

Grand Canyon Wilderness Comments Due by September 26th

The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared a wilderness plan for Grand Canyon National Park which deserves your active support. The Hearings are behind us now, but you can still write a letter; the deadline for comments is September 26th.

Background

In accordance with the requirement of the Wilderness Act, the National Park Service completed and sent to Congress in 1972 wilderness recommendations for three National Park System units in the Grand Canyon (Grand Canyon National Park, Marble Canyon Nat'l.

Monument and Grand Canyon National Monument). Conservation groups were disappointed in those recommendations since they omitted large portions of wilderness quality lands, largely those above the rim.

In 1975, the President signed into law the Grand Canyon National Park Enlargement Act which combined these 3 NPS units and added other lands, thus creating a substantially enlarged Grand Canyon National Park. That same Act required the National Park Service to prepare a new wilderness recommendation for the enlarged park, thus the

(Continued on page 6)



May 19, 1976

Decision-makers on the Chama River.

From the left:
 Legislator William Segó, University
 of New Mexico President "Bud" Davis,
 the Governor's daughter, Cynthia;
 Eugene Sorenson, Governor Jerry
 Apodaca (at the oars), Jay Sorenson,
 and river guide Doug Murphy.

Chama Scenic River Effort: All Work and All Play

by Karen Marston

The Chama River lies in north central New Mexico-- flowing through canyons of multi-colored stone and speaking of stories centuries old. It is an area that the Anasazi knew and loved; the Utes, Navajos, and Apaches travelled through, leaving only hints of their passing; and about whose beauty the Spaniards and Anglos wrote glowing prose. The canyon itself provides a home and haven for animals such as cougars, coyotes, and elk, and a place where golden eagles soar the wind currents high above.

As in so many cases, the area was unknown to many and forgotten by people speeding on their way to somewhere. However, the area is being "rediscovered" by backpackers, hunters, fishermen, river runners and the like. Unfortunately, such "discovery" leads to destruction -- litter, fragile environments destroyed unknowingly, passing people, over-developed campgrounds and subdivisions in the name of progress and comfort, and finally the fleeing of wildlife. The needs of human beings as expressed through recreation need to be fulfilled, but without some protection, this area will be trampled, traces of history erased, and the golden eagle homeless and lost for ages to come.

Concern and respect for the Chama area has led a handful of people to seek a way to protect the area and keep it the way it is for future generations to enjoy. The problem was attacked from several directions.

Susan Emrich, Don Campbell, and a small group in Chama and Sierra Amarilla-- whose combined endeavors in hiking canyon walls, mapping, and publishing expertise resulted in the "El Rio Chama" poster-- were one of the forces.

"Stretch" Fretwell and his efforts with the Boy Scouts in river running resulted in the Los Alamos troop adopting the Chama River as one of their conservation projects.

A small group of the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee attempted to have legislation passed designating the Chama River as a feasibility study for the Federal Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Act. This thrust died in the shuffle of other issues that year. The NMWSC also helped with the wilderness proposal as expressed in the poster.

Doug Murphy and Steve Berkson, who turned Jay Sorenson on to river running and set his Machiavellian mind into action concerning the protection of the Chama River, were instrumental in the focusing on river running and its tourist appeal as a handle for environmental protection in an age of development and comfort.

Their efforts seemed to hang in suspension when the U. S. Forest Service postponed their land use study of the canyon area until 1978. However, through Jay Sorenson's work in the New Mexico political arena, Governor Jerry Apodaca created the Wilderness Commission. Jay was convinced that an avenue for protection of the river was via State agencies and processes, and the selling point was river running and tourism. The stage had been set.

So, in 1976, Doug Murphy introduced both Jay Sorenson and Governor Jerry Apodaca to the Chama River. On the 19th of May, Doug took them, and UNM's President "Bud" Davis and legislator Bill Segó down the lower run of the Chama. The day was a perfect one with the sun highlighting the canyon colors along the way and only a brief spell of rain. Because El Rio Chama is an intriguing but treacherous river, the Governor and his sons were able to take the helm of the rafts and navigate through her bends and rapids.

Needless to say, the beauty of New Mexico as expressed by the Chama captured their hearts as it had the ones who had come before. In essence, the move to protect the Chama River began to take form again. It was at this point, that Jay, on his own initiative and with his expertise in politics and devotion to the preservation of New Mexico's wilderness areas, began to develop a plan for a State Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River System with the Chama River as a beginning.

With a little help from Karen Marston, the plan to build a river system began to take shape. The trips for the legislators took on momentum. The hope was to get as many of the legislators, state officials, and related, involved people on the river and the river do all the "talking". Doug Murphy and Steve Berkson provided their ratts, river expertise, love and enthusiasm for the river; the trips were relaxed and enjoyable but involving and informative. Even Jay became so possessed by the spirit of the river that it became impossible for him to resist taking the oars of even the littlest raft.

Although it was an election year and schedules were hectic, numerous legislators accepted invitations, and some like Aubrey Dunn, Joe Mercer, Ron Chaplin, and Jim Pieronnet ran the river. The river did indeed speak to them, and they learned to be concerned about the area, if not to love it also.

As the proposal took shape, 26 miles of the Chama River were identified for designation. Roughly, this area starts just south of the El Vado Dam and cuts through private, BLM, State, and U.S. Forest Service land to the headwaters of the Abiquiu Reservoir. Each area had to be identified and plotted on maps; each owner or agency had to be personally contacted. There were long, tedious hours in the Tierra Amarilla courthouse pouring over legal documents, or in Santa Fe reviewing existing legislation and much time spent just commuting from point to point.

