



The Rio Grande SIERRAN

May 1980

Three Cheers! New Mexico Woman Elected to National Board

All Southwesterners and New Mexicans especially have good reason to rejoice at the news that one of this region's most exemplary and effective volunteers has won election to the national Board of Directors of the Sierra Club. Betsy Barnett will be one of 15 members of the governing body of our 185,000-member organization.

A resident of Los Alamos, Barnett has been active in the Sierra Club for 13 years in Arizona, California and New Mexico. An avid crosscountry skier and hiker, she has served as Chairman of the Rio Grande Chapter, Regional Vice President for the Club's Southwest Region, and is currently Chairman of the Club's National Public Lands Committee. In 1975-1976 she was a member of the New Mexico Governor's Wilderness Commission.

In addition, Barnett has served as coordinator for the Club's Grand Canyon Master Plan Proposal and Kaiparowits Power-Project campaign, and is currently responsible for its mining law reform campaign. In 1977 she received a national

Sierra Club Award for her work on the controversial Kaiparowits project.

Barnett will travel to the Club's headquarters in San Francisco on May 1st, when she will be formally installed on the Board.



BETSY BARNETT

New Mexicans have been proud of Betsy Barnett for a long time, and are delighted that her well-proven effectiveness will now be reflected on the national Board, where she will work on fund raising issues and continue to be an advocate for protection of public land values.

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BLM Buckles Under To Coal Industry Pressure

A recent flurry of scandalous events has squelched the fledgling efforts of the Albuquerque District Bureau of Land Management to implement a meaningful public participation program.

It all began when the Albuquerque District Office attempted to elicit public opinion in the course of a regular up-date on the Chaco/San Juan Planning Unit for coal. On March 18th they sent out a questionnaire to 1600 people, industries, organizations, etc., who had expressed an interest in coal development in the San Juan Basin. The questionnaire was sent because the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 requires that the BLM apply the "Lands Unsuitability Criteria" to determine whether there are resource conflicts which make certain areas not good for future coal mining. (The "Lands Unsuitability Criteria" involve presence of National Parks, agricultural areas, wilderness study areas, critical habitat for threatened or endangered species, lands of high scenic value, etc.)

The questionnaire thus focused on the potential resource conflicts regarding coal development in northwestern New Mexico. It consisted of six sections (over 10 pages total) each with a different approach to eliciting knowledge, belief, and value judgments regarding resource conflicts and resource management in the area.

By early April letters of outrage began to pour in from coal companies (Western Coal Co., El Paso Natural Gas, Public Service Co. of New Mexico, Salt River Project, Peabody Coal Co.) and from State agencies and officials whose ears have long been bent by same.

Topping the list of this egregious outpouring was a letter from Governor King to Secretary of Interior Cecil Andrus expressing the basic consensus of opinion among the coal companies and development interests within the State government that the questionnaire was biased against coal mining and pro-environmentalist. We quote some of these letters below:

Governor Bruce King to Cecil Andrus, 4/7/80:

"...we are quite concerned about the use of a questionnaire recently distributed by the BLM's Albuquerque District Office. A number of State agencies have reviewed this questionnaire, and have generally found it to contain a number of serious flaws. These problems relate primarily to the strong anti-coal mining bias apparent throughout, the sampling technique, and the questionnaire format and content, which are unlikely to encourage realistic and useful responses. Due to the magnitude of these problems, we suggest that survey results not be used as a basis for resource management."

Larry Kehoe, Secretary, State Energy and Minerals Department, to L. Paul Applegate, Albuquerque BLM District Manager, 4/3/80: Regarding the following statement from the cover letter to the questionnaire: '...reclamation or rehabilitation of this land after strip mining is expected to be extremely difficult and costly, requiring substantial quantities of scarce water resources' Kehoe says "(this statement)...is outdated and incorrect. Many mine operators are currently employing reclamation techniques that require little or no water." (Ed. note: This would indeed be a feat of magic on the arid lands in question; what hat is Kehoe pulling this rabbit from?)

George Byers, Western Coal Co., to Harold L.

Runnels, 3/31/80: "...From talking with BLM officials the questionnaire was developed with review assistance from the Sierra Club. The BLM rejected requesting assistance from the coal and utility industries because it was felt their input would be 'biased.'"

The above statement from Byers is obviously of especial interest to us. We believe that he is in fact lying. The BLM sought input from Jean Herzegh (Chapter Conservation Chairman) and from Peter Hanagan, President of New Mexico Oil and Gas Association (both of whom are prospective members of the Albuquerque District BLM Multiple-Use Advisory Board). Their input was sought in order to give the questionnaire a "trial run," and because it was felt that each of them would reflect a different perspective: environmental protection on the one hand, and mineral development on the other. Hanagan never responded to the request for his input, and the BLM held up production of the questionnaire for ten days until they simply could wait no longer.

