



Volume 62, Issue 4

News of the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter: New Mexico & West Texas

Oct | Nov | Dec 2024

Renewables, savings, apprenticeships as coal exits



The stacks at the coal-fired San Juan Generating Station in Waterflow, NM were demolished on August 24, 2024. Thanks to the Energy Transition Act renewables and battery storage are replacing this polluting, expensive coal. See story page 3. Images courtesy of EcoFlight and Benjamin Hunter.



Photo by iStock.com/Moussa81

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Photo by Debbie Bryant

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Photo by Mary Katherine Ray

State wildlife action plan
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EXPLORE, ENJOY AND PROTECT THE PLANET



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Rio Grande Chapter
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National Water Sentinels: Teresa Seamster, Shannon Romeling

Page 1 banner: Mogollon Mountains, NM. Photo by Caroline Funk

Rio Grande ‘Sierran’ publication information

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The opinions expressed in signed articles in the Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club.
Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by Sierra

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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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Vote for chapter, group executive committees

Three candidates are running for three open spots on the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee. Only Sierra Club members may vote. Please mail this ballot with the member information intact on the label on the reverse side, or vote online. Online voting will be available to members in November at www.riograndesierraclub.org. To vote on paper, mail this completed ballot to: Sierra Club Election Committee, 2215 Lead Ave SE, Albuquerque NM 87106. Ballots must be received by Dec. 9. Two-member households can each vote, using both boxes. Please also vote for candidates for the group executive committee where you live. Note: El Paso Group ballots and candidate statements will be mailed separately, but El Paso members may vote for chapter executive committee using this ballot.

Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee (vote for 3)

Candidate statements are published at riograndesierraclub.org

☐ ☐ Alissa Keny-Guyer

☐ ☐ Sequoia Rudolph

☐ ☐ Valari Taylor

Northern New Mexico Group Executive Committee (5 open seats)

- ☐ ☐ Chris Calvert
- ☐ ☐ Craig Hammond
- ☐ ☐ Ken Hughes
- ☐ ☐ Norman Norvelle
- ☐ ☐ Joe Wells

Central Group Executive Committee (4 open seats)

- ☐ ☐ Fred A. Helms
- ☐ ☐ Sherry Noone
- ☐ ☐ Laurie Zunner
- ☐ ☐ write in: _____

Southern NM Group Executive Committee (4 open seats)

- ☐ ☐ David Baake
- ☐ ☐ Karen Boehler
- ☐ ☐ Gayle Eads
- ☐ ☐ Mary Katherine Ray

Coal’s exit brings new opportunities

MIKE EISENFELD
San Juan Citizens Alliance

On Aug. 24, the stacks at the coal-fired San Juan Generating Station in Waterflow were demolished. The plant opened in 1973 and originally had four coal-burning units totaling 1,800 megawatts. Units 2 and 3 were closed in 2017 and Units 1 and 4 continued operating until September 2022, when they were also retired permanently. Units 1 and 2 were jointly owned by Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) and Tucson Electric Power. Units 3 and 4 provided power to PNM and a mix of municipal utilities and rural electric cooperatives in New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and as far as California.

The plant was a major source of pollution when it was operating at full capacity, emitting more than 12-million tons of greenhouse gasses and more than 10,000-tons of nitrogen oxides annually. Both were major components of the region’s notoriously smoggy air. It also consumed billions of gallons of water every year from the San Juan River.

The San Juan Generating Station and the associated coal mine, San Juan Mine, became uneconomical for regional utilities and led to PNM and Tucson Electric Power leaving in 2022. Speculative attempts by City of Farmington and hedge funder energy novices Acme Equities (later Enchant Energy) to assume ownership at San Juan Generating Station and incorporate carbon capture/sequestration failed entirely from 2019-2022. Those efforts diverted the region’s attention from addressing the impact of coal plant’s final closure

Sierra Club and partners in the Four Corners recognized the inevitable fate of San Juan Generating Station and intervened in abandonment proceedings before the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission in correlation with the 2019 Energy Transition Act.

The transition to replacement renewable energy in the Four Corners was secured in a case before the Public Regulation Commission. Renewable energy and battery storage projects located in the Four Corners provide property taxes, money, to local school districts, and job replacement opportunities for impacted coal workers.

Closure of San Juan Generating Station has resulted in diminished pollution, fewer climate change-inducing impacts and reduced public health impacts. It also created economic transition opportunities for an iconic region that are more sustainable.

It is critical that work be done now to plan for transition and not to rely on unproven technologies like hydrogen and carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) to try to prolong reliance on aged coal plants. Here are some statements from groups in Four Corners: — “Indigenous advocates have long brought attention to the many adverse public health, land, and water



The San Juan Generating Plant running production full blast in 2014. Photo courtesy of Mike Eisenfeld.



The smoke stacks on the San Juan Generating Plant came down Aug. 24, 2024, marking the final closure and demolition of dirty energy in the region, to be replaced by clean energy and green jobs. Image courtesy of Ecoflight and Benjanmin Hunter.



The San Juan Solar Field is part of the transition to clean energy and green jobs, replacing the San Juan Generating Station’s coal fired energy. Photo courtesy of Ecoflight.

quality impacts resulting from the operations at SJGS and Four Corners Power Plant (“FCPP”), pointing out the environmental injustice that Indigenous and local communities were saddled with in living so close to two coal mines and plants”, said **Robyn Jackson, executive director of Diné C.A.R.E.**

“We can remember the terrible air quality that both plants produced in our region. It therefore came as no surprise that health disparities existed among our population, compared to the rest of the US general population when it came to childhood asthma,

as well as other illnesses like heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Our tribal-led organization recognizes that it is necessary and inevitable that our local economy be rebuilt around development that is renewable, sustainable, and regenerative. The health of our communities, economy and climate will require a transition away from fossil fuels if we are to survive and succeed.” — “We are hopeful that after the demolition of San Juan Generating Station, the Four Corners area and its communities will no longer have to sacrifice our health and safety for

fossil fuels,” said **Rose Rushing, attorney at Western Environmental Law Center.** “There is work to be done to ensure that the region can transition to a sustainable, diversified economy, starting with fulfilling the commitments of the Energy Transition Act. We look forward to working with community groups in the next year to make sure our community receives the full benefits the Energy Transition Act promises.”

— “The closure and demolition of PNM’s San Juan Generating Station marks yet another milestone, a step in the right direction away from fossil fuels and a step toward what we hope will be a just and equitable transition to more fossil-free energies such as wind, solar, and other sustainable, renewable, and real solutions that will truly combat climate change,” said **Eleanor Smith, Community Organizer of the Diné grassroots community organization Tó Nizhóní Ání.** “Our hope is also that false solutions such as blue hydrogen and carbon capture sequestration are not sought nor implemented.

