

The Rio Grande SIERRAN

FALL 79



BOOM!

Lovers of peace, quiet and solitude unite! The U.S. Air Force wants to destroy the solitude of over 1,500 SQUARE MILES of land lying largely in the public domain. Supersonic training flights of the F-15 fighter from Holloman AFB in Alamogordo would create 35 - 40 sonic booms per day over the northern part of the Gila National Forest.

The Air Force released an environmental impact statement this summer which glossed over the problems involved and concluded that since the area was sparsely populated it wouldn't upset too many folks so let's go ahead.

The original 45 day public comment period was extended to October 16 and a public hearing was held in Reserve. We are told that the hearing drew over 500 people and went until 3 A.M. Comment was entirely negative.

Aside from the obvious effects on non-human critters and on us backpackers the effect on 1400 people living directly under the area is unconscionable. People who have lived their lives in the peace and quiet of Catron County should not be subjected to the immense disturbance of regular sonic booms.

The alternatives considered in the EIS were given little discussion but economics is a major consideration. To send the F-15's from Holloman to an existing supersonic training

area would cost us taxpayers as much as \$24,000,000. more per year. Other alternatives are all over areas with some human population although one area in Texas has a population of less than 300.

It seems to me that if we are going to maintain the required military preparedness and if we are going to maintain some areas of peace and solitude in our land then we should be prepared to spend the extra bucks required.

The question of whether or not the Morenci Military Operating Area will become a supersonic training ground will likely be settled in the political arena. Write to your senators and congressman.

The following RARE II areas underlie the proposed super sonic area; or are immediately adjacent:

- Apache Mtn.
- Frisco Box
- Wagon Tongue
- Eagle Peak
- Nolan
- Aspen Mtn.
- Devil's Creek
- Elk Mtn.
- T BAR
- Canyon Creek
- Mother Hubbard

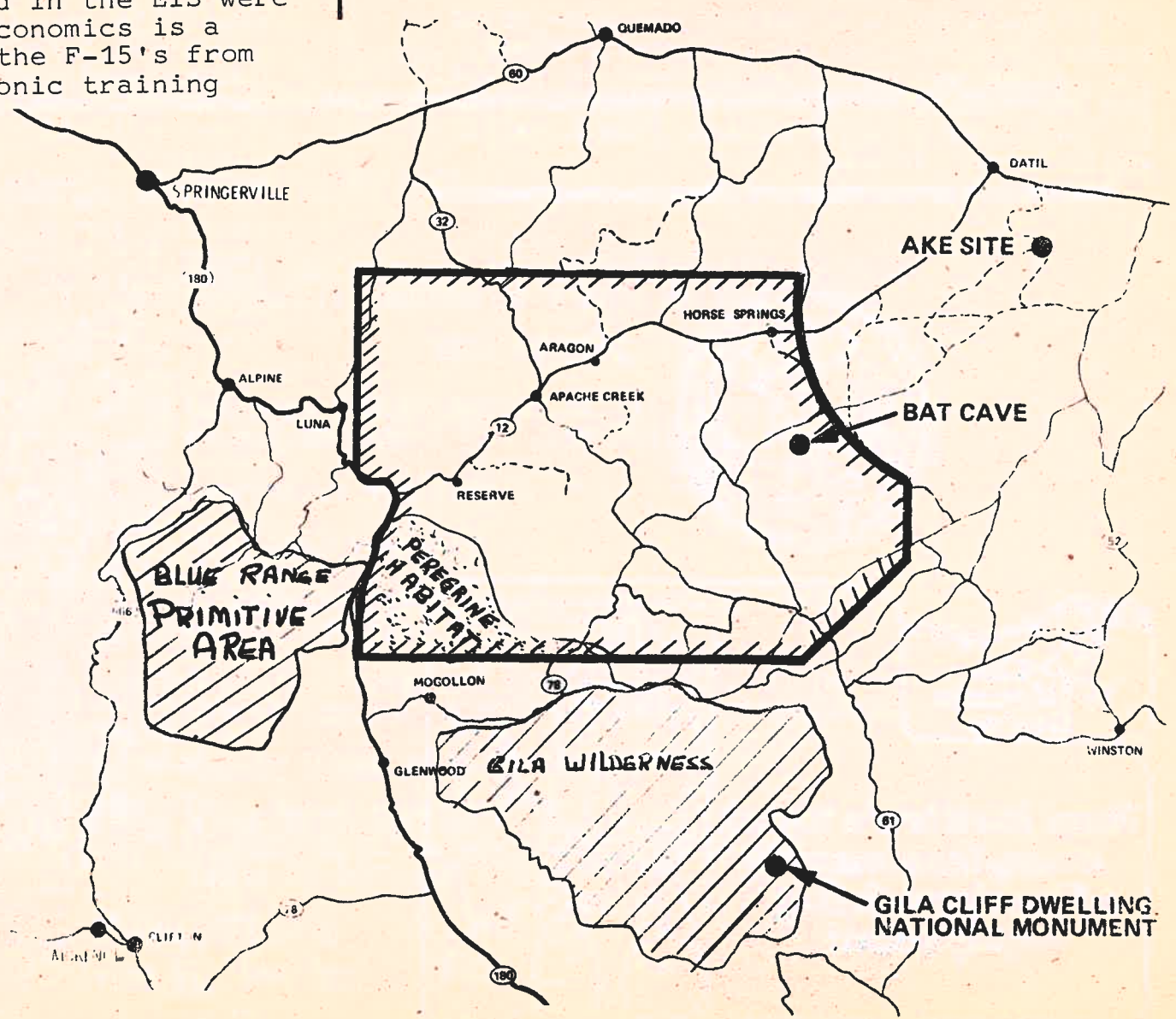
Gila Wilderness and additions to the Gila Blue Range Primitive Area and additions

BLM areas are Horse and Pelona Mountains.

For more information contact: Jim Stewart at 505-831-1941.

MORENCI MILITARY OPERATING AREA

SUPERSONIC AREA IN BOLD OUTLINE



OPINION

Woodstoves

Fireplaces and woodburning stoves are a sop for the masses. Most of us are being sold a bill of goods when we convert to wood. We may be conserving oil and natural gas but we aren't conserving energy!

Historically, huge areas of the world have been totally deforested in the quest for fuel. Large areas of the United States have been cleared for farmland and fuel. Now we are rushing into a poorly thoughtout substitute for oil.

I fear for the forests of New Mexico. Already we hear reports of widescale tree theft on our public lands. The demand for legal firewood on BLM land has doubled in one year. Sales of fireplaces and wood stoves are booming. The switch to wood is being promoted by just about everybody: government agencies, conservationists, MOTHER EARTH NEWS, local energy planners.

