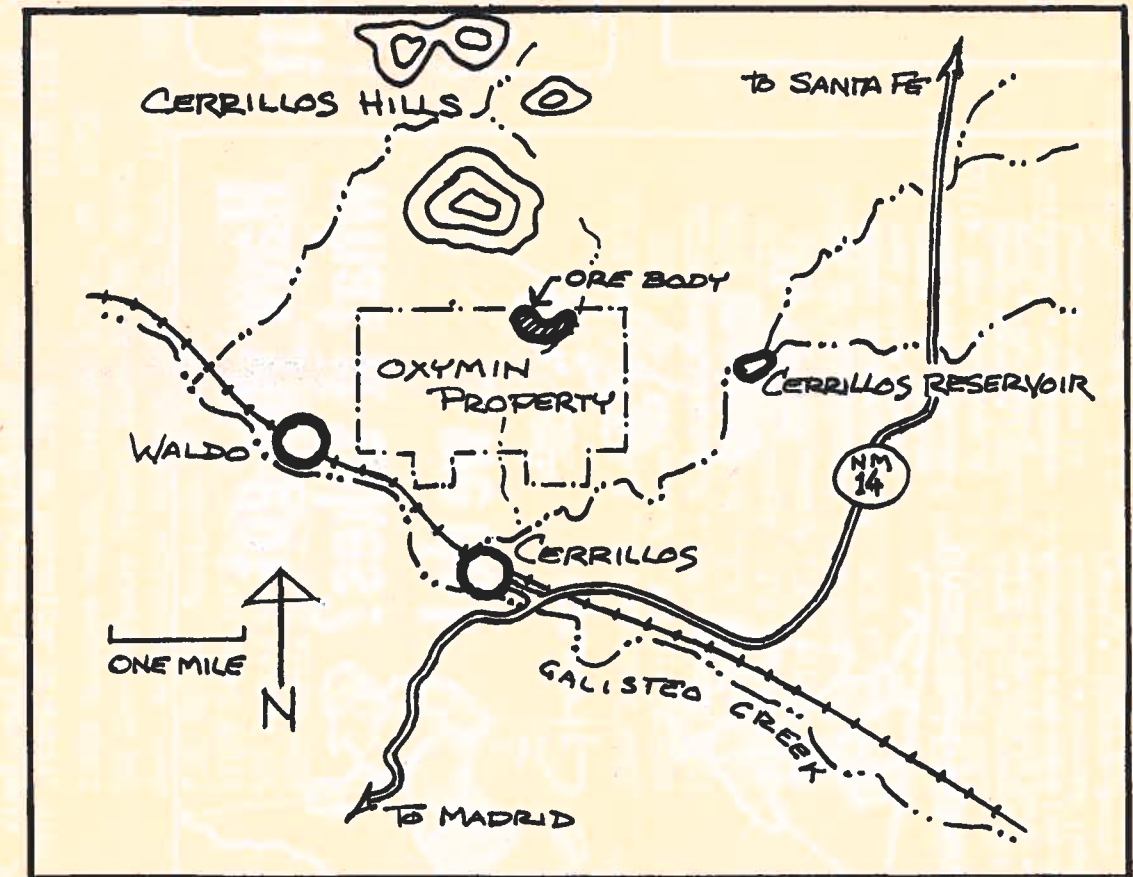




Return



Oxymin Starts With a Bang

by Jeff Pederson

Residents of Cerrillos and officials of Santo Domingo Pueblo had planned a demonstration for 11 a.m. January 21 to protest a preliminary 50-ton detonation at a proposed copper mining site two miles northwest of the small New Mexico town. To their surprise, Occidental Mineral Corp. (Oxymin) set off the blast at 7:45 a.m. after informing at least one member of the news media in advance with a 3:20 a.m. phone call (see the related article by Phil Niklaus).

That added another chapter in the 3-year old controversy surrounding Oxymin's plans to mine low-grade copper on a 1,300 acre site with a process involving leaching diluted sulphuric acid through the ore-bearing rock. Some Cerrillos residents have feared contamination of their water supply which was established in the 1880's by the Santa Fe railroad.

Discussions are still underway between Oxymin officials and state Environmental Improvement Agency (EIA) personnel over the key

(continued on page 2)

State Legislature Grinds to a Start

by Jeff Pederson
and Don Campbell

Additional taxes on mine operators, coupled with the "Bottle Bill" and a moratorium on radioactive waste disposal, will highlight environmental concerns in the current session of the New Mexico State Legislature. Proceedings began at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe less than two weeks before press time and many bills did not yet have numbers or official titles.

Legislators listen most carefully to constituents from their own districts, so in order to make your environmental views known you should write or phone your representative and senator in care of the State Capitol Building, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. 827-4011 is the number of the Capitol switchboard.