“The Navajo Nation and the Four Corners area have long histories of environmental injustices that continue to contribute to the climate chaos we are in. Now is the time for us, the impacted people who live and work in the Four Corners area, to plan and write the narrative of our fossil-free energy future rather than the historical dictation by industry, energy companies, or others. We must say K’adí (stop) the harm to Nihimá Nahasdzáán, our Mother Earth, which includes us all.”

— “I’ve lived in Farmington for 26 years, and it wasn’t until 2022 when the plant finally shut down that the brown haze lifted and we could see to the horizon,” said **Mike Eisenfeld, climate and energy program director for San Juan Citizens Alliance.** “It’s always difficult to close one chapter and begin a new one. But knowing children can breathe air that isn’t as polluted and being able to see this region for its beauty, which has been cloaked in smog for 50 years, is a good thing. There is huge potential for clean energy development and for diversifying our economy beyond just energy, and the demolition of these smokestacks is important symbolically for turning that page.”

Elections burn calories!

If you are like me, watching the debates, you couldn't sit still. I was off the couch, pacing with the urgency this election demands.

No one could call me a couch potato!

In the primary elections, I decided I needed to find a way to walk for the candidates. So after 8 a.m. school drop-off, I knocked doors for climate and women's champions. It was just a couple of hours each week. And it's interesting who is home on the early side.

That's my call to you today. Burn some calories with me as we face the most consequential election of



CAMILLA FEIBELMAN
Director's Column

our lives. Not just for women and the planet, but for democracy. Yes, the swing states are where a lot of the election action is taking place. But in New Mexico, this election's outcome could result in the type of state legislature where we might actually pass comprehensive climate legislation. Over the last month we've carried

out an array of climate solutions and just transition town halls. There, New Mexicans packed the rooms to find out about energy savings and to share concerns and ideas about how to next take on the climate crisis.

Our governor and volunteer Legislature have done so much. They passed the Energy Transition Act to increase the renewables generating our electricity. And they passed methane controls, boosted clean cars and supported energy efficiency building codes.

Yet the Permian Basin oil boom burns on, spewing the world's

most potent methane gas into the atmosphere and moving our reduction goal posts further from us.

With climate leadership in the Roundhouse, we can build our new economy with a sustainable workforce and offer jobs that are safe and clean. But we won't get there without legislators willing to vote for our future and for our families.

So join me in burning some calories (instead of fossil fuels)! Make calls and write letters to the editor. But most importantly, let's get out together and pound the pavement.

Global W. E. kicks off summer soirée



Pearl and Elodie after presenting their climate perspectives at the Western Environmental Law Center's Summer Soirée. Photo by Suze Wehr.

BY GENIE STEVENS CHAPTER CLIMATE EDUCATION DIRECTOR

This past July, the Global Warming Express was invited to headline the Western Environmental Law Center's Summer Soirée. Global W.E. students from Acequia Madre Elementary, Pearl and Elodie reprised the speeches they gave at the Roundhouse last winter.

Pearl spoke passionately about the need for people to reduce their meat consumption, and Elodie focused on the growing problem of deforestation. The Global W.E.

students always create their own topics, do their own research and write (and memorize) their own speeches, without any grownup intervention.

Their young voices became the focus of the adults' speeches that followed, and the Global Warming Express was invited to collaborate on events with Western Environmental Law Center in the future.

Both Pearl and Elodie will be returning to the Global Warming Express program this year as fifth and sixth graders.

Use your skills for climate solutions — volunteer with your local chapter

The Rio Grande 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). 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 a dynamic role and requires the ability to work as part of a team as well as independently. This requires working with the Chapter staff and activists to understand legislation and its impacts, including its impacts on the different constituencies represented by our allies, as well as building relationships with those other allied organizations.

You will need to develop talking points that volunteers can use when they speak to legislators about why they should vote as we wish and provide feedback to our lobbyist about what we learn. The duties include coordinating with other volunteers to ensure that there is a Sierra Club presence to present our position to committees.

Contact Camilla Feibelman at camilla.feibelman@sierraclub.org.



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RIO GRANDE CHAPTER

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!

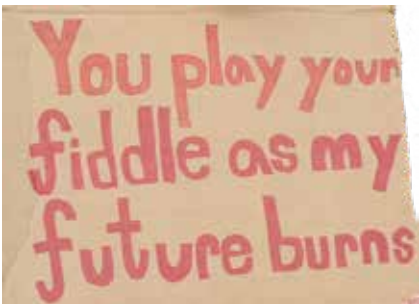


Photo courtesy of Javier Sierra

Calling Students! Become a climate activist!

The Rio Grande Chapter Sierra Student Coalition is awake and ready to act!

Are you a student, and do you want to stop climate change, protect wildlife, or see a just economic transition to renewable power? Join our student leaders to learn how to

organize, activate communities for change, and 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 voice of your community as everyone works for a sustainable future.**

Do you already know how? Great! Mentor other students. If you are a teacher, you can support your students' environmental interests. Contact Caroline Funk, chapter coordinator, at 505-243-7767, caroline.funk@sierraclub.org.

Town halls look at climate crisis



The Semilla Project Tabling at the Climate Solutions — Just Transition Town Hall in Albuquerque. Photo by Camilla Feibelman.



Melissa Bernardin with an induction cooktop raffled at the Climate Solutions — Just Transition Town Hall in Santa Fe. Photo by David McGahey.



Carl Ulibarri, NM Home Solutions & Santa Fe Community College — Energy Smart Academy; and Josué De Luna Navarro, The Semilla Project, Outdoor and Land Base Director in Santa Fe. Photo by David McGahey.

BY MELISSA BERNARDIN
CHAPTER CLIMATE ORGANIZER

This summer many of you helped pack the room in “Climate Solutions — Just Transition” Town Halls we held across the state in partnership with Dreams in Action/The Semilla Project. Together we looked at the devastating impacts of the climate crisis, identified actions we can all take at home and in our communities, looked at workforce and economic diversification opportunities and imagined the next big steps we can take at the coming 60 day legislative session.

The town halls were branded “Gen Green” in acknowledgement of the impact of the climate crisis on youth and the importance of their involvement in crafting policy solutions and building the clean energy

workforce of the future. Our partner organizations went door to door with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) youth to address climate justice and develop workforce opportunities.

Knowing that the impacts of the climate crisis from fires to flood can be overwhelming, we featured easy, climate-benefitting energy savings and clean energy incentives from utilities, the state and the federal government.

Also, there was a workforce development panel and conversations with legislators and local leaders.

Workforce panelists described the future of employment in the renewable and outdoor economies, while different state legislators at each town hall event talked about legislation that has moved us forward and what is yet to be done.