But, we aren't conserving! We are building dependence on a resource that is renewable only with careful planning and management.

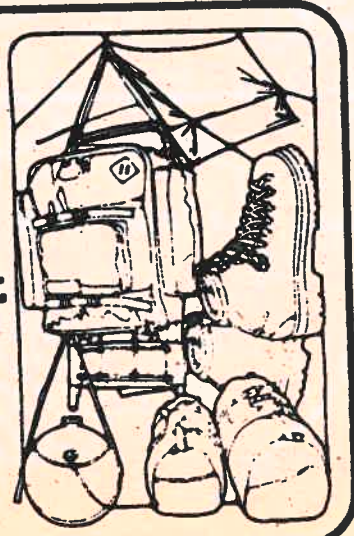
We have been told time and again that a Btu saved is cheaper than a new one developed. And that includes your new Jøtul stove. A recent, prestigious study from Harvard stated, once again, that conservation was the cheapest source of energy.

The problem, I think, is that conserving has no sex appeal. A new stove, or solar collector is much more glamorous than new caulking around the windows. Yet the combined effect of caulking, pulling the drapes at night, adding insulation, closing the door, turning down the thermostat, wearing long johns,..... is often of greater value in terms of Btu's than your new Ashley and two cords of pinon.

So the word is - before you burn those trees clean up your act. Become a miser. Make your house and car mizers. Hang on to every Btu you can. Then when you've got a place the little buggers can't escape from - maybe you won't need a stove.



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Wilderness

In the last issue of the RIO GRANDE SIERRA a letter writer takes the Sierra Club and the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee to task for supporting areas for wilderness designation that they expect will, in reality, never be given congressional protection as wilderness. He suggests that we should limit our support to areas that meet the criteria of Federal agencies, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. He sees little reason to promote wilderness designation for areas where the hand of man is evidenced by non-native plants, fences, unmaintained road tracks, or areas that are flat and featureless.

At times, I too, am plagued by misgivings that some areas may not ultimately be wilderness quality or that our tastes for wilderness are too broad. But when I look closely at the situation those misgivings vanish. If we could sit down at the bargaining table with timber and mining and ORV people and the Forest Service and be able to bargain and hagggle and trade and cajole and make the ultimate decisions and trade-offs in that forum then the bottom line on all sides would become clear and we could all go home with the job done.

But that ain't the way it works, folks. We are playing a political game in which the final decisions are made by Congress (God bless 'em) through a process that submits to no logical analysis. We must be opportunists. We must hold our cards close. Ask for the world. And take what we can get!

A case in point is the Endangered American Wilderness Act of 1978 (or was it '77?). The Sandia Wilderness adjacent to Albuquerque was bitterly opposed by local and regional Forest Service personnel. Public support was strong for the wilderness. With a little political maneuvering the official position of the Forest Service became one of neutrality. We won a major addition to the New Mexico wilderness system.

During the debate and horse trading that went on in the halls and back rooms of Congress over the bill an opportunity arose for New Mexico to put in another area. What area? It had to be non-controversial. An area that most people would never have considered, that had been one of those areas we would ask for and never get, fell out. It is now the Chama Wilderness.

We would not have secured wilderness protection for either of these areas had we followed the polite rules suggested by the letter writer. We got those designations through hard-nosed, opportunistic political maneuvering by some very savvy New Mexicans.

What about those areas that really never will become wilderness? Well, that congressional blessing is not the final word. Those areas must still be managed by the Forest Service or BLM or other public agency. By promoting these areas for wilderness designation we lay a foundation for public involvement in their management. The managing agency knows there is substantial public sentiment for conserving vs. exploitive management.

The Sierra Club and the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee are, even now, watching very carefully how both wilderness and non-wilderness lands are being managed.

Ultimately, wilderness is a state of mind. It is an attribute independent of Congress, the US Forest Service, The BLM, the Sierra Club, you, me. We aren't asking to make more wilderness - we can't do it. We want to preserve what damn little wilderness is left.

Get out there and fight! Kick, scratch, bite, cheat, lie, wheel, deal. Let's keep what we've got.

BLM WILDERNESS UPDATE

In the Socorro and Albuquerque districts there is a combination of good and bad news.

On the top of the list is a mess in the Socorro district, wilderness inventory unit #33, Coyote. The top of a little mountain disappeared when Ranger Industries rushed in to begin a stripping operation for barite. Apparently the BLM district office did not properly advise Ranger, which had an existing permit, of the restrictions on the land under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

An illegal action has occurred which must be addressed in the intensive inventory reports which will recommend whether or not the area is suitable for further study as a formally designated Wilderness Study Area. Before several new roads were bladed and the destructive mining activities began we hoped that this area would make it to WSA. The BLM district has now accelerated the inventory of the area and has to decide how to treat the illegal actions. (Legal opinion holds that because BLM failed to advise Ranger of the actual restrictions under FLPMA they would not be able to get an injunction to halt the mining). If the BLM decides to ignore the limits and recommend WSA status, Ranger Industries will sue. If they don't recommend WSA status the company can proceed merrily.

While we sympathize with the Bureau for the problems it faces in managing the areas in its wilderness inventory we cannot ignore the fact that destructive activities in a potential wilderness area have been allowed to occur. The files indicate that the district office was advised that heavy equipment was being moved into the area and yet they did not choose to investigate although the area is only a few minutes drive from the office.

If, in its accelerated inventory, the Bureau determines that the area would not have met the wilderness criteria even had the mining damage not occurred, the tendency might be to say, "Well, it was unfortunate but it wasn't a really neat area anyway." That attitude ignores the heart of the problem - which has implications beyond this one area. If the BLM screws up in a less deserving area it can just as easily screw up in a prime wilderness candidate. If we roll over and play dead on this one, the peck on the cheek of the mining industry may be the kiss of death to the BLM wilderness review program.

In the Albuquerque District, the intensive inventory has been going along well. Inventory unit #33, Windmill, an area along the Colorado border and contiguous to a roadless area in that state, may be bumped from WSA due to the impact of a corral, stock tank, trailer and trash, which are visible throughout most of the area.

San Isidro (#13) appears to have a little community within its borders. A Santa Fe County landfill has been discovered in Seco (#56) and the area has boundary problems.

San Antonio (#35) looks pretty good, although a powerline with no authorized right of way has been discovered running down the center. This is a 'home job,' not a utility company line, and goes to a little community nearby. However, even if portions east of the powerline were excluded we would still have an acceptable unit including the canyon in the western portions which remain almost pristine.

Some really good news - Navajo Peak (#59) has been expanded from its original 4600 acres by another 6500 acres which include three sections of ponderosa forest. It takes in the Chama Canyon including Gallena Peak on the west side of the canyon, south down to Navajo Peak. According to BLM's Albuquerque Wilderness Coordinator, Randy Botkin, the area is "fantastically beautiful."

