

By Dr. John Bartlit

No. 1 question on the airwaves is: "In a capsule, describe the smelter hassle."

New Mexico's Big Bull, Kennecott Copper Corp., finally told a story even a grandmother couldn't swallow. Which is why the Environmental Improvement Board on Sept. 12 turned down Kennecott's request to reconsider one of New Mexico's pollution rules on the basis of new information.

Gee whiz . . . it sounds reasonable enough just to hear a fellow's evidence. After all, that's what we like -- lots of facts. And shiny, new facts are surely better than old,

used ones. But the story Kennecott told -- whether out of intention, laziness, arrogance, or troubles with the New York office -- was a story that simply did not hang together. It was an incredible, incoherent, inconsistent, self-contradictory story told by a very big and very important old bull. It was a shame.

#### *The Board's Decision*

It became apparent Kennecott had an extraordinarily sticky story to push when they arrived for the board meeting sporting an oil-tongued Washington lawyer in addition to their usual, pleasantly homey one from Silver City.

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# Guadalupe Peak Alternatives ???

The Environmental Assessment of the Pine Springs Development Concept Plan is out. The public will have an opportunity to review it and comment at workshops to be held in Carlsbad on Wednesday, Nov. 5, and in El Paso on Thursday, Nov. 6. The Carlsbad workshop will be held at the Rodeway Inn at 7pm, and the El Paso workshop will be held at the Howard Johnson Hotel (I-10 and Hawkins) also at 7pm.

The Plan explores a series of possible development options for the Pine Springs/Guadalupe Peak area of Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Alternatives A through F run the gamut from a minimal development concept in 'Alternative A' which essentially keeps the status quo, to a series of high development options creating access to the Guadalupe Peak area by either tramway, road, or helicopter.

Except for 'Alternative A', all the alternatives have in common the development of a rather elaborate base facility at the mouth of Pine Springs Canyon. Alternatives B & C could be called the 'Tramway Alternatives' with plans for a tramway up the north side of Guad Peak to the "meadow" where the upper terminal would be constructed complete with

restrooms, exhibits, and self-guiding trails. A short shuttle tram would take visitors to the peak itself.

Alternative D proposes helicopter access to both the upper terminal facility and the peak. Alternative E proposes the construction of a road to an upper terminal facility near the peak and features a 1200 foot bridge over Pine Springs Canyon.

Alternative F, which has received conditional blessing from the Rio Grande Chapter, has the base facility development with separate improved horse and foot trail access to the peak.

At the Excom meeting of the Chapter held in El Paso on October 26, the following resolution was passed: The Rio Grande Chapter supports a combination of Alternatives A & F with a use limitation on trail access to keep upper area impacts and trail construction standards within levels compatible with wilderness designation.

A copy of the Environmental Assessment can be obtained by writing: Superintendent, Guadalupe Mountains Nat'l. Park, Carlsbad, N M 88220. Comments on the alternatives will be accepted until Dec. 5.

# Beetle Outbreak Bears Watching !!!

The Santa Fe National Forest was notified recently of a major spruce beetle epidemic on Chicoma Mt. in the Jemez Range by the regional forest entomology staff in Albuquerque. Potential epidemic conditions have existed in this magnificent spruce forest for several years ever since massive windthrow occurred following clearcutting operations. Early control measures were thwarted by bad weather conditions. Epidemic conditions extend from Chicoma Mt. west as far as Cerro Pelon.

Presently "salvage operations" (taking

out infected trees and high risk trees down to 9 inches in diameter) have been expanded from 1 million board feet into a full sale of more than 3 million board feet. The Forest Service is unsure whether the remaining trees will survive since spruce stands are extremely susceptible to windthrow after being opened up. The entomology staff's final report is not in yet, but Forest officers believe that salvage cutting may be called for on as many as 25,000 acres, taking 15 million board feet per year out

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After months of preparation and planning 20 persons were allowed in to view the site in the BACA where Union Oil Co. is involved in exploration and testing for the eventual production of GEOTHERMAL generated electricity. We were shown three individual sites which have been developed. Of the 16 wells that have been drilled, 6 have been of the nature of producing wells; 3 of remaining dry wells are being used to receive the re-injected fluids.

