



Rio Grande Sierran

Volume 63, Issue 3

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

JUL | AUG | SEPT 2025

PRODUCED WATER REUSE KEPT AT BAY



The Pecos River near Acme, New Mexico, is protected by the new discharge prohibition. The rule sunsets in five years to assess the viability of developing treatment technologies. Photo by Greg Lewis



Photo courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service

Asha has pups but not all wolf news is good
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Photo by Carol Chamberland

Protestors turn out to protect public lands
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Photo by Aku Oppenheimer

Remembering hiking enthusiast Norbert Sperlich
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EXPLORE, ENJOY AND PROTECT THE PLANET



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LaMancha Restoration Project

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Page 1 banner: Trail down

to the Rio Grande at Rio

Grande Del Norte National

Monument. Photo by Teresea

Seamster.

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Would you like to support the Rio Grande Chapter's campaign to promote clean, renewable energy? How about student programs like the Global Warming Express? Your donations make things happen!

Rio Grande 'Sierran' publication information

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Victory for ban on produced water discharge to NM waters

BY BRIAN SWEENEY
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER

Over the course of the last year and a half, the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter and Amigos Bravos, represented by the Western Environmental Law Center’s Tannis Fox, took part in a critical rulemaking for New Mexico’s clean water supply. A Water Quality Control Commission proceeding addressed whether to prohibit the discharge of “produced water” – a toxic byproduct of oil and gas drilling – from being Released into New Mexico’s ground and surface waters.

The New Mexico Environment Department initiated the rulemaking to ban discharges of this toxic soup. The risks of putting fracking wastewater to our waterways are many. It contains chemicals harmful to humans and the environment. There is no known treatment to remove those chemicals at scale. The oil and gas industry is not required to disclose what chemicals are in it; and there are no water quality standards for many of these toxic chemicals to protect human health and the environment.

“Produced water” is the water and chemicals that go down the well when drilling and the water and chemicals that come with the oil or gas that is extracted. Produced water contains many known and unknown pollutants. Many are known hazards. For example, produced water commonly contains arsenic, barium, bromide, mercury, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes.

At the hearing, Sierra Club and Amigos Bravos put on compelling expert testimony in favor of a discharge prohibition, supporting the position of Environmental Department experts. The New Mexico Oil and Gas Association argued treated



The Pecos River near Acme, New Mexico, is protected by new discharge prohibition. Photo by Greg Lewis

produced water could be discharged safely into our precious waterways, but their experts’ testimony was vague and unconvincing.

The hearing nearly veered off course when, in the second-to-last meeting, the commission voted to allow “pilot projects” to discharge up to 84,000 gallons of this toxic wastewater per day into New Mexico’s groundwater. Our team shot into action and filed a motion to reconsider challenging the evidentiary basis of the commission’s decision.

At the next meeting, after considering our request

to reconsider, the commission adopted a final rule banning the discharge of toxic oil and gas wastewater to surface and ground waters. The rule will sunset in five years to assess whether viable treatment technologies have been developed.

This nation-leading rule sets a strong, defensible position that keeps New Mexicans and our environment safe from this fracking waste, and we will vigilantly advocate for the strongest defensible protections again when the state revisits the rule.

La Mancha wetlands restored

BY NATASHA NORMAN AND
DAVID PATTERNSON
Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project

What was once a concrete dumpsite in the drought-stricken Southwest became a four-acre oasis, known as La Mancha Wetlands, along the Rio Grande near Las Cruces.

The La Mancha Restoration Project, a vision of Kevin Bixby who then led Southwest Environmental Center, took years of planning, permitting, fundraising and hard work to come to fruition in 2010. It provides habitat for numerous species of waterfowl, beavers, foxes, rabbits and quail as well as snakes, dragonflies and birds. The trail around it welcomes many visitors who enjoy the serene beauty of nature at its finest.

We began volunteering there in 2020 and were soon joined by Jim Mulhauser, a true craftsman who built and installed numerous birdhouses. His kestrel house was such a success that a study group from New Mexico State University came to monitor the project, which is now in its third year of successful fledging.

During our tenure there, Southwest Environmental Center decided to



Volunteers at the third annual “Earth Day at La Mancha” community clean-up in April. Photo courtesy of Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project.

close its doors and in 2022 it donated the property to Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project, led by Ángel Peña. Years of severe drought began taking a toll on the water level, cattails invaded and soon the pond only held water a few months during the summer — when the Rio Grande was running.

Under the project’s new stewardship, the wetlands experienced a remarkable renewal. In 2023, the organization kicked off its first Earth Day Clean

Up. It marked the beginning of sustained community engagement and celebrated the first year of new management.

Just this year, the project launched its first-ever designated giving campaign specifically for La Mancha Wetlands restoration efforts, raising nearly \$1,000. These funds will help protect La Mancha’s ecosystem, restore trails, enhance public access to the wetlands and provide community programs focused on conservation

education.

In May, 12 members from the growing La Mancha volunteer group joined their first official monthly gathering to continue ongoing restoration efforts. The restoration has also attracted academic interest. Professor Michaela Buenemann and students from New Mexico State are initiating research for a GIS project at La Mancha, using drone technology to study the wetland’s recovery.

Through our five years volunteering, we’ve witnessed La Mancha Wetlands thrive as essential habitat, proving dedicated community efforts can successfully revive and protect precious natural resources in our desert.

For more information on Nuestra Tierra’s La Mancha Wetlands Restoration Project, visit nuestra-tierra.org.

About Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project: Based in Las Cruces, NTCP works to ensure historically and deliberately excluded communities have access to the outdoors and that our history, values and people are authentically reflected in public land and water management decisions.

Solace in the summer: a guide for sustaining action

Watch Camilla talk about the power of public lands to heal at the No Kings Rally: bit.ly/44dxst0



CAMILLA FEIBELMAN
Director's Column

On summer mornings I drop the kids off at camp, which is close to the Bosque. So I've made a project of washing off the day's news along the river. The place and its context are profoundly symbolic of the situation we find ourselves in.

On the one hand, we're one of only a few cities that have left our riverfront natural. There's an entry point at every place a bridge crosses the river. And yet when and if I park, the sounds of the rushing traffic overtake me at first, and the scattered trash makes me feel like the world is falling apart. But then I think of the people in the cars, listening to their music, rushing to get the kids dropped off and to work hard the whole day and maybe not making enough money to get by, much less

stop for a walk.

I look down on the shore of the river to pick up a bottle. My dog's ears perk up, the hair on her neck bristles, and there's a coyote standing in the river. The water is pooling around her paws. The birds briefly quiet. Two more coyotes turn back to see what she is looking at. I don't feel afraid.

