



Rio Grande Sierran

Volume 63, Issue 4

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

OCT | NOV | DEC 2025

One step forward, another step challenged

New Mexico sees gains in methane pollution reduction

A methane flare in the Permian Basin in south-eastern New Mexico

READ ALL ABOUT IT ON PAGE 3

Photo by Leslie Von Pless



Oil & Gas proposes overturning produced water prohibition' p3

A produced water pond that holds the byproduct of oil and gas fracking. Photo by Al Braden.

Your Vote Matters

See our municipal endorsements, p9-10

EXPLORE, ENJOY AND PROTECT THE PLANET

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RIO GRANDE CHAPTER
2501 Yale Blvd SE | Suite 104
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www.riograndesierraclub.org/full-chapter-listings/#offices



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John Buchser, Patricia Cardona

NM Permian Environmental Justice Coalition

Antoinette Reyes



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RIO GRANDE CHAPTER

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Rio Grande Sierran publication info

Communication Excellence Award winner in 2023, The Rio Grande Sierran is published four times a year, in January, April, July and October, by the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter as a benefit for its members in New Mexico and West Texas.

Find the pdf edition online at riograndesierraclub.org/the-sierran/.

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 the Sierra Club.

Contributions to the Sierran are welcome. Send them to riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org. Submissions by Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence.

Articles chosen to be published are subject to editing. Letters to the editor may be up to 400 words, subject to editing, and are printed at the discretion of the editorial board.

Editorial practices as developed and adopted by the chapter will be used in production of the Sierran.

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 in November; ballots will be emailed to members. To vote on paper, mail this completed ballot to: Sierra Club Election Committee, 2501 Yale Blvd. SE, Suite 104, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Ballots must be received by Dec. 15.

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)

There are three candidates running for three open positions

Diane Reese Tricia Snyder Derrick Toledo

Central Group Executive Committee (5 open seats)

Susan Gorman
 Robert Grant
 David Ther
 Write-in _____
 Write-in _____

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

John Buchser
 Susan Martin
 Shannon Romeling
 Tom Gorman

Southern NM Group Executive Committee (4 open seats)

Cheryll Blevins
 Dan Lorimer
 Kurt Anderson
 Write-in _____

Page 1 banner: Trail down to the Rio Grande at Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument. Photo by Teresa Seamster.

Water

Backroom deal ignores public safety

Big Oil & Gas proposes overturning produced water rule meant to provide clean water for all

Dale Doremus

Chapter Water Committee

Tannis Fox

Western Environmental Law Center

Since 2022, New Mexico Environment Department staff have worked to develop a science-based rule for reuse of treated and untreated produced water outside oil and gas operations. Produced water is a highly toxic waste generated by oil and gas production.

This May, the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission approved a rule proposed by the department prohibiting discharge of produced water to NM surface and ground water.

Based on a two-week hearing and thousands of pages of evidence, the commission concluded that produced water could not be treated for safe discharge.

The Sierra Club and Amigos Bravos were represented by the Western Environmental Law Center in the rulemaking.

The commission initially approved discharge of up to 84,000 gallons per day of treated produced water to groundwater for “pilot projects.” The law center requested the commission to reconsider and it voted unanimously to prohibit all discharge of produced water. The rule, which sunsets in five years, allows non-discharging pilot projects to study treatment technologies.

But before the ink had dried on the rule, an industry group petitioned for a new rule-making to overturn the prohibition.

As Sierra Club, and other organizations, rallied the troops to oppose the petition, the law center filed objections.

At its July meeting, however, the commission, including the environment department’s secretary, voted to hear the petition, even though it would reverse years of work by department scientists, and those same scientists would not be allowed to participate in the next hearing to assess whether the discharges proposed are safe.

During the commission’s August meeting, the law center objected to the petition moving forward without the department’s participation as a party.

In the commission’s 58-year history, the environment department has never failed to take part in a rulemaking on a rule it would implement.

Sierra Club, and other groups, rallied the troops again and overwhelmed the commission with opposition. But five cabinet secretaries showed up to the meeting, all voting to move the petition forward.

Industry frames its proposed reuse rules as a solution to the drought we face. It is pure hypocrisy for industry to extract fossil fuels at an unfettered rate, driving the climate crisis and accompanying drought, only to turn around and offer its waste product as a solution to water scarcity.

The Sierra Club will continue to advocate for science-based rules that

File this under “Unbelievable” and voice your concern ASAP to the governor and your legislators.
www.governor.state.nm.us/contact-the-governor

NM Water Quality Control Commission approves rules prohibiting discharge of produced water into surface and ground water, and then, at the request of Big Oil & Gas, the Commission including five of the governor’s cabinet secretaries, immediately agrees to hear a proposed rule to overturn the prohibition.

protect our environment and public health. The hearing will be next year.

We will be up against Big Oil and Gas **without** the scientific expertise of environment department staff.

We urge you to write to the governor (www.governor.state.nm.us/contact-the-governor), contact legislators and join the fight to stop a rule that would reverse protections just put into place.

Environment

Deregulation is the climate change version of clear cutting

Antoinette Reyes

Southern NM Organizer

In just a few short months, the federal government has swung an axe at the foundation of US clean air protections – and the splinters are already hitting our lungs.

Six months ago, on March 12, the Environmental Protection Agency under Administrator Lee Zeldin launched what it proudly called the “biggest deregulatory action in US history.”

Thirty-one safeguards were targeted, including oil and gas methane rules, all in the name of “unleashing American energy.” Translation: Polluters profit, people choke.

That followed Congress’ February move to repeal the methane fee. Companies that spew above legal limits were supposed to pay \$900 per ton in 2024, rising to \$1,500 by 2026. Now? The fee is gone, and with it one of the only real financial deterrents against methane emissions.

On May 1, the Senate went further, voting to overturn an EPA rule that had restricted seven of the most toxic air pollutants – including mercury, lead and dioxins – marking the first time in history that such a safeguard fell under the Clean Air Act.

By July, the EPA issued an “interim final

rule” delaying compliance for methane and smog-forming Volatile Organic Compound standards until January 2027.

The cost of that “flexibility”? An extra 3.8 million tons of methane, nearly a million tons of VOCs and tens of thousands of tons of toxic emissions, translating into lost lives, particularly in frontline states like New Mexico.

Now the agency is preparing to gut the 2009 Endangerment Finding – the legal backbone that declares greenhouse gases a threat to public health and gives EPA authority to regulate them.

Without it, climate protections collapse entirely. Some 400 of you commented to defend EPA’s right to regulate greenhouse gases. Thank you!