Legislator remarks spanned topics from infrastructure investment to renewable energy to the challenge of diversifying the state’s revenue streams as the state of NM continues to transition from reliance on oil and gas.

And we packed the house at all of those events in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Taos, Santa Fe, Silver City, and Deming. Participants, panelists, legislators, and local leaders alike said they were impressed by the turnout and energy in the room.

Participant questions ranged from the intersection of climate issues with health and housing to crucial concerns about water supply and quality. They also asked how to get more of the cost saving from the federal Inflation Reduction Act incentives into the homes of renters and mobile home owners.

Many town hall attendees said they were impressed with the panelists’ presentations on workforce development opportunities and conservation initiatives happening through community groups and municipal leadership in each of the Chapter regions.

Our next step is to host a statewide virtual town hall after the election and before the start of the next legislative session. We also intend to work with all of you to bring your grassroots energy to the Roundhouse (whether in-person or virtually).

If you would like to be involved or help lead a local team, we want to hear from you! Please contact Melissa Bernardin, Climate Organizer, melissa.bernardin@sierraclub.org.

Energy savings for everyone

In September, the State Energy Office announced a new website where New Mexicans can find the energy savings that apply to them. Check it out: CleanEnergy.nm.gov. The website guides you through the benefits you are eligible for.

- The state will offer up to \$14,000 in benefits to income-qualified families. The program is being launched with a coupon for \$1,600 for DIY insulation being offered at Lowes and Home Depot (and hopefully soon at local stores).
- For New Mexico’s lowest income families, the Mortgage Finance Authority will help weatherize an entire home, mobile home or rental unit. <https://housingnm.org/programs/home-rehabilitation-and-weatherization>.
- Did you install solar panels between 2020-2023 and then not get the tax credit because it had run out? Thanks to a bill passed in this last legislative session and included in the comprehensive tax package, you can reapply here: <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/ecmd/tax-incentives/solar-market-development-tax-credit-smdtc/>.



Join us as we celebrate and work to protect the Earth! The global theme for Earth Day 2025 is “Our Power, Our Planet.” It is a call to action for all of us to embrace renewable energy and make a lasting impact on our planet’s future. We’ll continue making Earth Day a way to deeply engage with our Climate Solutions — from insulating your home to installing solar to purchasing an EV.

Save the Date

Sunday, April 13, 2025 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Balloon Fiesta Park, Sid Cutter Pavilion

Sponsorships are available now! The sponsor information packet is on the Festival home page: earthdayfestivalnm.org.

Vendor booths are available. Information and the vendor application form are on the booths page: earthdayfestivalnm.org/booths. The application deadline is April 1, 2025. Questions? Contact Caroline at caroline.funk@sierraclub.org.

ELECTION 2024

NEW MEXICO STATE SENATE ENDORSEMENTS

FIND YOUR DISTRICT AT NMVOTE.ORG



District 9 (Sandoval, Bernalillo): Cindy Nava



District 10 (Bernalillo): Katy Duhigg



District 12 (Sandoval, Bernalillo): Phillip Ramirez



District 15 (Bernalillo): Heather Berghmans



District 18 (Bernalillo): Natalie Figueroa



District 20 (Bernalillo): Martin Hickey



District 21 (Bernalillo): Athena Christodoulou



District 23 (Bernalillo): Harold Pope



District 29 (Valencia, Bernalillo): Tina Garcia



District 36 (Doña Ana): Jeff Steinborn



District 38 (Doña Ana): Carrie Hamblen

KEY VOTING INFORMATION

Make a plan as to how you are going to vote, whether absentee, early, or on election day. Vote early if at all possible.

Registration. You can find your registration status and register to vote online at nmvote.org. **Online registration must be completed by October 8.**

You can register in-person at your County Clerk’s office, and you can also register on the same day you vote at many early voting locations and on

election day, but you need to bring the right documentation, which you can find at <https://www.sos.nm.gov/voting-and-elections/voter-information-portal-nmvote-org/same-day-voter-registration/>.

Absentee voting. You can request an absentee ballot online or obtain a hard copy application at nmvote.org. Absentee ballot requests must be received no later than October 22.

Permanent absentee voters. Voters whose ballots are sent to an in-state address can check a box on the absentee ballot application to automatically be sent an absentee ballot for each statewide

election.

Filling out your absentee ballot. Absentee ballots must be signed on the outer envelope, and you must enter the last four digits of your Social Security Number.

Early voting. Early voting begins on October 8 at your county clerk’s office. Expanded early voting at additional locations begins October 19 and continues through November 2.

Election day voting. You can vote on election day, November 5, from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

KEY VOTING DATES and VOTING INFORMATION WEBSITES: page 8



Vote “yes” on the Ciudad Soil & Water Conservation District Mill Levy.

Bernalillo County

Commission Clerk

District 2:	District 3:	
Frank Baca	Adriann Barboa	Michelle Kavanaugh

Grant County

Commission

District 4:	District 5:
Barbara Bush	Phillip Schoenberg

Doña Ana County

Commission Clerk

District 5:	
Manny Sanchez	Amanda López Askin

Valencia County

Commission Clerk

District 2:	
Duana Draszkievicz	Rustin Porter

Sandoval County

Commission

District 4:
Madigan Ray

Luna County

Commission

District 3:
Ariana Saldares

Democracy and climate hanging in the balance

RICHARD BARISH
CHAPTER POLITICAL CHAIR

I’ve recently been reading *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a botanist and an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. This is a wonderful book, and one of the things that makes it that way is her description of how our Indigenous neighbors experience the world and their place in it. One aspect of that is seeing the lessons nature offers.

One recent morning, I sat outside, drinking my coffee, miraculously unbitten, observing what was going on in my yard. Some years ago, I planted some thorny desert plants in hopes of attracting thrashers and roadrunners. I now have resident curve-billed

6 Rio Grande Sierran

thrashers. Thrashers are not timid birds. One of them was perfectly at ease thrashing for bugs in the leafy mulch not 15 feet from me. Thrashers are LOUD, and around dusk they let everyone know they’re there. They are alert for danger and sound the alarm in the middle of the night when danger is near. And they’re hard workers. The thrashers in my yard had three clutches this year! It may seem a bit silly for those whose habits of mind have been shaped by the western intellectual tradition to look to a small songbird as a model of behavior. But the things thrashers do for their survival are exactly what the urgency of this moment demands of us for our survival in this pivotal year. We need to be courageous and assertive so we can

make calls and knock on doors to warn people about what is at stake, even though some of us may not like doing it very much. We need to work hard, really, really hard, to ensure that we do not descend into autocracy and chaos, and we are able to take those next, vital steps to address climate change. This is truly a moment when the future of the country and the world may depend on the commitments we are each willing to make over the next month. There are a lot of great candidates that need our help this year. If you can help, whether for an hour or as a full-time volunteer, get in touch. Fill out the form found here, <https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/elections/>, or give us a call at 505-243-7767.