The three coyotes track with us



Photo by Camilla Feibelman

toward a big burn swath from a couple of years ago. It is at once stark with white barkless trunks and black burn scars, but new vegetation is growing up through the wreckage. Fire is part of many New Mexico ecosystems, and yet with the profound dry and the climate-driven heat, the fires are burning earlier, hotter and faster.

I see the forest floor filled with seed-laden cotton but know the river won't overbank and the seed won't germinate. But I also know that Open Space is doing pole planting, so there will be young cottonwoods when this generation of trees die.

For a moment I feel like that young mother cottonwood, leaning into the river, holding onto the soil with my roots with a beaver scar in my side and a chicken wire wrap-around to keep me safe. I know the beavers are just doing what they know how to do. Their teeth grow and the water makes them think they might make a dam. And yet the people are protecting me

from that impulse to chew because these days there are other factors.

So I take a deep breath. I look. I listen. I feel. And then I breathe all the worry and wonder from my head down to my toes. I think of my family. Of our neighbors. Of our leaders. Of those living the worst harms, being rounded up at work, living in extreme heat on the street, breathing in the air of deregulation.

I think of the people who see things differently. Mostly I think of them and try to see their humanity so I can reach them with mine. Ours. I let all those thoughts, good and bad, roll down into the river.

And then I walk. Maybe it's a march. Putting one foot in front of the other. Finding my way on paths that are clear but not marked, paths that branch and present choices. I wander back to my car and the news, ready to stand up, join together, bring people in and create the world we want for our kids.

Volunteer highlight: Valari Taylor

BY MIYA KING-FLAHERTY
PROGRAM MANAGER

What is your volunteer role with the Rio Grande Chapter? I am the chapter's co-vice chair. I took that position in January 2025.

I think one of the reasons why I was considered as a candidate for the executive committee is that since moving to New Mexico 11 years ago, I have actively volunteered with the chapter by tabling events, writing letters to the editor and being part of the New Mexico Climate Corps.

How did you get involved with the Sierra Club? I got involved in Sierra Club and became a member in 2008, but I had been fiddling around with them long before I became a member.

The outdoor events and the service projects drew me to the Sierra Club. Illinois and northwest Indiana, where I lived, offered me opportunities, through Sierra Club to do hiking, camping and caving activities.

My first backpacking trip was through Sierra Club. I enjoyed collaborating with them because of their experienced staff and volunteers.

What is your background/professional background that helps you in your Sierra Club work? As a registered dietitian, I understand the importance of having access to clean water, air and open spaces because of their impact on one's health and wellbeing.

The social determinants of health are non-medical factors that affect one's health. One of the goals of the social determinants of health is to create healthy neighborhoods and environments that promote health and safety.

My vision for the US and the Sierra Club mission absolutely align with issues such as access to safe drinking water,



Valari Taylor, Chapter Executive Committee Co-Vice Chair. Photo by Selfie.

reducing the number of toxic pollutants released in the environment and reducing the health and environmental risks from hazardous sites.

What is your favorite memory about Sierra Club involvement?

This year I had a chance to work with the chapter as they navigated the 2025 legislative session here in New Mexico. I learned so much about the issues and the legislative process.

It was exciting reaching out to our legislators about the issues we care about through email, in person or by phone. One thing I know for sure is that it is important to be in conversation and to advocate for those things you deem important.

What would you tell someone who would like to get involved but does not know how? One of the things I like about Sierra Club is there are so many things one can do to get involved.

One could start just by taking part in the outings. There are a variety of regular events throughout the state.

Another great way to get involved is to act on issues by simply signing an online petition. This would allow you to learn more about Sierra Club and our mission.

Four actions you can take right now to join the movement:

1. Protect New Mexico's national monuments. Text "monuments" to 69866 to tell Congress to protect them!

2. Thank Gov. Lujan Grisham for fighting

for access to Clean Cars in New Mexico. Text "electric" to 69866.

3. Join our Rio Lobby email list to join in urgent actions. Email camilla.feibelman@sierraclub.org to join!

4. Become a member of the Rio Grande Chapter!

Join the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter

Text "Rio Grande" to 69866



Whether it's fighting to replace dirty coal power with 100% renewable energy, ending cruel coyote-killing contests and trapping on New Mexico public lands, or giving you the tools to make a difference at the Roundhouse and PRC, people power is what makes the Sierra Club effective.

Join us as a member to make your voice heard for our water, land, wildlife and our children's future.



You can join the Rio Grande Chapter for only \$15! Text "Rio Grande" to 69866 for a link to join. If you prefer more traditional communications, send a \$15 check with your name, address and the code 1700 in the memo line to Sierra Club, Attn: Member Services, 2101 Webster St., #1300, Oakland, CA 94612. Find us at riograndesierraclub.org.

In case you missed it: news highlights

BY REED ECKHARDT
RIO GRANDE SIERRAN TEAM

Attempts to delay methane waste fees and rules

Despite nation leading methane and smog safeguard in New Mexico, new Biden rules would have bolstered and strengthened our rules and protected border communities from Texas pollution.

Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship joined a host of other community and environmental organizations in calling out the waste that the Trump administration's Budget Reconciliation Bill would allow, delaying implementation of a fee on wasted methane gas that is vented, flared or leaked by industry, and potentially delay compliance with the federal rules.

<https://bit.ly/45KPSUx>

Appeals court rejects pollution suit

A state appeals court has turned down a lawsuit aimed at holding New Mexico accountable for not adequately protecting its environment. The plaintiffs said the state failed to provide proper funding for its regulatory agencies for enforcement, as well as not requiring needed pollution controls.

Those filing the suit pointed to the Pollution Control Clause in the state's constitution. It says protecting the state's natural resources, such as water and air, is of fundamental importance, including adding pollution controls. But the NM Court of Appeals, while agreeing the state must provide controls, said the clause does not specify the degree of those controls. <http://bit.ly/43BJFbV>

Heat bill proponents push back against delays

Efforts to create state standards to protect workers from the state's rising summer heat will have to wait through this year's warmest months, much to the dismay of proponents.

The proposed rule, designed to save employees from heat-related injury and illness, drew more than 600 comments.

Opponents included such varied industry groups as oil and gas, livestock growers, landscapers, local governments and utilities. The Environmental Department, which was set to approve the rules in July, said a delay until later in the summer would allow for broader shareholder engagement.

<https://bit.ly/4mW1Oss>

NM eyes new fuel standards by 2026

The state could have new standards for clean vehicle fuels as early as 2026 if proposed rules from the NM Environmental Department proceed as planned.

The agency recently set proposed rules for a program that would create a market around fuels used for transportation.

Those who would bring in fuels that exceed the state's carbon intensity standards would have to buy "clean

fuel credits" from those who make products below those standards. The Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter is actively participating in the rulemaking to ensure that electrification of transportation and benefits for overburdened communities plays a central role in rules.