TAXING EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES may be the single hottest issue this session. The move, supported by the Club and the New Mexico Public Interest Research Group (NMPiRG), would increase the tax on the value of products taken from the land. The new revenues would provide start-up money for services in existing and projected "boom towns" (such as Grants), and to tackle expensive environmental problems caused by the industry such as water pollution and tailings piles.

Governor Jerry Apodaca has stated his support of a 25 percent tax rate. One report, commissioned by the Energy Resources Board, said the rate could go as high as 42 percent and still leave mining companies in a viable economic position.

Present tax rates are extremely low, and leave the state with little funding for providing the required services or cleaning up the tailings piles once the operators have moved elsewhere. Last year New Mexico received only \$700,000 from the state's largest bloc of industries, according to Denise Fort of NMPiRG. This is because mining companies, of which uranium concerns are the largest, are subject to a one percent severance tax (effective rate is 0.25 percent), and a small natural resources excise tax (effective rate, 0.75 percent) according to Fort. The companies are not subject to the state gross receipts tax of 4.5 percent, and can take advantage of the 22 percent depletion allowance.

New Mexico uranium ore is a hot item -- in more ways than one. The state has over half the known reserves in the U.S., and production is expected to triple by 1985. In Grants, the present exploration center, the population could increase by 50 percent. Exploration continues across the state, and 52 industry lobbyists were registered with this session of the legislature!

NMPiRG is also pressing for the end to the state sales tax of 4.5% on food. This would mean a \$30 to \$35 million loss to state coffers, but a gain of \$70-million would be realized if a new tax of 32 percent were placed on the extractive industries. One bill already introduced would raise the rate to just 5% on the severance tax portion, for an effective rate of 1.25%. Other bills will follow, and the chances of a higher rate are good; Senator Aubrey Dunn is championing the cause. At the present rate of exploitation, the known reserves of uranium in the state will be exhausted by 1990, said Ms. Fort.

THE "BOTTLE BILL" or container deposit legislation, would place

a minimum of 5 cents deposit on beverage cans and bottles. The measure is patterned after similar legislation in Oregon which has had the effect of reducing roadside litter by 80% and of producing a net increase in jobs due to a reconstructed recycling industry. So far the bottle bill has failed twice at the hands of New Mexico legislators.

Central Clearing House lobbyist Sally Rodgers said the bill has a good chance of House passage, but faces tough sledding in the Senate Conservation Committee chaired by Senator Joe Gant (D-Eddy Co.).

Action needed -- The toughest going for both the Bottle Bill and the Chama River Scenic and Pastoral River Bill will probably be in the Senate Conservation Committee chaired by Senator Joe Gant (D-Eddy County). Other members of the Committee are listed below (perhaps your State Senator is among them). They can be reached by writing them care of the State Capitol Building, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501, or phoning them through the State Capitol switchboard, 827-4011.

Other Committee members are: John Morrow (D-Colfax, Union, Harding, San Miguel); Caleb Chandler (D-Curry); Aubrey Dunn (D-Otero); W.S. Eoff (R-McKinley); Lawrence Goodell (Eddy, Chaves); Lamar Gwaltney (D-Dona Ana); Don King (D-Santa Fe, Torrance); Bill Lee (D-Lea); Jack Morgan (R-San Juan); Raymond Sitta (D-San Juan); I.M. Smalley (D-Sierra, Luna, Hidalgo); William Valentine (R-Bernalillo) and Bob Wood (D-Roosevelt, Chaves).

Write them all -- if you feel so inspired -- but be sure to write if your Senator is among them. Also write to Senator Gant.

"Each time it comes up, the bottling industry spends more money to defeat it," adds Rodgers. The volunteer cause on the other side, has spent \$500 so far. If you would like to help them out financially, send what you can to Citizens Against Non-Returnables, Box 175, Montezuma, NM 87731.

Interestingly, throwaway containers are a very recent phenomenon. Between 1959 and 1972, according to EPA testimony, the quantity of beer and soft drinks consumed in the U.S. increased 33% per person. In the same period, the number of beverage containers skyrocketed by 22%. If the trend toward "convenience" packaging continues, 80 billion beverage containers will be produced annually by 1980. A single refillable bottle can be used 15 times on the average.

Joanne Sprenger, Chairman of the Rio Grande Chapter and a leader of Citizens Against Non-Returnables, says consumers pay approximately 30% more in beverage retail prices by using one-way containers, and a recent Federal Energy Administration report indicates that a national "bottle bill" could save consumers \$1.8 billion in retail costs.

Litter clean-up costs are substantial also amounting to \$500 million in 1968 (according to Keep America Beautiful -- an industry organization which can hardly be accused of environmental bias). The New Mexico Highway Department spends almost \$650,000 per year on litter clean-up activities. We also waste energy on containers -- the same amount per year that a city of 7.5 million would use in electrical needs.