The team from Union Oil explained in some detail the processes that they are using so far as drilling and testing techniques. As they are not yet into the production stages they were not able to testify as to eventual yields of the wells. They are in the process of completing a report which will deal in some detail with the environmental aspects of the project - they have engaged the services of biologists and plant specialists among others to prepare the document. We have been assured that a copy of the above mentioned document will be made available to the Sierra Club for review and comment.

The site is presently heavily impacted with roads which we were told were the remains of the logging activities in the vicinity. They have been improved in order to allow the very large drilling rigs in to the drill sites. The drill pads themselves are rather large - we were told that on two of the sites that more than one well was anticipated, therefore the very large pads.

A rather large number of pipes are strung out along the site in order to transport the rejected fluids to the re-injection wells. These cause the further removal of trees and vegetation - more scars on the landscape. Union is involved in some degree of re-planting - it is too early to tell to what degree this will be successful in repairing the landscape.

In connection with the drill pads are large pools of water which muffle the noise from the wells. These are murky pools of hot water with concentrations of silica, sulfur and various other chemicals. The day we were there clouds of vapor containing the very familiar smell of hydrogen sulfide (which smells like rotten eggs) was in the air.

It will be very interesting to return to the site once production commences as the explorative phases of the field do not give us the full picture.

--Nan Nalder

Brant Calkin is on the National Sierra Club Board of Directors. Brant, who is an environmental consultant and Director of the Frontera del Norte Fund, was selected by Board members to fill a vacancy in their ranks. Brant is a past chairman of the Rio Grande Chapter, an Excom member for many years, and a member of the Southwest Regional Conservation Committee. He has served on advisory boards to the BLM and to the State Executive. His particular talent is talking to "the enemy" (usually at lunch time) and coming away with their respect. Best of luck, Brant!

## The Rio Grande Sierran

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# New Planning Procedures -- an Opportunity

The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have organized their planning process and set timetables. The environmental community has perhaps the best opportunity to get in on the ground floor on decisions that will affect the environment for years to come.

The timetable for the Forest Service and BLM planning units to a degree will determine the timetable of citizen sponsored studies and proposals. For example, if the Lincoln National Forest plans to hold public hearings on the Southern Guadalupe Planning Unit in the fall of this year, then it is to our advantage to deemphasize our work on other units in order to refine and complete our proposals for the Southern Guadalupe Wilderness Study Area.

The newly instituted planning processes are both a sort of 'quiet crisis' and 'quiet opportunity'. Involvement of the public is a part of the new procedures. Although the form varies from agency to agency, in most instances an interested member of the public can become an active member of the planning team simply by indicating an interest to the agency. The planning process calls for a series of small group meetings over a period of time, and an individual who regularly participates has an opportunity to make a real impact on the planning decisions affecting an area.

If you want to have an impact on the land use planning decisions affecting your locality, study the list below and contact the land agency involved. Tell them you want to be included in the planning process. Show a little initiative!

The planning units -- both BLM and Forest Service -- that will be worked on by the agency during this year are listed below along with relevant data on the timetable and the defacto wilderness involved. The wilderness issue is only one of many that will be taken up in the planning process. Because there is a wide variance in the method the agencies use to determine the timetable of their studies, some dates mark

the beginning of the planning process, some indicate the publication of the draft environmental impact statement or the dates when public hearings are planned, or the date may indicate when the agency intends to complete the planning process.

## Carson National Forest:

--Los Pinos Planning Unit (including portions of the Rio Grande and San Juan NF in Colorado) -- Cruces Basin Wilderness Study Area (New Mexico) and Chama-South San Juan Wilderness Study Area (Colorado), underway and to be completed in 1976.

--Questa Planning Unit -- Latir and Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Study Areas, and Wheeler Peak Wilderness Additions. Underway and to be completed in 1977 (public hearings and draft statement possible this December).

