Sponsors of the legislation were Councilors Tammy Fiebelkorn (District 7) and Renee Grout (District 9). Grout’s amendment focused on the impact on taxpayers of more efficient and sustainable city operations, and the inclusion of cost-benefit analyses. Fiebelkorn supported the Sustainability Resolution from the outset, especially the measures that help frontline communities adapt to the negative consequences of climate change.

The bottom line is the city now has multiple strategies to prepare for and fight against climate change. Those will help improve the health, economic stability and quality of life for all residents, now and into the future.

Town Halls take on climate emergency

BY MELISSA BERNARDIN
CHAPTER CLIMATE ORGANIZER

The Rio Grande Chapter along with our co-lead organizations Dreams in Action NM and The Semilla Project will be convening state legislators, community leaders and activists this August in a series of Climate Solutions - Just Transitions Town Halls.

Climate powered fires and floods have harmed our communities in devastating ways this summer. The intense heat poses health risks to New Mexicans and means higher energy bills to cool off our homes and workplaces.

We’ve made good progress on reducing climate and air pollution from electric generation, oil and gas, and buildings and cars, but we’ve got to do more, urgently.

First let’s focus on what you can do, right now, at home to protect the climate and save money. Federal, state and utility incentives are available to weatherize, swap-out appliances, install solar panels and purchase electric vehicles. Each of these helps all sectors of society cut the emission of heat-trapping

pollutants. Our partners at 350NM have a great resource hub for more information: <https://350newmexico.org/electrify-new-mexico>.

Much more can be done through legislative policy to protect New Mexico’s people, land, water and wildlife from rising temperatures, drought and wildfire.

Our communities and our voices as individuals are needed to call for legislative action that responds to the climate crisis as the emergency it is.

Whether you want stronger accountability for polluting industries, better protection of our water supply, help for people to survive extreme weather, more and better deployment of clean energy tax credits, measures to incentivize clean energy jobs and community resiliency, or something else — **we invite you to bring your voice to an upcoming Climate Solutions-Just Transition Town Hall.**

We’ll share presentations on how you can receive the state, federal and utility benefits and how you can join or help

develop an environmental workforce. We’ll provide updates on the status of policies that are in place and discuss policies that we want to see in the coming 60-day legislative session in 2025. We want to hear your concerns and ideas.

For more information and to sign up, visit <https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/town-halls/>.

CLIMATE TOWN HALL SCHEDULE

Aug. 8 - Albuquerque
Los Duranes Community Center
2920 Leopoldo Rd NW
Time- TBD

Aug. 13 - Las Cruces
Location - TBD
Time- TBD

Aug 22. - Taos
Kit Carson Electric Coop Board Room
118 Cruz Alta Road

Aug. 29 - Santa Fe
Location - TBD
Time- TBD



Volunteer to create a Life-Long Difference!

Join the Global Warming Express (Global W.E.) Education Team!

Now celebrating 12 Award-Winning Years, The Global Warming Express Program is dedicated to a solution-driven, positive and creative approach to engaging students ages 9-12 in the exploration of science, climate science, arts, advocacy and mindful action solutions.

Help children to become one of the world’s positive, powerful solutions to the climate crisis.

Contact: maura@theglobalwarmingexpress.org TODAY!

Bringing Conscious Climate Education to NM Kids

**Breathe. Learn. Dream. Do. Inspire.
Kids Change their Worlds.**

Join us. We've got a place for you

Hello! I'm Diane Reese and I was so honored to be voted in as the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Rio Grande Chapter (RGCSC) this past January. I'd been serving as the Vice Chair for a few years under the mentorship of Susan Martin, outstanding long-time leader of our chapter.

With Susan's help and the guidance of our amazing Chapter Director, Camilla Feibelman, I agreed to step up. I can't thank them enough for their support and their leadership.

As a retired military officer — I was a healthcare administrator for 25 years — I had rarely been involved in local



DIANE REESE
CHAIR'S
COLUMN

issues and certainly not politics. But as a retiree and resident of the beautiful South Valley of Albuquerque, I was interested in finding a deeper role in my community.

I started to volunteer with the Bernalillo County Open Space program and as a master gardener, I joined the Rio Grande Chapter and took hikes. I became familiar with the environmental challenges

facing our state, especially the nearby Mountain View neighborhood and started attending City Council, County Commission and Air Quality Board meetings. I became an Outings leader to invite others to hike with me, especially in the Bosque.

And I found, as the climate — of our country and our Earth — changed, the time I spent with my fellow Sierra Club members helped me feel a little less helpless and a lot less down.

So, I want to dedicate my first column to invite you to a deeper role — there are so many options. Tell us your passion and we'll find the right spot for you! We can use more Outings

leaders; we are reinvigorating our youth programs; we need volunteers in our office to help with myriad tasks, or going out in the community tabling at all kinds of fun events.

As a group, we attend public meetings and stand up for clean air, clean water and plentiful public lands. If you prefer to do your advocacy from home, we'll help you with those letters to the editors, too. How about joining our executive committees at the Group or the Chapter level?

I have found great fulfillment and fun with my time with RGCSC — and I invite you to join us!

Global Warming Express student groups go plastic free, solarize and inspire

BY GENIE STEVENS
CHAPTER CLIMATE
EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Global Warming Express (GWE) groups followed up their successful trip to the Legislature by defining which big (community-wide or even broader) and small (school-wide) goals they would like to achieve in their elementary and intermediate schools this year and into next year.

Their goals aim to make a difference in their school, community, city or state. All of the GWE student groups accomplished impactful goals, highlighting a creative scope of climate solutions with group research, advocacy, arts and community engagement.

The GWE group at Manzano Mesa Elementary School implemented energy checks, going classroom-to-classroom with a checklist of actions to reduce their school's carbon footprint.

GWE Students at Chamisa Elementary School worked with students from the nearby high school on an electrification proposal to solarize their school.

They met with the school board and gave speeches at a school board meeting.

GWE students at Raton Intermediate School laid the groundwork to implement a first-ever recycling program in their school.

They researched and presented a proposal to their principal, visited their local



Chamisa Elementary School GWEs and teacher Susan pose with their banner after presenting at the school board meeting. Photo by Jari Thymian



Left: Darlee as "Good Earth" in A. Montoya's climate change play. Right: Pearl serving as a "Green Squad Member" during Acequia Madre's first day using silverware in their cafeteria. Photos by Jari Thymian



recycling center and presented speeches for financial support to their local Rotary Club.

This summer, the Rotary Club members voted to provide funding to buy recycling bins at

the Raton Intermediate School that will be installed at the beginning of next school year.

Acequia Madre Elementary School's GWE team decided to rid its school of the plastic cutlery used in all school meals. They wrote to and met with the head of Sustainability Services for Santa Fe Public Schools and asked that the plastic be replaced with metal cutlery.

Their request was granted almost immediately and those students now serve as a "lunchroom green squad" to help the students at their school learn new procedures for depositing metal cutlery into bins. The bins are transported to a neighboring elementary school to be washed in a dishwasher and returned to their school.

GWE students at A. Montoya Elementary School brought awareness to climate change by writing a script, creating props and costumes and performing their theater production in front of their 4th-grade class.

The Global Warming Express Program is dedicated to a solution-driven, positive and creative approach to engaging students in the S.T.E.A.M. exploration of science, climate science, arts, advocacy and mindful action solutions.

The majority of our students and mentors for the GWE 2023-24 school year will be returning in 2024-25. Our students, teachers, and mentors are excited to continue to: **Breathe, Learn, Dream, Do, Inspire, as Kids Change their Worlds!**



Photo courtesy of Javier Sierra

Calling Students! Become a climate activist!

Are you a student? Do you want to stop climate change? The Rio Grande Chapter has a new program for student leadership in climate activism. You'll learn to organize, to activate communities for change, to lobby in local, state and federal

politics. You can propose new policies and laws, you can influence rule-making in existing laws, you can be the voices of your community as everyone works for a sustainable future.