RADIOACTIVE WASTES of a low level could not be imported into the state for disposal until after a two year moratorium, under one pending measure, Senate Bill 55.

The bill is aimed against a Chem-Nuclear Company plan to start a disposal site in Colfax County. 'Low level' nuclear wastes come from medical sites or power plants, not from spent reactor fuel, but they are dangerous nevertheless. Currently six commercial low-level disposal sites are in operation in the U.S. Problems with leakage have

occurred at five of them. According to Sally Rodgers, problems normally show up years after the first disposals, such as at Maxey Flats, Kentucky, where streams were contaminated 14 years later.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has recommended that no new licenses be granted for disposal sites because the standards for monitoring safety are inadequate. Usually wastes are placed in containers (normally with a forty year life span) and then buried in large trenches in the ground. Some of the wastes remain potent for 700 years or

some future date because the federal law provides rather simple procedures for the upgrading of a state designated scenic river to a place in the national system.)

The bill to protect the Chama would:

- protect the natural and scenic values of the Chama and a strip up to 400' wide on either side from roughly the El Vado dam at the northern end to the Forest Service boundary about a mile below the adobe ruins at the southern end.
- protect private property rights and "existing uses;" would not allow the power of condemnation for purposes under the Act but would allow the state to seek easements from property owners.
- place the administration of the "scenic and pastoral river" under the state Game Commission, allowing that agency to establish permit controls if they see fit.
- provide for cooperative agreements between state and federal agencies.

At press time, the bill had not yet been introduced and had no number or official title. According to Brant Calkin, the bill will probably be introduced by Matias Chacon (D-Rio Arriba) with the support of the powerful senator from Otero County, Aubrey Dunn (a Democrat).

Opposition may develop in the Senate Conservation Committee, chaired by Sen. Joseph Gant (D-Eddy) and supporters of the Chama River's protective designation are encouraged to write to their New Mexico state senator, urging him to ask Sen. Gant to report favorably on this legislation.



AN AIR QUALITY ACT AMENDMENT is being considered that would restore to the Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) powers lost in a recent law suit.

The substance of the suit won by the Arizona Public Service Company prohibited the EIB from requiring pollution controls which would, in effect, provide air cleaner than the "maximum allowable" level of pollution allowed under the law. In short, the Arizona Public Service Co. threw its legal resources behind the "right" to pollute up to the legal limit.

The amendment would give the EIB the right to require pollution controls, on a case by case basis, which would hold the air pollution levels below the "maximum allowable" level.

POWER OF SUBPOENA would be given to the Environmental Improvement Board under a pending bill. This bill would let the EIB impound records of firms or individuals who had previously testified that enforcement of pollution regulations would force either a company shutdown or a reduction in employment. In other words, the testifiers would have to prove their case. Similar legislation is pending before the U.S. Congress. Calkin said the chances of passage in New Mexico are slim indeed.

more. After the license of 50 years runs out, the waste problem becomes a state responsibility.

A network TV show on January 26th quoted officials of the NRC, the Energy Research and Development Administration and the disposal industry as saying there is no present answer to the disposal problem, nor does anyone know when answers will be developed. (Incidentally, 99% of the total nuclear waste disposal in the country is from military sources.)

INSULATION CREDIT may result for homeowners who increase the heat-retentive properties of existing structures. Senator R. E. Thompson (D-Chaves) said the legislation was being rewritten and would incorporate 'R-factors' -- or measurements of insulation. He said the proposal would give the consumer a 50-50 break up to a \$1000 tax credit. For example, if it cost \$500 to re-insulate, you would obtain a \$250 tax credit. The limit may be lowered to \$500, however. Thompson said that if the sales tax on food items were removed this session, "There will be no other tax cuts."

Also there may be legislation granting a separate tax credit for solar water heating (in addition to the credit for solar heating units.)

A WATER BILL to benefit fish and wildlife would allow the state to acquire water rights, according to Sierra Club lobbyist, Brant Calkin. At present, state law does not consider streams in a natural condition to be of "beneficial use", and New Mexico law requires water rights holders to put their water to "beneficial use".

Chances of passage are good; the Game and Fish Department would welcome the bill and the State Engineer's Office has no objections, according to Calkin.

THE CHAMA SCENIC AND PASTORAL RIVER BILL is being put in final form. Although New Mexico has within its borders the first national wild and scenic river ever designated (the Rio Grande), this will be the first attempt in this state to legislate a similar designation at the state level. (The Chama may still end up as a segment in the National Wild and Scenic River System at

Oxymin Starts With a Bang

(From front cover)

questions of water quality and project monitoring.

The January 21 test blast was preliminary to a final decision by Oxymin on whether to begin full scale mining operations using the leaching technique. Under that procedure, the company proposes to blast copper-bearing rock, which lies to a depth of 300 feet, and then pump water containing a one percent sulphuric acid solution into the rock to leach out the mineral. Copper-bearing liquid would then be pumped out of the mine through a grid system of tunnels beneath the rock formation.