ELECTION 2024

NEW MEXICO STATE HOUSE ENDORSEMENTS

FIND YOUR DISTRICT AT NMVOTE.ORG



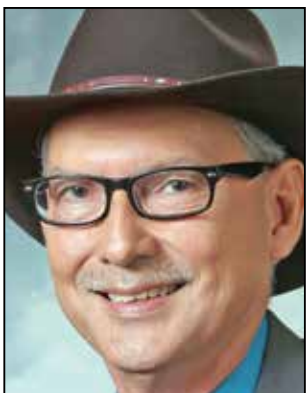
District 4 (San Juan):
Joseph Hernandez



District 6 (McKinley,
Cibola): Eliseo Lee
Alcon



District 11
(Albuquerque): Javier
Martinez



District 14
(Albuquerque):
Miguel Garcia



District 16
(Albuquerque): Yanira
Gurrola



District 19
(Albuquerque):
Janelle Anyanonu



District 24 (ABQ):
Elizabeth (Liz)
Thomson



District 25
(Albuquerque):
Cristina Parajon

SIERRA CLUB ENDORSEMENTS

Only candidates who have opposition in the general election are listed on these pages. For other endorsements, and for endorsements made after press time, see <https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/elections/>. For US presidential endorsement, see sierraclubindependentaction.org/endorsements.

State and local endorsement content authorized and paid for by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club Political Action Committee.



District 26
(Albuquerque):
Eleanor Chavez



District 28
(Albuquerque):
Pamelya Herndon



District 29
(Albuquerque):
Joy Garratt



District 30 (NE
Heights ABQ):
Elizabeth Diane
Torres-Velasquez



District 31
(Albuquerque): Vicky
Estrada-Bustillo



District 34 (Doña
Ana): Ray Lara



District 36
(Doña Ana): Nathan
Small



District 38 (Socorro,
Sierra, Doña Ana):
Tara Jaramillo



District 39 (Grant,
Catron, Luna): Gabby
Begay



District 43 (Los
Alamos, Santa Fe):
Christine Chandler



District 44 (Sandoval
and Bernalillo):
Kathleen Cates



District 50 (SF, Torrance,
Bernalillo, Sandoval):
Matthew McQueen



District 53 (Doña
Ana, Otero): Sarah
Silva



District 60
(Sandoval): Luke
Jungmann



District 68
(Bernalillo): Charlotte
Little

VOTING INFORMATION WEBSITES

General voting information: nmvote.org
Bernalillo County: https://www.berncoclerk.gov/elections/early-voting/ and https://www.berncoclerk.gov/elections/election-day-voting/
Doña Ana County: https://www.donaanacountyelections.com/locations
Santa Fe County: https://www.santafecountynm.gov/clerk/elections
Other county clerk website and contact information:
https://www.sos.nm.gov/voting-and-elections/voter-information-portal-nmvote-org/county-clerk-information/

KEY VOTING DATES

- **October 8:** Voter registration by mail or online ends.
- **October 8:** First day of Early Voting at the county clerks’ offices (in Bernalillo County, at the Clerk’s Annex, 1500 Lomas Blvd NW, Suite A).
- **October 19:** Expanded Early Voting begins at additional voting locations.
- **October 22:** Last day to request an absentee ballot online or to submit hard copy application.
- **November 2:** Last day of early voting.
- **November 5:** Election Day.

CENTRAL NEW MEXICO GROUP

Sierra Club and Beer: NM’s hotter and drier future

BY SUSAN GORMAN
CENTRAL NEW MEXICO GROUP CHAIR

Join us for a conversation about the Land of Enchantment’s most precious resource and how you can get involved to ensure New Mexico’s water is protected for future generations.

Our speaker is Tricia Snyder, Water Chair, Rio Grande Chapter; Rivers and Waters Program Director, New Mexico Wild.

Tricia will talk about New Mexico’s water challenges. She will give us an overview of the impacts of climate change that will bring a hotter and drier future to New Mexico, impacting our water security.

Then, Tricia will present the most pressing challenges and opportunities. For example, last year’s US Supreme Court’s decision in Sackett v. EPA rolled back decades of Clean Water Act protections, opening more than 90% of New Mexico’s waters to pollution and degradation and leaving the

state among the most vulnerable in the nation.

She’ll discuss the state’s efforts to revitalize and rethink regional water planning as well as highlight some of the gaps where the state still needs more attention and resources.

Come take part in a conversation about the Land of Enchantment’s water resources and learn how you can help to ensure they are protected for future generations. Enjoy a beverage and light snacks as well as a great evening with like-minded friends.

DATE: October 4, 2024
TIME: 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 431 Richmond Pl NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106
RSVP at https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/

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Vice Chair: Diane Reese
505-507-6416, DianeAbqNM@gmail.com
Treasurer: David Ther
Secretary: Terry Owen
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Ray Shortridge
rshortridge@gmail.com
Transportation: Patrick Burton
patrickburton9@icloud.com
Outings: Debbie Bryant
832-692-1881, bryade@gmail.com
Zero Waste: Laurie Zunner
lmzunne@gmail.com
Political/Bosque: Richard Barish,
richard.barish@gmail.com
Military Outings: Terry Owen
teowen@comcast.net
Volunteer Coordinator: Open
Wildlife: Open

Continue your climate saving legacy

BY JULIA CURTISS
SIERRA CLUB GIFT PLANNING SPECIALIST

October is National Estate Planning Awareness Month. Changes in life are inevitable, which means our plans have to change, too. Whether you already have a will or are thinking about creating one for the first time, here are six reasons to revisit your estate plans.

Your family has changed.

Events such as marriage, divorce, death, birth or adoption may affect how your estate will be distributed, who should act as guardian for your dependents and who should be named as executor or personal representative of your estate.

Support a favorite organization or cause.

Many people update their estate plans to include

gifts to organizations that are near and dear to their hearts. Gift planning is one way you can have a positive impact on an organization like Sierra Club’s Rio Grande Chapter — without affecting your budget right now.

Significant birthdays and milestones.

Significant birthdays, graduations, retirements, and other life milestones are a good time to check in with your estate plan and make sure it reflects your wishes.

You moved to a new state.

If you are moving away from New Mexico or splitting your time, it’s worth revisiting your estate plan. Laws among the states vary. Moving to a new state or purchasing property in another state can affect estate plans and how property in that new state will be taxed or distributed.

Changes in your estate’s value.

Your assets may have changed in value since you made your will. In addition to standard investment growth, you may have bought or sold a home or business. Make sure your will still reflects how you would like to distribute your estate.