First up will be a comment period, followed by hearings in the fall. The rules then could be finalized by year's end.

<https://bit.ly/4jHbp3C>

EV standards for NM still moving ahead despite vote

Despite a ruling by the Senate Parliamentarian that Congress cannot block the waivers that allow states like California to pass more stringent regulation of automobile pollution, New Mexico is still moving forward with its standards and all of the incentives for those wanting cleaner cars.

"For New Mexicans, clean car and charging tax credits are continuing in full force," said Jorge Armando in an email from the Environmental Department.

To fight back against the federal efforts, New Mexico has joined the Affordable Clean Cars Coalition. It will work with about a dozen other states to move toward lower-emission vehicles and maintain their Clean Air Act powers. <https://bit.ly/3SKviviC>

Oil and gas growth impacting local schools

Oil and gas may be booming in New Mexico, but so are its effects on school students, the Associated Press reports.

The AP found 694 oil and gas wells with new or active permits within a mile of schools in the state. That translates to nearly 30,000 students in 74 schools who are possibly exposed to emissions that can harm their health.

"This kind of air pollution has a real, measurable effect on students," said Mike Gilraine, an economics professor at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. His research shows student test scores are tied to air quality.

Acoma governor wants Chaco buffer to remain in place

The governor of Acoma Pueblo, Charles Riley, is hoping to block an effort by the federal government to allow new oil and gas development in a buffer zone around Chaco Canyon National Historical Park.

The 10-mile zone was set up in 2023 as oil and gas extraction was encroaching on the park. The Trump administration is looking to remove or reduce the buffer as part of its effort to further develop the nation's energy resources.

Riley is calling on "all our sister Pueblos, conservation allies and supporters of cultural preservation" to join him in this effort to save the protective zone.

<https://bit.ly/3SO8Y4i>

Oil/gas told to clean up its own messes

The New Mexico Court of Appeals has sent a clear message to oil and gas extractors: If you create a mess, it's your job to clean it up.

The court ruled on May 14 that Marathon Oil cannot pass its obligation to clean up its oil and gas wells in McKinley County simply by moving the lease to another company.

"We're making sure that companies honor the terms of their leases, and we're holding them responsible when they make a mess," wrote State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard.

<https://bit.ly/402aNOX>

Proposed changes could harm NM wildlife

Efforts by the federal government to redefine the Endangered Species Act could harm wildlife in the state, including lesser prairie chickens, advocates say.

The feds' effort is based on the definition of "harm" in the act. They say that should not be interpreted to include modifications to habitat, "which runs contrary to the best meaning of the statutory term 'take,'" the notice in the Federal Register reads.

The change would allow energy developers to drill in the areas where prairie chickens gather together. Under the new definition, developers would only be stopped from intentionally killing or removing the birds. Currently, their habitat is protected. <https://bit.ly/3FQCrrm>

Community solar struggles to ignite

New Mexico's community solar program was approved in 2021. Yet the first project, located in Valencia County, only broke ground in February.

In a meeting earlier this year, state officials agreed it has been tough to get the program going because of permitting, disputes over projects' costs and a lawsuit that has yet to be decided by the state's highest court. They did express optimism that the program will begin picking up speed.

In community solar, users don't own the solar panels, but they pay into projects to get the advantages of solar power. The program is designed to aid lower income residents in having access to the cheaper form of energy. It is expected to reduce their power bills by 30%.

<https://bit.ly/3SNmzZF>

Renewables sprouting on NM public lands

From 400 megawatts to 2,700 megawatts. That's the increase in renewable energy being produced on state trust lands. That includes 51 projects as compared to 12 just six years ago.

Those numbers came from State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard during her keynote speech at a recent Electrify NM conference.

It's an indicator of the success of state efforts to transition away from fossil fuels. Garcia Richard said she expects the growth to continue, creating jobs and generating millions

of dollars of funding for public schools and universities.

<https://bit.ly/4jOhqM7>

Oil, gas spills threatening NM environment, group says

One spill every seven hours. That's the conclusion of a report from WildEarth Guardians looking at spillage from oil and gas operators in six energy developing counties in the state.

In all, the group found that 75,000 barrels of liquids were spilled from January to March of this year. While much of it is cleaned up, it is estimated that about 10% of the waste has found its way into the environment, "threaten(ing) drinking water, aquifers, soil health, air quality and the wellbeing of frontline communities and ecosystems."

State officials said they couldn't speak to the report's specifics, but they added they continue to enforce rules requiring reports of the spills and issuing notices and fines if necessary. <https://bit.ly/4kBYwJB>

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.**

Steps forward & back for Mexican wolves

BY MARY KATHERINE RAY
WILDLIFE CHAIR

This spring marks the 11th year of wolf pup cross-fostering. Seventeen Mexican wolf pups were transferred from captive dens into wild dens to increase the wild population's genetic diversity.

Now the US Fish and Wildlife Service has released good news about the wolf Asha. She famously twice roamed north beyond the arbitrary I-40 boundary. First, she almost got to Colorado and, after being captured and located south again, she journeyed north a second time to the Valles Caldera. Then she was placed into captivity with a captive-born male wolf named Arcadia.

They mated last year, but no pups were forthcoming. This spring, the two have had a litter of five. Once the pups are old enough for their vaccinations, the US Fish and Wildlife Service promises the whole family is going to be released. They are currently in an acclimation pen on the Ladder Ranch. When ready, the agency will open the gates to let them run free on Ladder Ranch land, which has agreed to accept them. Hopefully with a family, Asha will stay home. She never preyed on livestock on her travels and successfully avoided humans. She can teach her mate and pups to do the same.

Unfortunately, another wandering wolf

named Ella roamed north of I-40 at the end of March. Just as news about her was spreading, she was found dead near Mt. Taylor. No cause has been released.

This roaming behavior is ingrained in young wolves and their moves north indicate suitable habitat is available. We have long urged the Fish and Wildlife Service to let wolves roam as they once did throughout the Southwest, but so far the agency will not relent.

It's also always jarring when Fish and Wildlife, tasked with recovering wolves, also removes them from the wild. Ranchers complained that the Mañada del Arroyo pack in the bootheel of NM preyed on their cattle. In May, even though the pack was denning, the agency captured the male and female parents and two pups and placed them into captivity. Even more disheartening, a third pup was euthanized in the den for being in poor health, according to the agency.

Bowing again to livestock interests, Fish and Wildlife ordered one uncollared wolf to be killed from the Bear Canyon Pack in Arizona. But in a glaring instance of incompetence, a 7-year-old collared female was killed by mistake by the agency in April. No explanation has been offered for this error. The slain wolf may have been pregnant, making the fiasco even more tragic.