This is deregulation on steroids, rolled out while wildfires rage hotter, droughts cut deeper and climate disasters become our daily news. The federal government hasn’t just tapped the brakes on climate action – it has ripped them out entirely.

Our response must be louder, sharper and impossible to ignore. Put our opposition on the record by continuing to make both public and written comments. Raise your voice now, continuing to resist but also acting locally.

We are lucky to live in a state where we can

Deregulation is on steroids, rolled out while wildfires rage hotter, droughts cut deeper and climate disasters become daily news. The federal government hasn’t just tapped the brakes on climate action – it has ripped them out entirely.

work to counteract deregulation. Our efforts are working. The Environmental Defense Fund recently reported that New Mexico’s Permian Basin has a methane pollution rate half that of Texas because of our state methane and smog rules.

Learn more at www.edf.org/Z6rC.

Donate your vehicle today!

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


SIERRA CLUB
RIO GRANDE CHAPTER

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Chapter News

Thanks for fighting the good fight

Rio Grande chapter volunteers, members, staff, and elected officials among the best anywhere

Diane Reese

Rio Grande Chapter Chair

I would really like to say thank you for your efforts – our members, supporters and staff. The energy and hours you have spent to protect our state is absolutely overwhelming.

We don't always win – but we have had great successes, especially when strong environmental laws are passed. Our legislative work is so important, but remember that the work doesn't happen just during the session – it goes on all year long.

It starts with electing leaders with strong environmental beliefs.

In this issue, you will read our endorsements in this fall's elections. Led by volunteer Richard Barish, we can't thank our Political Committee members enough. Interviewing candidates takes time and time is treasure – you are so appreciated and your work means a great deal to us all.

This is a committee that could use a few more volunteers. If you can help with this – let us know.

Holding our ground and making advances under the Trump administration is a challenge, to say the very least. The bad news coming out of Washington DC can seem daunting, even overwhelming, but we are not stopping.

If politics is not your thing, what is your interest? We can find things for you to do – you can

make calls, write letters, articles and emails to inform, attend rallies or help at our club table at a community outreach event.

Are you comfortable with social media and can help with our posting?

We can also use help with volunteer coordination and member



Diane Reese
Chapter Chair

support. Join an Executive Committee. Let me know your ideas – what should your chapter be doing? Let's talk.

Being a member of the Sierra Club is a powerful action. Remember to renew your membership and stay with us, and if you haven't yet joined – get on the website riograndesierraclub.org/donate and do it! Nothing feels better when you're feeling down than taking real action with results.

We keep up the fight – we will not give up – and we will do it together,

Thank you and I look forward to working with you.



Caroline Funk
Chapter Coordinator

Since the position is remote, Caroline and family will remain in Albuquerque for now, so we hope to see her often.

As coordinator, Caroline came in with an enthusiasm and optimism that was infectious. She organized and cleared years of documents, paper and electronic. She was the "welcome" to our volunteers, improving both outreach and engagement.

Caroline took our fundraising to the next level, increased donations and building a donor loyalty program to keep the funds coming.

We heartily thank you, Caroline. We will miss you in the chapter office, but we look forward to having a great contact at National.

Thank you Caroline!

In July, we said farewell to Chapter Coordinator Caroline Funk.

Lucky for the Sierra Club family, Caroline is staying onboard – she was hired by National to support the field team that supports and works with all the chapters.

Housewarming Party

Rio Grande Chapter

Thursday, Nov. 6 — 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
2501 Yale Blvd. SE, Suite 104
Albuquerque, NM

Join us as we celebrate our new office space!

New office location in Albuquerque

We've moved to a new office location.

Last month, the Albuquerque office relocated from our old location at 2215 Lead Ave., SE to a new office that suits our staff and volunteer needs.

We had a long run at the old location, have many fond memories and had a great relationship with our landlord and our favorite coffeeshop — Duggans.

But now it's time for new beginnings.

We are now located in an office complex at 2501 Yale Blvd., SE, Suite 104, Albuquerque, NM 87106 – not far from the Albuquerque Sunport. Our office phone number is still the same.

We'd like to extend many thanks and appreciation to our Wednesday volunteers, Patricia Duncan, Sequoia Rudolph, Robert Grant, Marilyn O'Boyle, Hanh Nguyen and Ron Savage for helping us prepare for the move.

Our open office volunteer hours occur every Wednesday from 1-4 p.m. in our office.

There are many opportunities to get involved and help us work to advance environmental issues that impact us all. From making phone calls to our members and supporters, turning them out to events or public hearings, helping with database needs, preparing mailings and letters, distributing newsletters to get the news out and various other needs.

We'll have a new office celebration on Thursday, Nov. 6 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Stay tuned for details.

Central New Mexico Group

Group's potluck set for Sat., Dec. 6

Susan Gorman

Central New Mexico Group Chair

On Dec. 6, join us for fellowship and yummy food. We'll review 2025 and discuss what's next for 2026 as we savor some darn good enchiladas (meat and veggie options will be available). Please bring an appetizer if your last name begins with A-I, a side if it begins with J-R and dessert if it begins with S-Z.

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It's been a great year with Central Group's Sierra Club and Beer, and we're determined to make 2026 just as great. Let's think back to all the programs this year.

In February, environmental journalist Laura Paskus enchanted us with her story of her curved-bill thrasher friend. In April, City Sustainability Officer Ann Simon and her team encouraged us to live more sustainably.

In June, Mark Kelly with Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority explained how the agency will continue to make sure clean water comes out every time we turn on the tap.

Then in August, Judith Phillips charmed us with stories of the Gardens of Los Poblanos.

Most recently, in October, we featured world traveler Terry Owen, who challenged us to Expand our Horizons. He asked, "Have

Sierra Club Potluck

Saturday, Dec. 6 — 6-8 PM

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
431 Richmond Place NE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

RSVP to www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

you ever thought of expanding your backpacking or hiking experiences to an overseas locale?" There's no better way to learn about a place and its people than on foot with a pack strapped to your back. It's the best way to meet local folks and critters. If you tire of your own trail cooking, find a village with pub or tea shop.

In 2026, we'll offer snacks, drinks, and more social time.

We welcome speaker suggestions and your time to help with set up and clean up.

Water

Sierra Club consortium wins its case

Water rights transfer for Copper Flat Mine reopening rightly denied by State Engineer's Office

Allyson Siwik

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Mining Co-Chair Executive Dir., Gila Resources Information Project

In late August, the state engineer's office issued a decision denying Tulla Resources' application to transfer water rights needed to reopen the Copper Flat Mine near Hillsboro in southern New Mexico.