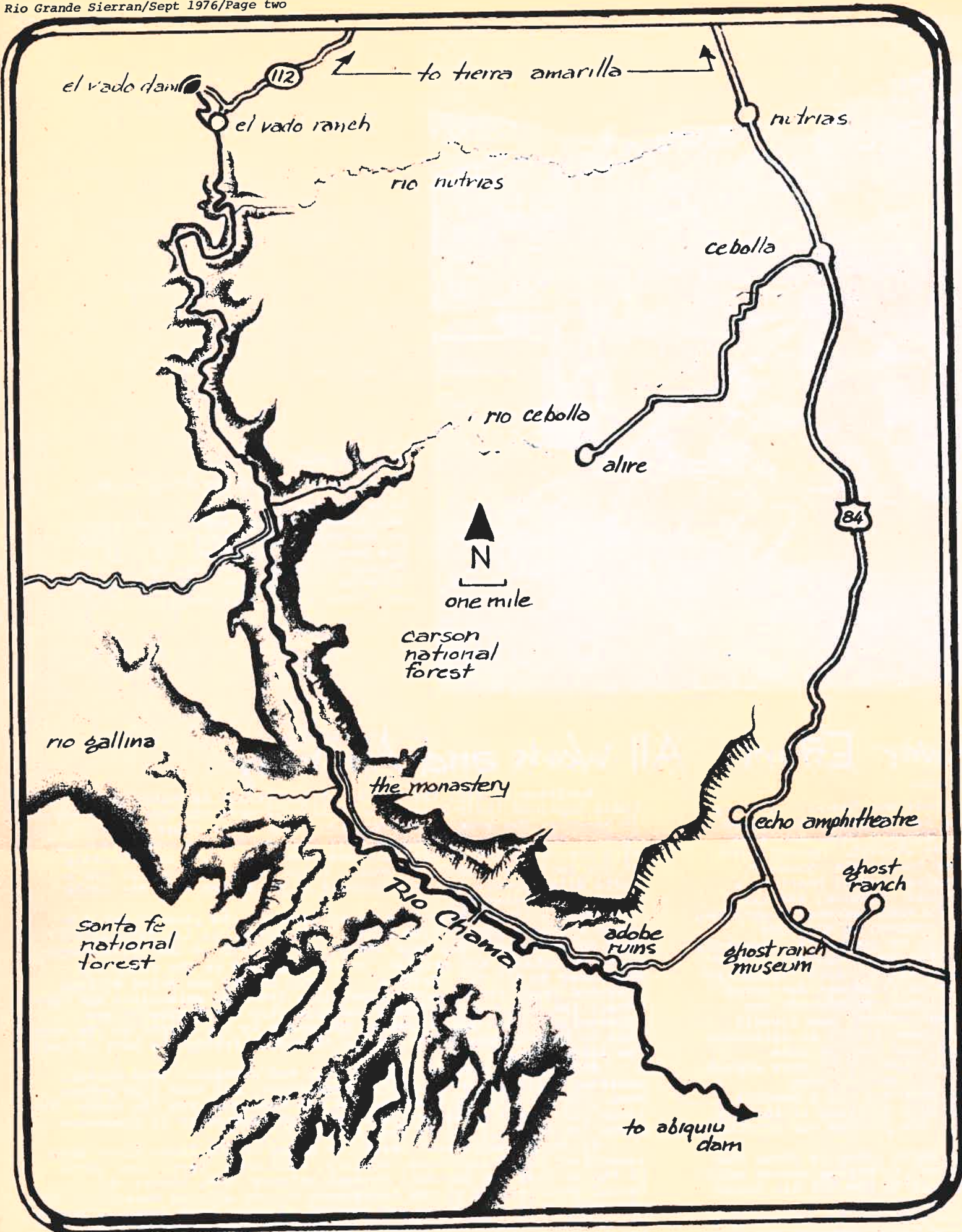
On August 9th, Jay Sorenson, representing the Governor's Wilderness Commission, with the help of the Lt. Governor's Office, visited the Mayor, Chamber of Commerce, and other members of the business community in the town of Chama. He paid courtesy calls and investigated a possible tie-in of river running with the tourist industry in Chama. Interest and support for this idea was quickly apparent, and an understanding developed about the proposed legislation and its possible implications for the people of Chama. Some of them, such as Mayor Benny Medina and railroad president Robert Keller accepted invitations for a river trip and became enthusiastic supporters.

Then, on August 10th, Dave Foreman, Southwest Representative of the Wilderness Society, called a meeting in Espanola where the forces finally came together and "Friends of the Chama" was created. Although the group was small, they were enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and active. The responsibility and work was divided, and a new cohesion was felt among them.

In the following weeks, innumerable agencies were contacted. These included the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State Game and Fish, and Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. Forays into this area proved fruitful but amazingly intricate.

The Santa Fe Forest Supervisor and the District Ranger were contacted. Discussions covered maintenance, land use planning, and historical background of the area. Topics of maintenance, enforce-

(Continued on Page 2)



The proposed Chama Wild and Scenic River can best be seen while reclining on a raft. An excellent two day trip begins at El Vado Ranch and ends at the 'adobe ruins'. Call ahead to El Vado Ranch to let 'em know you're coming. It will cost you \$2 to leave your vehicle there.