Should sulphuric acid be poured into the ground at the rate of 1935 gallons per minute at Cerrillos? Oxymin president Paul Bailly said, according to the New Mexican, that company officials feel there will be neither water contamination nor other damage to the environment. However, an ad hoc group of Cerrillos residents, calling themselves the Concerned Citizens of Cerrillos, have taken the other side and were upset with the recent "secret" blast.

The Oxymin "Cerrillos Project" has an ore body which is less than five tenths of one percent copper on the average. The copper lies in a crescent arc beneath an area of 20 - 60 acres, with an average depth of 135 feet. If hurdles with the state EIA are cleared, Oxymin will blast its main hole about a year from now (assuming the company finds it profitable to begin mining). The large blast, according to a preliminary paper, could involve 1500 primers, 1.5 million pounds of water gel, 4.5 million pounds of anfo, 600,000 feet of detonating cord, 500 delays and 100,000 tons of waste rock (one million cubic feet).

Oxymin's site is 7000 feet from the Cerrillos water supply. According to tests by the Rocky Mountain Center on the Environment (ROMCOE), which undertook preliminary studies for Oxymin, "... it is reasonable to conclude that no natural protection against leachate pollution exists at Cerrillos."

The Water Quality Division of the state Environmental Improvement Agency asked a series of questions of Oxymin in December 1976,



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Phil Niklaus Environment Deserves Gentler Treatment Than Media

The following is a column by environmental reporter Phil Niklaus which appeared in the Albuquerque Journal, January 23, 1977. Reprinted by permission.

Occidental Minerals Corp. (Oxymin), the company seeking to establish a copper mining operation just north of the village of Cerrillos, has a decidedly unique approach in dealing with the news media.

Oxymin is a Denver-based firm, a subsidiary of Occidental Petroleum Corp. of Los Angeles.

Oxymin's mining plan for Cerrillos essentially calls for blasting the subsurface bedrock with explosives and then pouring sulfuric acid into the resulting fissures. The acid serves to leach the low-grade copper deposits, which are then pumped to the surface where the copper is extracted.

As part of the proposed Cerrillos project, Oxymin staged an underground test explosion last Friday at the mining site, an event attended by various members of New Mexico news media, as well as protesters who expressed their displeasure with the plan.

The procedure used by Oxymin officials in media contacts, at least with this reporter, is worth recounting.

I had been informed by other sources earlier in the week that the test explosion was to take place Friday. So on Thursday, the day before the scheduled blast, I called the Oxymin offices in Santa Fe to find out what time it would occur.

A simple request, I thought.

I asked to speak with Robert Akright, the Cerrillos project director, but was told he was not available. I was instead referred to Carl Blumay, public relations director for Occidental Petroleum Corp. in Los Angeles.

I placed the call to Los Angeles and was connected with Blumay. I repeated the question: what time is Friday's blast to occur?

Blumay responded that he could not "confirm" that the blast was to take place Friday and said he could not "make a statement on the record" on the issue. He added, however, that he would be back in touch with me.

Later Thursday, I received a call from Meriweather Mason, Oxymin vice president, who informed me I would have to come to the Oxymin offices in Santa Fe on Friday morning to pick up a "pass" in order to be admitted to the site of the test blast near Cerrillos.

Now Cerrillos is located about 20 miles south of Santa Fe and therefore it didn't make much sense, at least to me, to drive from Albuquerque to Santa Fe to pick up the "pass" and then turn around and drive back south to Cerrillos.

I asked whether it would not be possible for the company to merely leave the "pass" for me in Cerrillos, thereby saving me at least a one-hour drive.

Not possible, said Mason.

Why not? I inquired.

and received answers in January. The EIA has asked a set of follow-up questions, to which answers have not yet been received. Cobia Clayton of the EIA indicated in a phone interview that Oxymin must still prove to the agency's satisfaction that underground water will not be polluted before leaching of copper ore can begin. The EIA will have new regulations, which go into effect February 17, which will allow the agency to protect the quality of underground water. (In the past most water quality regulations applied only to surface waters.) The new regulations will require Oxymin to submit a "Discharge Plan" which in turn will require a monitoring system and a contingency plan.

Oxymin has so far not supplied enough information, according to Clayton. The state's enforcement "teeth" lie in its ability to reject a Discharge Plan. Oxymin could appeal that decision within 30 days, but the burden of proof lies with the petitioner. In particular, Oxymin has proposed a monitoring system of two well holes beneath the test site, whereas the state has suggested a ring of well holes around the project. And Oxymin's contingency plan, according to the EIA, does not deal adequately with either restoration of, or containment of, contaminated ground water. Oxymin's contingency plan to date is to drill additional recovery holes, dilute the leach solutions, inject neutralizing chemicals in peripheral areas, and/or temporarily discontinue operations.