## Santa Fe National Forest:

--Gallinas Planning Unit -- Chama Canyon (uninventoried defacto wilderness and/or wild and scenic river). Started in 1974.

--Pecos Planning Unit -- Macho and Bear Ck. Wilderness Study Areas (Pecos Wilderness additions). Started in 1974.

--Santa Fe Planning Unit -- Santa Fe River and Pajarito Wilderness Study Areas (Pecos additions). Started in 1975.

--Los Alamos Planning Unit -- Caballo roadless area. Started in 1975. (The Dome roadless area, originally scheduled for a separate planning treatment, will probably now be treated in this unit.)

--San Pedro Parks Addition Wilderness Study Area -- to be done out of sequence with regular planning unit. Study to start in '75.

## Cibola National Forest:

--Manzano Planning Unit -- Manzano Wilderness Study Area. In progress (DEIS due by December 1975).

--Mt. Taylor Planning Unit -- Guadalupe Canyon Wilderness Study Area and Mt. Taylor

and Cerro Alesna roadless areas. To begin in 1975 or '76.

## Gila National Forest:

--Sapillo Planning Unit -- Conservationist's addition BB to Gila Wilderness (a portion of the Gila Primitive Area). Has started.

## Lincoln National Forest:

--Southern Guadalupe Planning Unit -- Southern Guadalupe Wilderness Study Area (part of the Unified Guadalupe Escarpment Wilderness proposal). Public hearing and draft EIS planned for October 1975.

--Ruidoso Planning Unit -- White Mountain Wilderness Additions Wilderness Study Areas. Draft EIS and public hearing planned for July 1976.

## Bureau of Land Management --

### Albuquerque District:

--Chaco Planning Unit -- Bisti Badlands. To be completed in 1975.

--Rio Grande Planning Unit -- Chama River, Cerro do Olla, San Antonio Canyon & others. Presently underway, to be completed in '77.

### Las Cruces District:

--Las Uvas Planning Unit -- West Potrillo Mtns, Las Uvas Mtns, Aden Lava Flow. To be completed in 1975.

--Caballo Planning Unit -- Jornada Lava Flow, Cuchillo Mtns. To be completed in '75.

--Gila Planning Unit -- Guadalupe Canyon, Peloncillo Mtns, Lower Gila Box, others. Presently underway, to be completed in '76.

### Socorro District:

--Stallion Planning Unit -- Jornada Lava Flow, area adjacent to the Bosque del Apache NWR Wilderness. To be completed in 1975.

--Driveway Planning Unit -- Horse Mtn. and Pelona Mtn. To be completed in 1976.

### Roswell District:

--East Chaves Planning Unit -- Mescalero Sands. To be completed in 1976.

(Data regarding the planning schedules collected by Debbie Sease.)

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# Beetles...

of the area for five years.

The management of spruce for timber production in the Southwest presents one of the thorniest silvicultural problems. A Forest Service task force which investigated timber harvesting practices in the Southwest in 1971 reported that they did not look at one cut in the spruce type that did not have problems. In fact, many Forest officers believe that no cutting at all should occur in spruce in this area.

One problem results from the fact that spruce is very shallow rooted. Any sort of intermediate cutting that takes out more than 25% of the stand usually results in excessive wind damage to the rest of the stand. Thus the silvicultural alternatives are limited to light selection cuts or clearcuts. Heavy windthrow will also occur around the perimeter of a clearcut (as occurred near Chicoma Mtn.).

Spruce bark beetles also cause many problems in the management of spruce. Beetle populations are usually endemic in any spruce stand. Areas where large numbers of trees have blown down are the origin of most beetle epidemics since the insects thrive on weakened, but still sappy, trees. Control measures may be effective in the early stages of an outbreak, but once the beetle populations have assumed epidemic proportions, there appears to be very little that can be done outside of letting the epidemic run its course.

Cutting in the spruce type on the Santa Fe National Forest during the last ten years has exceeded the amount that would be sustainable indefinitely. Therefore no sales in the spruce type were planned for the interval until 1979 covered by the current timber management plan. The developments on Chicoma Mt. should have a profound effect on management activities in the spruce type on the Santa Fe NF for years to come.