For an excellent day trip put in below the monastery and take out at the 'adobe ruins'. (Do not disturb the monastery schedule by putting in or taking out at the monastery itself.)

Check beforehand with the Bureau of Reclamation regarding the flow from El Vado. If it's above 350 cubic feet per second, the river is runnable.

canoeists, were recognized as positive assets to the State, and a task force focusing on the needs of people like them was formed. Here people who have been trying to encourage wise and concerned use of our resources were finally finding some backing.

As of the end of August, most of the float trips will be completed and the hope is to have reached out to legislators like Ted Montoya, Ray Medina, Joe F. Del, Matias Chacon, and other state and federal officials. At the end of October, the proposal will have been presented to the Subcabinet of Natural Resources and legislation drafted and prepared as part of the Governor's legislative package for the January 1977 session of the State Legislature if all goes well.

It should be noted that action by the State to protect the Chama does not exclude the possibility of eventually placing Chama in the National Wild and Scenic River System. Quite the contrary. Once the state protection is an established fact and if the river in question meets the stringent national standards (which the Chama certainly does) then, if it is the state's wish, the state may request that the river be included in the National Wild and Scenic River System also.

The work at the state level however, has only begun. The more anyone delves into the process of saving a river, the more there is to know and do. There are still more details to be checked, private land owners to be contacted, conferences with officials of the various agencies, information packets to be written for the legislators, lobbying, letter-writing and much much more.

What started as the concern of a handful of strangers has now become a possibility for a handful of friends -- the protection of the Chama River. For others in the past their respect and awe of the river was shown by their ability to live and travel through areas with only a trace left behind. In our day of progress and complicated trappings of security and comfort, we must reach out and protect the fragile but enduring environments for others to know.

The Chama Canyon is an area that so far has withstood the flow of centuries and has shared its beauty, protection and serenity with countless travellers. It can continue to do so only if we respect and honor its own integrity and ecological balance. At this end the "Friends of the Chama" are striving.

The Rio Grande SIERRAN

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Editor: Don Campbell
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Volume XIII, Number 7

Chama River

(from page 1)

ment, and land status were covered with BLM and BOR. Discussions with Robert Nanninga of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District were held concerning river flow data. Each agency added another piece to the puzzle, and, slowly, all was beginning to fall into place.

As a sideline to this issue, the office of Lt. Governor Robert Ferguson became interested in the small businesses associated with the recreational aspects -- kayak and canoe outfitters, river runners and the like. Doug Murphy and Steve Berkson of Get Down Rios, who run rivers commercially, or Buck Cully of "Mountains and Rivers", who outfits kayakers and

lone in the Kayak

--Karen Marsten

as alone in the kayak now --
rafts were out of sight
and the rapid ahead was willing to accept my challenge.
throat was dry and my stomach filled with butterflies.
as alone with the river
and I pointed my craft downstream.
don't remember much about that rapid --
the pitch of the kayak,
the cool water in my face,
the straining muscles --
trying to keep the kayak upright and pointed downstream.

then --
it was over!
as again in placid water,
rocked gently by the Chama.
leaned back and gazed at the multi-colored canyon walls,
the blue sky filled with soft, white clouds;
the thrill and excitement of having made it engulfed me.
was only a beginning --
my first rapid, my first kayak trip;
yet I knew I would return and
fulfill my commitment to the Chama.
pointed my kayak toward the next rapid.



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Marine Mammal Protection Act Threatened

In 1972, the U.S. Congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act. One of the targets of the act was the U.S. tuna industry which had been "incidentally" killing some 400,000 dolphins each year in the course of fishing yellowfin tuna "on porpoise". The act mandated that in two years dolphin mortality incidental to tuna fishing must be reduced to insignificant levels approaching zero.

The tuna industry was given two years to improve gear and methods in order to comply with the MMPA by 1974. The National Marine Fisheries Service, the enforcement agency involved was also given two years to study the effects of the tuna fishing "on porpoise" on dolphin populations and to file an Environmental Impact Statement.

In 1974, NMFS filed an EIS, set up regulations and issued permits to the tuna industry to kill dolphins incidental to tuna fishing. The Environmental Defense Fund filed suit, claiming the EIS to be inadequate. On May 11, 1976, Judge Charles R. Richey ruled that the MMPA, according to the MMPA, the "on porpoise" fishing was illegal and he declared the permits null and void as of May 31, 1976. The response of the tuna industry was to appeal the decision and they were granted a stay until the appeal was heard. The appeal was heard in early August in the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals and Judge Richey's decision was upheld. The decision is effective January 1, 1977.

The scene has shifted now to the legislative arena where the industry will try their best to have the MMPA amended to allow the continued slaughter of the dolphins. Congressman Robert Leggett (D-California), Chairman of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation & the Environment has indicated that he will hold four days of oversight hearings on the amendment to the MMPA in late September. The proposed amendment, H.R.13865 would so completely weaken and destroy the MMPA that it must be firmly opposed. It would place the future welfare of the dolphins in the hands of the tuna industry with their record of slaughtering over 2 million dolphins in the last fifteen years that step is not appropriate! Please write your Representative, and also Hon. Lenore K. Sullivan, Chairman House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee immediately! Two species of dolphin, the spotted and the spinner are being considered endangered due to the tuna fishing. The MMPA will be enforced as it is written. Write today for the dolphins! The address of your representatives is under the 'Exercise Your Rights' column elsewhere in this newsletter. Congressman Leggett's address is below:

The Honorable Lenore K. Sullivan
Chairman, House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee
House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Also the article on page 5 about a locally produced television show "Last Days of the Dolphins" -- produced a long way from the nearest studios of KNME in Albuquerque.)