After leaching, according to Oxymin, the sulphuric acid solution would be recirculated without adding make-up water and the acid would be consumed by the rock itself until the pH gradually rises with recycling. The EIA, however, citing tests by ROMCOE, commented that "passage of original leachate through country rock and ground water will not purify the mining solution."

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Does this mean that Oxymin's present proposal would result in pollution of the water table as some Cerrillos residents fear? According to Oxymin Project Manager, Robert Akright, who said in a telephone interview that the ROMCOE lab tests "never went far enough to be conclusive." He went on to say that Oxymin wanted the water quality monitoring to be done "right" and that the actual methods were still under discussion.

Akright also said the test blast January 21 was held at 7:45 am because in the interest of general safety "When you're wired and ready to go, delaying for any reason is not a safe practice." He added that no firm time had ever been set for the blast and no firm date has yet been set for mining operations. The pilot test must be evaluated, a feasibility study must be prepared, and a decision on whether to proceed will then be made, said Akright. That would mean waiting until 1978.

The six to eight month test leaching at the test blast site is scheduled to begin this spring. The EIA still questions whether the residual acid will be transported to the water table along natural pathways. Oxymin has said the flow of the leachates should be strictly vertical. The pilot test is supposed to verify this. The EIA, in addition, is to make sure monitoring systems ensure that no pollution to ground water occurs (Oxymin assumes a 100 percent recovery rate from the leachates with 10 percent water added because of evaporation.)

As it now stands, according to the EIA, ". . . the monitoring program, as presently designed . . . will fail to provide information on water quality impacts adjacent to the immediate mining area. . . It is not clear . . . that the pilot project is designed to provide information useful in this regard . . . nothing has been submitted which suggests that the pilot project will provide any data useful in developing workable contingency plans or reclamation programs."

Anyone interested in the viewpoint of the Concerned Citizens of Cerrillos or interested in helping them out in any way should contact:

Deirdre Hazelrigg
Concerned Citizens of Cerrillos
Box 7
Cerrillos, New Mexico 87010

Because that was the "security system" that had been established by the company, Mason replied. "We just don't want anyone to be hurt inadvertently," he added.

Okay, I said, I'll drive to Santa Fe Friday morning and pick up the "pass" and then drive back down to Cerrillos. But what time is the test explosion scheduled for, I re-inquired.

Mason then informed me that the time had not yet been decided, but he said he would call me at my home at about 7 a.m. Friday to tell me the time of the explosive display.

Reluctantly, I agreed to the plan.

Before going to bed Thursday night, I set my alarm for 6:30 a.m. in order to be ready to go when the call from Mason came at 7 a.m. Friday.

Sometime during the night Thursday, I was awakened from a deep sleep by the telephone - ringing.

It was Mason, the Oxymin v.p. - the time was 3:20 a.m.

"We're going to shoot (the explosion) a little early," he said. Can you be in the (Oxymin) office in Santa Fe at 6 a.m.?"

Mason explained that the Oxymin detonation team had worked through the night" and would be ready to go early.

At 4:30 a.m., I called Richard Pipes, the Journal photographer who was to accompany me on the Cerrillos junket.

Richard was as bleary as I had been, perhaps more so, when he answered the telephone.

I asked him to come over to pick me up - we had to be in Santa Fe by 6 a.m.

I told him I would attempt to explain later.

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Quiet is Not Enough

by Jesse Williams

Lightweight, relatively inexpensive equipment, the warmth of down clothes and wool, the attraction of a quiet winter wonderland have opened up a whole new world to many who have limited themselves to summer or fall outdoor pursuits -- all these have fused into a grand, brand new winter phenomenon.

And it is quite a phenomenon. We're confronted with something that wildlife scientists gave little worry to until recently and something that we're also finding difficult to measure. Winter -- so things used to be -- was left pretty much to the wildlife populations away from urban areas or winter sports facilities such as ski areas of relatively limited size.

Sure, livestock owners would be out, and wildlife biologists

sometimes, and some trappers and a few late arriving wood-haulers would circulate through some of the back country. But all in all, the animals pretty well had it to themselves.

They don't any more. Only a computer -- if the data were available, which it isn't in most cases -- could handle and weigh each bit that would measure the additional stress people may cause to wildlife while in generally innocent pursuit of the newly popular forms of outdoor winter recreation.

Age. Sex. General condition. Weight. Available feed. Water. Cover. Temperatures. Snow depth. Early winter? Late winter? Mild or severe? Animal densities. Metabolism rates. Stress.

Compute. Then add snowmobiles weighted according to noise. Plus skiers. Plus snowshoers, plus human beings in general.