Do you already know how? Mentor other students! Join our Youth

Environmental Leadership team and make change. Or maybe you're a teacher and you like to support your students' environmental interest? Contact Caroline Funk, Chapter Coordinator at 505-243-7767, Caroline.Funk@sierraclub.org.

BLM Monument plan should reconsider rights-of-way

BY TERESA SEAMSTER
NORTHERN NM GROUP

Concerns about proposed rights of ways and new transmission lines in the Río Grande Del Norte National Monument (RGDN) spurred public lands advocates in the Rio Grande Chapter to collaborate with New Mexico Wild and a coalition of 15 environmental groups to speak out against them.

Our joint comments were submitted in May on the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment (RMPA/EA)

Overall, the groups support the BLM’s efforts to develop a Monument-specific management plan that prioritizes the protection and restoration of wildlife, landscape and cultural values. Those priorities were described in the 2013 Presidential Proclamation establishing the Monument.

A primary concern is the BLM’s proposal to designate new and expanded rights-of-way (ROWs) within the Monument, especially the 600-foot Powerline Falls corridor that would create a barrier to wildlife movement along the Rio Grande Gorge and cause collision risks for birds.

We strongly encourage the BLM to reconsider all proposed ROWs to avoid significant and permanent impacts on the Wild and Scenic River Corridor and the unique ancient landscape the Monument was established



Proposed rights-of-way (ROWs) within the Monument include a 600-foot corridor across the Río Grande gorge, which would cause significant and permanent impacts on the Wild and Scenic River Corridor shown here. Photo by Teresa Seamster.

to protect.

Another request was for the BLM to strengthen the draft plan by choosing a modified version of Alternative B1. That would designate the Cerro de la Olla area as a Wilderness Study Area (WSA) under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

This would increase the proposed WSA from 5,120 acres to almost 13,000 acres. Protecting the wilderness characteristics of this area is important as it does not have the permanent protections given to other congressionally designated areas within the Monument.

The comments submitted commend the BLM for choosing greater protection for the Monument’s unique

resources, views and wild species. Maintaining habitat connectivity, monitoring and protecting nesting areas and minimizing activity and disturbance in species recovery or migratory areas are specifically supported in the preferred Alternative B.

Much remains to be done to ensure transmission corridors are properly sited and other impacts such as pipelines and off-road vehicles are kept from damaging the beauty of this northern New Mexico treasure.



The RGDN National Monument is not well protected by the existing Resource Management Plan. Proposed amendments put this protection at risk. Photo by Teresa Seamster.

BLM’s acquisition in June of 3,700 acres adjacent to the Monument will provide added wildlife habitat and access to a segment of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.

Call for ExCom Candidate Nominations

If you want to get more deeply involved with saving the planet, run for election to your local group or the chapter Executive Committee.

The Rio Grande Chapter is made up of four regional groups in New Mexico and West Texas. Each has an elected Executive Committee of volunteer leaders. Chapter terms are three years and two years for the Groups.

If you’re a member of the chapter and would like to be considered for nomination to either your local group or the chapter Executive Committee — or if you’d like to nominate someone else — please **write to: Nominating Committee Chair Diane Reese at dianeabqnm@gmail.com by Sept. 15.**

Donate to Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter

riograndesierraclub.org/donate

Would you like to support the Rio Grande Chapter’s campaign to promote clean, renewable energy? How about our outreach efforts such as the Global Warming Express? **Your donations make things happen!**

New federal rules bolster conservation, climate efforts throughout New Mexico

BY MIYA KING-FLAHERTY
OUR WILD NEW MEXICO ORGANIZER

This spring we saw a flurry of federal rules finalized and announced by the Biden Administration. From curbing greenhouse gas emissions to prioritizing and elevating conservation on federally managed lands, this administration is adopting policies that improve how public lands are managed.

In March, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) releases its Methane Waste Rule that will curb methane waste on public and tribal lands, and awaits finalization. Methane waste routinely vented and flared by oil and gas operators at oil and gas sites has been a long-standing issue.

The BLM Methane Waste Rule

limits methane waste on public lands, conserves domestic energy resources and ensures that taxpayers benefit from the publicly owned mineral.

Then in April, the BLM released its Conservation and Landscape Health Rule (often referred to as the Public Lands Rule). It puts conservation and land health priorities on equal footing with other multiple uses for public lands, which have historically favored extraction and grazing.

Under the agency’s multiple-use mandate, the BLM is obligated to manage public lands and their numerous natural resources so that they can be used for economic, recreational and scientific purposes without causing permanent damage. This rule sets the foundation for the agency to accomplish this and prioritize

conservation on public lands.

Nearly ninety percent of public lands in the state are already available for oil and gas development. The BLM manages 13.5 million acres, making it the largest land manager in the state.

Nearly 32% of public lands in the state are leased for oil and gas. The Public Lands Rule received over 200,000 comments that were overwhelmingly in support — including from thousands of Sierra Club supporters.

That same month, the BLM issued its final Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Rule. It is the first comprehensive update to the federal onshore oil and gas leasing program in decades. This rule includes long-overdue, commonsense fiscal reforms and incorporates updates passed by

Congress under the Inflation Reduction Act.

For decades, the BLM has auctioned off public lands in New Mexico to oil and gas operators for pennies on the dollar, locking up vast amounts of land and preventing other uses on them.

Operators have historically paid low royalty rates, rental rates and fees to lease and develop on public lands. These fiscal reforms to the federal oil and gas leasing program will ensure proper stewardship of our public lands and require operators to pay higher prices to drill on federally managed lands.

Thank you for helping to get these rules over the finish line.

Chapter-endorsed candidates win big

BY RICHARD BARISH
CHAPTER POLITICAL CHAIR

Twenty-five of the 29 candidates who were endorsed by the Chapter and who had opponents won their races in the recent primary elections.

Among the winners were some great newcomers, including (but not limited to):

- **Heather Berghmans**, who ousted long-time Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto in Albuquerque’s northeast heights.
- **Angel Charley**, who beat former conservative Democratic Senator Clemente Sanchez in a sprawling Senate district from Los Lunas to the Arizona line.
- **Chapter Excom member Anita Gonzales**, who beat a conservative incumbent in the Las Vegas area.
- **Activist and ally Joseph Hernandez**, who won in a three-way race in the northwest part of the state.

Thanks to all of the volunteers who helped our candidates. The Chapter depends on you to help it do its part to contribute to these victories.


Here’s the full run-down of how our endorsed candidates fared:

- Shannon Pinto, Senate District 3 **WON**.
- Pete Campos, Senate District 8 **WON**.
- Cindy Nava, Senate District 9 **WON**.
- Linda Lopez, Senate District 11 **WON**.
- Heather Berghmans, Senate District 15 **WON**.
- Athena Christodoulou, Senate District 21 **WON**.

- Julie Radoslovich, Senate District 26 **LOST**.
- Angel Charley, Senate District 30 **WON**.
- Joseph Hernandez, House District 4 **WON**.
- Eliseo Alcom, House District 6 **WON**.
- Christopher Hudson, House District 9 **LOST**.
- Art De La Cruz, House District 12 **WON**.
- Patricia Roybal Caballero, House District 13 **WON**.
- Yanira Gurrola Valenzuela, House District 16 **WON**.
- Anjali Taneja, House District 18 **LOST**.
- Greg Seeley, House District 27 **LOST**.
- Angelica Rubio, House District 35 **WON**.
- Susan Herrera, House District 41 **WON**.
- Jon Hill, House District 53 **WON**.
- Paulene Abeyta, House District 69 **WON**.
- Anita Gonzales, House District 70 **WON**.
- Bernalillo County Commission District 2: Frank Baca **WON**.
- Bernalillo County Commission District 3: Adriann Barboa **WON**.
- Bernalillo County County Clerk: Michelle Kavanaugh **WON**.
- Doña Ana County Clerk: Amanda López Askin **WON**.
- Santa Fe County Commission District 2: Lisa Cacari Stone **WON**.
- Santa Fe County Commission District 4: Adam Fulton Johnson **WON**.
- Santa Fe County Clerk: Katharine Clark **WON**.
- Taos Commission District 3: Darlene Vigil **WON**.
- Taos Commission District 4: AnJanette Brush **WON**.