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Alone in the Kayak

--Karen Marsten

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Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

El Paso Group Works to Preserve Mountain Backdrop

The Franklin Mountains cut into the heart of El Paso. John Colburn has characterized them as "mountains you can really see, without all those trees covering them up". Since they are in the desert, when grading is done it takes many years for the scars to heal (if they ever do). On the eastern slopes, the rain fall is part of the recharge to the Hueco Bolson and the more asphalt that goes on the slopes, the more recharge El Paso loses from its water supply. Also, the present developments on the slopes have not provided adequately for the runoff from the heavy showers of the rainy season. This has led to flooding of the area below. In addition, the 'personality' of El Paso is largely dependent on the mountains.

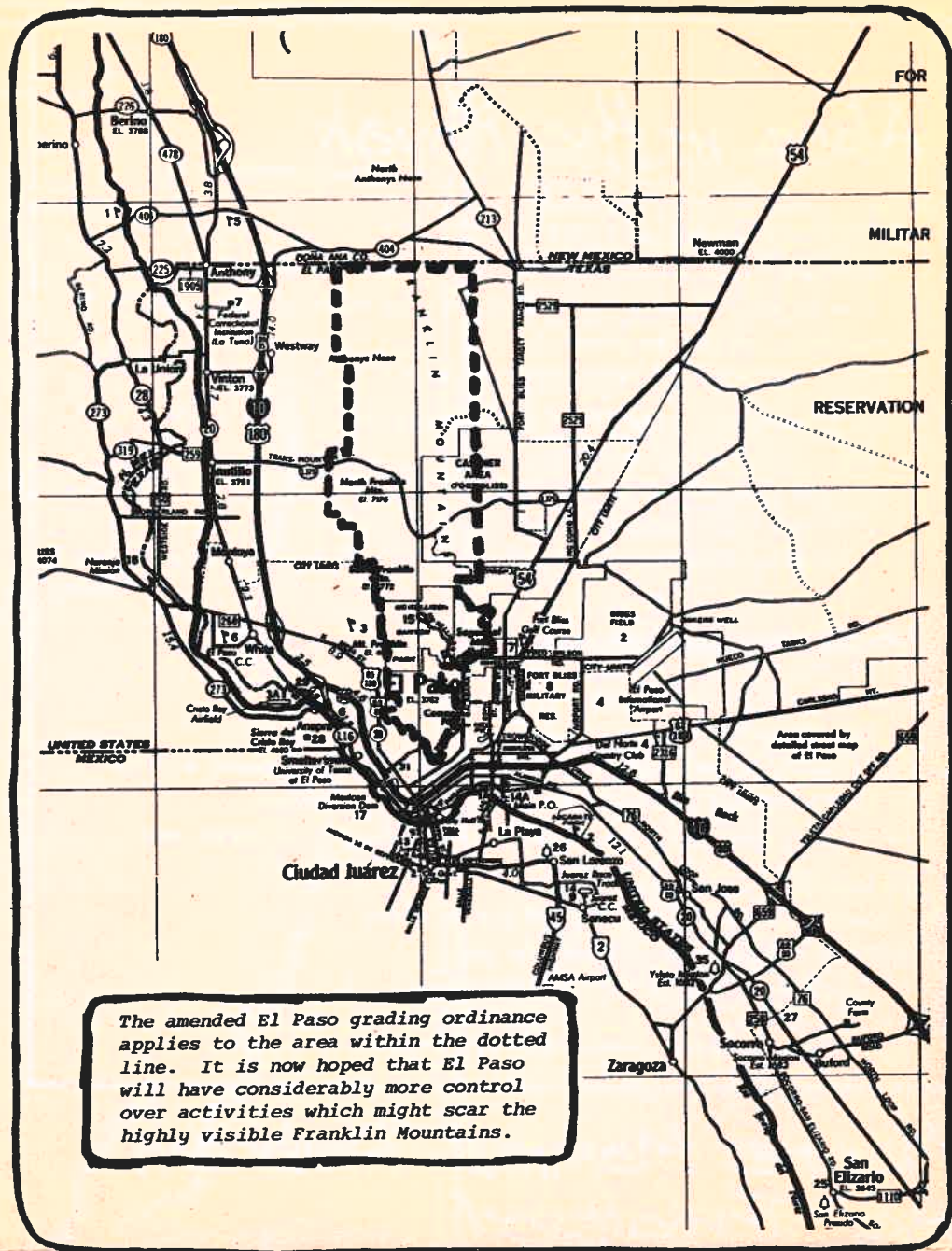
The Sierra Club first became involved in protecting the mountains in 1972. One particularly poor development had been planned for the east side. Bob Barto, then Chairman of the El Paso Group, along with other interested citizens formed an organization called 'Save the Mountain' and launched a successful petition campaign.

The Mayor ordered a six months' moratorium on building on the mountain while a committee was appointed to come up with some recommendations about the future of the Franklins.