NM State Engineer Elizabeth Anderson noted the effects of climate change on New Mexico's water resources. Quoting a 2006 Office of the State Engineer report, she stated, "New Mexico's water future will be determined by water demand and availability of resources; climate change will likely have a significant impact on both."

The state engineer's decision to deny the water rights application was based upon the hearing examiner's findings of fact and conclusions of law that the application will impair existing surface and groundwater rights; that the applicant did not meet its burden of proof that it would be able to put the water rights to beneficial use within the 10-year permit term; and that the application is detrimental to the public welfare of the state as it adversely affects New Mexico's Compact obligations with Texas.

The Copper Flat Mine operated briefly for about three months in 1982 before shutting down and leaving behind contaminated groundwater and a toxic pit lake. The mine has not operated since.

The Australian company Tulla Resources

Group applied to transfer 2,400 acre-feet per year of groundwater rights on behalf of New Mexico Copper Corporation for it to build, operate and reclaim the open-pit copper mine.

Tulla Resources Group is the primary lender to New Mexico Copper Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Themac Resources Group, a Canadian corporation which is itself owned by Tulla Resources Group.

Protestants Percha-Animas Watershed Association, Hillsboro Pitchfork Ranch LLC, Gila Resources Information Project, Ladder Ranch of the Turner Ranch Properties and the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter argued that transferring these water rights would harm the water supplies that local communities depend on for household use, crop irrigation, businesses, livestock and hunting operations.

The protestants also provided testimony that the water rights transfer would damage local waterways, such as the Rio Grande, Las Animas Creek, Percha Creek and Caballo Reservoir, essential to people, wildlife and native vegetation, harming riparian habitats that sustain unique Arizona sycamores and the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher.

Charles de Saillan, the attorney representing the Hillsboro Pitchfork Ranch, LLC, the Percha-Animas Watershed Association, Gila Resources Information Project and the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club wrote: "This proposed mining operation would have used a tremendous amount of water – 6,100 acre-feet (almost 2 billion

The proposed mining operation would have used a tremendous amount of water — 2 billion gallons a year for 12-14 years, yet Hillsboro's an arid region. The state engineer absolutely made the right decision in finding that this proposed water transfer would be detrimental.

gallons) of water per year for approximately 12 to 14 years, yet Hillsboro is an arid region. And close by we have a residential community and local businesses; two working ranches; and a truly unique, biologically rich ecosystem along Las Animas Creek. They all depend on water. A few miles downstream we have the Lower Rio Grande, which is subject to a water compact with Texas. The state engineer absolutely made the right decision in finding that this proposed water transfer would be detrimental to the public welfare of New Mexico."

Read more at <https://tinyurl.com/4ppx975x>.

ET go home: Beyond Dirty Fuels sees danger ahead

Energy Transfer's proposed 516-mile pipeline taking methane from TX to AZ puts NM at risk

Roddy Hughes

National Beyond Dirty Fuels Campaign Organizing Strategist

In August, Energy Transfer announced plans to build a massive 516-mile, 42-inch-wide gas pipeline from West Texas across New Mexico and on to Arizona.

The new pipeline, which the company calls Desert Southwest, would supply methane to power AI datacenters planned for the region.

Though Desert Southwest would be co-located with the Transwestern Pipeline, its construction and operation will adversely impact landowners and families in Carlsbad, Roswell, Los Lunas, Belen, Grants and Gallup as well as towns in between.

The project would require nine gas-powered compressor stations to move the 1.5 billion cubic feet of gas per day.

That amount of methane would emit an estimated 56 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMT CO₂e) each year from extraction to end use, equivalent to the annual emissions from 15 coal plants.

As serious as these impacts would be, the major issue with the pipeline and asso-

ciated buildout of AI datacenters is water.

Data centers need a lot of water for cooling, and locating these facilities in New Mexico and Arizona would drain our already scarce resources.

One estimate is that large data centers use 5 million gallons of water per day, equivalent to the water use of a town populated by 10,000-50,000 people.

Energy Transfer plans to have the pipeline built and operational by Q4 2029.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will be the primary federal permitting agency, but the company has yet to file a notice that would result in the agency opening a docket for the project.

The Army Corps of Engineers will have a role in permitting water crossings like the Pecos River, the Rio Grande and others.

Energy Transfer will also need air permits for the nine compressor stations as well. Each of these permits provides an opportunity for people to submit comments and speak out against Energy Transfer, the pipeline and the AI datacenter buildout.

Sierra Club's Beyond Dirty Fuels team is tracking the project and starting to talk to

AI datacenters need water — 5 million gallons per day, that's a town of 10,000-50,000. Given Energy Transfer's long history of installing pipelines that tend to leak dangerous chemicals, raise your hand if you really want to take a chance on this project.

organizations and communities that would be impacted by the project.

Energy Transfer has a long history of pipeline leaks and explosions, and New Mexico cannot be bullied into accepting another dangerous pipeline.

Read more at <https://tinyurl.com/4znshmv8> and tinyurl.com/4d9ssx62.

Oil & Gas

Big energy should pay for its own messes

With 600+ abandoned oil and gas wells already, state regulators consider rules to prevent more

Miya King-Flaherty
Program Manager

New Mexico is rich in oil and gas. With that wealth comes a mess – literally.

The state is home to more than 60,000 wells that will eventually need to be plugged to prevent methane leaks, groundwater contamination and long-term environmental degradation that place New Mexicans' climate and health at risk.

Right now, hundreds of these wells are already abandoned, and thousands more are dangerously close.

Unless we act, New Mexicans – not the out-of-state corporations profiting from our public resources – will be stuck with a cleanup bill that could top \$1.6 billion.

Oil and gas operators are legally responsible for plugging wells and cleaning up after themselves.

But not all follow the law, leaving the state holding the bag.

Worse, our laws make it easy for corporations to walk away.

Current bonding requirements – meant to ensure corporations have money set aside for cleanup – are woefully inadequate. State law caps bonding at \$250,000 per operator for active wells even though it costs an average of \$163,000 to plug just

one well. Some corporations have as little as \$105 set aside per well.

Meanwhile, nearly a third of oil and gas operators in New Mexico are out of compliance with the law, holding more inactive wells than they're allowed.

Inactive wells – those that haven't produced for 15 months and aren't approved for temporary abandonment – are often the ones left behind next.

The state has inventoried over 600 abandoned wells in New Mexico, and 1,400 more are likely to join that list soon. While recent federal grants have helped plug some, those programs are on hold. We can't rely on federal dollars to help with this large and growing problem.