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## more cock & bull...

Their story went round about as follows: In January 1972, the State adopted a regulation to control particulate emissions from copper smelters. The regulation allowed 28 months, 'til April '74, to come into compliance. In April '74 Kennecott requested and was granted a four year extension until 1978 to come into compliance, with the requirement they would, by April '75, file a schedule on how they planned to comply. Throughout the 40 months elapsed since 1972, Kennecott had repeatedly given assurances they could and would comply. Last June they requested and were granted another delay in filing their plan.

On Sept. 12, three and one-half years after the reg had been duly adopted, Kennecott announced since August they had acquired new information -- the regulation was unnecessary, unreasonable: could not be met either technically or economically; and would have to be eliminated. Except . . . they also said their new converter smelting process for meeting the reg was "technically but not economically feasible," and their Washington lawyer when asked about economic data said, "Nobody is saying this is a matter of money." Or to summarize their case, "No, but yes, maybe I don't know."

The Board, by 3 to 2 vote, simply did not believe any company could work sincerely & competently on the problem for 45 months before suddenly producing this new and self-contradictory story.

### Shutdown!

The Board's decision left Kennecott in violation of State Law. The next step was for New Mexico to go to court to enforce its laws. And this is when the Big Bull really hit its fans. The law provides three possible enforcement options -- a fine, a court order to comply, or an injunction to close the smelter. Even though all environmental interests at the hearing, including the

Agency and us, made it abundantly clear nobody would seek a shutdown, the next day's headline in the Silver City Press emblazoned: "Chino Smelter Faces Forced Shut Down -- Some 1300 Workers Could be Affected." The headline had its intended effect -- 'Save Our Jobs' ads were run, 'Save Our Jobs' motorcades organized, and a 'Save Our Jobs' investigation conducted by a NM legislative committee. The threat followed by less than two years Chino's last shutdown scare.

Gov. Apodaca summoned Kennecott President Frank Milliken from New York to discuss the issue. Pres. Milliken made a point of telling Gov. Apodaca the NM rule on particulates was stricter than other states required. True enough. However, Pres. Milliken neglected to mention that NM could save 200 tons per day of Kennecott's sulfur dioxide pollution and solve the particulate problem in the bargain by adopting Montana's smelter rules.

To climax the month that never was, Pres. Milliken explained to the NM press, "Nobody's talking about closing down." And the board granted a rehearing.

### As I See It

Three points stand out:

1) Gov. Apodaca spoke to the right man in President Milliken. Kennecott's pollution decisions are made in New York City, not in Silver City.

2) The board's decision to reopen the hearing on the limited issue of economics was a wise one. To date every time corporate officials have been asked to provide economic information, their refusal has been as mechanical as a myna bird: wheeeet "Kennecott does not divisionalize its profits"awwwwwwwk.

3) To minimize the use of unsupported shutdown threats to hatchet the environment, the Environmental Improvement Board and Agency should have the power to subpoena corporate records in such cases.

If you care about New Mexico's economy as well as New Mexico's environment ----- WRITE: Gov. Jerry Apodaca; Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503; SUPPORT: an environmental anti-blackmail bill.

## Action Needed Now!

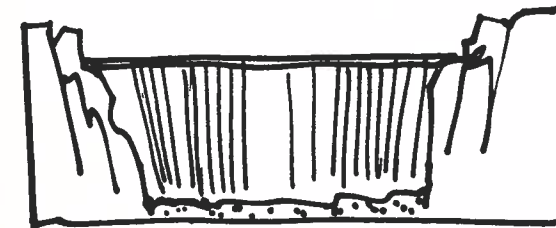
The proposed Central Arizona Project currently in the planning stages by the Bureau of Reclamation is the largest project ever planned by the Bureau and would destroy or seriously degrade most of the last remaining fragments of the riparian habitat associated with the major water-courses of the Sonoran Desert of Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. In the process it will probably account for the extirpation of the Gray Hawk from the U. S. as a breeding species -- and a potentially dangerous reduction in the nation's Black Hawk and Zone-tailed Hawk populations.