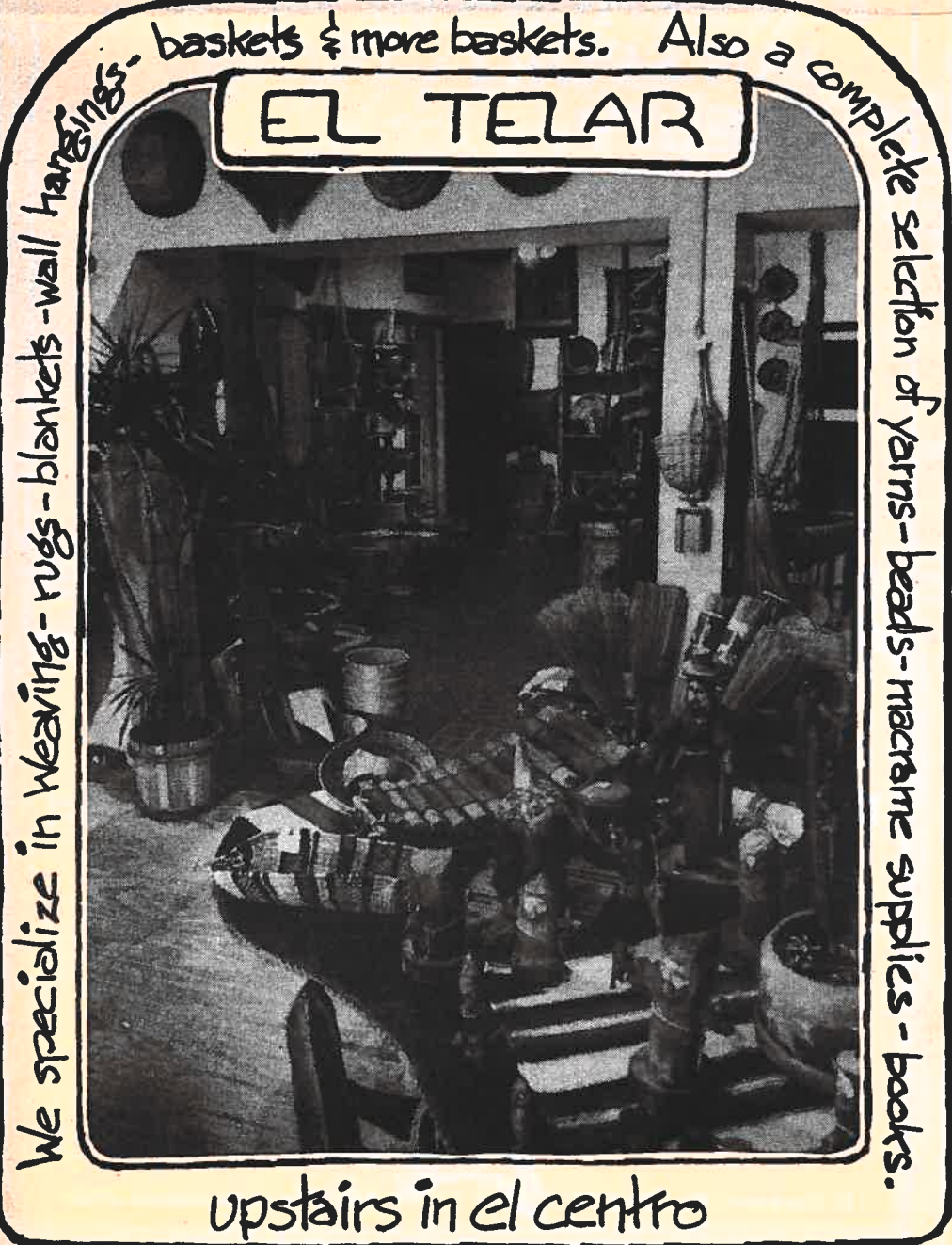
Bob Barto was a member of the committee and a comprehensive report was prepared with many good suggestions. But, at the very time of the committees' report to the Mayor and the City Council, Bob Barto died -- a most untimely and unexpected event. Also it was the end of the Council's term of office, and the succeeding Council and Mayor did not consider the mountain a priority. So no action was taken on the report.

In the next three years various developments continued to creep up the mountain on all sides. Then in late 1975, Sugarloaf Mountain -- one of the prominent peaks on the east side -- was attacked by dynamite and bulldozers for the first time. The blasting was a new quarry operation under the guise of preparing the site for apartments. The deception was obvious to everyone from the City Planning Commission to the average citizen, but the grading ordinance was so inadequate that there was no legal way to stop what was happening.

The Sierra Club, along with Save the Mountain, the League of Women Voters and other groups decided it was time for action. On January 22nd we presented to the City Council an amendment to the grading ordinance to cover the mountain area. It was referred to the El Paso Mountain Committee, the Department of Planning and the City Attorney's Office. The amendment arrived back at Council on April 22nd, was voted on for first reading on May 22nd (passed 3 to 2, the Mayor with us) and was passed on final reading on July 7 (unanimously). (Those of you familiar with these things understand the inevitability of the delays.)



The amended El Paso grading ordinance applies to the area within the dotted line. It is now hoped that El Paso will have considerably more control over activities which might scar the highly visible Franklin Mountains.



Handwritten text around the photo: "We specialize in weaving - rugs - blankets - wall hangings - baskets & more baskets. Also a complete selection of yarns - beads - macrame supplies - books." Above the photo is a sign that says "EL TELAR". Below the photo is the text "upstairs in el centro".