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CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN
AT THE SEPTEMBER 22 MEETING OF THE RIO
GRANDE CHAPTER EXCOM MEETING IN EL PASO

Chapter Priority Session: The November 2 and 3 ExCom in Santa Fe will be devoted in large part to a Chapter Priority Session.

John Tiwald of Albuquerque has agreed to be the Energy Contact person for the Chapter.

Ken Adams of Santa Fe will become the New Council Rep., replacing Bob Howard who is now Chairman of Council. Ron Grotbeck of Albuquerque is the new Council Alternate.

Dave Glowka of Albuquerque is the new Swrcc Delegate replacing Ted Zobeck. Janice Cordero of El Paso is the new SWRCC Alternate.

Allocated \$400 to the El Paso Group Inner Cities Outings Program as seed money.

The problem of outings to Mexico and along the Rio Grande River continue. El Paso Group is trying to find a solution.

Each Group still has several free National News Reports to be allocated.

Chapter Brochure is nearing completion. Still some need for photos.

It was decided that the groups would handle their own nominations to the BLM advisory committees.

Funding has been obtained from SWRCC to send three individuals to the Public Lands Conference in Denver on October 27-28.

Treasurers Report

Checking account was moved to El Paso.
\$150 will be kept in the mailing account at all times.
We will return to our full allocation from National.
Balance \$2,992.43 in account with \$689.13 in fund.
Allocated Las Cruces group \$200.

Membership

Tanya Hoppes of El Paso will take over as Membership Chairman in January.

Elections for the Rio Grande Chapter Executive committee are rapidly approaching. The Chapter ExCom meets about every six weeks throughout the Rio Grande Chapter and sets policy for Chapter level activities. If you are interested in running, contact your group Chairman. If you live in an area which does not have a group, contact your nearest group chairman or call Peggy Robinson at (915) 778-3492



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

As I attend meeting after meeting with a few conferences thrown in; and read all the environmental material that comes across my desk, I can feel something in the air right now. I get the feeling that battle lines are being drawn for one of the biggest environmental shoot-outs that we have seen in quite a while. I haven't seen so many issues coming to a head since I have been in the Southwest.

The Endangered Species Act is under full attack in Washington, D. C.

Congress wants a synfuels plant in every backyard instead of a car in every garage.

The fight for Alaska in the Senate promises to make the house battle look like kidstuff.

The Rape, Ruin and Run boys are trying to claim ownership of vast tracts of public land in the west.

The President is pushing for an Energy Mobilization board which could ignore all the environmental laws and regulations on the books (are you getting the impression that red tape is becoming the new buzz-word for due process).

The BLM which has finally gotten to operate under a multiple use mandate is under fierce attack for daring to obey the law.

The Senate passes legislation which guts the strip mine bill.

Sound depressing, the other side hopes it does. They really believe they have the whip hand now. But they are wrong as they have always been. For each of these challenges gives us opportunity. We are going to knock some people reeling.

The rest of 1979 and 1980 is going to be fun, exciting and critical. If you have ever wanted to get active this would be the time to come forward. The other side has megabucks, plenty of people and lots of time. All we have is you. That sounds about even to me.

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Energy Mobilization Board: each group is to:

1. see that letters to the editor are written;
2. set up formal meetings with congressman
3. see that letters are written to congressmen expressing our position

BOOK REVIEW

Bike Touring. The Sierra Club Guide to Outings on Wheels. By Raymond Bridge. (Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1979. 456 pp., paper. \$6.95)

If you are planning a first bicycle tour, this new addition to the Sierra Club Series of Guides to Outdoor Activities should be invaluable. In fact, there is so much information I doubt you will absorb it all. You will have to reread the book after putting a long tour or two under your belt. Even a veteran of several cross-country rides should be able to cull a few pointers.

The heart of Bike Touring is the description of the touring machine. It covers, from the touring cyclist's perspective, all parts of the bicycle. You will learn how to equip your bike to meet your own touring needs. The discussion of gearing systems (range and distribution of gears) is especially good. Other topics covered include: riding techniques, safety, clothes, luggage and how to carry it, tour planning, and camping on the tour. Appendices identify equipment suppliers, touring organizations, and other touring literature.

The book is comprehensive but not completely so. Space limitations prevented full use of figures to illustrate points made. Some points are overlooked. For example, Bridge notes that on a steep descent you are most stable with your hands on the lowest part of the handlebars. But he fails to add that you maximize stability by locking your forearms against the bars, just above the brake levers, on the sides of the bars. Another example: he never states that a touring group that rides close together should develop a set of hand and voice signals. The lead rider is often the only one who can see chuckholes, glass or similar hazards well in advance. His or her popularity plummets when the others are not warned. Finally, Bridge merely hints at the pleasures and unique experiences of a long-distance camping tour. This is good, for you learn these things only by hitting the road.

John Sproull
El Paso



Jim Stewart has received a grant from the Department of Energy Appropriate Energy Technology Small Grants Program to develop insulating window shutters. He needs several homes in which to install the shutters for test purposes. A reduced fee will be charged to help cover some of the costs. If you would like to participate call Jim at 831-1941 in Albuquerque.

BLM AREAS

San Antonio (area 010-35) is rolling grass- and shrubland, including beautiful wheatgrass prairie - a rarity in the state, and apparently nowhere protected from development in New Mexico or southern Colorado. San Antonio Creek cuts an 80 to 100 foot gash across the area, with ponderosa pine and Douglas fir against its rock walls and a variety of autumn-colorful shrubs and trees (and campsites) along its bottom. Antelope roam the upland and hawks nest on the creek's cliffs. Nearby San Antonio Mountain's wildlife - elk, deer, bear, mountain lion - also visit these shortgrass plains. There are several intrusions: antenna lights on the mountain and night lights of Antonito, Colorado; fences and the sight of a water tower on the Cumbres and Toltec RR to the north from which an occasional steam whistle is heard. Much of the range is badly overgrazed. The NM Wilderness Study Committee has not yet explored adjacent Carson National Forest prairie lands, which are in better shape; from maps it appears that we'd want to seek about five Forest sections to combine with Bureau lands, thus adding 1.5 miles of the creek and 3,000 acres of rolling wheatgrass. The best eastern borders are also unknown: probably some of the area's 16,000+ acres should be dropped to decrease intrusion from U.S. 285, but this might lose the area's only prairie dog town as well as its most beat-up shrubland.