But we can look to our state regulators to adopt common-sense reforms to address the problem.

The New Mexico Oil Conservation Commission is considering long-overdue updates to bonding rules that require oil and gas corporations to set aside money to clean up after themselves. Bonding works like insurance or a retirement plan for a well.

Matching bonding to actual costs is not a punishment; it's a guarantee. It ensures that when a well reaches the end of its life, there is the right amount of money set



aside to plug it properly. Let's get behind and support these rules.

The commission will hold a public hearing Oct. 20-Nov. 7.

Visit the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department page to learn how to comment in support of these rules at <https://tinyurl.com/4hskvdpj>.

For more information, contact me at miya.king-flaherty@sierraclub.org.

Outings

You may know how to hike, but are you truly ready to be an emergency contact?

The flip side of preparing for your next adventure — here's what experts say you really need to know

Debbie Bryant
Chapter Outings Chair

You're a prepared hiker or backpacker about to go on a trip. You have your 10 essentials, your satellite communicator, your bear can and bear spray and you've got an emergency contact who



Debbie Bryant / Rio Grande Chapter

Our recent wilderness first aid class with Glenn Wohl and Cherie Gaston was a great learning experience for all who attended. Students practiced techniques required to determine a person's level of injury.

has a copy of your itinerary. You're prepared.

But as I recently learned by being someone's emergency contact, you need to ensure that your emergency contact person knows what to do.

Local expert Al Webster, a long-time Sierra Club member and Search and Rescue member here in NM, advises all emergency contacts get answers to the following questions:

- 1 — How long should an emergency contact wait to raise an alarm if you are overdue?
- 2 — Do you know whether the hiker has a medical condition, is depressed and what medicines they take?
- 3 — How experienced is the hiker?
- 4 — Do you, as the emergency contact, know who to contact first?
- 5 — Can you describe the hiker, their clothes and their equipment?
- 6 — Did you and the hiker practice with the satellite communicator beforehand and are you getting updates?
- 7 — Do you know where the hiker parked and what their license plate number is?
- 8 — Can you describe their experience on that trail or in other wilderness areas?

Outings & Events

See page 12 for a full list of upcoming outdoor adventures organized by members, for members.

- 9 — Have they ever been lost before, and if so what did they do?

I didn't know that there is no set waiting period. It's a common misconception that people should wait 24 hours past the hiker's planned finish time before raising an alarm.

Webster said that it's better to let law enforcement in the area evaluate whether there is an immediate need to start looking for someone.

The need for action is dependent on the answers to the questions above.

As to who to call, in a large national park you should call the ranger station first and ask the chief ranger whether you should also call 911 or the sheriff.

In other locations, call 911 and they will transfer the call to the appropriate office.

Being prepared means everyone is prepared. Many thanks to Al Webster for the insights.



Pinyon jay populations have plummeted in the last 50 years. They are a NM Species of Greatest Conservation Need and are a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. Extreme drought and wildfire, both results of climate change, are taking their toll on this important keystone species of the pinyon-juniper woodland. Photo by Maresa Pryor-Luzier. A Mexican wolf in its natural habitat, courtesy Arizona Department of Game and Fish.

Wildlife

Getting personal with the Pinyon Jay

Maresa Pryor-Luzier

Professional Wildlife Photographer

When we moved to Catron County bordering the Cibola National Forest, we never knew how connected we would become with a bird called a “pinyon jay.”

In April 2023, we heard loud calls and noticed birds landing in our backyard. At least 70 birds ascended on our little parcel.

Being a wildlife photographer, I wanted to learn more about them specifically so I could photograph them.

Pinyon jays are the only jay to walk, not hop, on the ground, and do they walk with confidence with their chests held high as they slightly wobble step by step. So my first step was to install a blind so I could document their behavior on the ground.

This worked — if they didn't see me. However, if I came out to fill the feeders or bird baths, they would fly away in distress.

We've been fortunate to watch three babies come in each year. They are usually about a month old and begging for food. This can go on for four or five months.

Each year we have one pair with twins, and I feel for the parents. I can see why females perish from exhaustion, especially in years when there is little food.

The birds often bury piñon nuts for later consumption but they have also contributed, perhaps unwittingly, to the growth of new piñon forests.

Each winter, our group of about 20 birds joins a flock and becomes 200 birds. What a sight to behold. At dawn, they explode onto the horizon and fly about looking for

piñon nuts. Now, however, instead of burying nuts, they search for food as there are only a few trees with nuts in early spring.

Because we have fallen in love with these sometimes loud and gregarious birds, we've seen firsthand that the pinyon jay needs strengthened protections.

It is truly an essential species in New Mexico's piñon and juniper habitats.

You can urge the New Mexico Game and Fish Department to continue its work monitoring and studying these iconic local birds by emailing the agency at ispa@dgf.nm.gov.

Maresa resides in Datil, NM. She is a wildlife photographer focused on species of concern. Her work has been published worldwide.

Don't kill wolves — let them migrate

Genetic diversity heading in the wrong direction; mixing area packs would help reverse trend

Mary Katherine Ray

Rio Grande Chapter Wildlife Chair

Despite years of cross-fostering genetically valuable lobo pups from captive litters into wild wolf dens, scientists have determined that the overall genetic diversity of the wild wolf population has declined each year for the last four years.

The Mexican wolf was nearly eradicated before recovery efforts were begun. The genes of only seven wolves founded the entire Mexican wolf population alive today. It is a limited genome from which to draw, but the captive population still has 37% more genetic diversity than the wild one, which means more can be done. Cross-fostering is not enough.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service must stop removing wolves from the wild. In the

last six months, the agency has fatally shot two wolves, captured and removed four members of another pack and killed the fifth member in the den. A kill order for an eighth wolf is in effect at this writing. These actions are taken at the behest of livestock interests.

The Rio Grande Chapter joined 29 other conservation organizations urging that these removals stop.

It is also becoming increasingly clear that a genetic infusion from the Northern gray wolf that is being restored to Colorado will be needed. For this to happen, the Mexican wolf must be allowed to naturally migrate north beyond the arbitrary boundary of Interstate 40. Some members of the NM Game Commission seemed open to allowing this at the August meeting in Catron County.

Releasing well-bonded captive wolves with their pups is a proven way to get geneti-

cally important wolves on the ground quickly.

In very welcome news, Asha — the wolf who twice wandered north of I-40 only to be captured and placed into captivity — has been returned to the wild.

While captive, she chose a mate with whom she produced pups this spring. The entire family was released on the Ladder Ranch in Southern New Mexico.