River-bottom lands of the Salt, Verde, San Pedro and Gila Rivers are slated for damming or drastic alteration as a result of the massive Central Arizona Project -- which will pump water uphill from the Colorado River into the interior of Arizona.

One of the finest pieces of environmental PR which we have ever seen has been put together by the Maricopa Audubon Society -- a twelve page illustrated brochure complete with maps, diagrams, photos, drawings and an extensive text describing the environmental impacts of CAP. Hooker Dam, which would back up waters into the Gila Wilderness, is but a small part of the whole project.

You are encouraged to write to the Maricopa Audubon people for a copy of their excellent study. You might want to send along a small contribution to help with their printing costs.

Write to: The Maricopa Audubon Society, C.A.P. Project, PO Box 15102, Phoenix, Az. 85060.



## El-Rio-Chama

The Forest Service has identified three new roadless areas in the Chama River Canyon between El Vado and Abiquiu Dams.

The "Ojitos", "Rio Chama" and "Dark Canyon" roadless areas totalling upwards of 35,000 acres, are in close proximity to one another in an area which has been eyed by wild river buffs for some time.

The identification of the three areas is consistent with Forest Service policy expressed in a memorandum from Chief John McGuire on August 28, 1974, requesting Forest Service personnel to reevaluate areas that might have been overlooked in the original Roadless Area Review and Evaluation.

It is likely that the Forest Service is also responding to a high level of interest in the area from the public.

Some of you may remember the 'Save the Gila' wall poster published by UNM students prior to the 1972 Gila Wilderness Hearings. Susan Emrich's studies of the wild and scenic river and wilderness potentiality of the Chama Canyon has culminated in a similar 23" x 34" poster full of poetry, drawings, wise sayings, and information on the geologic and human history and the flora and fauna of the Chama Canyon.

If you would like a copy of her attractive poster please write: Don Campbell, 338 East DeVargas St., Santa Fe, NM 87501.



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## ORV Comments

The Lincoln National Forest has just published its tentative proposals regarding the use and restriction of Off Road Vehicles. The proposed restricted areas protect the roadless areas of the Lincoln and other areas with delicate soils and steep slopes.

The Lincoln National Forest is seeking public input; copies of the proposals can be obtained by writing:

John A. Hafterson, Supervisor  
Lincoln National Forest  
Federal Bldg, 11th & New York  
Alamogordo, NM 88310

Comments should also be directed to Mr. Hafterson at the same address and must be submitted prior to January 1, 1976.

## Flora Freaks !!!

All flora freaks are to be advised that there will be a Symposium on Threatened & Endangered Plants at the Midtown Holiday Inn, 2020 Menaul Blvd., NE, in Albuquerque on December 4 and 5. The event begins at 1pm on the 4th, and is sponsored by the New Mexico sections of the Society for Range Management and the Society of American Foresters.

The registration fee is \$5.00. The program committee would appreciate early registration. If possible send your name, address and registration fee to: Ann Wolfe, Range Staff Group, Federal Bldg. Rm. 6033, 517 Gold Ave, SW, Albuq. N M 87102.

## Phreatophytes ...

Hearings were held in October regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the "Operation and Maintenance Program for the Rio Grande, Velarde to Caballo Dam".

An extension of the comment deadline from October 24th to November 15th means that there is still time to get comments in.

The DEIS discusses many ways of controlling vegetation along the river course: root plowing, chaining, mowing, burning -- to mention a few. Among the most controversial are the plans to eliminate large acreages of 'phreatophytes', and the plans to control vegetation by using the Vietnam-famous herbicides: 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D.

The massive DEIS can be found in many libraries and government offices throughout the State, or you can order your own by writing: Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation, Southwest Region, Herring Plaza Box H-4377, Amarillo, Tx. 79101 (phone: (806) 376-2401). Written comments should be sent to the same address before November 15th.