Passage of time

It’s always good to review your estate plan and refresh your memory, plus note any details that may need updating.

Visit myplan.sierraclub.org/planning-toolkit for free estate planning resources. For legal or tax advice, please consult an attorney or tax advisor. If you’d like to talk about including a gift to the Rio Grande Chapter, you can reach out to Julia Curtis at julia.curtis@sierraclub.org or Caroline Funk at caroline.funk@sierraclub.org



The Gila River is just one of the precious water and wilderness resources we are able to enjoy, explore, and most importantly, protect in part because of legacy donations made to the Rio Grande Chapter. Photo by Caroline Funk, Gila River near Cliff, NM.

State Wildlife Action Plan protections

BY TERESA SEAMSTER
NORTHERN GROUP

The State Wildlife Action Plan assesses biodiversity and identifies threats to wildlife and habitats combined with proposed conservation actions and measurable outcomes. It includes data concerning population surveys, case studies, climate vulnerability research and expert evaluation of declining wildlife species.

There are eight key requirements in all federally mandated State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP).

- The distribution and abundance of wildlife species, especially low and declining species referred to as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Such species are indicative of the diversity and health of wildlife in the state.
- The location and relative condition of key habitats and community types essential to SGCN.
- Problems that may adversely affect SGCN and their habitats.
- Actions necessary to conserve SGCN and establish priorities for conservation actions.
- Provisions for periodic monitoring of SGCN and effectiveness of conservation actions.



The Porcupine, a proposed species of greatest conservation need, carries some 30,000 quills for protection and is a vital forest “engineer” that lives in and feeds on trees and helps recycle woodland nutrients. Photo by Mary Katherine Ray.

- Provisions to review the SWAP at intervals not to exceed 10 years.
- Provisions for coordination with federal, state, tribal and local entities.
- Public participation.

This in-depth overview of the status of our state’s wildlife allows the Department of Game and Fish to receive federal aid to help wildlife species that are a) vulnerable to climate change, b) in decline, c) geographically isolated, d) endemic, e) keystone species important for ecosystem function, or f) whose core range is threatened. NM represents more than 10% of the species range for all SGCN.

The 10-year plan is being directed by Dr. Ginny Seamster, assistant chief for Technical Guidance, New Mexico Game and Fish.

The proposed New Mexico SGCN list of 499 state species was presented at two public meetings this summer.

Numerous members of the SGCN core team of biologists, researchers, land managers and conservation organizations that have been assisting in compiling the list have publicly praised the research and rigorous selection process being followed in developing the list and the inclusion of 86 pollinating insect species not previously listed, butterflies, moths, flies and bees.

The final plan will go to the State Game Commission for approval in 2025.

For more information: <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/conservation/state-wildlife-action-plan/>.

In case you missed it: news highlights

BY REED ECKHARDT
RIO GRANDE SIERRAN TEAM

EPA looking to expand WIPP. The federal Environmental Protection Agency is seeking feedback on its plans to expand the Waste Isolation Pilot Project, known as WIPP, to make up for lost capacity caused by two incidents.

The agency held public meetings on the proposed expansion in August. Environmental groups are urging the EPA to go through a formal rule-making process, rather than a lesser administrative process, before taking action.

WIPP was initially planned as a pilot project to store “legacy” nuclear waste, such as “clothing, tools, rags, residues, debris, [and] soil,” according to DOE. However, no other sites have been built in the 25 years since its development.

Don Hancock with Southwest Research and Information reports that the EPA plans to grow the facility and accept waste that is “totally different than was ever contemplated.” <https://bit.ly/3T7J8ZK>

Harvest water from the air? Lawmakers have heard a proposal that might allow them to increase the state’s water supplies by drawing it directly from the air.

Scott Lopez and Colin Goddard explained that their company, Source, produces hydro panels. These work like solar panels but use the sun’s energy to make water instead of electricity.

They are currently in place in the Navajo Nation. Goddard told the Water and Natural Resources Committee in Socorro, “You can quite

literally harvest your own drinking water directly out of the air ...”

Lawmakers expressed interest in the idea. <https://bit.ly/3z3U4AG>

Renewable projects set for state land. Grant and Hildago counties both will see solar facilities sprout up on state land, Land Commission Stephanie Garcia Richard announced recently.

Their combined 36,000 acres of renewable energy could power 110,000 homes.

Under Garcia Richard’s leadership, renewable energy on State Lands has increased six-fold, has produced 2,500 megawatts of wind and solar power, and added millions of dollars to state coffers, including \$146 million from the two new projects. <https://bit.ly/4779z7m>

Lawmakers look to limit utility wildfire liability. With PNM entering court to defend itself against charges that it caused a wildfire in 2022 in Ruidoso, some lawmakers are looking to protect it and other utilities from future liability.

Among these lawmakers is state Sen. Pat Woods, R-Broadview, who worries that the costs of any judgment eventually will be passed onto customers, raising the price of their power. He said he intends to draft legislation for the coming session that would limit liabilities for utilities and electric co-ops as long as they act to prevent those fires.

State Rep. Joe Sanchez, D-Alcalde, has previously expressed concern that a lawsuit could force co-ops into bankruptcy and raise consumers’ costs. <https://bit.ly/4cTT5km>

NM town has atrocious air quality. A group of air quality experts discovered that Loving has ozone problems more significant than those in Los Angeles. Despite knowing the data, the US Environmental Protection Agency has not aided the community.

Loving is in the heart of the Permian Basin, one of the nation’s top oil-producing regions and a key contributor to the state’s budget. As the region’s energy role has increased, so have the levels of noxious chemicals released. When heated, these chemicals make smog.

EPA can create a nonattainment zone in the area, spurring a crackdown on industry emissions. The current decision not to do that is based partly on 2018 ozone levels, which were not considered dangerous then. But that was when production was only one-third of what it is today. <https://bit.ly/4cLjtNf>

Solar panel facility set for Albuquerque. Ebon Solar of Delaware had announced plans to put a \$1-billion manufacturing facility at Mesa del Sol in southeast Albuquerque.

The 834,000-square-foot facility would employ 900 workers if things go as planned. It will develop beginning-to-end manufacturing of the cells.

“This means more high-paying jobs for locals as Albuquerque continues to become a leader in clean energy,” Mayor Tim Keller said. <https://bit.ly/3MusYG6>

Navajo Nation protests uranium transport on its land. Energy Fuels Resources of Utah recently caused a stir when it

carried two loads of uranium across the Navajo Nation, violating tribal law. The ore was headed to a processing facility, also in Utah but on the edge of the reservation.