Now -- what did we accomplish? That will be determined the first time the amendment is used. The ordinance sounds effective and the area it covers is relatively satisfactory (we would have included more land idealistically, but El Paso's mountain is almost all privately owned and there were many pressures at play in this).

The intent of the amendment is "that proposed grading shall result in the minimum possible disturbance of terrain and natural land features necessary to construct residences or other permitted buildings" . . . Excessive grading "which unnecessarily changes the terrain, mountains or other natural features, or creates flood problems or irreparable scars which will have an adverse effect on the physical character or economic viability of the community as an attractive place to live" shall not be permitted.

In brief summary it says this: any application for a grading permit in the Mountain Development Area must be accompanied by a development plan indicating the intended use, development, and subdivisions of the land and the relationship between the proposed development and the grading plan. This must be evaluated by the City Engineer, Department of Planning and passed to the Planning Commission who will hold a public hearing before voting on the issuance of the permit.

The Planning Commission must determine if the proposed work will have an adverse effect on the City's land use plan for the area, the adjacent property, and the visual appearance of the mountain. It must see that standards will be met with regard to: paving, streets, and traffic control; drainage, soil stabilization, slope protection, landscaping, erosion control, and protective devices; the safety of the work. The decision of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council by either party.

The El Paso Mountain Committee, (the committee originally appointed 4 years ago with some new members), has prepared a new zoning classification which will apply to land on the slopes of the Franklins. The Council should approve the classification this August, but then, the property will have to be considered parcel by parcel for zoning change. It is an excellent ordinance, with many restrictions, but if several landowners do not want their property under this classification, then it may not prove to be extremely effective.

This grading amendment was the El Paso Group's first real involvement in a local project. I believe we were successful because many members came to many Council meetings, and wrote letters to the Mayor and Council members. Also, the protection of the Franklins is important to most El Pasoans because it is so visible it is hard to overlook. The favorable press coverage was very helpful. The printed press and radio were excellent throughout, and the TV coverage was positive to neutral. All these factors worked together for the passage of the amendment. It afforded the participation of many members who are not able or interested in our wilderness outings and conservation efforts. We will be vigilant about the implementation.

--Gayle Eads

'Spectrum' Shows True Colors

"Spectrum" is a CBS radio network feature which is designed to expose the listener to "varying shades of personal opinion on current issues." So says the press release material from the network. It is also stated that "The opinions expressed on "Spectrum" are those of the commentators themselves and should not be attributed to CBS or any of its affiliates".

I guess that means that CBS is off the hook and we pile all the heat on Mr. M. Stanton Evans himself.

At any rate, the "Spectrum" editorial on the right was aired in August, and we reproduce it in full because it sounds so very much like the material on the subject put out by the National Chamber of Commerce and reported on by the Sierran in January and May of this year.

I asked Chris Goddard -- who worked this spring in Washington with the National Clean Air Coalition -- for a few choice comments by way of rebuttal. --Ed.

Unfortunately, it seems that Mr. Evans did not carefully review S. 3219, as there are serious fallacies in his statement. This kind of misinformation, when expressed over one of the major networks, is intolerable.

One of the most serious and blatant fallacies that we find in Mr. Evans "Spectrum" statement is his claim that the Clean Air Amendments will mainly affect:

"...rural areas that are planning any kind of economic development -- industry, shopping centers, a housing complex..."
(quote from his statement).

If Mr. Evans had carefully researched the appropriate background material, or even read through S. 3219 once, he would have discovered that S. 3219 affects only new stationary sources where major pollution is a possibility.

In addition, if Mr. Evans had taken the proper time to read S. 3219, he would have realized that, contrary to his claim, S. 3219 does not "enshrine the no growth policy", but merely requires that new point sources of air pollution must install efficient pollution control equipment.

Does Mr. Evans realize that the non-degradation proposals would permit even a new 1000 megawatt coal-fired power plant, with scrubbers, to come into almost any Class II area?

The Sierran fully understands that there is opposition to the Clean Air Amendments of 1976. Yet, when an opinion is shabbily researched and based on misinformation, such as Mr. Evans "Spectrum" statement, attention must be brought to this kind of unprofessional journalism and efforts made to correct it in the future.

--Chris Goddard

M. STANTON EVANS
CBS RADIO NETWORK
AUGUST 10, 1976

I'm M. Stanton Evans.

If you doubt that the yen for regulation in this country has reached the level of fanaticism, consider the Clean Air Amendments of 1976.

The Environmental Protection Agency has come up with something called "Significant Deterioration Standards for Purity in Air." These regulations say, in essence, that if a community or area has higher levels of air quality than those required by national standards, it may not do things that would lower them appreciably. It may not, in other words, reduce its standards to those permitted elsewhere.

The impact of this ultra-purist ruling is felt mainly in rural areas that are planning any kind of economic development-- industry, shopping centers, a housing complex. It is an obvious barrier to economic progress, mandating that any area now consisting of sylvan glade or open field remain that way forever, a de facto no growth policy for America.

It has been put across, moreover, with hardly a word of public debate. The policy was not invented by Congress, nor is there any evidence that Congress envisioned such a policy when it passed the Clean Air Act of 1970. The ruling was promulgated by a federal court and subsequently enforced by guidelines from the EPA.

One would think that imposition of such a policy by such a method would stir resistance in the halls of Congress. Such, however, is not the case--at least not with the Public Works Committees of House and Senate. Both these bodies have stepped forth with proposals that would enshrine the no-growth policy in statute law.