The pack has been named the Quartz pack, and while the pups are not yet collared, Asha and her mate can be viewed on a map provided to the public by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

You can see her location by scanning this QR Code.

Please note locations are not precise. The hexagons are 2000 acres in size, and they are not in real time.



Public Lands

Take action on public lands, ASAP

Send Trump, Interior Dept. postcard to voice your 2 cents

Jody Benson

Northern New Mexico Group

The Northern Group tabled at the Pajarito Environmental Education Center's Annual Bear Fest in Los Alamos in August.

The center is a place of pride for the former Pajarito Group whose membership helped found it in 2005. Sierra Club members (now part of the Northern Group) continue to volunteer with muscle, money and expertise.

At our table, children and adults who love their wildlands and the bears signed, wrote comments and drew pictures on postcards to President Trump, telling him politely:

What Makes America Great Already are our Public Lands and especially our National Parks and Monuments. Please ensure ALL of these National Treasures and the People's Public Lands are protected for your great grandchildren and ours.

The Los Alamos area has two national monuments (Bandelier and the Manhattan Project), and one park preserve, the Valles



Jody Benson

A young activist shows his support for public lands with a postcard to President Trump.

Caldera. It was for these, in particular, but with the goal of protecting all public lands, that the Northern Group collected and mailed 44 signed postcards and gave away many more to people to write and send their own comments.

The Republican budget bill's sell-off of our public lands is on hold for the moment, but it is important to remain vigilant and continue strongly stating our opposition.

Send your postcard to these addresses:

President Donald Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Doug Burgum, Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

Protecting the Valles Caldera National Preserve

Public comments really do help determine park's activities and keep its unique value, beauty

Teresa Seamster and Tom Ribe

Northern New Mexico Group Members

It has been called a "once in a lifetime" moment and a "land of superlatives."

It's that moment of awe when you see a perfect valley shining with high-altitude light, green abundance and outstanding beauty.

This is the feeling many express when they first set eyes on the giant Valle Grande in the Valles Caldera National Preserve.

How best to preserve the unique values of the preserve as well as manage the visitors that want to come hike, ride, bike, fish, hunt and explore is the task ahead for National Park Service at the preserve in consultation with nearby pueblos of Santa Clara, Jemez, Zia, San Ildefonso as well as the public.

The 88,900-acre preserve is described as "the world's premier example of a young volcanic caldera," created about 1.25 million years ago with a major 11,254-foot resurgent dome, Redondo Peak.

The Valles Caldera was designated as a unit of the national park system in 2014.

Superintendent Jorge Silva-Bañuelos recently hosted a public meeting to describe the draft General Management Plan and the possible additions of trails, backcountry per-

mitting, camping and other visitor "engagement" activities.

The agency staff has proposed new trailheads, road closures, a relocated entrance road, a new visitor center and a zoned management system to concentrate use in some places and leave large areas essentially wild.

Here are some comments already submitted in response to the plan:

The organization Caldera Action commented that, "Since the (preserve) has been public since 2000, we can see clearly the pressures and ecological eventualities of the future.

"We've seen high-severity wildfires burn through most of the preserve, radically altering its vegetation, wildlife and hydrology.

"We've seen post-fire flooding with its gullying and debris fields.

"We've seen trespass cattle polluting the streams, damaging vegetation, and ruining restoration structures put in by staff and volunteers.

With climate change a certainty for the future and with a growing human population in the region, these events from the past are likely to repeat in the future.

The National Park Service knows what is

coming and must use the best available science to prepare.

Additionally, one individual commented that, "This (draft) should include a specific reclamation plan to remove legacy waste and infrastructure and restore areas damaged by geothermal and timber industries as well as by heavy grazing and high-intensity wildfires that have impacted over 60% of the preserve.

"The current (35 per day) permitted rate of visitors to the back country should be kept as well as seasonal closures due to weather or high wildfire risk."

Opinions differ on what activities should be permitted and which areas should be accessible to the public, but protecting the unique values of the Valles Caldera described by trustee, William deBuys, remain paramount:

"The friends of the Caldera need to repeat their message over and over, and make sure they are heard. If the preserve is to remain a place where eagles congregate in the fall and elk canter through the night like a living tissue of the land, the friends of the Caldera need to insist on it, and settle for nothing less."

Comments on the plan closed Aug. 31.

2025 Municipal Elections Guide

Here are the endorsements of the various Chapter Political Committees for the municipal elections in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces

Albuquerque



Tim Keller

Mayor — Tim Keller

Under the leadership of Albuquerque’s sitting mayor Tim Keller, the city has invested deeply in its sustainability program and has placed a sustainability expert in each of the city’s

major departments. Keller has overseen the city’s transition to renewable sources and is now close to 100% from such sources.

The Keller administration carried out an extensive planning process to reduce our climate pollution in which the Chapter has been deeply involved. The city has invested in EV charger build out and supported our Earth Day events by putting their entire staff behind our efforts. Mayor Keller has also supported zero fares buses and free microtransit.

When confronted with a threatening letter from Attorney General Pam Bondi about cooperation with ICE, Mayor Keller responded by refusing cooperation.

The mayor has been steadfast in acting to support our city’s immigrant community, refusing police cooperation with ICE and defending our status as an immigrant-friendly city. He has demonstrated his commitment to opposing the Trump regime in the city’s “Defend Albuquerque” website — you can visit at <https://tinyurl.com/3h8vrmhy>.



Daniel Leiva

City Council District 1 — Daniel Leiva

District 1 is a westside district, from south of I-40 North almost to Paseo.

Leiva is a recent law school graduate with ambitions to represent his community, including immigrants, workers and families. He is a small business owner who formerly worked in the city’s economic development office, including on work-force development. He is committed to climate action, insisting that despite the multiple challenges the city will face, climate “can’t just be an afterthought.”



Teresa Garcia

City Council District 3 — Teresa Garcia

District 3 is the southern-most west-side council district.

Garcia worked for the NM Coalition Against Domestic Violence; she now holds a similar position remotely for a Maryland coalition.

She is chair of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Commission for the city and is focused on ensuring that nonprofits continue to be funded as federal money is lost.

Garcia states, “Climate action must provide both immediate relief and long-term resilience, shaped by the voices of those most affected.”

City Council District 7 — Tammy Fiebelkorn

We said this four years ago, and it’s still true today — We can’t say enough good things about Tammy Fiebelkorn, a longtime

activist, leader and ally on climate and environmental issues, especially for low-income New Mexicans.

Fiebelkorn has strived mightily to get good things done on an anti-environment council, sometimes succeeding, and has been our savior on some bad bills.