Days-old pups are headed for a wild den as part of the cross-foster program. Photo courtesy of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Shortly after, another wolf, Viento, of the Hail Canyon pack in New Mexico was also purposefully gunned down by Fish and Wildlife order. Both wolves had been accused of preying on livestock, but killing any one member of a pack to stop this behavior is controversial and scientifically questionable.

Emboldened ranchers in wolf country have continued to flex their political muscle. The Catron County Commission declared a wolf emergency in April and has asked Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham

to declare a state emergency to release funds and provide National Guard assistance to “protect” the county from wolves. Sierra and Socorro counties have followed suit.

Even though Mexican wolves have never harmed a human, the fearmongering has been extreme. And funds are already available both for compensation for documented wolf livestock losses and for coexistence measures. The governor, thankfully, has not responded to this request.

State wildlife action plan approved 7-0, gets standing ovation

BY TERESA SEAMSTER
WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

At the most recent State Game Commission meeting in Red River, newly appointed commissioner and UNM professor Chris Witt said the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan “meets the eight federal requirements solidly and is an outstanding reference” for future conservation planning for at-risk wildlife in New Mexico.

Numerous individuals, wildlife biologists and conservation organizations, including the Sierra Club, testified in support of the final plan. They also praised the inclusive and transparent core team approach over the past two years in gathering, updating and synthesizing new data on the state's wildlife to determine which should be listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

An important area added in the 2025 plan is a section on Riparian Conservation Opportunity Areas.

New Mexico is the driest state in the United States with the least amount of surface water and highest number of regions with very low precipitation. Every permanent or transitory source of water is critical to a

majority of state species, and most state rivers and reservoirs are approaching historically low levels. The Wildlife Action Plan outlines project opportunities to enhance wetlands and streams as well as providing Conservation Actions for Aquatic Species and Associated Ephemeral Habitats. It also brings needed attention to the state's most rapidly changing habitat and declining condition.

After the unanimous vote to approve the plan, Commissioner Sabrina Pack suggested a standing ovation for Assistant Chief for Technical Guidance Ginny Seamster, Ph.D., who is the State Wildlife Action Plan coordinator, for the quality of the comprehensive 778-page report and the dedication of the state Department of Game and Fish and core team in keeping state species off the endangered list.

The Wildlife Action Plan will enable the state department to apply for over \$10 million in federal wildlife grants as well as get state funding of over \$6 million annually to restore habitat and recover declining or vulnerable species of fish, amphibians, pollinators, mammals and birds.

Chapter volunteer leaders needed

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.

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. If you were fired up by the action during the 60-day session, sign up now to be a leader next January.

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
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Photo by M. Murphy

Are you thinking about making an estate plan?
Giving Docs is a simple, secure way to create your will and other important estate planning documents online. It's free for Sierra Club supporters—and it only takes a few minutes to create an account and get started.

You can even use Giving Docs to create your Sierra Club legacy by naming the Rio Grande Chapter as a beneficiary of your plans. This is completely optional. A gift of any size is greatly appreciated!

To learn more about planned giving or to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please get in touch! We're happy to help.



Scan the QR code or
get in touch to learn more

julia.curtis@sierraclub.org

(800) 932-4270

myplan.sierraclub.org

Tell your impact story around federal cuts

As federal programs face cuts and grant funding is canceled, many New Mexicans — particularly those in frontline and underserved communities — are experiencing serious gaps in support related to health, safety, jobs and environmental protections.

We're working to document these impacts, identify alternative funding and employment opportunities and connect affected communities to resources.

Please help us by filling out this confidential survey and sharing it with your networks.

The survey is designed to be flexible. All questions are optional, and you can complete only the sections that apply to you.



Outings trail maintenance service trip helps BLM

BY JOHN BUCHSER
NORTHERN GROUP CHAIR AND
OUTINGS LEADER

A sturdy crew of eight volunteers worked for two days on Rinconada Trail between the visitor center and El Aguaje Campground at Wild Rivers Recreation Area near Questa, NM. Our team repositioned a culvert under the trail.

The Bureau of Land Management team had been handicapped by layoffs and chaotic re-hirings as well as the inability to spend funds that had already been authorized, thanks to the presidential executive order freezing spending. As a result, there was confusion on our team's arrival. Staff did not tell us the water had been out since February at the campground. A new pump is needed, and the paperwork has been

held up by federal officials. They were not able to re-hire our contact until two days before we arrived, and as a result the trail work was not flagged. I knew from last year that there was a culvert that needed repositioning, and we thought staff would bring in powered equipment, but they didn't.

I scouted the trail along the Rio Grande between Little Arsenic Trail and the junction of the Red River and the Rio Grande during our service work. I plan to organize a future trip to do much-needed vegetation maintenance on that section.

To me, this is a call to action. Wild Rivers is a wonderful campground and we need to protect it and our other public lands if our federal government will not.



Chapter volunteer leaders and chapter staff at the tri-annual Chapter Meeting at The Commons in Santa Fe in May 2025. The Tri-Annual meetings are where the leaders set the activism agenda for the coming months and the conservation teams report back on actions and issues. All chapter members are welcome to attend the Saturday meetings to learn more about the chapter and to get involved. Page 2 of this newsletter lists the action groups, and all should feel free to contact area leads to join in the work. Photo by David McGahey.

NUCLEAR

Supreme Court decision could allow high-level nuclear waste storage to go forward in Texas and New Mexico

BY CAMILLA FEIBELMAN
CHAPTER DIRECTOR

In June, the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that Texas and New Mexico, and groups like the Sierra Club, did not have the right to challenge Nuclear Regulatory Commission licenses for "interim" high-level nuclear waste storage facilities in their respective states.

The commission denied intervention for these

entities in the licensing process and therefore the court ruled that the states did not have the right to challenge the license.

"The Supreme Court and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission are depriving our state and communities of real meaningful participation in the process. The commission won't let us intervene and the court won't hear our arguments because we're not interveners. We deserve our day in court,"

said John Buchser, Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Nuclear Waste chair.

In 2023 New Mexico passed legislation banning the storage of high-level nuclear waste, prohibiting the issuance of local permits.

And Sierra Club policy holds that the waste should be held at the closest, safest location to its source, in hard casks, until a permanent storage facility is established.

From Albuquerque's local garden history to international backpacking with Sierra Club & Beer

BY SUSAN GORMAN
CENTRAL NEW MEXICO GROUP CHAIR

On August 1, your Central Group will focus on high-desert gardening with a presentation from Judith Phillips, landscape designer and garden writer. She'll share her newest book, "The Gardens of Los Poblanos," and recount the history of these quintessential and world renowned gardens in Albuquerque.