Fortunately, there are some members of Congress who oppose this abdication of responsibility. Virginia's Senator William Scott has weighed the impact of the no-growth policy and has taken the lead in trying to get it reversed. He proposes a common sense amendment that would establish standards in keeping with national sanity. It says quite simply that existing undeveloped areas need not adhere to air quality standards more stringent than those required for the nation as a whole.

In trying to overturn the dictates of the regulators, Scott and a few others in Congress have taken on a formidable challenge. Here's hoping that they win their battle.

This is M. Stanton Evans with Spectrum.

Dolphin Documentary Debut

This July KNME-TV and several local Sierra Clubbers got together and produced a television show called "Last Days of the Dolphins". If New Mexico seems an unlikely place to produce a show on dolphins remember that tuna sandwiches are eaten nationally! Nick Nicolaus and Phil Howard were instrumental in getting the show done and Greg Montgomery of KNME was the prime mover and producer. John Schneider and Katie Parker of the Santa Fe Group were on the show with Greg. John and Katie have been working on the whale boycott for some time now and consequently know alot about dolphins too so they were asked to be on the show. It's a great show and hopefully Sierra Club folks all over the country will get it aired on their local Public Broadcasting Station soon as oversight hearings on the amendment to the Marine Mammal Protection Act will be coming up in late September. The first part of the show is an excellent and graphic account of the tuna fishing and the dolphin slaughter. The second part is a discussion which brings the film up to date. To find out more call Nick Nicolaus in Albuquerque at 268-2040 or John and Katie in Santa Fe at 983-5701.

The Governor's Wilderness Commission will conduct a PUBLIC HEARING regarding the Wild, Scenic & Recreational River designation for the Chama River

Saturday, Sept. 25, 1976 at 1 pm
Chama City Hall

115-Miscellaneous

One Classified Ad

FORMER RIO GRANDE SIERRAN EDITOR (Shirley Alsop) desperately needs two back issues of the SIERRAN -- Nov/Dec 1973 and Jan/Feb 1974. Any packrats still hoarding these issues would be handsomely rewarded (a trip to Washington, D.C.'s most elite Burger Chef, for example, and/or a place to crash for a few nights should they ever visit the area.)

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.. GRAND CANYON WILDERNESS

(from cover page)

current proposal and hearings.

The Park Service Wilderness Proposal

The National Park Service has proposed 992,046 acres of wilderness and another 120,965 acres for potential wilderness addition status (That adds up to more than six times the size of the Pecos Wilderness). The total acreage in the Park is 1,211,104.

'Potential wilderness addition' status is proposed for areas in which park officials contend there are some conflicts with immediate wilderness designation -- such as areas in private ownership, the Colorado River itself and those lands within Grand Canyon National Park on which the Havasupai Tribe is allowed traditional uses. It is the intention of the National Park Service to add these areas to the wilderness if and when the "conflicts" are resolved.

Omitted from the wilderness are the developed areas of the North and South Rim, the cross-canyon corridor including Phantom Ranch, and roads open to public travel in other parts of the Canyon.

Sierra Club Recommendations

Overall, the Club feels that the NPS plan is a good one -- worthy of praise and support. Conservation groups have long doubted the need for the potential wilderness addition status, and ask that these lands be included within the wilderness immediately. However, we are pleased that the National Park Service has recognized the wilderness qualities of these lands and that they hope to eventually include these lands in the wilderness. Viewed together, the lands proposed for immediate wilderness designation plus those proposed as potential wilderness additions encompass virtually all of the land within Grand Canyon National Park which the Sierra Club and other conservation groups would like to see designated as wilderness.

Probably the greatest controversy will center around wilderness designation for the Colorado River. The NPS report notes that, "There is no question that the river passes through some of the most scenic and primitive land remaining in this country." The Sierra Club believes that it is particularly important that the river itself -- and not just the banks -- be included in the wilderness. Such designation is likely to be opposed by some of the companies that operate commercial river trips using motorboats through the canyon. Motors are not essential to either the safety or the enjoyment of persons on river trips.

Opposition to wilderness may also come from groups who still have not given up on their hopes of building dams in the Grand Canyon and others who seek to have certain areas excluded from the park & see wilderness designation as a further obstacle to their plans.

What You Can Do

Because opposition to the NPS wilderness proposal is likely, it is important that we build a strong record of support. The hearings were held in Arizona and Utah last month, but the hearing record remains open for letters and written comments until September 26th!

Your letters should be sent to the following address:

Hearing Officer
c/o the Superintendent
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023

As far as the Club is concerned, the main points to be made are as follows:

1. Support the National Park Service Wilderness Proposal.
2. Praise the National Park Service for doing a good job.
3. Emphasize the importance of wilderness designation for the Colorado River itself.
4. Ask that those areas proposed for 'potential wilderness' status be designated as wilderness immediately.

A packet of materials describing the NPS proposal in detail is available from the Superintendent of the Park (see the address above).

For more information on the Sierra Club position, or if you have any questions, please contact the Sierra Club - Southwest Office, 2014 East Broadway, Room 212, Tucson, Arizona 85719.

Ask a friend to write also.

-- John McComb
Sierra Club Southwest Representative

CHAMA CHANGES?

The Army Corps of Engineers has announced that they will hold a hearing in Espanola in October to get public input regarding the question of storing additional water in Abiquiu Reservoir and regarding the problem of aggradation in the Chama River bed between Abiquiu Dam and the confluence of the Chama and the Rio Grande which inhibits the Corps from releasing fast flows from Abiquiu Dam.