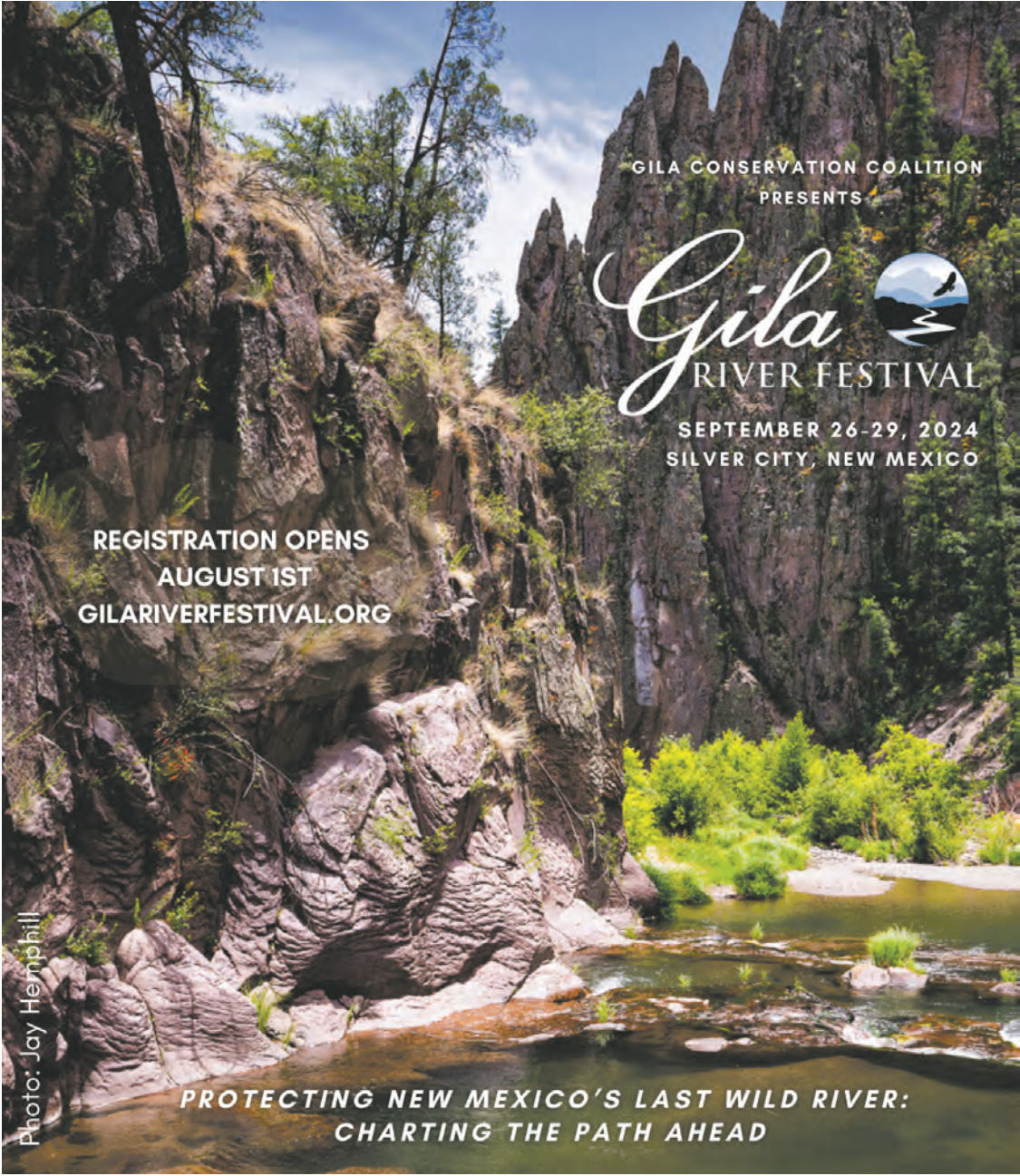
Anita Gonzales (left), Rio Grande Chapter Vice Chair and Primary Candidate in the Las Vegas area stands with Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury (right). Along with 24 other Chapter endorsed candidates, Gonzales won her race. Photo by Camilla Feibelman



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RIO GRANDE CHAPTER

Join the Chapter today. Visit us online at sc.org/JoinNM or email Caroline.Funk@sierraclub.org to find the people working on the issues most important to you.



GILA CONSERVATION COALITION PRESENTS

Gila

RIVER FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 26-29, 2024
SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO

REGISTRATION OPENS
AUGUST 1ST
GILARIVERFESTIVAL.ORG

PROTECTING NEW MEXICO'S LAST WILD RIVER:
CHARTING THE PATH AHEAD

Photo: Jay Hemphill

Wanted: Chapter Officers

The Chapter is looking for volunteer leaders.

Compliance officer. The Chapter Compliance Officer advises Chapter political activists on questions about how to conduct our electoral activities in compliance with state and local campaign laws and Sierra Club policy. This is an essential position. If we don’t have a Compliance Officer, we can’t have a political program. This would be a great way for an attorney (active or retired) or any person comfortable reading statutes and regulations to help the Chapter accomplish its legislative goals.

Contact Richard Barish, 505-232-3013, richard.barish@gmail.com.

Treasurer. The Chapter treasurer provides oversight of the finances for all Chapter entities (Chapter, Groups, Activity Sections, ICOs and PACs). They also communicate and promote adherence to all Sierra Club policies and procedures. The main duties of the treasurer are to complete year-end financial reports and to report the Chapter’s financial status to the Executive Committee quarterly. Day-to-day bookkeeping tasks are performed by our Chapter

bookkeeper. The current Chapter Treasurer would like to train a new treasurer.

Contact Caroline Funk, 505-243-7767, caroline.funk@sierraclub.org.

Legislative Chair. The Legislative Chair represents the Chapter and works under the general direction of the Chapter Lobbyist to “trouble shoot” in getting priority legislation passed or defeated in committees during legislative sessions. This is an active dynamic position and requires the ability to work as part of a team as well as thinking both critically and independently. This requires working with the Chapter Issue chairs to understand the impacts of legislation on policy; providing feedback to the lobbyist as needed; and developing time-appropriate talking points that provide legislators with information to pass or defeat legislation. The duties include providing Sierra Club presence before committees and understanding how their different constituencies are impacted by proposed legislation as well as building relationships with other organizations.

Contact Camilla Feibelman, Chapter Director at camilla.feibelman@sierraclub.org.

We must stand up for waterway access

BY DEJA WALKER
KINGSTON NM RESIDENT

Did you know that New Mexico’s water law states that you can walk/wade through any stream and/or watercourse and that they belong to the public? This is so whether the watercourse runs continually (perennial) or if it flows only in rain/flood events (torrential).

So what is a “watercourse”? It is “any river, creek, arroyo, canyon, draw, or wash or any other channel having definite banks and beds with visible evidence of the occasional flow of water.”

How might one access these public watercourses? Only from public land or permission from a landowner. You may not exit the watercourse onto private land unless you have permission.

It was with this knowledge that the residents of Kingston walked Percha Creek in southern NM. And so our story begins ...

Back in December 2023, we were walking the creek that runs through Kingston and came upon a fence crossing the creek stating “No Trespassing”. Knowing of the public easement, we went under the fence and then three more.