Judith traces the history of these gardens and discusses how they have helped preserve the deep agrarian roots of the village of Los Ranchos. She shows how gardens are much more than plants. Her dedication to working with arid adapted native plants in her designs is based on their beauty, water conservation and ability to support wildlife in our high-desert environment.

On Oct. 3, world traveler Terry Owen challenges us to expand our horizons. He asks, "Have you ever thought of expanding your backpacking or hiking experiences to an overseas locale?"

Terry says there is no better way to learn about a place



Dolwyddelan Castle in Wales, United Kingdom. Photo by Terry Owen

and its people than on foot with a pack strapped to your back. Join him for his presentation on his recent hiking journey through Wales. He'll cover planning, logistics, travel and safety while also sharing his experiences,

photos and video from the land of dragons and castles. It might be just the thing to get you to say, "Why not expand my horizons?"

Terry is a retired US Navy officer and deep submersible pilot who subsequently completed an 18-year career at Sandia National Laboratories. An avid hiker, backpacker and climber for nearly 50 years, he has journeyed to six continents but just recently expanded his horizons to include overseas backpacking trails, because he said, "Why not?"

DATE: Aug 1 and Oct 3 (and put on your calendar: Appreciation Party Dec. 6 at 6p.m.)

TIME: 7:15-8:30 p.m.

PLACE: St. Mark's Episcopal Church 431 Richmond Pl NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106

RSVP at <https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar/>

The truth about textile waste

BY MARIANNE DICKINSON
ZERO WASTE TEAM

The fashion industry is now under intense scrutiny for massive waste generation, especially in its end-of-life disposal and its responsibility for up to 10% of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Fast Fashion trend is driving huge production of cheap goods with a very short life cycle with the help of online "influencers." US consumers throw away an average of 81.5 pounds of clothing a year, most of it headed to landfills.

A photo of the vast mountain of discarded clothing in Chile's Atacama Desert was published in 2021, identifying it as the second-largest clothing dump in the world. (The largest is in Ghana.) The following year, an estimated 11 tons of the Atacama

pile was set on fire (<http://bit.ly/44bASOh>), spewing toxic fumes into the atmosphere and the lungs of the local inhabitants.

The name-brand clothes and footwear come from the US, Europe, Korea and Japan and sometimes have sales tags still on them, some are barely used and others are repairable. Some of it is resold by salvagers, creating an informal economy that governments see as beneficial.

A lot of clothing waste is from donations to nonprofits that go through commercial sorters and onto East Africa. The poorest quality (about 40%) goes straight to dump sites and is burned or washed down rivers to open seas.

REDUCE/REPAIR/RE-USE/RECYCLE

In the hierarchy of zero

waste in a circular economy, the most important step is to produce less, produce better and use longer.

Research has shown that repairing garments prevents new purchases more effectively than resale. A few high-quality brands are now taking back garments and repairing or re-styling them while using eco-friendly ways to effectively clean garments and shoes. Savvy consumers have always looked to vintage clothing sellers and thrift shops for quality garments. Online businesses are now booming, reselling designer and vintage clothing.

About 70% of clothing is made of polyesters, and as with all plastics, they don't biodegrade for centuries and shed microplastics. Recycling them has drawbacks. Because consumers are being persuaded that recycling

is a solution, recycled polyesters are being used in new clothing (despite the fact that plastic bottles instead of textiles may be used) and may contain toxic chemicals from sources like BPA, PFAS, formaldehyde, etc. Natural fibers, if not blended with synthetics and elastic fibers, can be recycled into new fiber, composted or reprocessed into textiles such as felt.

So what can we do: Buy natural fiber clothes, but not a lot of them. Repair your clothes at one of our fantastic local alterations shops. And swap with friends or thrift when you want something new.

For more information, article links and things you can do, see our Zero Waste page at <https://www.riograndesierraclub.org/zero-waste/>

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GREEN ENERGY JOBS

Tuition-free home energy auditor training

BY MONIQUE ANAIR
SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Santa Fe Community College is accepting applications for its Home Energy Auditor Training Program and pre-apprenticeship at the nationally recognized Energy Smart Academy. The tuition-free training courses culminate in the Building Performance Institute's Building Analyst Professional certification.

The courses provide the foundational skills needed for residential energy modeling, building analysis and data evaluation essential for improving home energy efficiency.

New Mexico's Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions have recognized

the demand for energy auditors in New Mexico.

They are supporting New Mexicans by investing over \$500,000 for training and certifications for current and new trades industry workers through both the US Department of Energy Training for Residential Energy Contractors program and Workforce Solutions' Building, Energizing and Connecting through Apprenticeships program. That latter course supports partnerships with private industry and public entities to build and expand on pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs in priority sectors.

"Santa Fe Community College is honored to receive two contracts that lead to in-demand, well-paying careers," said Becky Rowley, the college's president. "The home energy auditing at SFCC offers accelerated,

hands-on training to meet the urgent workforce needs of New Mexico's growing and emerging industries. Most importantly, they empower our students with the skills and certifications needed to improve their lives and contribute to the state's future."

Classes will begin online Aug. 11. Anyone interested in the program should apply at <https://bit.ly/fall25-energy-auditor-app>. For more information call Joss Mulligan at 505-428-1007 or email ESASupport@sfcc.edu.



NM voices strong support for public lands

BY MIYA KING-FLAHERTY
CHAPTER PROGRAM MANAGER

In a powerful show of widespread support for public lands, environmental protections and responsible land stewardship, hundreds of New Mexicans, including educators, retired professionals, artists, medical professionals, faith leaders and environmental organizations signed onto a letter sent to the entire New Mexico congressional delegation. It thanked them for their leadership in pushing back against renewed threats to public lands from the Trump administration and its congressional allies.

The letter was delivered following the June 7 Defend National Monuments Day of Action, which is part of a broader movement to oppose potential Trump administration attempts to roll back national monuments and other public land protections. These actions come on the heels of an April report by The Washington Post that revealed the Trump administration is targeting six national monuments for potential reduction or privatization, one of which is in New Mexico: Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks.

Then on June 23, thousands rallied in Santa Fe at the El Dorado Hotel where Interior Secretary Doug Burgum spoke at the Western Governors’ association to protest mass sell-offs of public lands

and threats to monuments and sacred places. A provision to sell off hundreds of thousands of acres of public lands was first defeated in the House version of the budget reconciliation bill.

US House Republicans passed their version of the bill by one vote just before Memorial Day. While broad advocacy, including from US Rep. Gabe Vasquez, D-NM, led to the removal of land sell off language, the bill that passed the House is profoundly harmful. Some provisions in the bill aim to zero out vital clean energy incentives, such as tax credits for wind, solar, electric vehicles and domestic clean energy manufacturing. The bill also proposes to open public lands and waters to mandatory oil and gas leasing, and it sets forth a “pay-to-play” permitting system that lets polluters buy expedited



Thousands gather at De Vargas Park in Santa Fe to rally for protections of public lands. Photo by Miya King-Flaherty

environmental reviews that are not subject to judicial oversight.