The deliveries have been paused to allow time for the tribe and company to negotiate. Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs intervened on behalf of the Nation. The uranium transport brings to mind the pain caused to the tribe by previous uranium mining. Former mines dot the reservation, many of them unremediated. Lung cancer is just one of the impacts affecting tribal members.

In response, the tribe has OK’d legislation to strengthen the current law controlling the passage of uranium on its land. The legislation requires more extended notice of uranium shipments, payment of transport fees, and emergency preparedness plans. <https://bit.ly/3AL1ARD>

Bird species in danger. Overgrazing by cattle is threatening the yellow-billed cuckoo, which migrates in New Mexico and Arizona, the Center for Biological Diversity reports.

The bird was listed as threatened under the Environmental Species Act in 2014. The center estimated that grazing cattle are trampling 57% of the areas the cuckoo needs to survive. “At some point, people have to choose whether we want our public lands to look like feedlots or to be preserved as important desert habitats for future generations. We can’t have both,” said Chris Bugbee with the Center. <https://bit.ly/3Mqqusj>

Nuclear power’s dangerous path

BY JOHN BUCHSER
NUCLEAR WASTE COMMITTEE
CHAIR

Hundreds of former uranium mining sites are scattered across the Navajo Nation. People who live near them have increased risks for chronic metabolic diseases and illnesses including kidney disease, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and autoimmunity.

Chris Shuey is an environmental health specialist at Southwest Research and Information Center in Albuquerque. He told the Legislature’s Interim Radioactive and Hazardous Waste Committee this summer that a new push to clean up the mines is needed to reduce or prevent these health risks.

Shuey said current proposals to cover mine sites with thin layers of dirt will lead to contaminant releases from runoff, particularly summer thunderstorms. He urged a concerted effort by the state to develop a regional approach to remediation.

Shuey asked, “Why is our nation promoting nuclear power and building more nuclear weapons” when our



Havasu Falls on the Havasupai Tribe’s Reservation. Havasupai, or Havasu Baaja, means “People of the Blue Green Waters.” These falls are vital to the Tribe’s identity and survival, and are at risk due to uranium mining in the region. Photo by Alicyn Gitlin, Sierra Club.

nation has not cleaned up past messes brought about by government policies to mine uranium since the 1940s?

The 2024 Advance Act increases the nuclear waste problem by promoting nuclear power construction. An early result is the resumption of uranium mining adjacent to the Grand Canyon, which threatens springs providing

water to the Havasupai Reservation.

Activities associated with the development of nuclear weapons have left many families with persistent cancers. The radiation affects DNA, and multiple generations of both downwinders and those living close to hazardous mining wastes are suffering.

As we transition away from coal, we must continue the rapid expansion of wind and solar power. The US is producing wire with 88% greater capacity that can be used to replace existing high-voltage power lines. This process of reconductoring can enhance distribution, minimizing the need for new lines. Also, battery technology is fast advancing; many states are quickly deploying battery storage (why not New Mexico?).

Nuclear power costs are double that of renewable alternatives. Let’s clean up the past messes, not make more without a plan for disposal.

PUBLIC LANDS

BLM focuses on recreation and advocacy actions

BY ANTOINETTE REYES
SOUTHERN NM, EL PASO ORGANIZER

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) convened an outdoor recreation summit in Albuquerque on Sept. 5, focused on challenges and opportunities around recreating on BLM lands in New Mexico

They were thrilled to highlight the creation of a parallel organization,

the Foundation for America’s Public Lands, to do what the agency cannot — lobby.

The agency’s nonprofit partner will use donations it receives to advocate for more resources for the agency. They will also disburse microgrants to partner organizations that will meaningfully invest in public land stewardship and restoration projects.

On other fronts, BLM is updating the way it manages its lands with a renewed focus on recreation through its “Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation” assessment currently underway.

BLM highlighted data showing 2.2% of US GDP is attributed to outdoor recreation despite the minimal 0.16% of federal funding going toward it.

Clearing out trash

BY JACKIE LEYBA
GUEST COLUMN

Land-management agencies have the task of providing various recreational opportunities on public lands, which include hiking, biking, fishing, sightseeing, target shooting, hunting, spelunking and climbing, to name a few.

These activities are well enjoyed by the public, and recreation infrastructure investment is noticeable and apparent. However, significant investments often are not recognized.

Land management agencies are tasked with ensuring the health, productivity, and sustainability of America’s Public Lands, which includes the remediation of many potential hazards from foreign bodies strewn over the landscape by human use and development.

Mitigating illegal dumping is one such task. Illegal dumping reclamation comes in literally all forms, from typical household waste disposed at parking lot

trailheads to large industrial equipment and hazardous materials. Such lesser-known projects behind the scenes in the Land of Enchantment that don’t receive as much attention include:

- The recent successful removal of a 240-ton crane abandoned since the 1960’s at Zambarmo Lake.
- The removal of three vehicles driven off the cliff edge at Bluewater Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) by a K-Max Helicopter.
- The removal of abandoned oil and gas infrastructure such as buildings, water tanks, and pump houses riddled with asbestos, lead and potential biohazards at Ojito ACEC.

Restoration of these landscapes requires resilience and patience, which is happening all throughout New Mexico.

Wilderness champions

BY ANTOINETTE REYES
SOUTHERN NM, EL PASO ORGANIZER

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, a coalition of organizations sent dozens of people to Washington, D.C. to meet with members of Congress. An awards ceremony thanked Congressional Wilderness Champions for their work protecting public lands.

Lands protection efforts included legislation to protect Utah’s Red Rock — an area sacred to Navajo, Zuni, and Acoma Pueblo, the Gila Wilderness, and Alaska Wildlife. We are working with

our delegation to get a Pecos mineral withdrawal in southeast New Mexico as well as continuing to work towards attaining a Wild and Scenic designation for the Gila River.

In addition to work being done federally to protect public lands, in New Mexico we continue to work for the protection of four important conservation areas around the Mimbres Peaks in Southern New Mexico and to protect the Caja del Rio from a proposed transmission line that would transect the area. Comments on this proposal are due by 10/10/24 — environment.lanl.gov/resources/epcu.

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Political: Gayle Eads gayleseads@gmail.com
Chapter rep: Kurt Anderson 575-646-1032, kurt@nmsu.edu
Dan Lorimier (Copper Flat, Dairy Coalition) dlorimier1948@gmail.com

Nature photographer gives works to chapter

EJ, a photographer featured in the Sandia Heights Arts 2024 Studio Tour, highlighted the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter as one of the charities she supported in her studio show.

EJ traveled throughout the shorelines of the world with the US Navy and retired to focus on her passion in wildlife and nature photography.

You can view several of her Antarctic photographs in the Chapter office, available for a donation to the Chapter. Thank you EJ, from everyone in the chapter!