By mid-March 2024, we had the sheriff’s deputy from Sierra County alert us to criminal trespassing charges. Dumbfounded, we submitted a complaint to the New Mexico Department of Justice (formerly called the Office of the Attorney General).

Long story short, the Sheriff’s Department decided to dismiss our case.

On the same day of our case dismissal, a group of officials and attorneys agreed to walk Percha Creek and speak to the landowners. We were pleased to hear from Sheriff Joshua Baker that the



Percha Creek blocked from access by a local landowner despite visible water flow. Photo by DeJa Walker

landowners were asked to adjust their fences and signage (albeit enforcement unclear). Then to our disappointment, we were informed that the public can only walk the creek if water flows. Walking on sections of the creek that go below the surface would classify as criminal trespassing.

We were shocked and filed another official complaint. Kingston residents plan to meet and discuss these matters further.

We believe an unjust infringement of the public’s constitutional right is happening whereby there are flawed interpretations of the law instead of proper enforcement and legal clarification.

We ask citizens to stand up for their right to enjoy all waterways. They are areas of great riparian importance and vital for life. Our use of such waterways has always been valued, even before statehood. If we can’t access these watercourses, if private landowners drown our voices, these waterways will become segmented with little public accountability to keep them healthy and without damage.

We are the stewards and we are the voice to the natural world. Please use your voice.



A sign on the gate blocked Forest Service Road 40E to intimidate those wanting to access Percha Creek from this point. Photo by DeJa Walker

Grandma, we made it to the Capitol for advocacy

BY ARIANA SALUDARES
DEMING NM RESIDENT

Earlier in May I was in Washington, D.C., representing New Mexico, Luna County and “small city, big heart” Deming, New Mexico.

As part of a coordinated effort by the Sierra Club, representatives from multiple states came together to spread their passion.

Constituents gave a face to the true advocacy happening on the ground in our communities. Our individual backgrounds varied, but we all shared the responsibility of relaying the importance of working together through bipartisanship legislation as well as the impact of that legislation, or lack thereof.

We attended meetings with countless US senators and representatives and their staffs. We visited the Department of the Interior and met with the Council on Environmental Quality.

We shared why we stand for the passage of the EXPLORE Act and the Farm Bill and how national monuments in our area are vital to our future. We told our stories.

As I walked the US Capitol property and halls, I couldn’t stop smiling: My grandmother was looking down on me, beaming with joy. She was a lifelong supporter of our environment, human rights and education for all. She and I imagined that very moment when I would hear the sound of my own footsteps

down those Capitol halls, or just as a tourist, but following passion and doing what is right for my community.

Although my meetings with congressional staffers were mere minutes, for me these were moments 29 years in the making.

My grandmother helped plant that mission within me. And it took all those years to cultivate the opportunity to do exactly that; to again replant those ideals by the current generation for our future generations. All of this being made possible by our past generations’ plight.

Some may achieve this dream in shorter years, but my path included the best detours — growing a family, returning to my hometown to make positive change, finding my passion and continuing my grandmother’s legacy to advocate for our people and our land. I represented us and the lifelong work started so many generations ago.

Hard work, following your passion and caring for your community through advocacy is what every individual can continue on as a legacy — for all future generations. WE MADE IT, Grandma!

Never measure the impact of a single seed, as every seed has the potential to begin to regrow a forest, a farm or a hometown.

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ABQ vote could lead to minority rule

BY RICHARD BARISH
CHAPTER POLITICAL CHAIR

Albuquerque City Councilors have passed a proposal to amend the City Charter that would change how the mayor and city councilors are elected. Under the current system, the mayor and councilors need more than 50% of the vote to be elected. If no candidate receives 50% of the vote, there is a runoff election. Under the proposal passed by council, whoever gets the

most votes will win, regardless of the percentage of votes received. The proposal will likely be vetoed by Mayor Tim Keller, but at this time, the votes appear to be there to override the veto, and the proposal is likely to be on the ballot in November. It was only 12 years ago, in 2012, that Albuquerque voters rejected this idea and voted to amend the City Charter to require a majority vote. This proposal goes hand-in-hand with other efforts to enshrine minority

rule in this country, including voter suppression efforts, refusal to recognize and to manipulate election results and violating long-established norms in order to appoint Supreme Court justices who support extreme, minority points of view. Councilor Klarissa Peña argued that historically, requiring a candidate to receive more than 50% of the vote and the use run-off elections was a strategy to ensure that black candidates were not elected in southern states. However, run-off elections in Albuquerque have

not had the effect of excluding minority candidates from office, and advocating for their use today ignores the present context of efforts to create minority rule. While it is true that fewer people vote in run-off elections, the answer is not minority rule. It is ranked choice/instant run-off voting like they have in Santa Fe and Las Cruces. Stay tuned for calls-to-action to attempt to prevent an override of the anticipated veto by the Mayor.

Feed your curiosity at Sierra Club and Beer

BY SUSAN GORMAN
CENTRAL NEW MEXICO CHAIR

An attentive audience of 35 people gathered on June 7 at our Sierra Club and Beer event to enjoy David Ryan’s chat about his adventures wandering in New Mexico. David shared pictures and told stories from his two books, “60 Hikes within 60 Miles: Albuquerque” and his newest, “Wandering in the Clear Light of New Mexico.”



Photo by Meslissa Bernardin

Many of the attendees had hiked these special places. David’s journeys make me think back to hikes with my partner, Blair, long ago. If you would like to buy one of David’s books, they are at bookstores and various outlets throughout Albuquerque. You can also get them online at www.gentleartofwandering.com. Our next Sierra Club and Beer event will take place Friday, Aug. 2. **We hope you can join us for a presentation by Jackie Leyba from the Bureau of Land Management Rio Puerco Field Office.** Jackie will share insights on the awesome places that are administered by BLM. These lands include National Monuments and Conservation Areas,

Wilderness Study Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, National Scenic, Historic and Recreation Trails, etc. All of these special places are open for visitation including hiking, camping, and wildlife watching for all of us! Jackie will also say a bit about the new Conservation and Landscape Health Rule recently finalized by President Biden. He’ll bring along brochures and other literature to share following a question-and-answer session. **RSVP at www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/** **When:** Friday, Aug. 2 at 7 p.m. RSVP at <https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/> **Location:** St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 431 Richmond Place NE, Albuquerque.

It’s time to alter car-only culture

BY PATRICK BURTON
CENTRAL GROUP TRANSPORTATION CHAIR

Transportation is one of the most resource-intensive aspects of our daily lives. As a consumable good (purchasing/leasing a vehicle, bike, travel tickets; buying fuel, maintenance, etc.), it is also one aspect we have frequent control over. Every trip should be a chance to decide on the best way to get to your destination. We have a car-centric system that makes alternatives too difficult, even for the people who would like to walk, bike, or bus. Albuquerque ranks second in the nation for pedestrian fatalities and fourth in a long-term increasing trend (since 2013) of such deaths. To break out of this negative trend, we need to advocate for safer infrastructure, better driver behavior and a transportation system that doesn’t rely almost exclusively on single-occupancy vehicles. The Sierra Club should have an active role in promoting the necessary changes through a couple of paths. First, we have to take care with the EVs we purchase. Reducing emissions is critically important, but treating giant luxury EVs as eco-friendly is not addressing the root problem of

excessive consumption. The Zero Waste Team points out that similarly, recycling does not solve the waste problem! Offsetting short trips with walking, a bike ride or e-bike/scooter can help reduce the environmental impact. It may not be possible to go car-free, but car-light is a great improvement. We need to advocate for safer streets in order for people to use lower impact transportation, including public transit and micromobility. Second, we need to generate more demand for safe transportation. It’s understandable that people don’t feel comfortable cycling in the city. We need to change the expectation that riding is too dangerous to insist that riding should be the simple, fast, and safe way to make short trips. Cars do have a role to fill for longer trips, but they shouldn’t be the exclusive option that they are today. This will be a long-term effort and should include our members as well as become a criterion for candidates we endorse. More information can be found at <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/> and at <https://www.sierraclub.org/smart-growth-urban-infill>.