Utah Sen. Mike Lee introduced a provision to expand public land sell-offs. Fortunately, the Senate parliamentarian ruled that the sweeping land sell-offs were not germane to the bill. They were not included in the final version of the bill that passed on July 3 and was signed into law on July 4. Despite this win, we must remain vigilant. This Administration and

its allies in Congress are comfortable with breaking the rules.

New Mexicans want to keep our public lands in public hands. Our stunning landscapes are rich with history, create jobs and boost local economies. But most importantly, they belong to all of us. Our delegation continues to work tirelessly to reject policies that prioritize corporate profits over people, the climate and our environment.

Future undecided for Tererro Mine

BY TERESA SEAMSTER
CHAPTER MINING
COCHAIR

National Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land holdings are under severe threat of being sold for development and extraction by the Trump administration.

Santa Fe National Forest has received almost universal statements of opposition to the Comexico, LLC 2019 permit request to conduct exploratory drilling on Jones Hill, above the old Tererro Mine in Upper Pecos River canyon. These include from Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, the New Mexico congressional delegation, tribal and community leaders and local residents. This 4,500-acre site next to Thompson Peak Wilderness is still

vulnerable to mining as the Trump Department of Interior has pushed for less regulation and more access for extractive industry in our national forests.

There have been no new steps taken by either Comexico, LLC or Santa Fe National Forest in completing outstanding permit requests for information or in addressing drilling waste removal from the site.

Over its long history, Congress has withdrawn some federal public lands from statutes that allow for resource extraction and development and reserved them for particular uses, including for preservation and resource conservation.

The Upper Pecos River watershed received such a mineral withdrawal under the Biden administration,

but any extension of that two-year protection is as yet undecided. The Greater Chaco Landscape in the Four Corners and the Buffalo Tract in Placitas has also benefited from a mineral withdrawals that are now at risk.

Over 70% of Republicans and more than 90% of Democrats agree public lands are essential for their state’s economy, according to polling. Even in conservative-leaning states like Wyoming and Utah, strong majorities oppose the idea of selling public lands or reducing their protections. Another recent poll, this one from YouGov, found that 71% of Americans oppose the sale of public lands, including 61% of the Trump voters polled.

Remembering Ralph Vigil

BY TERESA SEAMSTER
WATER SENTINEL

Ralph Vigil was an inspiration as a voice for the voiceless and a defender of his community remains deep in our thoughts after his sudden and unexpected passing on May 16 at his Pecos farm, Molina de las Isla Organics.

At community meetings, town halls or the NM Legislature, Ralph was closely listened to because his words were authentic, deeply felt expressions of the vital importance of safeguarding clean and abundant water and land to pass down to future generations. Most recently, Ralph helped lead efforts to protect the Upper Pecos Watershed and stop the proposed Terrero Mine.

Ralph’s words in a Sierran article written a few years ago described it beautifully:

As an 8th generation resident and farmer of East Pecos, the Pecos River and the land it crosses has been a part of my everyday life for 43 years. It’s not just a river to me, it’s my home, my sanctuary, my family and has sustained many different cultures for thousands of years. We must protect these sacred and life-giving watersheds for generations to come and not leave our children to

deal with the consequences of poor land-use decisions within watersheds today. Let us not forget the lessons of the past contamination of our waters as we move forward as a community of stewards of this precious land, and may we leave it in better shape than we found it. His example is our ongoing guide and strength.



The banner was approved by Ralph’s parents and designed by Water Sentinel Teresa Seamster to honor the work, leadership and compassion Ralph exemplified in his life to preserve the Pecos River and watershed. Photo by Teresa Seamster

Remembering Norbert Sperlich

BY JOHN BUCHSER
NORTHERN GROUP CHAIR

For nearly three decades, Norbert Sperlich (May 17, 1938-Jan. 27, 2025) contributed to the book the Northern Group created, "Day Hikes in the Santa Fe Area." His La Vega hike (one of my near-town favorites) was in the 1990 (3rd) edition. The editors noted that Norbert deserved "special recognition for imagination, commitment and perseverance in putting the book together."

By the 9th edition, Norbert was still re-hiking trails to verify changes, and he was very engaged in producing

most editions of the book.

After moving to Santa Fe in 1977, Norbert began working as a gardener and could often be seen bicycling to and from his jobs, his tools tied to the handlebars.

Norbert helped orient many new hike leaders during his years of volunteering.

I particularly remember him for a hike to Cabezon Peak. Not every hiker wants to go up the steep part, and Norbert was kind to all, especially supporting those with concerns for their skills.



Norbert exploring Grasshopper Canyon in 2014. Photo by Aku Oppenheimer

Build our energy future

BY JOHN BUCHSER
NORTHERN GROUP CHAIR

As we watch President Trump and his Republican supporters undermine our democracy and our energy future, upgrading our electrical grid is crucial to our country's energy resilience. Shifting the production of power closer to electric demand is one of the easiest and cheapest ways to accomplish this.

In the Santa Fe area, the energy company AES proposed the Rancho Viejo solar energy project, which brings power production close to where demand is and close to existing grid infrastructure.

PNM, our power supplier, now requires all new projects to include storage, which both assists in providing grid stability and in powering our community after the sun sets.

The battery storage system that AES plans to use has been tested for fire safety and meets updated, stringent

fire safety codes and standards. Even before these codes came into effect, battery fires have been increasingly rare, and none have escaped their enclosures.

Awareness of fire safety around our community fortunately has been promoted by City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County. The last decade has provided lessons on how to improve safety of battery storage projects. Last year, construction codes and fire codes governing battery energy storage systems (BESS) were updated.

At the Santa Fe County Planning Commission hearing on this project, AES accepted all the recommendations of a fire safety firm the county hired.

The solar energy proposal was approved, but opponents have challenged that decision. On Aug. 11 at 9 a.m., the commissioners will hear presentations from the applicant, the objectors, the Green Chamber of Commerce, 350 Santa Fe and the Sierra Club at the Santa Fe County

John Gaw Meem Historic Building located at 102 Grant Avenue.

Your engagement in support of clean energy is critical! **Until July 31, comments may be submitted to publiccomment@santafecountynm.gov.** Please note in the subject line "SUPPORT Rancho Viejo Solar case 24-5200". On Aug. 12 at 10 a.m., the commissioners will take two-minute comments from the public in the order folks sign up starting July 15 at <https://www.santafecountynm.gov/AEScomment>.