The balance of power on City Council is discouraging; we’re very lucky to have her.



Tammy Fiebelkorn

City Council District 9 — Colton Newman

District 9 is in the far north- and south-east heights.



Colton Newman

Colton Newman has a minor in sustainability studies and worked for the UNM Sustainability Studies Program prior to joining the UNM Center for Alcohol, Substance Use and Addictions.

He states that he “share[s] the Sierra Club’s dedication to advancing bold climate action, protecting natural resources and promoting environmental justice, especially for frontline communities disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change.”

Visit riograndesierraclub.org for more endorsements and voting info.

Albuquerque municipal election endorsement listings authorized and paid for by

Sierra Club ABQ MFC
Susan Gorman, Chairperson

Not authorized by any campaign or campaign committee.

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Top Five Donors: Richard Barish, Susan Gorman, Kenneth M. Hughes and Laureen Zunner.

Voter info — How to cast your ballot in New Mexico

Registration

You can find your registration status online at nmvote.org. By the time you read this article, your only option to register will be same-day registration on the day you vote.

You will need to bring (1) a New Mexico driver’s license or New Mexico identification card issued through the MVD; (2) any document that contains an address in the county together with a photo identification card; or (3) a current student photo identification card from a post-secondary NM school and a current student fee statement with the student’s address in the county.

Early voting

Early voting has begun in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces at a single location in each city. Check with your County Clerk for times and location.

Early voting at expanded locations begins October 18.

Election day voting

You can vote on Nov. 4 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Contact your county clerk for voting locations.

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 the close of business on October 21. If you do not receive your absentee ballot, contact your County Clerk’s Office. If you don’t receive it, you will still be able to vote in person by filling out an affidavit.

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

Absentee ballots may be returned to the

County Clerk’s Office, a drop box, or any polling location no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day.

For all jurisdictions, including those where we have not endorsed candidates, information about early voting, absentee voting, as well as times and locations for casting your ballot can be found at your county clerk’s website, by calling the clerk’s office or by visiting nmvote.org.

Albuquerque

cabq.org/vote
505-924-3650

Santa Fe

santafecountynm.gov/clerk/elections
505-955-6521

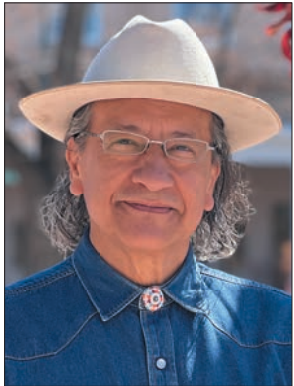
Las Cruces

lascruces.gov/government/city-clerks-office/municipal-elections
575-541-2115

Santa Fe, Las Cruces candidates make their case to club volunteers

Our political committee says these candidates best embody our priorities, values as Sierrans

Santa Fe



Mayor — Oscar Rodriguez

Rodriguez has more than 30 years' experience managing cities and their money. From Austin to DC to Taos, he has the experience needed to put Santa Fe on solid footing.

Oscar Rodriguez

Rodriguez pledges to solarize all new and refurbished city facilities, pay for needed wastewater treatment plant improvements through bonds, adopt a holistic approach to climate change through an equity-centered approach that integrates stewardship with social justice, and ensure wildlife can migrate through the city on corridors that also serve as bike-hike paths.

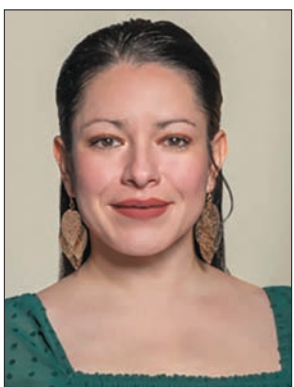


City Council, District 1 — Pat Feghali

Attorney Feghali is a frequent bicycle commuter and has consistently pushed for safer streets and sidewalks for people traveling on foot and by bike.

Pat Feghali

Professionally, Feghali has been and will continue to be an advocate for sustainable, walkable city design. This includes better transit, stormwater management, easier permitting for solar and energy-efficient upgrades and changes to the city code to encourage more infill housing that will reduce the need for long commutes.



City Council, District 4 — Amanda Chavez

Incumbent Amanda Chavez has been a consistent supporter for environmentally related policies and programs while on the City Council during her first term in office.

Amanda Chavez

In her second term, she intends to support funding for protected bike lanes, require emissions testing of vehicles and adopt a landscaping plan that prioritizes native, drought-tolerant plants and grasses.

Las Cruces



City Council, District 3 — Michael Harris

Harris earned his masters in computer science from New Mexico State University and has run his own technology consulting business 13 years.

Michael Harris

Harris is a strong supporter of public transit and serves on the Transit Advisory Board, where he has supported the purchase of the city's EV buses and construction of a LEED-Silver certified operations facility.

He supports eliminating natural gas usage in new city and residential construction.



City Council, District 5 — Becky Corran

Corran is running for reelection.

She has a masters degree in Public Health and is a professor at Doña Ana Community College. Corran serves

Becky Corran

on the Environmental Protection Agency's Local Government Advisory Committee.

She has been a strong advocate for the transition to clean energy as well as housing, transportation, zoning reform and LGBTQ+ issues.



City Council, District 6 — John Muñoz

Muñoz describes himself as one of the principal advocates for the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks.

He emphasizes

John Muñoz

community-based solutions for Las Cruces. He comes from the business community and has served on many nonprofit boards, and he has strong connections throughout the community.

Muñoz is especially supportive of EVs and electrification, and importantly, he has expressed a strong commitment to resisting President Trump, in particular on immigration.

Las Cruces municipal election endorsement listings authorized and paid for by

**Rio Grande Chapter
Las Cruces PAC**

Richard D. Barish, Treasurer, 505-232-3013

Democracy is not a spectator sport

Vote, yes ... but there are other ways to make your voice heard

Richard Barish

Chapter Political Team

I'm not sure who to attribute the above headline to, but whoever said it, it's true. And it's especially true this year, for two reasons.

First, this is a municipal election year. These are low-turnout affairs. The candidates who win are those who get their voters to cast their ballots.

This year, we are focusing on trying to flip an unfriendly Albuquerque city council. We need strong, principled councilors to enact our priorities and to stand up to the Trump regime.

We've got some great candidates, but they need your help to get out the vote. If you can spare a few hours to knock on doors or make phone calls, please contact me at richard.barish@gmail.com.

Second, our democracy is in grave peril from the action of the Trump regime.