Mountain View worried about unfair air quality

BY DIANE REESE
CHAPTER CHAIR

Mountain View residents filed a federal civil rights complaint with the US Environmental Protection Agency in June. They seek an investigation of environmental justice and unfair air pollution in overburdened communities in New Mexico. This complaint follows the interference of the Health, Environment and Equity Impacts hearing by City Councilor Dan Lewis in December 2023. Councilor Lewis was investigated by the State Ethics Commission, which found he “likely violated” the Governmental Conduct Act. Lewis was said to have a conflict

due to his employment with the Albuquerque Pavement Association of New Mexico. He has since agreed to recuse himself on any Council issues that refer to the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board or the Asphalt Pavement Association of New Mexico. Further dirty industry could be headed for the area: Universal Waste Systems is proposing a massive transfer station at 5520 Broadway Blvd. It would bring in commercial waste from six counties, consolidate it and transport it to the landfill east of Albuquerque. This would bring over 400 trips a day to the already overcrowded Rio Bravo Blvd. It is less than one mile

from the elementary school. There was just one public hearing and no coverage in media outlets. The neighborhood association has asked citizens to contact the NM Environment Secretary (james.kenney@env.nm.gov) and request that he “deny this permit and prioritize the health and well-being of the Mountain View and South Valley communities of Albuquerque. We deserve a clean and safe environment.” A smaller transfer station at Edith and Comanche NE was proposed but dropped in 2016. That proposal resulted in numerus news stories and former City Councilor Benton wanted an economic impact evaluation before it was approved.

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Help bring back New Mexico beavers

BY CHRIS SMITH
WILDLIFE PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR WILDEARTH GUARDIANS

Before widespread commercial trapping took off in North America, beavers were abundant. In nearly every waterway, the flow was complicated by beaver-built infrastructure. And historical accounts of the American West recall a relatively green, lush, wet, and fertile landscape.

At the beginning of the 17th century, there were likely between 100 million and 400 million beavers in North America. By 1900 there were only an estimated 100,000 beavers left. The American West was denuded of wildlife during this period. Bison were all but wiped out. Wolves were erased from most of their range. And we lost many species that will never return.

But the decimation of beavers fundamentally and profoundly changed the landscape for the worse.

Beavers are, by most accounts, the second-most impactful ecosystem engineers on the planet. And, unlike humans most of what they build promotes life, biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

The full extent of beaver benefits is still coming to the fore. But hydrologists, ranchers, biologists, farmers, birders, climate scientists, anglers and policy-makers are already confident that beavers slow and store surface water, recharge aquifers, mitigate flooding and drought, reduce wildfire damage, create aquatic and wetlands

habitat for myriad species and provide more clean, cool water to all life that relies on it — including us. That seems pretty important.

And here in New Mexico, where we are at the forefront of the climate crisis, it’s critical. We increasingly face drought, wildfire, flooding, extreme weather, declining wildlife and challenges to agriculture. Trapping has waned drastically and is no longer legal on New Mexico public lands.

Protections for beavers have increased, as has awareness of their importance. There are now an estimated 10 million to 15 million in North America.

Yet, there are still many places in New Mexico where beavers should be. And because of that absence, New Mexico’s landscapes, waterways, and human and wild communities are less resilient to the climate crisis.

But New Mexico does not have a plan to restore or manage beavers. There are few resources to coexist with beavers. Killing “nuisance” beavers is still too



A beaver working on providing clear, cool water for all. Montana creek, Glacier National Park. Photo courtesy of Glacier National Park Service

often the first option taken by New Mexico Game and Fish. And coordination among state agencies and landowners to relocate beavers is lacking.

The New Mexico Beaver Project aims to change that. We want to change policies and marshal resources to restore beavers to as many New Mexico waterways as possible. To learn more visit nmbeaverproject.org.

Benefits of practicing yoga outdoors

BY PAMELA COOK
REGISTERED YOGA TEACHER AND VOLUNTEER

We know communing in the sights, sounds and scents of our surroundings offers uniquely beneficial opportunities to unplug and truly connect movement with mindfulness.

The first yoga class I ever taught, almost 10 years ago, was as a volunteer for summer outdoor yoga classes at the beautiful Hudson Gardens just south of Denver.

What could be better than a natural setting where your walls are trees and blue sky your ceiling? As we practiced our asana next to a babbling stream and the swaying willows of the Garden’s Monet’s Place, where many an outdoor wedding ceremony has been held, I was completely enchanted.

I attended my first Yoga in the Mountains in 2019. It was organized by former Chapter Outings Chair Terry Owen. It was the genius combination of an easy hike followed by an hour of yoga practice. In 2020,

I gratefully accepted Terry’s offer to lead the class, and this summer will be my fourth year



Pamela Cook posing with yoga in the mountains outing participants. Photo by Debbie Bryant

volunteer teaching. Debbie Bryant is now the fabulous outings leader for this special and popular event.

Let’s explore some benefits of practicing yoga outdoors:

It allows you to soak up the sun’s nourishing rays and enhances your vitamin D levels, giving a boost to your bones, enhancing your immune system and uplifting mood.

It offers an opportunity to fill your lungs with crisp, fresh air. That rejuvenates your respiratory system, thereby benefiting your overall vitality. The quality and depth of breath is integral to traditional yoga practice. Breathing in fresh air in the synchronicity of yoga asana offers a flow of revitalization and attunement to the natural rhythms of Nature.

Expand your practice experience: Outdoor yoga exposes you to different environments and surface textures. Those challenge both balance and stability, which are crucial as we age and remain active. Safety is always paramount, so poses are modified to suit all levels and abilities. There may be a tree nearby as a sturdy and gracious support.

Practicing Vrikshasana (tree pose) among the trees is truly an uplifting experience. Whether it is ponderosas swaying in the breeze, cheerful wildflowers, or a gentle stream flowing nearby, nature’s wonders ignite our creativity, lift our spirits, and deepen our connection to the world around us.

In case you missed it: news highlights

BY REED ECKHARDT
RIO GRANDE SIERRAN TEAM

Judge keeps pollution lawsuit alive. An effort by Indigenous, frontline and environmental groups to require the state to live up to its pollution control obligations will be allowed to continue, a state judge has ruled. The lawsuit is opposed by the administration of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham.

Loophole allows record methane releases. An exception in New Mexico’s standard-setting methane rules is being used to turn loose millions of cubic feet of the climate-threatening gas, the nonprofit Capital and Main reports. Targa Northern Delaware has released 250% more methane than the state’s other oil and gas producers combined, using a rule allowing emergency releases.

Rare lizard added to endangered species list. A lizard about 2.5 inches long that inhabits the sand dunes of southeastern New Mexico and several adjacent counties is in danger of disappearing and thus has received federal protections, the Associated Press reports. Experts say the spiny, brown dunes sagebrush lizard is threatened by energy development, sand mining and climate change.

More mosquitos are in the state’s future due to climate change. A study of two species of mosquitoes shows they are expanding their ranges toward the poles in North and South America, experts at Los Alamos National Laboratory report. The pesky bugs are significant spreaders of disease, including the West

Nile, Zika and yellow fever viruses, though of these diseases only West Nile has appeared in New Mexico with the mosquitoes. New Mexico residents might need to begin adopting practices well-known on the East Coast, such as remaining indoors when the mosquitos are most active.

Key area protected from oil and gas drilling. The Bureau of Land Management has withdrawn a complex cave system in the Lincoln National Forest from oil, gas, and other mineral extraction, the Carlsbad Current Argus reports. There will be no such activities for 20 years in the Guadalupe Cave Resource Protection Area.