La Olla (area 010-36) is a rounded volcano, Pot mountain or Cerro de la Olla, rising 1800 feet above the plains. Topography - the pot - around the summit is interesting. Of the two old craters one has a surface-runoff outlet and one does not. Most of the area is wooded (pinyon - juniper, ponderosa, douglas fir) but sagebrush covers the lowest slopes and 1000 acres at the top are a rich grassland-mountain shrub mix. The dense wildlife population includes elk, deer, bobcat, and probably mountain lion, with antelope and coyote below. Boundary questions are minor but resource conflicts in the area deserve close study. Two jeep trails up the mountain branch out on top to form a network for elk hunters. A fancy rubberized water catchment tends to concentrate game and cattle in one area near the summit of the otherwise waterless mountain. Perhaps most importantly, the mountain is a local source of posts, poles and firewood, and the impact of that activity must be evaluated.

Roger Peterson

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

DECEMBER 15

SEND PHOTOS & ARTICLES TO:

JIM STEWART
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STAR

The darkness of the night sky is another natural resource abused by our energy-guzzling society. Since the widespread use of outdoor lighting came into being, urban dwellers have obliterated the beauty and even the sense of the existence of a starry night with the varicolored blaze of mercury, sodium, neon and a plethora of other sources of illumination, synergized by dirty air. Unnecessary light pollution has caused most of us to lose sight of the biological and aesthetic distinction between night and day.

Perhaps one of the more overlooked parts of a wilderness experience is the chance to see something natural in the sky besides the sun and the moon, to see the real night sky from a truly dark location remote from the torches of civilization.

Here is a quick overview of some things to look for next time you are under a dark sky this fall. We are close enough to the autumnal equinox to assume that the sun sets due west. (At least we were close when this article was written). Ninety degree's to sundown's right is north. Thirty-five degrees up from north is Polaris (35 degrees altitude is about 1/3 of the way from the horizon to the zenith, straight up). This should suffice for orientation for what follows.

There are no bright planets in the evening sky through October; Venus might be glimpsed in the west in bright twilight after sunset. All the planetary action is in the morning.

As twilight ends, the true beauty of the firmament resolves itself out of the deepening blue into a multitude of stars, many times more than the pitiful few that can be seen from suburbia. There are so many that sometimes identification of patterns and constellations can become difficult. The stars all seem bright and clear except for those close to the horizon, where the effects of atmospheric extinction of starlight are striking. This is one of many interesting atmospheric phenomena that reveal themselves

to the attentive observer. By the way, try to observe from a meadow or other clearing to get the full sweep of the heavens.

Two of the five brightest stars in the sky are visible. Low in the west is Arcturus (fifth brightest) in the constellation Bootes. Around the zenith is Vega (pronounced vee-ga) the brightest star visible at this time of night this time of year. Just to the east is Deneb and going to the south about the same distance you will be able to pick up Altair. These three bright stars comprise the Summer Triangle. To the northwest is the Big Dipper. Cross the pole to the east to find the W of Cassiopeia and its end at about the same altitude.

The Milky Way stretches across the sky from the northeast to the southwest and gives clear evidence of extinction. Its diffuse glow diminishes abruptly several degrees above the horizon. This textured band is a magnificent visual experience to the unaided eye or with binoculars. A slow sweep through the rich field of the Milky Way will discover innumerable asterisms, clusters, and nebulae as both dark lanes and bright patches.

Look towards the southeast part of the galaxy and you are looking in the direction of the center of our galaxy. The stars clouds here in the constellation Sagittarius are abundant. One of the most prominent objects is the Lagoon Nebula, really part cluster and part nebula. Further west, Scorpius is setting though right after dark you may be able to see that this constellation closely resembles its namesake. Travelling to the north, the unaided eye will be able to see a split in the western side of the Milky way. This large rent is caused by interstellar dust and gas obscuring our view of more distant stars, similar to the effect of atmospheric extinction. Certain tribes of American Indians called this region the protective hands of Father Sky.

You should be south and a little east of the zenith at this point, close to Altair in

NOTES →



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TED ZOBECK, member of the Chapter Executive Committee and chief organizer of the Southwestern Group, has moved to Ohio to take a job.

HUGH CICHILLO of Las Cruces has been appointed to take Ted's place on the Excom.

SHERRON GREEN of Los Alamos, the Chapter treasurer for the past several years has departed for a year in Switzerland.

GEORGE MADER of El Paso has been pushed in the breach as our new treasurer.

The Chapter office in Santa Fe now has a part time employee. MIKE WOODS, a student at St. John's College is being paid a pittance for ten hours a week minimum and all the free time we can squeeze out of him.

The BLM is going to nominate JEAN HERZEGH for the American Motors Conservation Award. As much as we all like recognition for our efforts I doubt that will get Jean off their backs.

GAZING

aquila. About a binocular field north and west is Brocchi's Cluster, a pretty asterism often called the Coat Hanger. Sweep east of Altair about the same distance for the neat little configuration of Job's Coffin, which makes up the central part of Delphinus.

The next constellation to the north is Cygnus (Swan), often called the Northern Cross. Look carefully about three or four degrees east of Deneb at the top of the Northern Cross and you might see the famous North American nebula, an association of hot stars causing interstellar gas to shine. Northern Cygnus is filled with dark dust lanes and intriguing random stellar groupings.

To the west of Cygnus is Lyra with its principal star Vega. This is a compact geometrical group of stars consisting of a parallelogram tipped with an equilateral triangle with Vega at the west vertex. The Northernmost star in this triangle is an obvious double in binoculars; with a telescope each star is further split into doubles again - a double double.

A moving object that is no airplane may catch your attention. It is not unusual to see half a dozen satellites from a dark site even if you aren't looking for them. Generally, they will move from the western to the eastern sky. Some move north-south or south-north. The motion, lack of sound and colored position lights will distinguish them from airplanes. Most are fairly constant in brightness. Though a few will provide a silent light show caused by tumbling as they fall around the earth. Watch for entry into the planet's shadow. Occasionally a bright satellite will change color as it is being eclipsed as the sunset thousands of miles away is reflected off of it.

Following the Via Lactea (another name for the Milky Way) to the northeast you will cross Cepheus midway between Cygnus and Cassiopeia. Cepheus is supposedly a king, but doesn't have a human figure that I can see or imagine. It looks more like a nose cone aimed at the pole.

A red star at Cepheus' base is a famous pulsating variable which changes brightness by a factor of two in a period of five days.

Next is Casseopeia, whose bright stars form a W-shaped figure standing on its left edge in early evening. Binoculars will show a number of bright clusters and a small telescope reveals a magnificent grouping of colorful stars.

Continuing to the northeast we come to the end of the road and find Perseus, whose brightest stars constitute a beautiful region of the Milky Way.

There are four galaxies besides our own that can be seen without optical aid: the Large and Small Magellanic Clouds in the southern hemisphere, Andromeda and M-33 in the north. To find Andromeda, return to Casseopeia and sight the V that forms the top of the W. Go about 15 degrees in the direction the apex is pointing and a large elongated, nebulous patch will be seen. That is what the Milky Way would look like from two million light years.