Restarting Chapter’s ICO, helping youth connect with the outdoors

BY HALEA MEESE
PROVISIONAL ICO LEAD

Getting outside and away from it all for the first time can be so inspiring. That feeling of wonder and awe of nature is what we hope to inspire in the next generation of young people.

Sierra Club Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) is a way for people who want to share their outdoor knowledge and experience to connect with those who may not otherwise have access to the outdoors.

Sierra Club adult volunteers partner with local agencies to provide outings that are completely free of charge to our community partners.

We provide all the equipment and nourishment necessary for young people to have experiences we hope will change lives — or at least give them a unique and eye-opening experience.



Detroit youth on an ICO (Inspiring Connections Outdoors) trip to Yosemite. Photo by Elizabeth Earle.

The Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter is looking for more people to volunteer on our local trips.

Mainly, these are short hikes with no more than a half-day time commitment. Our chapter hopes to expand these opportunities and include more types of activities in the future.

Want to join us? You’ll need to complete a background check to ensure everyone is safe during these activities (please keep in mind this may take a couple of weeks). Please contact Halea Meese, provisional ICO lead, for more information meese@gmail.com.

WATER

Up next for Produced Water Reuse Rule

BY DALE DOREMUS
CHAPTER WATER COMMITTEE

The oil and gas industry generated more than 89 billion gallons of wastewater in New Mexico in 2023 from drilling and hydraulic fracking. The result: the state is left with a huge excess of toxic produced water.

Can this wastewater be treated and reused in a way that is safe to public health and the environment? This is the question before the Water Quality Control Commission in its hearing on the proposed Produced Water Reuse Rule.

The hearing concluded Aug. 13 after 11 days of testimony and cross-examination from environmental advocates, oil-and-gas industry representatives and extensive public comment.

Regulators from the New Mexico Environment Department and an expert witness put on by Sierra Club and Amigos Bravos testified that discharges of

produced water outside oilfield operations are too risky because there are no water quality standards for many chemicals in produced water, and there is no proven technology that can effectively treat it to scale for reuse outside of oil and gas operations

The proposed rule would prohibit the discharge of treated and untreated produced water to groundwater, surface water and land outside oil and gas operations. However, the rule authorizes demonstration studies as well as industrial uses as long as there is no discharge to ground or surface water.

The Chapter supports the proposed prohibition on discharges because the evidence shows discharge of produced water, whether treated or untreated, to our state’s precious water sources is not protective of human health and the environment.

While we agree that demonstration projects for research purposes should be strictly regulated by

NMED, there wasn’t sufficient evidence in the record to support industrial use and the risks it poses.

After the parties file post-hearing briefs and the hearing officer files a report summarizing the evidence, the Commission will deliberate and make a decision in early January. You can find more on NMED’s reuse rules and program at: <https://www.env.nm.gov/water-reuse/>.

We want to thank the Western Environmental Law Center for representing the Rio Grande Chapter and Amigos Bravos in this critical rulemaking process. Specifically, thanks to Tannis Fox of the Law Center for her months of tireless research, preparation, and dedication to safeguarding our precious water resources.

New Mexicans Coming Together For Water Security

For Our Communities & Culture
For Our Economy & Environment.



WATER CAN'T WAIT

Learn more at watercantwait.org

Water Can’t Wait is a new public education campaign to elevate water issues in New Mexico. The goal is to ensure addressing the water crisis is a priority for communities, local governments, and policy makers in upcoming legislative sessions and throughout the year, and for water administrators as they enforce rules and make new regulations. The campaign features storytelling and community voices prominently, with New Mexicans from all corners of the state coming together with one voice to say “Water Can’t Wait.”

Join the Rio Grande Chapter

You can join the Rio Grande Sierra Club (including the national Sierra Club and the local Rio Grande Chapter) for only \$15!

Online: Go to sc.org/JoinNM

With your phone: Scan the QR code to join online:



By mail: Send a \$15 check with your name, address and phone number to: Sierra Club, Attn: Member Services, 2101 Webster St., #1300, Oakland, CA 94612 (Please include the code F94QB17041 in the memo line of your check!)

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

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2 North Sandia Crest Trail, from towers to Placitas, 8 a.m. start (all day). It's an achievable goal to hike the North end of the Sandias, especially going mostly downhill, but it won't be easy. This is a big accomplishment, roughly one-half of the entire Sandia Crest Trails. Looking for adventurous souls to join me for a beautiful day in the outside. Must be used to hiking long distances at between 1.5-2 mph. "All Trails" says this is 11 miles; "60 Hikes" clocks it at 13. We will have breaks as needed and lunch on the mountain. We will need to put at least one car at the Tunnel Springs trailhead first thing in the morning that can hold everyone. I will need a volunteer for that. Then we will meet at the towers at the top of the Sandias at the upper parking lot. Be prepared to enjoy some fantastic views. Cost: None. Sign-up restrictions: Adults in good shape with recent experience hiking. Dogs who are well behaved on the trail are welcome after discussing with the leader. Bring: 3 liters of water minimum; appropriate clothing for the weather, the 10 essentials, snacks. Additional links: <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/new-mexico/north-crest-trail?u=i&sh=67jvxf> Trip leader: Debbie Bryant, 832-692-1881; bryade@gmail.com Level: Strenuous, Location: Sandia Crest, Placitas, NM

SATURDAY, OCT. 5 Santa Fe Vegetation management and trash cleanup, 9 a.m. Help keep the elm and trash under control. Several high-flow events this summer have left a lot of debris piles and moved trash to this area. The elms are taking over as is the case every year. Bring your enthusiasm, work gloves, water, and sturdy footwear. Loppers appreciated. As of mid-August, clear water was flowing down the river, thanks to the city's Living River Ordinance. No unaccompanied minors under 13 allowed. Trip leader: John Buchser 505-820-0201, jbuchser505@gmail.com Level: Easy/moderate Location: Santa Fe, Closson Street footbridge, south side. Parking is available on Lower Alto St. **The Santa Fe group uses MeetUp to sign up. It would be greatly appreciated if you find us on meetup.com/santa-fe-sierra-club-outings and sign up there!**

SATURDAY, OCT. 5 Bike to the Balloon Fiesta, 5:45 a.m. - 11 a.m. 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. We'll then return via the bosque on both paved and single-track trails. Multispeed mountain or gravel bikes, or e-bikes with wider tires and 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. E- bikes are OK. Just over 11 miles each way and less than 100 feet of elevation change. We'll do 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 Oct. 2 at our chapter events calendar. Outing leader: Debbie Bryant, 832-692-1881, bryade@gmail.com, Terry Owen, 505 301 4349, teowen@comcast.net, Rose Rowan, 505 449 8244, rose.rowan7@gmail.com Level: Moderate Location: Albuquerque