Tallgrass aggressively pushes fossil-fueled hydrogen in the northwest corner of the state. A new industry being built around the development of hydrogen is attempting to plant itself in New Mexico. Presentations by Tallgrass Energy of Kansas City, KS at public meetings show projects for hydrogen production, transportation, carbon sequestration and power generation planned from Farmington to Gallup to Albuquerque.

Disease fatal to bats surfaces in NM. White-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that kills millions of bats annually, has appeared in a cave in southeastern New Mexico, the Carlsbad Current Argus reports. It’s the first time the illness has surfaced in caves there. It threatens the extinction of species essential to agriculture and other ecosystems. The fungus has not been found to spread to humans, but those people who do not take proper precautions can spread the disease.

CNM program sharpens your solar job skills

BY MARLENE BROWN
CNM FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE

Did you know Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) has courses in solar electricity, or photovoltaics (PV)? Why take a course in photovoltaics? Solar is becoming mainstream in our society and is embraced in our state. New Mexico has an abundance of sunshine, over 320 days a year.

There are several ways to learn about PV at CNM. A curious learner can take a single class in theory. A Certificate of Achievement in Solar Electricity can be completed in a single term. Another option is to combine three terms of the Electrical Trades program with one term of the PV Program for an Associate's Degree in the Electrical Trades with a Concentration in PV.

Theory and lab courses are designed to be taken together to give students an in-depth understanding of the concepts. All courses are half-semester. The first half consists of an online Fundamentals and Hands-on Introductory Lab Class. The second half concentrates on the National Electrical Code as it relates to PV and an advanced lab class.

All classes are either online or at CNM's Main Campus. There is also an optional large-scale PV class held at CNM's Westside Campus, where students can work safely next to a megawatt solar array. It is the only of its kind in the US. Large-scale PV is the future of solar.

Here in NM, we have an accessible and affordable way to train the up-and-coming PV workforce. Our hands-on classroom has all the necessary tools and components for learners to safely install systems. Students work in teams to get real experience and become familiar with the parts used, with different types of systems, designs and installations. It is possible to achieve the basic understanding and skills in solar energy or PV in one term. The PV program will



Students posing at CNM's Large Scale PV Array at CNM's Westside Campus. Photo by Marlene Brown

give students advantages in a competitive job environment. They will have the skills needed to be productive immediately and add value to any company.

PV is in the school of Skilled Trades and Arts (STA). To take classes, register as a CNM student, and the PV classes are listed with the Electrical Trades classes. Get started at www.cnm.edu.

Here is a list of the classes and course numbers for a PV Certificate of Achievement (first term):

- 1st Half Semester
 - ELTR 2605 - Photovoltaic Fundamentals & Applications 4 credits (online)
 - ELTR 2692 - PV Installation Lab 3 credits (hands-on)
 - ELTR 2615 - PV Code Compliant Systems 2 credits (online)
- 2nd Half Semester
 - ELTR 2630 - Advanced PV Theory /Design/ Installation/ Maintenance and Commissioning 4 credits (hands-on) AND/OR
 - ELTR 2645 – Large Scale PV 4 credits



Students work together in teams to install PV systems in CNM's PV Program's Hands-on Lab. Photo by Marlene Brown

(hands-on)
You can view the program at https://catalog.cnm.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=52&poid=12262

Earth Day points the way to savings from climate actions

BY CAROLINE FUNK
CHAPTER COORDINATOR

More than 4,500 visitors learned about cost savings through climate-friendly actions on Earth Day, April 21 at Albuquerque's Balloon Fiesta Park. See more in our videos online at <https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/greenest-earth-day-ever-in-new-mexico/>

Some 70 local businesses, non-profits, and government agencies shared information about sustainable products and actions everyone can take to care for the Earth. Many thanks to the Earth Day Festival sponsors, partners, and participants for making the Earth Day Festival a community success (EarthDayFestivalNM.com).

The Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter's Energy Guides and 350 New Mexico's Energy Experts helped hundreds of festival-goers get information on how to find cost savings with utility, state and federal incentives, as they update and electrify their homes.

The Festival hosted a series of panels from local leaders, industry experts and kids on weatherizing your home, planning electrification

upgrades, landscaping appropriately and the benefits of outdoor learning.

Unprecedented utility, state, and federal incentives for weatherizing and going electric are still available.

Two steps can help you get started saving money: Schedule an energy audit with your local energy provider, and visit Rewiring America's Incentive Calculator (homes.rewiringamerica.org) to learn what is available for you. Visit 350NM's website (350newmexico.org) for New Mexico-specific information about cost-savings as you go electric.

Getting an EV is the most effective way to go electric for many households. The incentives for leasing or buying an electric vehicle are at the highest levels ever for New Mexicans with the NM Clean Car Tax Credit.

The tax credit is available for EVs purchased after May 15. An online application portal will open later this summer. There is no cap on the Clean Car tax credits, and all NM taxpayers can claim credits for vehicles purchased or charging equipment installed in 2024 when they file for



Maggie Seeley (heat pump condensor), Bill Raynovich (induction cooktop), and Linda Starr (mini-split a/c unit) at the Earth Day Festival. Photo by Camilla Feibelman

tax year 2024. Information on the application process and documents can be found on the Energy Conservation and Management Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) website at:<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/ecmd/>.

There's more in development as the federal incentives stack up with local and state benefits. To keep learning, save the date for Earth Day New Mexico 2025 on April 13, 2025 at Balloon Fiesta Park! We're planning more panels, workshops, and a great day for celebrating and caring for our planet. **Interested in sponsoring Earth Day Festival 2025? Email Joanie Griffin at jgriffin@sunny505.com.**

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ALERT Northern Group's new mailing address! **ALERT**
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Produced water rule to protect state’s resources

BY DALE DOREMUS
CHAPTER WATER COMMITTEE AND
BY RACHEL CONN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR AMIGOS BRAVOS

New Mexico’s Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) held a five-day hearing from May 13-17 to consider a rule proposed by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED). It would prohibit the discharge of treated and untreated produced water outside oil and gas operations to ground and surface water. This includes banning discharge of this wastewater to land because it can infiltrate and pollute groundwater.

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter and Amigos Bravos support a prohibition on the discharge of produced water to protect our state’s precious water resources. Represented by Western Environmental Law Center, we intervened in the rulemaking and sponsored expert testimony at the hearing.

The hearing resumes the week of Aug. 5 to hear expert testimony from remaining industry and advocacy groups.

The chemical composition of oil and wastewater varies greatly among drilling sites with almost 1,200 different chemicals found in the byproduct. Among them are cancer-causing substances like petroleum hydrocarbons, radionuclides and other known and unknown contaminants that have no water quality standards.

There’s no clear evidence that current technology can reduce the chemicals to a safe level because many of the toxins in produced water, even

in trace amounts, pose health risks. This new rule would close a loophole in existing state regulation, ensuring that produced water, either treated or raw, cannot be released into ground or surface water or to the land surface outside the oilfield.

The rule would also establish requirements for use of treated produced water in “demonstration projects” or research projects and “industrial projects” that do not discharge to ground or surface water and require spill prevention plans and cleanup of spills, accidents, or discharges.

The proposed rule does set up some protections for reuse of produced water in both research and industrial projects. However, it is clear from the testimony of experts and agency staff that more study is needed before reuse of produced water in large-scale industrial projects off the oil field should be allowed.

The Chapter and Amigos Bravos oppose reuse of treated produced water for ongoing industrial use because there is inadequate information to ensure protection of human health and the environment.

Please make your voice heard at the WQCC hearing the week of Aug. 5 during public comment each morning at 9 a.m. and afternoon at 1 p.m. The NMED events calendar at <https://www.env.nm.gov/events-calendar/> has information on how to watch the hearing and provide comment.