Then compute them for densities, numbers, frequency -- and, especially, attitude.

We know it would compute two things. One: more and more human beings are out in the woods and fields in winter than ever before, and their numbers are growing. Two: winter is a time of stress for the wildlife populations, and becomes increasingly so as it progresses. Winter-kill losses are generally greatest at winter's end, but the losses are caused by influences throughout the preceding months.



"So?" you ask. "How do I or my two or three friends hurt anything when we're quietly gliding along the meadow?" "Or how do I bother anything when I drive my snowmobile down a logging road?"

We don't know for sure how much or how many; but we can offer some advice on attitude. It's likely that the quieter the group or the machine, the less area -- and the wildlife associated with it -- is going to be disturbed. Another thing is not to follow the natural inclination, when you see an animal, to try to get a closer look. Watch from a distance and move on, quietly. If you find you've discovered a deer herd's winter yards or an elk herd's winter country, don't bring all your friends up for a look, but urge them and yourself, to leave it be.

An animal's metabolism is an amazing thing, but it is not indestructible; nor is any animal immortal. Better to move quietly, avoid areas of animal concentration, avoid harassment of them when possible, than to bring on yourself the suspicion that you've just caused one to run off the last few pounds or ounces of fat that would have made the difference between life and death.

Jesse Williams is Chief of the Public Affairs Division of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Chairman's Corner

by Joanne Sprenger
Chairman,
Rio Grande Chapter

Results of the Chapter election are in. Re-elected to two year terms were Robert Howard & Joanne Sprenger. Elected to their first two-year terms were Katie Parker and Alan Kennish. As some ballots were not received by El Paso club members, and a vacancy existed as of this month due to the moving of Sherron Kirkpatrick to Tucson, it was decided to appoint John Colburn to this position. That gives El Paso two representatives (John & Wes Leonard); Santa Fe has two (Katie and John Schneider); Las Vegas has two (John Gavahan and Joanne); and Albuquerque has three (Nick Nicolaus, Robert Howard and Alan Kennish). We hope that recently elected officers of all the groups will be listed elsewhere in this issue (see pages 6 and 7). There were 349 ballots received, or about a 23% return.

The Sierra Club is trying something new in membership recruitment, and New Mexico is one of the pilot states. The "Crazy People" brochures which some of you may be seeing in sporting goods stores, libraries, and other carefully selected places, are designed to appeal to persons interested in wild places. Please do not take one as a souvenir; they are expensive.

The last Congress produced many victories for the environment. Brock Evans, director of the Washington Office, reported that of 22 major priorities the

Club had set, we had 12 wins, 3 partial wins, 4 losses and 5 deferred. This victory was possible because of the generosity of persons throughout the Club who donate time and money to help the people who do our lobbying; people who are willing to respond when the call comes to write letters or to donate a few dollars to help with expenses.

Chapter finances are very low at the moment, meaning we have to cut back severely on needed programs. There will be a Chapter fund drive in about two months. It is being organized by Wesley Leonard of El Paso. There will be a category for deductible as well as non-deductible gifts. Of course, lobbying efforts are non-deductible, but this is perhaps where the greatest need is. PLEASE give generously when you are contacted.

One of the actions taken by the Executive Committee at their January meeting was a motion to the City of Albuquerque requesting that they turn down a proposal to allow the resumption of firearm use in the Bosque.

Another major concern is proposals to channelize a 200 mile stretch of the Rio Grande between El Paso and Presidio, Texas, which would destroy vast areas of riparian habitat. There are less expensive ways -- both financially and environmentally -- for the International Boundary Commission to locate the boundary.

Wilderness Leaders Conference

Plans are being made for a wilderness leaders conference, and the weekends being considered are March 19-20 or March 26-27. The conference will be held at Camp Thunderbird in the Gila National Forest. The setting is nice, and as we learned at the conference two years ago, the food is delicious!

The purpose of the conference is to bring wilderness leaders from around the state together

for a planning session, to set priorities, and plan strategies for the coming year. We will also elect the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee (NMWSC) officers for next year. As details are firmed up, more information will be sent out to anyone who is interested. If you want to be kept informed about the conference, contact Dave Foreman, P O Box 38, Glenwood, NM 88039.

Gila / Aldo Leopold Workshop

Conservationists in southern New Mexico & West Texas are planning a Wilderness Workshop that will concentrate on additions to the Gila Wilderness and the proposed Aldo Leopold Wilderness. The weekend Wilderness Workshop will be held in El Paso at the UTEP Student Union on Feb. 26-27. Registration will be at 8:30 AM on Saturday the 26th.

The major concentration of the workshop will be on the 1 million acres of potential wilderness in the Gila/Aldo Leopold complex, but discussions will also be held on other wilderness issues in southern New Mexico and West Texas, as well as sessions on the Wilderness Act, How to do a Wilderness Study, the administrative and legislative processes for wilderness designation, etc.