Messier 33 is the farthest object visible to the naked eye - three million light years! Find it first with binoculars by using a red star (Mirach) south of Andromeda. M-33 is the same distance as Andromeda from this star but on the opposite side. A faint circular patch will reward your efforts.

This vast pattern you have been looking at should stretch your mind a bit and give you a deepening sense of place. Here you are, a small part on a small part of an even smaller part of everything you can see. But your sight extends only a thousandth part of the way to the limits of present detection of the Universe. An awesomely tiny piece we are! But this vastness, the effort to know the what and why of it, and our relative insignificance in this pattern should really make you more appreciative of the perishability and preciousness of Earth and the life on it.

Clear skies!

Derek Wallentinsen

Insulation and Other Conservation Expenditures

The act provides for an income tax credit of up to \$300 for 15 percent of the first \$2,000 of insulation and other energy-conserving expenditures. The expenditures must be for a taxpayer's principal U.S. residence which was in existence on April 20, 1977. Owners, renters, members of condominium associations and tenant shareholders of cooperative housing corporations are all eligible for the credit.

The tax basis of the residence will be increased only to the extent the expenditure exceeds the energy tax credit claimed.

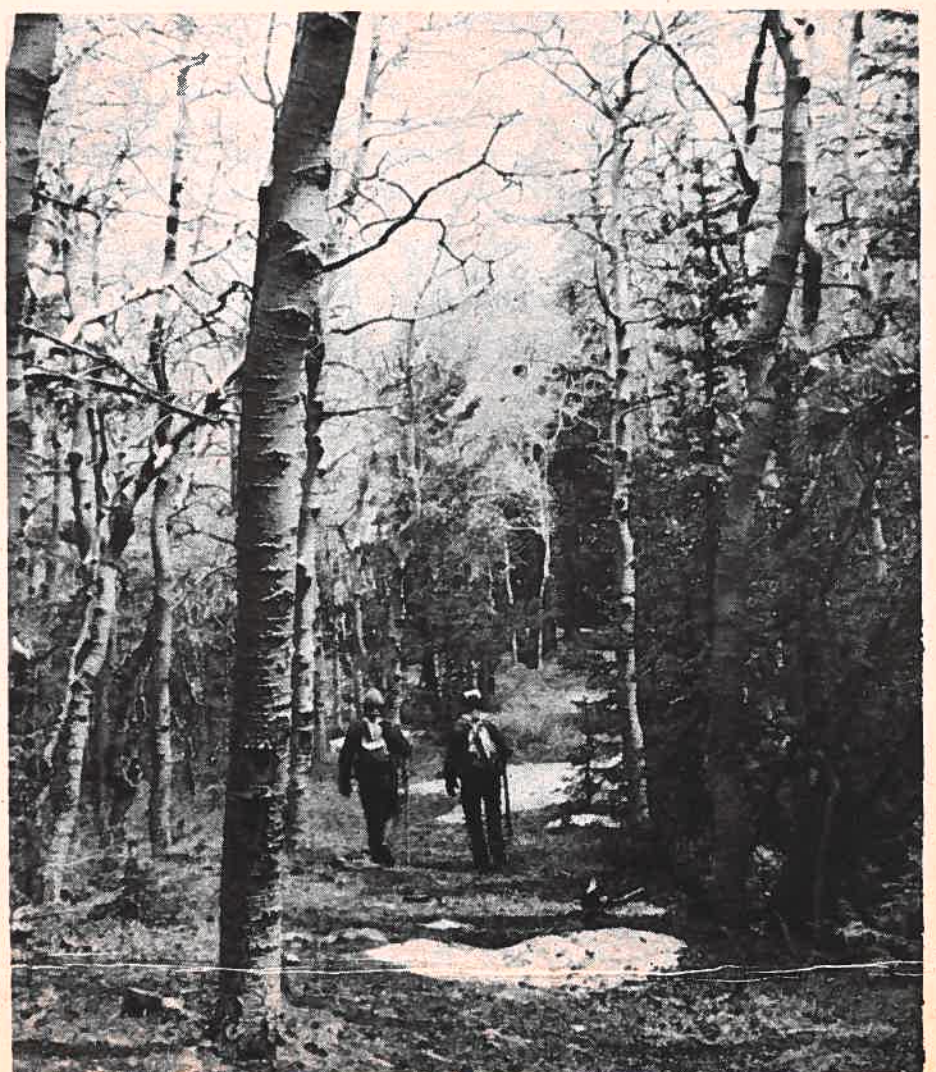
In addition to insulation expenditures, the following may qualify for this 15-percent credit: replacement burners, devices to modify flue openings, electrical or mechanical ignition systems that replace a gas pilot light, storm and thermal doors or windows, energy-saving thermostats, exterior caulking and weather-stripping, and meters that display energy usage.

Renewable Energy Equipment. The act also provides a tax credit of up to \$2,200 for 30 percent of the first \$2,000 and 20 percent of the next \$8,000 spent for new equipment to harness solar, geothermal, wind and other renewable energy for residential purposes.

Unlike the credit for insulation, renewable energy equipment may be installed in either an existing or a newly constructed residence. In other respects, the qualifications and limitations are similar.

The residential energy-credit provisions are applicable for qualifying expenditures made after April 19, 1977 and before January 1, 1986. Credits for qualifying expenditures made during 1977 are to be claimed (along with any 1978 credits) in the taxpayer's 1978 income tax return. Unused credits may be carried forward.

TAX CREDIT



FIREWOOD & BLM

While environmentalists following the progress of the BLM wilderness review are accustomed to protests and problems arising from restrictions regulating mining activity in wilderness inventory units, they may be somewhat less aware of situations arising from the need of local citizens to gather firewood for home use.

Never slow to provocation at signs of government 'meddling', inhabitants of the Taos area have become incensed at the prospect of less fuel for their fires this winter following closure of Pot Mountain (La Olla, #36) to woodcutting pending results of the intensive wilderness inventory.

Pot Mountain had been one of two traditional pinon cutting areas for the local people. The other, an area near the Rio Grande Gorge, was closed last year because it was decided that woodcutting was impairing the scenic quality of the area near the visitor center.

The local citizenry in Taos threatened open defiance of the closure of Pot Mountain, and the BLM officials in the new Taos Resource Area office saw their prospects of establishing a harmonious relationship with the public diminishing as rapidly as the slow-growing pinon has been disappearing of late. Some of the local agency personnel apparently felt that the area didn't really deserve intensive wilderness inventory anyway, and were loathe to dispatch patrols to Pot Mountain.