Dry Rio Grande in Las Cruces, NM. Photo by Mary Patierno

Get the water planning process you want

BY TRICA SYNDER
CHAPTER WATER CHAIR

Chances to make your voice heard on protecting New Mexico’s water resources will come your way at open houses across the state in the coming weeks.

In its 2023 session, the New Mexico Legislature unanimously passed the Water Security Planning Act. It changes how the state does regional water planning and gives communities the means to ensure their values are reflected in water management and planning, but only if it is set it up right.

The Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) is offering open houses in each of the 16 regions across the state. These open houses are your chance to make your voice heard on what the regions should look like and how the process to finish these plans should be set up.

- There are six open houses left:
- 3-7 p.m. July 22: Region 15, Socorro-Sierra, in Socorro
 - 3-7 p.m. July 23: Region 4, Southwest New Mexico, in Silver City
 - 3-7 p.m. July 24:

- Region 11, Lower Rio Grande, in Las Cruces
- 3-7 p.m. Aug. 5: Region 6, Northwest New Mexico, in Gallup
- 3-7 p.m. Aug. 6: Region 2, San Juan, in Farmington
- 3-7 p.m. Aug. 7: Region 12, Middle Rio Grande, in Albuquerque

Find more information on the open houses at <https://mainstreamnm.org/get-involved/>.

The meetings are set up on a drop-in basis so you can arrive at any time and participate fully. There are no presentations, but you’ll have an opportunity to ask questions and informational tables will guide you through a set of surveys.

Survey questions will help ISC understand community priorities as they develop the region boundaries and rules and guidelines to structure the planning process.

Consider these talking points and include these ideas in your survey responses. The goal is to ensure a process that is equitable and sustainable:

- Ensure the environ-

ment has a seat at the table and all water uses, including water for nature and our robust outdoor economy, have equal decision-making power.

- Make funding available for each region’s planning process, including funds for travel stipends, childcare, and other support, so any community member who wants to can take part.

• Note the importance of the Water Data Initiative. Regions must have the funding for the data and information needed to create these important plans.

- Encourage ISC to adopt a rule-making process like that used by the New Mexico Environment Department. It includes robust public participation to make sure communities have more opportunities to weigh in on how this process is being set up.

Can’t make your regional open house? Not to worry! There also is an online survey, open until Aug. 18. Visit <https://mainstreamnm.org/online-open-house/>.



A fracking water pond filled with produced water. Photo by Al Braden

New Mexico Citizens Dairy Coalition focuses on Avian Flu outbreaks in NM dairies and beyond

BY DAN LORIMER
DAIRY CHAIR

The H5N1 Avian Flu outbreaks in some southeastern New Mexico dairies, as well as in dairies in 12 other states across the country, have raised concerns from health organizations operating at the international, national, state and local levels.

Why should we worry? This is a highly contagious avian virus that has led to the slaughter of millions of commercially

raised chickens. Having spread to dairy cows, it has jumped the avian-to-mammalian gap and this mutation poses a potential threat to all mammals.

While chicken Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) just destroy infected flocks that have contracted Avian Flu, dairy herds are too valuable to just destroy. Dairy cows don’t seem to die from this flu. Their consumption and production go down noticeably for a period of time, but they seem to recover after some

weeks. The few dairy workers who have contracted Avian Flu from cows didn’t have life threatening symptoms.

National agency actions, like paying for protective clothing for workers; offering laundry and shower options for workers; encouraging workers to participate in national laboratory studies; and several other subsidized response programs have not been widely accepted by the industry.

Industry fears that public

panic will impact their profits, which have led them to closing their ranks and proclaiming that pasteurization will protect the public from dairy bourne Avian Flu.

Avian-to-mammal spread of this virus is concerning enough, but mammal-to-mammal transfers raise the level of concern again. Despite the relatively low number of dairy workers infected by cows, each of these occurrences is an attempt by the H5N1 Avian Flu virus to mutate in a way that

utilizes mammal-to-mammal transfer.

Our New Mexico Environment Department is monitoring this evolving situation, but due to the inherent risks of CAFOs and the public health risks of H5N1 Avian Flu, there are many changes ahead for the New Mexico dairy industry.

More information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/situation-summary/mammals.html> and at <https://youtu.be/Uj3myg6WYzA> .

JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OUTINGS

Sign up for all outings at www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

SATURDAY, JUL. 13

Yoga In The Mountains. 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Come celebrate the day with us. We'll meet at the trailhead at 8:30 a.m. If you'd like to explore the wonders of nature, hiking and outdoors yoga in the company of really nice people, this is the hike! We'll embark on an easy 3.5 mile hike that incorporates a one-hour outdoor yoga and mindfulness break midway. Includes 300 feet of elevation gain and amazing views of the mountains. Limited to 15 participants, and children over the age of 12 are welcome when accompanied by parent or legal guardian. A \$10 cash donation for our amazing yoga instructor, Pamela Cook, would be greatly appreciated. Good, well-behaved dogs are welcome. Afterward, some of us go for lunch and all are welcome. Sign up by July 11.

Trip Leader: Debbie Bryant, bryade@gmail.com, 832-692-1881. Level: Moderate
Location: Tijeras, NM

FRIDAY, JUL. 28

ZWAT Tour of Vivarium Exhibit - Albuquerque Museum. 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Latin for "place of life," Vivarium demonstrates how contemporary painters create narratives that highlight the complex intersections between humans and the non-human living world. These works counter the prevailing belief that "4 legs are good, but 2 legs are better" by depicting animals as protagonists through a variety of cultural lenses and including references to relevant historical issues. This special tour is open to all but will have a zero waste emphasis. It will be led by Carol Chamberland, artist, Albuquerque Museum docent and member of our Zero Waste Action Team, and Laurie Zunner. The tour is limited to 12 participants, so sign up early. Admission to the museum on Sunday morning is free. Registered persons will meet in the lobby at 11 a.m. Sign up by July 27.

Trip Leader: Laurie Zunner, lmzunne@gmail.com, 505-440-5337. Level: Easy
Location: 2000 Mountain Rd NW, Abq, NM

SATURDAY, AUG. 17

Yoga In The Mountains. 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Come celebrate the day with us. We'll meet at the trailhead at 8:30 a.m. If you'd like to explore the wonders of nature, hiking and outdoors yoga in the company of really nice people this is the hike! We'll embark on an easy 3 mile hike that incorporates a one-hour outdoor yoga and mindfulness break midway. Includes 300 feet of elevation gain and amazing views of the mountains. Limited to 15 participants, and children over the age of 12 are welcome when accompanied by parent or legal guardian. A \$10 cash donation for our amazing yoga instructor, Pamela Cook, would be greatly appreciated. Good, well-behaved dogs are welcome

if you talk to the leader two days in advance. Afterward, some of us go for lunch, all are welcome. Sign up by Aug. 15.
Trip Leader: Debbie Bryant, bryade@gmail.com, 832-692-1881. Level: Moderate
Location: Tijeras, NM

SATURDAY, AUG. 24

Outings Leader Training. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Interested in becoming a certified Sierra Club outings leader and want to lead local outings? The first step in that journey is to successfully complete Outings Leader Training. This is a one-day course that will provide you with the foundational information you need to lead safe, fun and inspiring outings, such as hikes, bike rides, snowshoe or ski outings and ambles. Or if you are a currently certified outings leader and it's been about four years since you last attended this course, you should also join us. This training will provide additional focus on risk management in the desert and Mountain West, including high-altitude outings. The requirements for becoming a certified Sierra Club Outings Leader are: 1) Be a Sierra Club member, 2) Be at least 18 years old, 3) Complete Outings Leader Training (this class), 4) Complete a basic first-aid course* or wilderness first aid, and 5) Successfully plan and complete a provisional outing with a currently certified outings leader. Sign up by Aug. 20.
Trip Leader: Debbie Bryant, bryade@gmail.com, 832-692-1881. Level: Easy
Location: Virtual