Brant Calkin, National President of the Sierra Club, will deliver the keynote address, and Bob Howard, Rio Grande Chapter

Chairman, will be the master of ceremonies. An added attraction will be Sally Ranney, Colorado folksinger and wilderness leader, who will entertain Saturday night with original songs about wilderness. Slide shows, maps of proposed areas, and handout information will also be offered. Participants will have the opportunity to sign up for various field trips into the Gila/Aldo and other areas.

All folk interested in the Gila/Aldo wilderness complex or in getting active in wilderness issues in West Texas or southern New Mexico are urged to attend. Out-of-towners will be housed in El Paso homes. For more information, contact Wes Leonard (616 DeLeon, El Paso, TX 79912, 915-584-7730) or Dave Foreman (P.O. Box 38, Glenwood, NM88039 505-539-2645). To preregister, fill out and mail in the form below.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Yes, I will attend the Gila Wilderness Workshop in El Paso.

No, I can't attend, but I am interested. Keep me informed.

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Thieve's Mountain Needs Help!

The New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee has long been working for protection of wild and rugged Sierra Ladron (Thieve's Mountain), to the west of I-25 between Belen and Socorro. Phil Tollefsrud, Paul Krehbiel, and Corry McDonald have been their honchos on this important area, along with the Sierra Club, and it now appears that their efforts may be about to pay off--but only with your help.

At a January 4 meeting in Belen to present their Management Framework Plan for the Ladron Planning Unit in central New Mexico, the Socorro District Office of the Bureau of Land Management offered two alternatives for a Ladron Primitive Area--one alternative would include 18,294 acres of the mountain itself, the lower Cerro Colorado ridge to the south, and the Rio Salado Box. The other alternative, which BLM has advanced due to pressure from large grazing interests, includes only 11,000 acres of the rocky inaccessible reaches of the 9176 foot peak. It is feared that BLM is now leaning to this smaller proposal instead of to the larger one which they had earlier developed.

The New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, represented by Paul Krehbiel of Socorro, supported the BLM 18,294 acre proposal, but also proposed that about 2500 acres be added to the northwest and southwest.

Because of the grazing opposition, it is important that conservationists express strong support for the Ladron Primitive Area or it could be lost. Write, today, to:

Mr. Arlen P. Kennedy
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
PO Box 1456
Socorro, NM 87801
expressing your strong support for:
*the BLM 18,294 acre Primitive Area, plus
*the approximately 2500 acres of NMWSC additions.

Be sure that you mention the 18,294 acre proposal (which is good and for which BLM should be complimented). We don't want your support being chalked up for the inadequate 11,000 acre proposal.

If possible, send copies of your letter to Representatives Harold Runnels and Manuel Lujan, and to Senators Pete Domenici and Harrison Schmitt (the address for both senators is: Senate Office Building, Washington, D C 20510) They need to know how you feel on this issue.

For more information contact Dave Foreman, PO Box 38, Glenwood, NM 88039, or call Paul Krehbiel 835-0759 (in Socorro), or Corry McDonald 265-2842 (in Albuquerque). Ladron will be New Mexico's first BLM Primitive Area. We must have strong public support! Please write today. Thank you.

EPA Meet on Toxic Substances

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will host a meeting in Houston, Texas on February 14-15 which will focus on the Toxic Substances Control Act passed by the Congress last October. This act is intended to help control serious environmental and health dangers caused by chemicals.

Not only will environmental & public interest groups attend, but representatives of industries and unions will also hear the EPA explain the new act and hear comments from all interested parties.

No prior registration is necessary. This regional conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Medical Center/6701 South Main St./Houston Texas.

El Paso Group Outings

Feb. 20 (Sun) easy to ? John Bowen (915) 584-6750
Dripping Springs, on the west side of the Organ Mtns., is an uncrowded spot that has hiking and scrambling possibilities ranging from a mild stroll to a wild chaser. There is a \$1 per person entrance fee. Call John Bowen for details and meeting place.

John Colburn (915) 592-4033, will be scouting the Big Bend country during the Easter weekend (early April). Call him if interested.

Also, because he is leading a national Club trip in June into the proposed Aldo Leopold wilderness, Colburn will be spending several weekends in that territory after the snow melts (what snow?) If you want to go along, check with him. Be advised these will be working trips to check trail, springs, campsites, etc. John will be moving fast.

Note: To help defray the rising costs of insurance coverage for Sierra Club outings, the El Paso Group Excom decided to charge a fee of 50¢ per person per day on all outings conducted by the Group.