While the local people have claimed that the pinon cutting was for home use only, the number of cords they demanded to be allowed to cut was disproportionate to their numbers. Most likely a good deal of the pinon cut in the Taos area has also been supplying commercial markets, where it commands as much as \$90 per cord in Albuquerque.

It is interesting to compare a situation which arose in recent years regarding pinon cutting on Forest Service lands in northern New Mexico. It became clear that the pinon supply would disappear in a few years if cutting continued at the accustomed rate. When the Forest Service personnel talked to the local people about the problem, they readily acknowledged that continued cutting at that rate would leave nothing left for home use.



But if commercial sales 'on the side' were halted, a sustained yield cutting program would at least keep the home fires burning.

Not without effort, the Forest Service convinced them that other types of wood burn too: ponderosa and aspen were plentiful, and the slash from regular timber sales could be counted upon to yield a substantial number of cords. While pinon remains everyone's "favorite flavor," a good public relations effort successfully influenced even so deeply ingrained a preference as that one.

Disaster in the Taos situation was eventually resolved by a policy devised by the Albuquerque District which appears to offer a creative compromise without sacrificing the wilderness characteristics. '(Since about 75% of the timber in the Albuquerque and Socorro districts is presently tied up in wilderness inventory units, an equitable compromise is needed.) The Bureau has decided that a 10% canopy reduction would not impair wilderness characteristics.

These supervisory restrictions are all-important; public lands always see more of a timber loss than is expressly allowed by the fuel wood permits. In the case of Pot Mountain, the new program has just begun, with a BLM patrol camped on the Mountain to keep careful watch.

Jean Herzegh



Cholla Cactus

Sierra Club Calendars 1980

CALENDAR FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. Insects are the theme, both in full-color photographs and in the nature lore and activity projects—A wall calendar this year. 10% x 8-3/8.

ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR. A week-by-week tribute to the natural glory of our continent. Fifty-eight full-color photographs in a popular desk calendar. 6% x 9%

WILDERNESS CALENDAR. The natural beauty of North America's wilderness depicted in fourteen full-color photographs. Quotes from literature and natural history. 10% x 13%

TRAIL CALENDAR. The outdoor life around the world—backpacking, mountaineering, cross-country skiing, river running, caving, and hot air ballooning—celebrated in fourteen photographs. 10% x 11 1/2

WILDLIFE CALENDAR. Beautiful, often rare species of wildlife depicted in their natural habitats throughout the world in fourteen full-color photographs. 10% x 8%

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CHAIRMAN**

PROFITS GO TO GROUP ACTIVITIES

EL PASO'S PAGE

EL PASO GROUP REPORT

The weekend of Sept. 29-30, the El Paso Group had its first trail maintenance trip. Fifteen members went up to the Lincoln National Forest to work on the Argentina Canyon Trail. They leveled trails, destroyed fire rings, widened the trails, put in erosion controls and had a great time. Saturday we finished the trail work so Sunday three members cleaned up the campground, seven members worked on the Little Bonita Creek Trail and three just took it easy. In the future the group will have at least two trail maintenance trips a year.

We also have added another notch in the Inner Cities Outings program. We took twelve high-schoolers on a car camp in the Gila. We have plans in November to take the same kids on a back-pack and in October we have a day hike planned for a new group of kids. Janice Cordero, the ICO Chairman now also has some operating money (thanks to Chapter) which helps a great deal.

Jim Owens, the BLM Chairman was able to get five members to run for various positions on the BLM Advisory Boards and was also able to get four members to lead outings into the BLM wilderness review areas.

The proposed trip during Thanksgiving down the Rio Grande River, to be lead by George Mader, could not be sponsored by the Sierra Club due to the Foreign Outings insurance policy. We have had to cancel day hikes, car camps and general "lets see Mexico" trips due to this policy. It seems ironic that our members worked to have sections of the Rio Grande included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers and now we can't float down it.

La DOLCE VIDA

On August 11th and 12th, Joy and I were able to experience one of those rare moments when it all comes together. Ambiance, simpatico, or just plain good people, good food and a perfect environment to enjoy both.

Rollin Wickenden and his wife Esther were to thank for this. Rollin led a "Gourmet Backpack" to Spring Cabin in the White Mountain Wilderness. Saturday began in El Paso with a breakfast of coffee cake, mellow balls, coffee, tea, juice and Oh Yes, of course Champagne. The drive to the trail head at Little Bonito was marred by heavy showers around and the prospects of soon getting wet. While we donned hiking gear, three Sherpas headed up the Argentina Trail ahead of us. About a mile up the trail, we met the Sherpas (actually Bill and Tanya Hoppes, and John Bowen) and enjoyed lunch of juices, cold cuts, breads, grapes, pineapple, cherries, pickles and cheeses which we topped off with frosted brownies. On up the trail and still dry but under threatening skies, the forest was lovely with flowers in bloom, clean clear air and comfortable hiking temperature. Evening found us at Spring Cabin where after the tent ritual, and still threatening skies we sat down to a meal of five different wines, Shish Kabobs (meat, potatoe, onion, peppers, mushrooms) on a bed of "late" wild rice, and Strawberry Shortcake for desert. After the usual campfire stories, the coyotes failed miserably in keeping us awake. Sunday opened to still threatening skies and a breakfast of Huevos Rancheros, Sausage, Coffee, Juice and left over Marshmallows. Coming

down Little Bonito Canyon was as beautiful as our previous day's ascent. We sampled Wild Raspberries, Chokeberrys and that cool, clean air. Lunch, while some of our party swam, was a little prosaic, but then Burritos, Avocados and juice are nothing to put down either. Afternoon found us back at the cars munching out on watermelon, saying goodbys, and getting ready to come back to face the eight to five.

Many Thanks to the Wickendens (who worked their.....off), Winnie the Wilderness Ranger, the White Mountain Wilderness itself, and a benevolent God who allowed us to stay dry to enjoy the sights, smells, tastes, sounds and companionships of one of those once in a blue moon experiences.

Jim and Joy Owen

ICO

The El Paso Group continues to support and encourage its new Inner City Outings program. ICO's are the Sierra Club's community outreach program described in detail in the March-July issue of the SIERRA.

A core group of dedicated people have organized four outings so far. We've taken teenagers from the city and introduced them to the Sacramentos in December, the Guadalupe in February, the Organs in April and most recently, the Black Range in September.

Our latest was an overnight venture with a ten mile hike on Saturday and a five mile hike on Sunday. The food was fantastic, the hikes breath-taking and the campfire conversation unique - adults and teenagers were actually communicating.