SATURDAY, AUG. 31

Fall Birds Along Animas River. 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. This is the first of two trips to look for migrating birds in the fall. Meet at the Riverside Nature Center at 8 a.m. 18-year-olds and up. No dogs please. Leisurely pace. Trip will be 2.5 miles on level dirt trails. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars, snacks and water. Sunscreen and bug juice always good. For added enjoyment, download the free App called Merlin onto your phone. Limit of 10 people. Sign up by Aug. 28.
Trip Leader: Mike Foster, mike4ffoster@gmail.com, 303-594-1431. Level: Easy
Location: Farmington, NM

SEPT. DATE TBD

Zero Waste Tour of the Cerro Colorado Landfill. Yes, it's back! Solid Waste will be offering tours of the landfill! We still don't have a firm date, but wanted to get it in the Sierran to let you know. Keep checking the events calendar for an update or contact the leader.
Trip Leader: Laurie Zunner, lmzunne@gmail.com, 505-440-5337. Level: Easy
Location: Albuquerque

SATURDAY, SEPT. 14

Yoga In The Mountains. 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Come celebrate the day with us. We'll meet at the trailhead at 9 a.m. If you'd like to explore the wonders of nature, hiking and outdoors

yoga in the company of really nice people, this is the hike! We'll embark on an easy 3 mile hike that incorporates a one-hour outdoor yoga and mindfulness break midway. Includes 300 feet of elevation gain and amazing views of the mountains. Limited to 15 participants, and children over the age of 12 are welcome when accompanied by parent or legal guardian. A \$10 cash donation for our amazing yoga instructor, Pamela Cook, would be greatly appreciated. Good, well-behaved dogs are welcome. Afterward, some of us go for lunch, all are welcome. Sign up by Sept. 12.
Trip Leader: Debbie Bryant, bryade@gmail.com, 832-692-1881. Level: Moderate
Location: Tijeras, NM

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18

Rio Bravo Open Space Hike. 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Welcome to the beautiful South Valley! Rio Bravo Open Space Riverside Picnic Area provides excellent access to forest paths and river views. We'll head north through the bosque about 2 miles, then go back. Sign up by Sept. 16.
Trip leader: Diane Reese, DianeAbqNM@gmail.com, 505-507-6416. Level: Easy no elevation gain; mix of shaded-unshaded
Location: Rio Bravo Picnic Area, Albuquerque, NM

SATURDAY, SEPT. 21

Service Project at Chiricahua National Monument Sept. 21-Sept. 28. The Sierra Club Austin Group is hosting a service trip and the Rio Grande Chapter is working with them again. Join



Sierra Club Outings explore, enjoy, and protect. The Wild Rivers Recreation Area Service Trip outing in May paired light trail maintenance with camping and hiking. Left to right: Katy Parks, Carol Thompson, Florence Storey, Laura Lippman, Alan Shapiro, Rose Rowan, Terry Owen and John Link. Photo by D. Bryant

Stan and Diane for a week of camping and service work at Chiricahua National Monument. This National Monument contains one of the Six Best Hikes Stan has done in his life. This monument is located near Willcox, Arizona. Elevation approx 5,200 feet. Service projects include re-decking the footbridge at the Bonita Creek Nature Trail, Silver Spur trail, invasive plant removal, and trail and sidewalk maintenance. We will have a day off for hiking. Participants are responsible for their own transportation, camping equipment, and breakfasts and lunches. You and partners will also be responsible for feeding the entire group one evening. This includes bringing

and preparing the food, Dish Patrol and washing pots and pans. The National Park Service is providing free park admission, campsite, and work tool usage. For information about the park, visit the site at <https://www.nps.gov/chir/index.htm>. This trip requires completion of the medical form. To see requirements, sign up at <https://shorturl.at/SiWwD>

FRIDAY, SEPT. 27

Salinas Pueblo National Monument Tour. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tucked away in the middle of New Mexico, you'll find Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument. We will stop and explore two of the three distinct sites, Quarai and Abo, each offering a glimpse into a unique time in pre-US history. These sites offer a quiet place to reflect on this history, local archeology and the Land of Enchantment. This outing affords abundant photo opportunities, with stops at each to hike around each mission, perhaps finding inspiration to write a quick poem or make a quick sketch. We will meet at the Lowes parking lot at 2001 12th Street, ABQ, then proceed on I-40 East to Tijeras, head south on NM-337. Wear comfortable attire and sturdy shoes. Bring clothing layers, hats, sunscreen, water and your picnic lunch. We'll return via I-25. Total hiking distance is less than one mile and 50 feet of elevation change. No dogs, please. Sign up by Sept. 25
Trip Leader: June Parsons, comicsilver@gmail.com, 832-723-4533 . Level: Easy
Location: Mountaineer, NM

SATURDAY, SEPT. 28

Wilderness First Aid 2-day Course. Sept. 28 8 a.m. - Sept. 29, 4 p.m. Rio Grande Chapter and Women Who Opt Outside are jointly sponsoring a coed Wilderness First Aid course. The SOLO Wilderness First Aid Course is a two-day first aid course that provides training for anyone who spends time hiking, skiing, engaged in other outdoor pursuits or just wants to know what to do when things go south. The course is a blend of lectures, demonstrations and scenarios. At the successful completion of the two day course, you will be certified or re-certified. Why attend? People get hurt, sick, or lost.



The temperature drops, the wind picks up, and it starts to rain. Would you know what to do? If you're ever more than an hour away from a hospital or one mile from any road, these skills are essential. The price for the course is \$200 per person. Participants must commit to attend both days. Payment instructions will be sent in mid-August requesting a \$65 deposit to hold your seat. Applicants will be taken in the order they register and pay by the deadline. Maximum class size is 22. Sign up by Sept. 24
Trip Leader: Debbie Bryant, bryade@gmail.com, 832-692-1881. Level: Easy
Location: Village of Tijeras Village Hall, 12 Camino Municipal, Tijeras, NM

SATURDAY, OCT. 5

Bicycle to Balloon Fiesta Saturday. 5:45 a.m. start. Want to experience the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta morning mass ascension but don't want the hassle of fighting traffic? Join us for your own dawn patrol bike ride to Balloon Fiesta Park. We will meet up near Rio Grande Nature Center State Park and ride along the bosque to the park. When we arrive at the park, we'll leave our bikes with the bike valet and enjoy the show. Then we'll return via the bosque on both paved and single-track trails. Multispeed mountain or gravel bikes, road or e-bikes with tire sealant are required. Helmet, gloves, headlamp and/or bike light are required. Add lots of lights and colors to you and your bike to increase the fun and visibility quotient. Riders should have the ability to average 10-12 mph and stay up with the group. Just over 11 miles each way and less than 100 feet of elevation change. Our route is: Bosque Trail to Paseo del Norte trail to North Channel trail, so almost no roads (approx. three road crossings). Sponsored by the Sierra Club Military Outdoors Program, and everyone is welcome. Register no later than Sept. 27 at the link provided.
Trip Leader: Debbie Bryant, bryade@gmail.com, 832-692-1881. Level: Moderate
Location: Albuquerque, NM

SATURDAY, OCT. 26

More Fall Birds Along Animas River in Farmington. 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. This and the August trip aim to discover which of the 31 migrants who headed north last spring will follow the same route heading south in the fall. We'll also look for the 24 residents discovered last spring and hopefully find a few more. Eighteen years-old and up only. No dogs please. Use sunscreen, bring binoculars, water, snacks, and dress for the weather. Limit of 10 people. Sign up by Oct. 24
Trip Leader: Mike Foster, 303-594-1431 mike4ffoster@gmail.com. Level: Easy
Location: Farmington, NM

Teaser: Watch the events calendar online (at www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar) for a fun low-emissions trip via Amtrak!