Santa Fe Group Outings

Feb. 12 (Sat)	moderate	Brett Roorbach	983-2862
Feb. 13 (Sun)	family outing (bring the kids)	Don Lowrie	471-2620
Feb. 19 (Sat)	mild	Julie Gomez	988-5023
Feb. 20 (Sun)	moderate	Walt Kunz	983-7994
Feb. 26 (Sat)	strenuous	John Muchmore	983-1250
Feb. 27 (Sun)	cross-country ski trip.	Contact Maurice Dixon for specific details.	988-1190

Saturday hikes leave at 8:00 am and the Sunday hikes leave at 8:30 am from Kaune's parking lot at the junction of Old Santa Fe Trail and Paseo de Peralta. Carpooling is the means of transportation and reimbursement to the drivers is expected of each hiker.

WANNA BE IN THE MOVIES ??

The Institute for Regional Educational is making a feature film which studies the impact of television and technology on the environment.

We are funded in part by the Sierra Club, but we are non-profit and cannot pay our actors or extras (sorry!).

We need people who would be willing to donate one or two days to work as extras in this environmental film. No acting experience is necessary; the acting requirements are minimal; but we need lots of people for some of our scenes. Besides - its fun!

The dates are not set yet, but they will be sometime in late February or early March.

If interested please call 982-2226 in the afternoon or evening or send your name and phone number to:

Sally Jackson
605 Sunset Street
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Mining Task Force Proposed

by Dr. Phyllenore Howard

Big changes are coming to northwestern New Mexico. The push is coming to develop the vast supplies of coal in that region. Company estimates are that between 1980 and 2020 over 2 billion tons of coal will be mined (mostly from surface mines) 5,000 people will be employed during maximum levels of operation, and over 3 billion in salaries will be paid over the life of the mines.

A summary of the major mines are:

-Carbon Coal Co. will expand their Gamarco Mine, 5 miles west of Gallup to 871 acres. 15.4 million tons of coal will be removed between 1979 and 1990, supplying Arizona utilities.

-There are plans to strip mine from the "Fruitland Strip" (generally between Star Lake and Bisti) up to 2 billion tons of coal in 40 years. This includes an extension of the San Juan Mine by Western Coal Co., a 3,000 acre surface mine by Arch Mineral Company, surface mines at Gallo Wash and Star Lake to be mined by Peabody Coal Co., Texas Utilities, and the Cherokee and Pittsburgh Co., and another 1500 acre mine at Star Lake by Freeman-United.

-Consolidated Coal is planning two underground mines at La Ventana to produce 60 million tons of coal between 1984 & 2024.

-The Salt River Project plans two underground mines immediately west of Nageezi to produce 206 million tons of coal in 20 years.

265 miles of new railroad lines are planned, as well as extensive new transmission lines, roads, and a new Plains Electric Generating Plant.

The Bureau of Land Management, Albuquerque District, is writing an Environmental Impact Statement covering these proposed opera-

tions. We must be ready to provide all the information we can about ecologically sensitive areas, sensitive animal populations, valuable archeological sites, and desires regarding reclamation efforts.

The Rio Grande Chapter needs a Mining Impact Task Force to study the proposed plans at the BLM office, become knowledgeable about the other resources of the San Juan basin (BLM has done a resource inventory) and participate in the drafting of the EIS. If you would like to volunteer some time, contact the Chapter Conservation Coordinator, John Schneider, 535 Douglas Street, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501.

Club Exhibit

The Albuquerque Group has placed a pictorial exhibit at the Forest Service Visitors' Center at the top of the Sandia Tramway. These pictures with appropriate captions portray early Sierra Club scenes and people including John Muir, President Theodore Roosevelt, etc. and early Forest Service scenes and people. Comparable pictures of similar scenes today are used in contrast. There are many pictures of the Sandia Recreational area, as well, to show the vast changes over the years. The exhibit is entitled "Past, Present---What of the Future?"

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Nuke Panel

On Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. in the Inn of the Governors Hotel in Santa Fe, there will be a panel sponsored by the New Mexico branch of the American Institute of Chemists. The theme: "The Future of Nuclear Energy in New Mexico."

Panel members are Dr. Tom Keeman from Los Alamos Scientific Labs; State Rep. John Mer-shon; David Bloom of the Energy Resources Board;

And Sally Rodgers, director of Central Clearinghouse.

Chapter members are invited to attend, become informed, and participate in the question and answer period.



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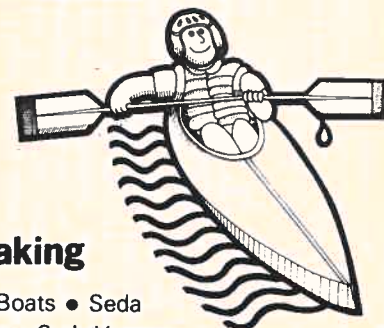
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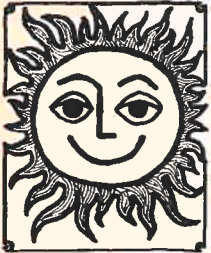
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