Communication, understanding and caring are ICO objectives. We believe that ICO's should provide both recreation and education for young people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience these things. We are trying to develop individuals who have wilderness savvy. Political activists can be created by such programs as the ICO's. A Wilderness experience can teach an individual more about himself or herself so that he or she can effectively deal with another type of wilderness on a daily basis. ICO's provide both abstract and tangible learning experiences.

We need your continued support. Many thanks to the Chapter for the funds that have been made available to us and to those people who have donated equipment. Keep those checks and camping gear coming.

Next on our ICO schedule is an all - girl dayhike. We're taking a group of ladies from Loretto Academy on a hike in McKittrick Canyon on Saturday Oct. 20. In November we are going to attempt our first backpack. The girls are busy learning how to make tortillas and the guys have assured me they can construct shelters out of odds and ends. All we need now is eight sleeping bags.

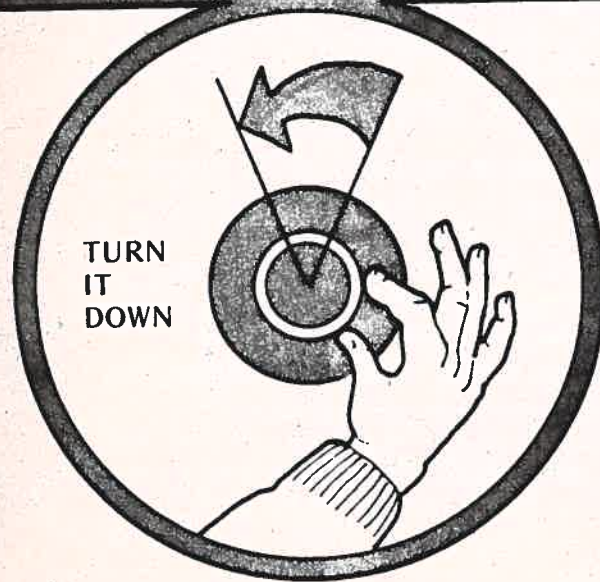
Help is always needed. You can contact me at 915-565-9586 if you can offer any help. My address is: 1414 N. Piedras #34, El Paso, 79930.

Janice Cordero

YOUR HEATING SYSTEM

Perhaps the most important thing you can do to reduce the high cost of heating your home all winter in New Mexico and still remain comfortably warm is:

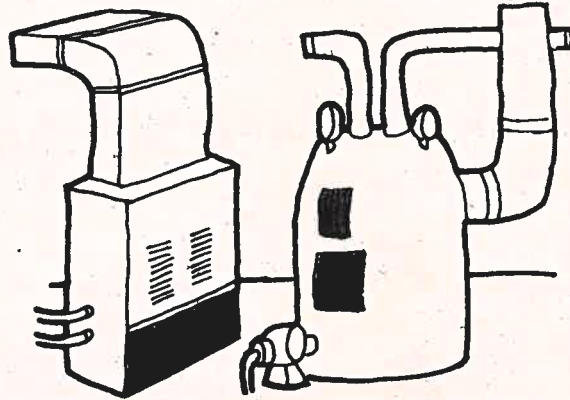
PRACTICE SENSIBLE THERMOSTAT SETBACK—KEEP YOUR THERMOSTAT NO HIGHER THAN 68° DURING THE DAY. AT BEDTIME, SET IT BACK 5° OR MORE FOR THE NIGHT.



Another thing you should do is have a qualified serviceman check your heating system and perform any needed maintenance every year. This can increase the efficiency of your heating system and reduce fuel consumption by as much as 10% or more.

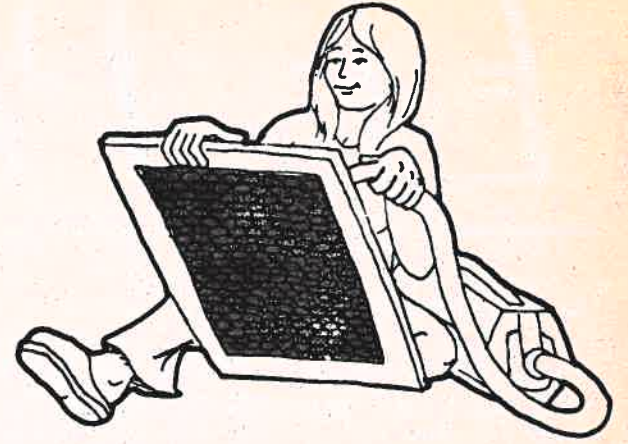
For a natural, bottled or LP gas furnace the serviceman should:

- ✓ Adjust and clean burner unit.
- ✓ Adjust fuel-to-air ratio for maximum efficiency.
- ✓ Check for leaks.
- ✓ Check electrical connections, especially on safety devices.
- ✓ Check operation of main gas valve, pressure regulator and safety control valve.
- ✓ Adjust and clean primary air supply nozzle for proper combustion.
- ✓ Check and adjust pilot and burner ignition.
- ✓ Clean thermostat contacts and adjust for proper operation.
- ✓ Conduct a CO₂ test to see if fuel is being burned completely.
- ✓ Check the vent to make sure it is clear.



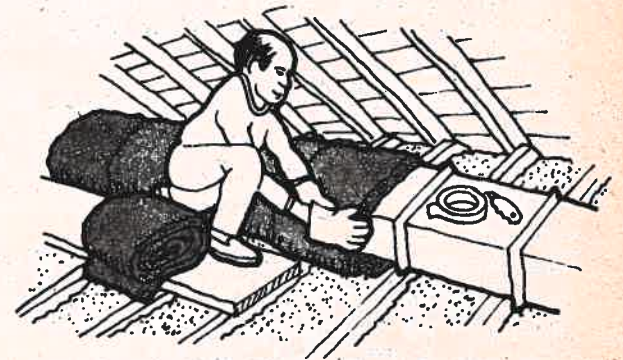
For an oil burning furnace the maintenance requirements are similar. Little maintenance is normally required for an electrical furnace, but check the manufacturer's specifications—electrical relay points often require checking and cleaning. For a forced hot air heating system a serviceman should:

- ✓ Check blower operation.
- ✓ Check for duct leaks where duct is accessible.
- ✓ Oil the blower motor if it doesn't have sealed bearings.



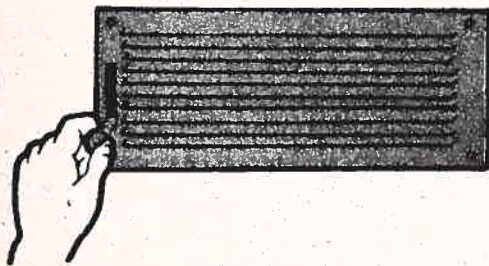
Here are some additional things you need to take care of:

1. Clean air filters every 30 days during the heating season, or replace them if they are disposable. Have the serviceman show you how.
2. Keep all registers clean—vacuum them every few weeks, and make sure that warm air coming out of registers is unobstructed by curtains or furniture.
3. Assure that all ducts in unheated spaces are well insulated and do not leak. Such unheated spaces may include your attic and garage. Duct insulation comes generally in blankets 1" or 2" thick; the thicker variety is best for rectangular ducts.