Politicians, the media, and other institutions have been bending the knee and looking the other way, when they know the people do not support Trump's actions or their response to it, and when there is a price to pay for compliance, they miraculously grow a spine.

Trump only has the power we give him. It is critical that resistance continues to grow and that it solidifies before the Trump regime consolidates even more power.

We've had unbelievable turnouts at past protests, but this time needs to be something this country has never seen before and that institutions cannot ignore.

You can find a protest near you by visiting nokings.org. Bring some friends who have never protested before with you, and let's make our message unmistakable and unavoidable on October 18!

Go to nokings.org to find a protest near you.

Santa Fe municipal election endorsement listings authorized and paid for by

**Rio Grande Sierra Club
Healthy Communities**

Ray Shortridge, Treasurer, 505-504-3908

riograndesierraclub.org

ENDORSEMENTS • VOTING INFORMATION • CLUB NEWS

Northern New Mexico Group

Difficult energy transition still ahead

While needed solar projects get approval, opposition plans appeal of ruling despite 4-1 approval

John Buchser

Northern Group chairperson

The emergence of gas-powered cars replacing the horse and buggy as the primary means of transportation in 1890 was scary at first. Early cars were noisy and backfired, scaring people and horses, resulting in injuries and worse. The cranking process to get the cars started could result in sprains and broken arms. The shift to cars resulted in the collapse of many industries supporting horse-powered transportation.

We are in another energy shift. The Rancho Viejo, moderate-sized solar plus battery storage project, located just outside Santa Fe and supported by the Sierra Club, created a lot of fear. Some neighbors were particularly concerned about fires resulting from the possibility of failed batteries.

The company proposing this project, AES,

initially offered a project with minimal detail. Their second try was a thorough proposal, reviewed carefully by the county and approved.

The approval process at first only considered nearby neighbors, rejecting concerns from 350 Santa Fe and the Green Chamber of Commerce. The Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Northern Group joined the supporters and the Planning Commission nearly unanimously approved it. Then several of the objectors appealed that decision to the Board of County Commissioners.

In late September, after hearing 13 hours of testimony from the county, AES, supporters and opponents and then another day of two-minute-long public testimony, the board approved the project 4-1.

The opponents plan to appeal this to the court on what would appear to be a limited technical basis. The electric utility, PNM, must now accept the AES proposal as part of a

request for proposals, and then the Public Regulatory Commission must approve it as part of a utility resource need.

Many other projects are in the works from other companies in NM. In Sandoval County, a project that borders Santa Fe County is now in court after narrowly being approved by the county commission.

Some poor choices were made in the design of battery storage systems as recently as five years ago, but current designs deploy many levels of fire protection, though no battery fire has ever escaped its casing. A house fire is more likely than a battery storage system fire.

We extend our thanks to the county commissioners who approved this project: Hank Hughes, a long-time climate-action champion who represents the district where the AES project will be located, Camilla Bustamante, Justin Greene and Adam Johnson.

Youth

Sierra Student Coalition back in action

Summer program grads, youth advocacy group members say kids deserve a seat at the table

What this intern did over the summer at SPROG changed her life forever. We're all better off because of it.

Berit Robnett

Sierra Student Coalition

Over the past year, several Sierra Club chapter leaders came together to plan a youth summer program, otherwise known as SPROG (Summer Program).

A group of eager youth advocates from New Mexico, Idaho, Utah, California and Puerto Rico then converged to share their experiences and stories with one another in an unforgettable week.

As a prior intern for the Rio Grande Chapter, attending SPROG this summer was like nothing I'd experienced before.

From the moment of arriving at the Sierra Club's Clair Tappan Lodge near Lake Tahoe, there was something comforting about these 50 strangers. I would soon realize they would be some of the most important connections I've made in my 23 years. My fellow young activists have become my community.

As we connected over the short several days through advocacy training, guest speakers, storytelling, art and outdoor recreation, it was clear we wanted to be part of something bigger.

On the final night of the program, the entire room voted to reinstate the Sierra Student Coalition as a virtual chapter of the Sierra Club as it had been since 1991, when it was founded by Adam Werbach.

As we left California the following day, we began to plan our next moves through

our executive committee that consisted of myself and several other advocates. We continue to meet online weekly.

In the following months, we established outreach, communications, funding and education committees.

In this short amount of time, we were given the opportunity to present to the national Sierra Club board about the importance of youth involvement.

Kids eager to change world

Breathe. Learn. Dream.
Do. Inspire ... and join in!

Genie Stevens

Chapter Climate Education Director

The Global Warming Express program is off to a promising start in the new school year. Mentors from all our programs are returning to our after school classrooms in Raton, White Rock, Tijeras and Santa Fe.

New and potential mentors have been trained and are about to jump into programs in Albuquerque, Placitas and Las Cruces, and a record number of teachers are getting involved in this year's program.

If there ever was an important time to teach New Mexico's 4th through 6th graders accurate Earth science, climate science, climate solutions, mindfulness, arts, advocacy and action, this is it.

For more on how you can get involved, email genie.stevens@sierraclub.org.

As we finished our presentation, we moved into a discussion where countless members encouraged our movement, complimented our drive and supported us wholeheartedly to reinstate the Sierra Student Coalition.

This monumental summer within the Sierra Club ignited a spark in our youth that will not be extinguished.

Youth are our future, and we deserve to have a voice.

Northern New Mexico Group

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Northern Group
1000 Cordova Place | Suite #995 | Santa Fe, NM 87505

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Vice Chair, Secretary — Shannon Romeling
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Joe Wells — joe.wells@sbcglobal.net

Outings — Alan Shapiro

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Book Distributor — Janet Peacock 505-988-8929

El Paso Group

Chair — Laurence Gibson

915-309-5419, laurenceagibson@gmail.com

Secretary — Ann Falknor

915-833-9162, afalknor@sbcglobal.net

Southern New Mexico Group

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Southern Group
P.O. Box 735 | Mesilla, NM 88046

Chair — David Baake, davidbaake41@outlook.com

Treasurer — Cheryl Blevins

Secretary and Wildlife — Mary Katherine Ray
575-537-1095, mkrscrim@gmail.com

Outings — Howie Dash

575-652-7550, howiedash@aol.com

Kurt Anderson 575-646-1032, kurt@nmsu.edu

Dan Lorimier dlorimier1948@gmail.com

Wildlife

Protecting New Mexican ecosystems from pesticides, one person, one victory at a time

Jacqueline Buenrostro

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Connection to the land runs deep in New Mexico and the Southwest. In addition to majestic landscapes, culturally significant spaces and precious waterways, the Southwest is also a biodiversity hotspot. When it comes to pollinators, the region hosts nearly a quarter of all bee species and half of all butterfly species in the US. Many of these species are particularly vulnerable to extinction with documented declines across the region.