THURSDAY, OCT. 10 - OCT. 13 Wild Rivers Recreation Area Service Project. Here's your chance to give back to the Land of Enchantment. We'll meet at the El Aguaje group campsite at the Wild Rivers Recreation Area of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument on Thursday afternoon and enjoy campfire therapy in the evening. Bring your van, tent or small RV to spend the night. On Friday and Saturday, we'll conduct trail maintenance, and then enjoy



Sierra Club Outings explore, enjoy, and protect. The Jemez Springs outing hike includes breath taking views of the Santa Fe National Forest. Photo by Debbie. Bryant

the evening under the stars. Participants are welcome to join us either Thursday evening or Friday evening. Friday's campfire will include a talk about the area by the local ranger. On Sunday morning, we'll go for a hike or bike ride, clean up the campsite and depart by noon. Participants should be in relatively good physical condition, be able to hike at least three miles and be able to use various hand tools to conduct trail maintenance. This outing is appropriate for children 12 and up when accompanied by parent or legal guardian. Recommended gear and equipment list will be provided. RSVP no later than Oct. 7. This is a fall trip at 7,500 feet elevation, with average highs in the high 60's, with night lows just around freezing – great work weather. Views

are stunning in all directions. Local flowers will be going for their final push with mountain colors of the oak and aspen in the distance. Sign up at: <https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/> Trip leader: John Buchser, 505-820-0201, jbuchser@comcast.net Location: Wild Rivers Recreation Area, 45 minutes north of Taos Level: Moderate

SATURDAY, OCT. 19 Late migrating birds at Pastorius Reservoir State Wildlife Area, 9 a.m. In addition to the reservoir, this site offers several conifer habitats and a large meadow. Expect to find migrating songbirds in the trees, plus ducks and geese in the reservoir. Bring a scope if you have one. Please be on time or early. 18-year-olds and up. Leisurely pace. Trip will be about two miles on level dirt trails. Dress for the weather. Limit of 10 people. No dogs please. Cost: None. Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar by Oct 16. Bring: Binoculars, snacks, and water. Sunscreen and bug juice always a good idea. Trip Leader: Mike Foster 303-594-1431, mike4ffoster@gmail.com Location: Near Durango, Colo., Pastorius Reservoir State Wildlife Area Level: Easy

SUNDAY, OCT. 20 Beginner Bike Outing for Grocery Shopping, 9 a.m. Got a new ebike? Looking for fun ways to reduce your transportation footprint? Learn how to use your bike to

aim to discover some of the 31 migrants, who headed north last spring will follow the same route, heading south. 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 12 people. Register no later than Oct. 24 at our chapter events calendar. Trip leader: Mike Foster, 303-594-1431 mike4ffoster@gmail.com Level: Easy Location: Farmington, NM, Riverside Nature Center

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 30 Night transportation bike ride, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. Biking at night can be a daunting challenge, but it substantially improves transportation options and can be fun. It's easier to build confidence gradually by making short trips in good company. This small-group ride (limit five) from Montgomery Park to Canteen Brewery will be an opportunity to gain experience and confidence riding at night on multi-use paths without vehicle traffic. Five miles round trip with less than 500 feet of elevation gain, with a stop for a beverage at Canteen. This ride is meant to help participants feel safer riding a bike on ABQ streets at night, so the ride is short. The leader is experienced with riding at night. Planned pace is 10-12 mph, but no one will be left behind; the group will stay together. Road-capable bike with front and rear lights, helmet, bike lock and reflective clothing required. Participants must be 21 or over. No dogs are allowed. Deadline for registering: Oct. 29 at our chapter events calendar. Trip leader: Patrick Burton, 505-550-5534, patrickburton9@icloud.com Level: Moderate Location: Albuquerque

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13 Zero Waste Tour of the Southside Wastewater Reclamation Plant, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. We will meet at the Southside Wastewater Reclamation Plant at 9:20 a.m. to sign in. We will hear an orientation that will hopefully include a slideshow of activated sludge and the live critters that consume it, followed by a tour of the extensive facility showing the stages of wastewater reclamation. This will be mostly outside and includes walking and standing, so comfortable shoes are recommended. Long pants and closed-toed shoes are required. Hard hats will be provided. Register by Mon., Nov 11. Limit 16; children ages 10 and up accompanied by parent or legal guardian may participate. Trip Leader: Laurie Zunner, 505-440-5337, lmzunne@gmail.com Sign up: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

SATURDAY, NOV. 16 ABQ-Santa Fe Rail & Bike Multimodal Urban Exploration, 8 a.m. - 2:30 pm. Riding the train is the lowest impact way to get to Santa Fe, but it does pose a



last-mile problem. There are a lot of great things to see in Santa Fe that are just a little out of easy walking distance from the railyard. But you can easily fix this and have more fun. Bring a bike with you onboard the train and explore Santa Fe at a pedaling pace. We will explore the year-round Farmer's Market, a local chocolatier, and any other destinations selected by attendees, such as where to eat lunch. (anticipate 5-20 miles distance, maximum 500 feet elevation gain). Trails in Santa Fe are suitable for beginner bicyclists. This ride is appropriate for children over the age of 16 when accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. E-bikes and other micromobility devices are welcome. No dogs are allowed. Cost: None, but be prepared to pay for their own train ticket <https://www.riometro.org>, lunch and incidentals. Full details and Sign up at our chapter events calendar by Nov. 13. Participants must be able to keep up with the group at a 10-12 mph pace. Trip leader: Patrick Burton, 505-550-5534, patrickburton9@icloud.com Level: Moderate

Location: Albuquerque (Meet at the Los Ranchos RailRunner station at 8 a.m.) and Santa Fe

FRIDAY, Dec 6, 2024 Annual Appreciation Pot Luck, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Join us for fabulous fellowship and food — we'll review the year, discuss our path ahead and enjoy some darn good enchiladas! The Club will provide drinks and enchiladas(meat and veg) — please bring an appetizer (last name A-I), a side (J-R), or dessert (S-Z). Location: St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 431 Richmond Pl NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Sign up on the events calendar.

THURSDAY, DEC. 12 Zero Waste Tour of BARCO Recycling Facility, 1 p.m. - 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. Vests, helmets, eye protection and ear plugs will be provided. Dress warmly as buildings are not heated. Register early; space is limited to 10 adults. Deadline to register is Dec 9. Meet at 12:50 at 5029 Edith Blvd. NE, Albuquerque. Contact trip leader if you need or can give a ride. Trip leader: Laurie Zunner, 505-440-5337, lmzunne@gmail.com Level: Easy Location: 5029 Edith Blvd. NE, Albuquerque Sign up on the chapter calendar.

We'll add outings to the calendar throughout the fall and winter, www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