The AES website has documentation at <https://www.aes.com/project/rancho-viejo-solar> and the county's summary of documents can be viewed online at <https://www.santafecountynm.gov/growth-management/building-development/large-scale-renewable-energy-projects-2024/appeal>



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- * Apply today to mentor with the Global W.E.-Global Warming Express program, now in its 13th award-winning year, in partnership with the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter.
- * Train to co-mentor students in grades 4-6 for the 2025-26 school year.
- * Generous stipend.

For more information, email Beverly Williams at beverly@theglobalwarmingexpress.org

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Join us for Good Trouble Lives On, July 17

BY RICHARD BARISH
CHAPTER POLITICAL TEAM

I know many of you are beyond angry and frustrated about what is coming out of Washington, DC and are feeling discouraged and helpless. But there is something we can do and need to do: We can keep protesting.

Thousands have come out around the country and in New Mexico on April 5, May 1, June 14, and to protest the mass public land sell-off when Interior Secretary Burgum came to New Mexico on June 23.

Protests are not going to change things overnight, but continued protests can make change possible in the longer term. Cribbing from activist Leah Greenberg here, Trump is rushing to consolidate power, crush the institutions and people who oppose his agenda and chill potential opposition that could stymie his efforts to create an authoritarian government. His success depends on projecting power and creating an aura that he cannot be stopped so no one will dare to oppose him.

Mass protests do a number of things:

— They create conditions where the courts, the media, law firms, universities like Harvard, elected officials like US Sen. Cory Booker, D-NJ, and others feel emboldened to stand up to Trump, where they feel that they do not need to remain silent and obey.

— They change the narrative. They disrupt Trump's effort to successfully project strength and



Chapter Director Camilla Feibelman leads chants at the May Day rally and march in Albuquerque. Photo by Richard Barish

unstoppability and show that, to the contrary, the opposition is big and getting bigger.

— They create the conditions whereby Trump may feel constrained in his ability to get away with at least some of the things he is trying to do.

— By repeatedly protesting, we bring in new people and communities, grow the movement, foster community and demonstrate that our power is increasing.

— By turning out with hundreds or thousands of other folks, we understand at a gut level that we are not alone, that we have power and that this is a fight that we can win. Protests are empowering and filled

with positive energy.

Political scientist Adam Bonica, who has studied successful and failed authoritarians, states with respect to the judiciary that “every authoritarian who successfully destroyed judicial independence did so because civil society failed to unite in time. The key difference? Whether people mobilized.”

The aura of unstopability that Trump is trying to create is an illusion. It only exists if people accept it. We can turn back authoritarian rule by mobilizing.

The next mass protest will be Good Trouble Lives On, on July 17, the anniversary of John Lewis's passing (details still being worked out for an evening vigil in Albuquerque; check linktr.ee/nmresist, nmgrassrootsbb.org, or Indivisible Abq FB for information; check goodtroubleliveson.org for events in other locations). If you can, there are

also some smaller, regular protests. In Albuquerque, we have Resist Tyranny Tuesdays every week, now from 9-10 a.m., at Lomas and Fourth; Save our VA Sundays, noon to 1p.m., San Mateo and Gibson; and Tesla Takedown Saturdays, 10-noon, Hwys 550 & 528 intersection, Bernalillo. Santa Fe has two weekly protests: Walk the Talk, Wednesdays from 12-1 p.m. at St. Francis Drive and Cerillos; and RESIST | REST | REPEAT on Thursdays from 1-2 p.m. at the Roundhouse.

Don't lose heart, and keep standing up for democracy!

Changing minds one conversation at a time

BY MELISSA BERNARDIN
CHAPTER CLIMATE ORGANIZER

“Deep canvassing” is a concept being promoted by the cool kids in changemaking spaces. But outside of philosophical definitions involving organizing jargon, what does the term mean in the real world?

“Deep canvassing” is a communications approach that involves genuine conversations that seek to share perspective, encourage understanding and sometimes to even persuade. “Deep canvassing” is the opposite of traditional canvassing (shallow canvassing, anyone?), which is all about sharing one-directional talking points, ticking off numbers of doors knocked or phone numbers dialed and categorizing people as “with us,” “against us” or “persuadable”.

Traditional canvassing and phone banking certainly have a role in campaigns. A campaign has no idea whether it is on track to win or lose until it has a count of how many legislators plan to vote “yes” on a bill or how many voters will support a candidate. But how many campaigns actually go back to those

“persuadables”?

If you've made it far enough to get a legislator on the phone or to be at the door of a voter who's actually opened it, it's a lost opportunity to not engage in a real conversation. Deep canvassing will ask people their opinion, yes. But then ask them, why. And maybe share an opposing point of view in a conversational way that seeks to build bridges rather than to prove one person is right.

This approach can be used as we talk to voters about our endorsed candidates or when we call legislators to encourage support for a bill. But even for those who aren't drawn to “politics,” these kinds of conversations can be an approach to try in member recruitment settings like tabling at fairs and festivals. Or even with friends and family.

We will have opportunities to learn more, and to try this approach out yourself coming up this year, so stay tuned. With elections and another legislative session coming up, let me know if you'd like to get involved. You can contact me at melissa.bernardin@sierraclub.org.

Earth Day rally and the value of community

BY BERIT ROBNET
SPRING CHAPTER INTERN

On April 22, I walked along Lomas Boulevard to the downtown courthouse. I began to hear a plethora of honks, beating of a drum and chatter. As I turned the corner, I saw a large crowd of people gathered for Earth Day.

The energy of the protesters was something noteworthy. I walked across the street light to meet fellow Sierra Club members Diane Reese and Richard Barish, who actively helped to spread the word about these Tuesday afternoon rallies.

People were singing and laughing together, spreading positivity for our Earth and community all in one place, for the one day of the year we celebrate our planet all together.

The people of our community banded together to protest current issues ranging from climate change to human rights.

As I made my way through the crowd, several people began to notice me or more so, my age. The crowd was filled with individuals 20 to 30 years older than me.

As a college student, I was amazed by the work being put in by a different generation than mine. They are laying the groundwork for my generation to flourish and live in a world with clean air, water and energy and to enjoy these things for a long time to come, for our children and their children after that.

“Thank you for being here” was a phrase I'd heard several times that day. I felt seen, noticed for my efforts being in the minority that day.

I made conversation with several folks, thanking them for their efforts and being there for not only themselves but our collective whole.

Our older community members are looking for and encouraging the younger generations to stand up alongside them.

This Tuesday afternoon showed me how important community is, how essential it is to show up for each other and how valuable it is to show up for the planet we call home when it feels like so much is against it.

BY DEBBIE BRYANT
CHAPTER OUTINGS CHAIR

We look forward to seeing you outside! We have quite varied offerings. Sign up for outings at: www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar and also see "Santa Fe Sierra Club Outings" at <https://www.meetup.com/santa-fe-sierra-club-outings/> and the <https://www.facebook.com/NMSierraClub/events> page for some of the Southern Group events. More outings will be added, so please check these links periodically.