The hearing will be held at:

The Richard Lucero Center
314 West Oñate
Espanola, New Mexico
at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 6th

Originally Abiquiu Dam was constructed as a flood control dam only and there were no plans at that time to hold behind it a permanent pool.

The City of Albuquerque has requested that the storage be allowed so that the City will have a place to store its allotment of the San Juan-Chama Diversion water. Apparently the City of Albuquerque is entitled to more water from the Diversion than it can currently use.

The Corps is already storing about 25,000 acre feet, but the City of Albuquerque wants a green light to store up to 44,400 acre feet.

Ghost Ranch and others who own land behind the dam are very much involved because the change in storage would mean permanent or semi-permanent inundation of their property.

The second major area for discussion, as the Corps sees it, has to do with the Chama River channel below Abiquiu Dam which, in its present condition, does not allow the level of high flows desired by the Corps and some of the downstream water users -- notably the Rio Grande Compact Commissioner for the State of Texas, Jesse Gilmer.


According to the Corps, the Chama River channel has "aggraded" (filled up and become choked with sand and debris from side channels and arroyos, etc.) to the point that it can only comfortably accommodate about 1500 cubic feet per second. Occasionally the downstream users -- and the Rio Grande Compact spells this out in its language -- would like to be able to call for a release of up to 4000 cubic feet per second! At the present time such a release would wreak havoc with the traditional ditch systems on that portion of the Chama between Abiquiu Dam and Espanola.

Plans to correct this "problem" are amorphous but seem to include the construction of new irrigation inlet works and the scouring of the Chama River bed with bulldozers to increase channel capacity.

The environmental questions at issue are many and profound. There is little prepared material on these problems as yet, but the Corps does have a "Draft Environmental Statement on the Operation and Maintenance of Abiquiu Dam & Reservoir" (Nov. '75) which addresses the issue of increased storage behind the Dam.

Water politics -- the most exciting game in the Southwest!! Plan to be at the Espanola hearing.

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The Staff

S.W.R.C.C Agenda Tames Mighty Colorado

Water Supply and Distribution in the Colorado River System

Saturday, September 11, 1976
9:00 a.m.
Room 153 Administration Building
Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO

MORNING SESSION - BACKGROUND

9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Changing Values, Policies and Institutions on the Colorado River: An Historical Analysis -- Henry P. Caulfield, Jr., Professor of Political Science, Colorado State University, formerly Director of U. S. Water Resources Council in Washington, D.C. and Director of Resources Programs Staff for the Department of the Interior under Stewart Udall.

10:00 - 11:00 Water Availability of the Colorado System
1) Existing Developments and Diversions; Quantification Studies and Conclusions - A representative of the Bureau of Reclamation - to be announced.
2) Quantification Studies and Conclusions Through Tree Ring Analysis - A Longterm View - Charles W. Stockton, Assistant Professor of Hydrology in the Department of Hydrology and Laboratory of Tree Ring Research, University of Arizona.

11:00-11:15 - Break
11:15-12:15 - The Affect of Salinity on Availability - John W. Keyes, III, Chief of the Colorado River Water Quality Office, Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, is a hydrologist who has been involved with the Bureau's water resource planning for 13 years.
12:15 - 1:30 - Lunch break

AFTERNOON SESSION - Viewpoints on Best Future Use of the Colorado River

1:30 - 1:50 - A State's Point of View - Daniel F. Lawrence, Director of Water Resources, Utah State Division of Water Resources. A registered engineer, Mr. Lawrence has served with the Soil Conservation Service and Corps of Engineers. He has been with the State Division of Water Resources since 1956, its Director since 1967, and is the Governor's appointee to the Inter-State Stream Commission.
1:50 - 2:10 - An Energy Intensive Scenario - Ken Kaufman, Assistant Chief of the Division of Planning Coordination for the Bureau of Reclamation at its Engineering and Research Center in Denver. Mr. Kaufman is an engineer with 27 years' planning experience which includes service as principal staff member with the inter-agency task force which produced the Western U. S. water Plan Study and as Chairman of the Department of Interior's Water for Energy Management Team.
2:10 - 2:30 - An Economist's Point of View - William Schulze - Assistant Professor of Economics in the area of environment and natural resources at the University of New Mexico; investigator with Lake Powell Research Project and the National Science Foundation Research Project on Solar and Geothermal Energy.

2:30 - 2:45 - Break

2:45 - 3:05 - An Environmentalist's Scenario - John A. McComb - Southwest Regional Representative and hydrology consultant to the Sierra Club since 1970. His responsibilities include following water resource and energy developments, and protection and management of federal lands in the Four Corners states.

3:05 ----- Questions and Discussion

ACCOMMODATIONS


Motels: Durango has many independent motels as well as a Holiday Inn, at least one Best Western and Travel Lodge.

Forest Service Campgrounds: The closest Forest Service campgrounds are located at Vallecito Reservoir, about 15-20 miles northeast of Durango, and another is located about 10 miles north of Durango on Route 550.

Fee Campgrounds: Hidden Valley Lodge and Campground, 2202 Main Avenue, Durango - 303-247-0460; Jaycee Memorial Campground, within walking distance of downtown Durango, 303-259-0708.

For further information: Betsy Barnett, 338 E. deVargas, Santa Fe, NM 87501
505-982-4349 (day), 662-9581 (evening)

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