Climate change and habitat destruction are usually in the spotlight when we talk about the

drivers of ecological harm. While these are important problems that necessitate action, there is another factor that tends to receive less attention: pesticides, including insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and rodenticides.

Pesticides cause pernicious harm that often goes unnoticed, like invisible graffiti marring grasslands, waterways, city parks and backyard gardens. Research has shown that pesticide contamination is ubiquitous, including on pollinator habitat intentionally planted to protect declining species. Even when we expand climate-resilient habitat, that habitat is degraded if it is not protected from pesticides.

New Mexico is ready for big, systems-level

change on pesticides – reimagining land management to better protect the state's wildlife and ecosystems. Conservation action is critical at the local level. It will take all hands on deck to make the changes New Mexico needs.

Individuals can eliminate pesticide use at home. Advocates can work with local leaders and land managers to make our parks, natural spaces and cities pesticide-free spaces safe for people and pollinators. Government needs to promote policies that reduce pesticide use and protect our precious ecosystems from harm.

We all have a part to play in making the spaces we love pesticide-free. Let's get to work.

Outings

Check out events, excursions across NM

Join us on one of our upcoming outings or special events. Check our website and socials for more listings or sign up for outings on our website or on social media.

- riograndesierraclub.org/calendar
- Santa Fe Sierra Club Outings at meetup.com/santa-fe-sierra-club-outings/
- facebook.com/NMSierraClub/events for Southern group events

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 15 — Bosque Walk at Duran Open Space, 10 a.m. - Noon. Welcome to the beautiful South Valley. Durand Open Space provides excellent access to forest paths and river views. We'll do a two-mile loop and then take a break at the covered picnic area. Meet at the Durand parking lot by 9:45 a.m. No dogs please.

Leader — Diane Reese, 505-507-6416, dianeabqnm@gmail.com
Location — Albuquerque, NM • Level — Easy

SATURDAY, OCT. 18 — Table at Wildlife Zone at Bosque del Apache, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Are you comfortable talking to people, mainly kids? Do you want to help share information about climate issues in New Mexico while we host an activity at our table? Come table with us. We're building wind turbines, pinwheels! We are one of several educators joining the Friends of Bosque del Apache for their Wildlife Zone event. Wildlife

Zone. Sign up for an early shift, 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.

Leader — Laurie Zunner, 505-440-5337, lmzunner@gmail.com
Location — San Antonio • Level — Easy

SATURDAY, OCT. 25 — Fort Stanton Historic Site — Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area, 9 a.m. - Noon. Join us for a leisurely hike on the outlying grounds of the Fort Stanton Historic Site in Lincoln County, famous for Smokey Bear and Billy the Kid. Surrounded by the Snowy River NCA, we'll discuss the cave system and its background. There are more than 73 miles of sustainable horseback, mountain biking and hiking trails that wind through open meadows of juniper and pinon and arroyos and subtle canyons. There will be great views of the Sacramento, Capitan and Vera Cruz mountains within the Lincoln National Forest. We'll also discuss the lengthy historic background of this intact frontier fort. The trail length is 2.5-3 miles with side stops and off trail that is looped with a minimal elevation gain of 100 feet or so. The event is free, but there is a \$7 fee if you choose to go into the visitor's center museum. You'll have time to explore the grounds and buildings on your own once the hike has ended. If there is enough interest, we can shuttle to the Fort Stanton Cave entrance about 15 minutes away and discuss the current status of research. Limit to 8 people and no dogs. The deadline to register is Oct 23.

Leader — John Pijawka, 575-937-7422, jastro@windstream.net
Location — Fort Stanton Museum • Level — Easy

SATURDAY, NOV. 8 — Ruidoso-Eagle Creek Trail at Alto Lakes 9 a.m. - Noon. Join us for a short brisk hike through the cool pines of Ruidoso. Our hike starts at the Alto Lake parking lot; we'll take a two-mile round trip hike along and behind Alto Lake. We might catch a glimpse of elk or wild horses. This trail is also used by bird watchers and it hosts several songbirds, ducks and hawks.

The Eagle Creek Trail has a minimal elevation gain. We'll discuss hydrology and view two drinking groundwater wells along the trail as this area has several Ruidoso's Water Department uses for public consumption. Learn about water systems, maintenance, distribution and storage, as well as EPA Safe Drinking Water Act requirements, laws, sampling and testing, public notice issues and Consumer Confident Reporting. Limit is 8 people, no dogs. Register by Nov 6. Bring: water, snack, foul weather gear, binoculars.

Leader — John Pijawka, 575-937-7422, jastro@windstream.net
Location — Ruidoso • Level — Moderate

SATURDAY, NOV. 22 — Hike 3 Gun Springs and possibly on Oso Pass, 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Three Gun and up past it is one of my favorite hikes, especially in the winter as it gets a lot of sun year round. We will make it to the "stick of success" and have lunch there, then hopefully visit at least two medallion trees as we continue upward (weather permitting). This hike will be at least six miles, possibly eight, with 1,700-2,000 feet of elevation gain. It takes around 3.5 hrs up, depending on how far we go. Hikers need to be experienced and able to maintain a 1.5-2 mph pace. If you don't know your pace, call or email to see if this hike would be a good fit for you. Limited to 8, kids older than 12 are fine if they're good hikers. Bring water, snacks, lunch, appropriate clothing, walking poles.

Leader — Debbie Bryant, 832-692-1881, bryade@gmail.com
Location — Monticello. You will get an email with directions to the trailhead a week before this excursion. RSVP by Nov. 18
Level — Moderate / Strenuous

SATURDAY, DEC. 6 — Appreciation Pot Luck, 6-8 p.m. After a year of hard work and shocking assaults on the environment and our liberties, let's celebrate our hard fought wins. Bring something to share if you can. The club will provide drinks and enchiladas (meat and vegetarian). Please bring an appetizer if your last name begins A-I, a side (J-R), or dessert (S-Z). Contact Diane Reese at dianeabqnm@gmail.com or Susan Gorman at susangorman1945@gmail.com.

Location — Albuquerque, NM

Are you looking for an outing in southern NM?

We would like to set up regular outings prioritizing areas four or more participants want to explore. Email Antoinette Reyes or John Pijawka for information about outings near Las Cruces or Ruidoso.

Las Cruces — Antoinette.Reyes@sierraclub.org
Ruidoso — jastro@windstream.net