Also, If you are interested in joining the next outing in Southern NM, contact either Antoinette Reyes in Las Cruces at Antoinette.Reyes@sierraclub.org or John Pijawka at jastro@windsream.net for outings around the Ruidoso area. Depending on the interest, we will start having more regular outings based on attendance and will prioritize areas that have four or more people interested.

SATURDAY, JULY 26
Table at the Pueblo of Isleta Environmental Fair, 10a.m.-2p.m.

Are you comfortable talking to people? Do you want to help share information about climate issues in New Mexico? Come table with us! We are setting up a Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter table at the 2025 Pueblo of Isleta Environmental Fair. This is an indoors event, always fun and we'd love to see you there with us!. Sign up for an early shift, a late shift, or stay the whole time. If you haven't tabled before, we'll show you how. This is a great way to meet people and act for change in a positive, family-friendly atmosphere.

Level: Easy
Location: 60 Tribal Rd 40, Isleta, NM

SATURDAY, AUG. 9
Table at Veg Fest, 9a.m.-5p.m.

Are you comfortable talking to people? Do you want to help share information about climate issues in New Mexico? Come table with us! We are a Kiwi level sponsor and we are setting up a Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter table at the Red & Green VegFest organized by the folks at Sprouting Compassion. Sign up for an early shift, a late shift, or stay the whole time. If you haven't tabled before, we'll show you how. This is a great way to meet people and act for change in a positive, family-friendly atmosphere.

Level: Easy
Location: 3701 Carlisle Blvd NE, ABQ

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 13
Zero Waste Tour of the Surface Water Treatment Plant, 10-11:30 a.m.

Learn how water from the Rio Grande is taken in and treated to become your drinking water. It is expected that by August

the Rio Grande will be too low, so the treatment plant will switch to taking up groundwater. Learn how this is done, the relationship between the river and ground water and how and when the treatment plant recharges the groundwater. There will be a lot of walking, going in and out of buildings and climbing stairs. Long pants and closed-toed shoes are required. Bring a hat, water bottle and questions. Limit 16 people. Register by Aug. 11.

Level: Easy
Location: 6000 Alexander Blvd. NE, Albuquerque
Leader: Laurie Zunner, 505-440-5337, lmzunne@gmail.com

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6
Birding Along the Animas River, 8 a.m.-11 a.m.

Please join Mike Foster for a fun outing looking for interesting birds along the Animas Riverwalk. This is a beautiful walk, and it's possible to see several types of birds and really enjoy the morning. Bring: water, binoculars, patience and appreciation for the outdoors.

No dogs, 18 years and older. Space is limited so please sign up by Sept. 4
Level: Easy
Location: Riverside Nature Center, Farmington
Leader: Mike Foster, 303-594-1431, mike4ffoster@gmail.com

THURSDAY, SEPT. 11
Zero Waste Tour of BARCO Recycling Facility, 9-10:30 a.m.

See how all of our blue-bin recycling is sorted. Come 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. Long pants, closed-toed shoes are mandatory, mask optional. Bring: water bottle, questions. Vests, helmets, eye protection, and ear plugs will be provided. Register by Sept. 9. Register early; space is limited to 10 adults. Meet at 12:50 p.m. at 5029 Edith Blvd. NE, Albuquerque which is the office beyond the parking lot. The street sign says 5021 Edith. Go down the long drive way to the parking lot.

Level: Easy
Location: 5029 (5021) Edith Blvd. NE, Albuquerque
Leader: Laurie Zunner, 505-440-5337, lmzunne@gmail.com

SATURDAY TO SUNDAY SEPT. 13-14
Wilderness First Aid Course

The Rio Grande Chapter of Sierra Club is sponsoring a Wilderness First Aid course especially geared toward our members. This course is in high demand and typically fills up months in advance. The SOLO© Course 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. Why attend? People get hurt, sick or lost. The



Summer solstice hike at Sandia Crest. Shown are: Debbie Bryant, Sequoia Rudolph, Michael Skrabanek and Terry Owen. Photo by Cynthia



Cooling Off In the Sandias. Shown are: Debbie Bryant, Amy Near, Poonè Haghani, Leslie Kingsley, Sequoia Rudolph, Nicole Kelley, and Arlene Buchholz. Photo by D. Bryant

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 you need this class! The course is a blend of lecture, demonstrations and scenarios. Students will have ample opportunity to practice skills in life-like situations, both as patients and caregivers. At the successful completion of both days, you will be certified or re-certified in Wilderness First Aid. Attendees must participate in all portions and hours of the course to obtain certification. Many backcountry emergencies are preventable, and even when bad things happen, sometimes the wrong care can make things worse. By learning a few basic skills, you can make the difference between a good outcome and a bad one – and maybe even save a life.

For more information on SOLO's curriculum, visit www.soloschools.com
Price: The price for the course is \$200 per person. Participants must commit to attend both days). Class times: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. each day
Organizer: Debbie Bryant, 832-692-1881, bryade@gmail.com
Location: Tijeras Village City Council chamber

SATURDAY, SEPT. 20
More Birds Along the Animas River, 8 a.m. -11 a.m.

Please join Mike Foster for a fun outing looking for interesting birds along the Animas Riverwalk. This is a beautiful walk, and it's possible to see several types of birds and really enjoy the morning. We will look for migratory and resident birds. Bring: water, binoculars, patience and appreciation for the outdoors. Downloading the Merlin app (which is free) is helpful. No dogs, 18 years and older.

Space is limited so please sign up by Sept. 17.
Level: Easy
Location: Riverside Nature Center, Farmington
Leader: Mike Foster, 303-594-1431, mike4ffoster@gmail.com

SATURDAY, SEPT. 20
Hike Palomas Peak Via Faulty Trail, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

This is a strenuous hike, please only sign up if you are in shape and know your pace. This trail is approximately 7.5 miles long with 1,853 elevation gain (according to All Trails) and is rated by All Trails as moderate to strenuous. We will meet at

the Sandia man cave parking. We should be done in 5.5 hours if everyone who signs up can maintain a 1.5 to 1.75 mph pace. (If you don't know your pace, this hike isn't for you). This is a remote trail with some great views and some medallion trees that we will try to find. We will stop for water breaks and a snack/lunch break along the way. Restrictions: No dogs please, it's too onerous. Children over 13 are allowed if they have hiked eight miles before recently and IF the leader approves. Bring: water, food, hat, appropriate clothing for the weather. Long sleeves and pants are recommended as about 20% of the trail is overgrown.

Level: Strenuous
Location: Placitas Sandia Man Cave
Leader: Debbie Bryant, 832-692-1881, bryade@gmail.com

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