4. Determine if your furnace is too big—which it may be if your house has been insulated since it was installed. Here's how to tell: wait for a cold night, then set the thermostat at 70°. Once the house temperature reaches 70°, if the furnace burner runs less than 40 minutes out of the next hour (time it only when it's running), your furnace is too big. A furnace that's too big turns on and off much more than it should, and that wastes fuel. Call your service company—they may be able to cut down the size of your burner and adjust the blower operation without replacing the whole furnace.

5. Make sure no room in your house gets more heating than it needs. Also, you should reduce the heating supplied to unused parts of your house. If some of your rooms get too hot before the other rooms are warm enough, your system needs *balancing*. This can be done by adjusting your registers and—if you have more than one thermostat—by turning down the thermostats in areas where less heat is needed.



6. Turn the furnace pilot off during nonheating seasons—for safety, see the manufacturer's instructions.

7. Clean the fan that moves the air through your system at least once a year.

8. When the sun is shining brightly, take advantage of a natural passive solar energy system and let the sun shine in and warm your house!

When purchasing a new furnace, keep the following points in mind:

- Your new furnace should be properly sized to the needs of your home—one with the smallest capacity to do the job.
- Consider selecting a furnace incorporating an automatic flue gas damper—a device which reduces loss of heat when the furnace is not in operation.
- Try to select a furnace designed for sealed combustion and indoor installation—and locate it centrally.
- Try to adjust the blower switch so that the fan turns on at 100° and turns off at 80-85°. With these lower switch settings, the moving air may feel cool if you place your hand directly in front of a register, but the air is still quite a bit warmer than room temperature. Consult your furnace manufacturer's instruction manual for details.
- Some high efficiency features available on various new furnaces include electronic ignition and a two-speed blower—look for them.
- If you use electric heating, consider a heat pump system. Heat pumps use outside air in both heating and cooling and can cut the use of electricity for heating.

For additional information on saving energy, call (toll free) the New Mexico Energy Hotline, 1-800-432-6782, or visit your nearest Energy Extension Service Information Center.

Santa Fe—440 Cerrillos Road, 521-3886

Albuquerque—3015 Manito Vista NE,

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GET OUT!



This column is dedicated to those who need to get out--out of houses and cars; out of cities; out of themselves.

He who distinguishes the true savor of his food can never be a glutton; he who does not cannot be otherwise. -Henry David Thoreau-

In the last issue I went out on a limb and recommended some books on backpacking. This time I'm going further out on a much weaker limb to recommend a few books on camp and trail cooking.

These books are those I've found useful in planning and cooking meals for my personal trips as well as the central commissary group trips I've led. The mention of a particular book is no endorsement except that I have found it useful, and the omission of a book means nothing except that I may not have come in contact with it or used it.

A book that is especially valuable for the backpacker who is tired of the high prices and plastic taste of the "store-bought" dehydrated and freeze-dried foods is The Complete Light-pack Camping and Trail-Foods Cookbook by Edwin P. Drew (McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, New York, 1977). Drew has an extensive section on the home preparation of foods, including techniques for drying cooked foods and reconstituting them in camp using a technique he calls the "one Minute Boil." In addition, the book contains a comprehensive report on the efficiency of the various backpackable stoves and suggestions for making cookset pots more useful. Oh yes, many of his recipes are good.

Another book with a good section on home preparation is Harriett Barker's Supermarket Backpacker (Greatlakes Living Press, Matteson, IL, 1977). Ms. Barker also stresses the foods that are available on the shelves of your neighborhood supermarket. She is the author of another excellent cookbook, The One Burger Gourmet, which is not of particular value to those who value a light pack more than a satisfied palate.

An interesting little book in a novel format contains a different method for carrying food on backpack trips. Brown Bagging It...; A Guide to Fresh Food Cooking in the Wilderness by Jean Nagy (The Marty/Nagy Bookworks, San Francisco, 1976) is printed on brown paper, ala supermarket bags, with a corrugated cardboard cover and contains several hints and recipes for carrying and cooking fresh foods on backpack trips.

For the non-meat types, Vikki Kimmont and Claudia McCell's Simple Foods for the Pack (Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1976) and The Healthy Trail Food Book by Dorcas S. Miller (The East Wood Press, Charlotte, NC, 1976) give a lot of suggestions and recipes for filling and satisfying dishes from the low end of the food

chain. I haven't tried many of the dishes, but they look good on paper.

Other cookbooks I've used from time to time are: N. O. L. S. Cookery; Planning and Preparation of Food for Backpacking Expeditions, Nancy Pallister, editor (National Outdoor Leadership School, Lander, WY, 1974), Backpacker's Cookbook, Margaret Cross and Jean Fiske (Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA, 1974), The Well-Fed Backpacker by June Fleming (Victoria House, Portland, OR, 1976), and The Outdoor Epicure; An R. E. I. Cookbook, Larry Ferguson and Priscilla Lister, editors, (Recreational Equipment Inc., Seattle, 1979).

For those interested in drying their own foods, Dry It--You'll Like It; A Book About Food Dehydration by Gen MacManiman (Living Foods Dehydrators, Fall City, WA, 1974) is invaluable. It includes the plans for making your own dehydrator which could be modified for solar power.

In the Sierra Club Totebook series, Cooking for Camp and Trail by Hasse Bunnelle with Shirley Sarvis (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1972) contains some 200 recipes that have been tested by Sierrans all over the world. It also has a good section on planning and preparation of foods and suggestions for general camp management as well as cooking.

Another Sierra Club Totebook by Hasse Bunnelle is the bible for anyone who is planning a central commissary group trip. Food for Knapsackers and Other Trail Travelers (Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1971) contains a "Master Food List" which gives the amounts of the various foods per person per day which is a great aid in planning group meals. Recipes for groups of five and twenty are included as well as suggested menus. This book is not very useful for someone planning for an individual commissary trip except in a general way. My biggest objection to the book, however, is that nearly one-third of the pages are wasted on rather poorly executed drawings which bear absolutely no relationship to the contents of the book. I would prefer that those pages be omitted to save paper and weight or, if the pages were necessary in the book-binding process, left blank for notes, additional recipes, etc.

There is no need for any backpacker to suffer gastric distress to keep his pack weight down or to cripple himself with a heavy burden to be able to enjoy good food on the trail. With planning and forethought anyone can hike with a light pack and a pleased palate.

Get out!

-John Colburn-

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Fall 1979

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Wes Walker

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