Instead of making any attempt to justify the validity of this questionnaire, the BLM State Director Arthur Zimmerman has chosen to make a vacuous and spineless retraction. Whether this action has come at the direction of Cecil Andrus himself makes no difference in the final analysis: The BLM has once again proven itself to be a weak agency which will buckle at the onslaught of special vested interests. Conservationists have tried to be supportive of the agency to help get them over the hurdle of this time-honored tendency, but clearly we cannot continue to do so given their insouciant disregard for the opinion of all but a chosen few.

What we have here is more than a colossal waste of time and effort. We have a blatant and unfortunately successful attempt on the part of coal companies to keep the wool pulled over the eyes of the public. Naturally they do not want the public thinking too clearly about the complicated issues involved in resource development and management in the San Juan Basin; and they most assuredly don't want the public to have more than a token, effete input into the Bureau planning process for "their" coal development plans.

The BLM is now in the process of responding to the congressional inquiries on their questionnaire. At this writing, we have just learned what their response will be. They will write a "Dear Public Land User" information sheet on work-in-progress for the Chaco/San Juan Planning Update for Coal which says that "due to problems which arose" the questionnaire has been retracted and the information returned will not be used in their planning process.

There were two issues on the basis of which the questionnaire could have rightfully been declared invalid: 1) it was in fact biased against coal development; or 2) it violated certain OMB regulations requiring clearance by OMB for "Facts obtained or solicited by the use of written report forms, application forms, schedules, questionnaires, or other similar methods calling either for answers to identical questions from 10 or more persons other than agencies ... of the U.S. ... which are to be used for statistical compilations of general public interest (44 U.S.C. 3502)."

Although the questionnaire had not been screened through OMB, the clearance issue could have been addressed on the basis that the questionnaire was primarily open-ended in its questions and never intended for statistical compilation. The questions asked did not lend themselves to that sort of analysis. Also, the questionnaire was not randomly distributed, but sent only to persons already identified as having expressed an interest in the issue. The question of bias could as easily have been addressed by pointing out that the whole purpose of the application of the unsuitability criteria is to ask which lands are not good for coal mining because of the impacts it would have on other special resources.

The balance of political power in this state is such that what the development companies want, they GET. They leaned on King, who squawked all the way to D.C. And the BLM has capitulated to the demands of vested special interests. Is there any question but that this will happen again, and again, and again -- with regard to any of the other resources that many of us value? Is there any question about the extent to which the coal and mineral development companies are going to scream every inch of the way along the BLM Wilderness Review Program?

The public must be told the issues in terms of what exactly is at stake. Water resources here are scarce. Reclaimability is a vastly unexplored problem in the arid southwest. Coal strip mining does have severe and destructive impacts on other land resources. But the scenario that has just occurred makes it altogether unlikely that we will ever be able to look to the BLM for valid statements about the impacts and issues at stake. The precedent just established is that we can count on BLM for absolutely nothing except silence and circumvention whenever possible.

And now the \$64,000 question: What do we do about this? Where do we go from here? We start talking; we make our voices heard. We may not be able to buy our way to the throne, but there are in fact better and more decent roads to wise land use decisions in this state. Let's get on them and get going.

- Jean E. Herzegh
Conservation Chairman

BLM PLANS FOR AMERICA'S ENERGY NEEDS

America needs its coal more than ever before to break our dependence on foreign oil. Fortunately New Mexico has substantial quantities of low-sulphur coal. More than 28 billion tons in the Chaco/San Juan area of northwestern New Mexico is Federal coal. Owned by all of the American people, it is *your* coal, managed in the public interest by the Bureau of Land Management. While it is the bureau's responsibility to make these urgently needed natural resources available to America's industries, it is also the bureau's responsibility to see that the lands holding these vital coal deposits are not subjected to indiscriminate development. The map at right offers a simplified analysis of resource conflicts in the Chaco/San Juan Planning Unit.



GET THE COAL? YES! BUT... LET'S DO IT RESPONSIBLY!

Archeological sites must be protected.

How would YOU resolve this conflict?

The coal region contains archeological ruins of one of the nation's most impressive prehistoric civilizations. The Chaco Anasazi culture was apparently centered at what is now Chaco Canyon National Monument, but at least 80 other related communities have been found recently in the area. BLM is required to consider mining impacts on these resources.

Although some parts of the coal region yield little vegetation at present, other parts support livestock and wildlife. After strip mining, the land must be returned to its former capacity. But the fragile soils and arid climate make reclamation success highly questionable.

The land's productivity must be restored after strip mining.

How would YOU resolve this conflict?

Major fossil deposits will be uncovered.

How would YOU resolve this conflict?

The coal region is one of the few places in the world where the evolution of land animals can be studied through the critical period covering the extinction of the dinosaurs and the first widespread propagation of mammals. The paleontological record here is a world standard. In many parts of the Chaco/San Juan, miners would have to go through the fossils to get to the coal.

The Chaco/San Juan coal region includes three federal Wilderness Study Areas: the Bisti Badlands, De-na-zin and Ah-shi-sle-pah. Coal strip mining is prohibited there until Congress specifically approves it. But in surrounding areas where mining is expected, BLM may be required to protect habitat for Bald and Golden Eagles, as well as other forms of wildlife.

Damage to the natural environment must be minimized.

How would YOU resolve this conflict?

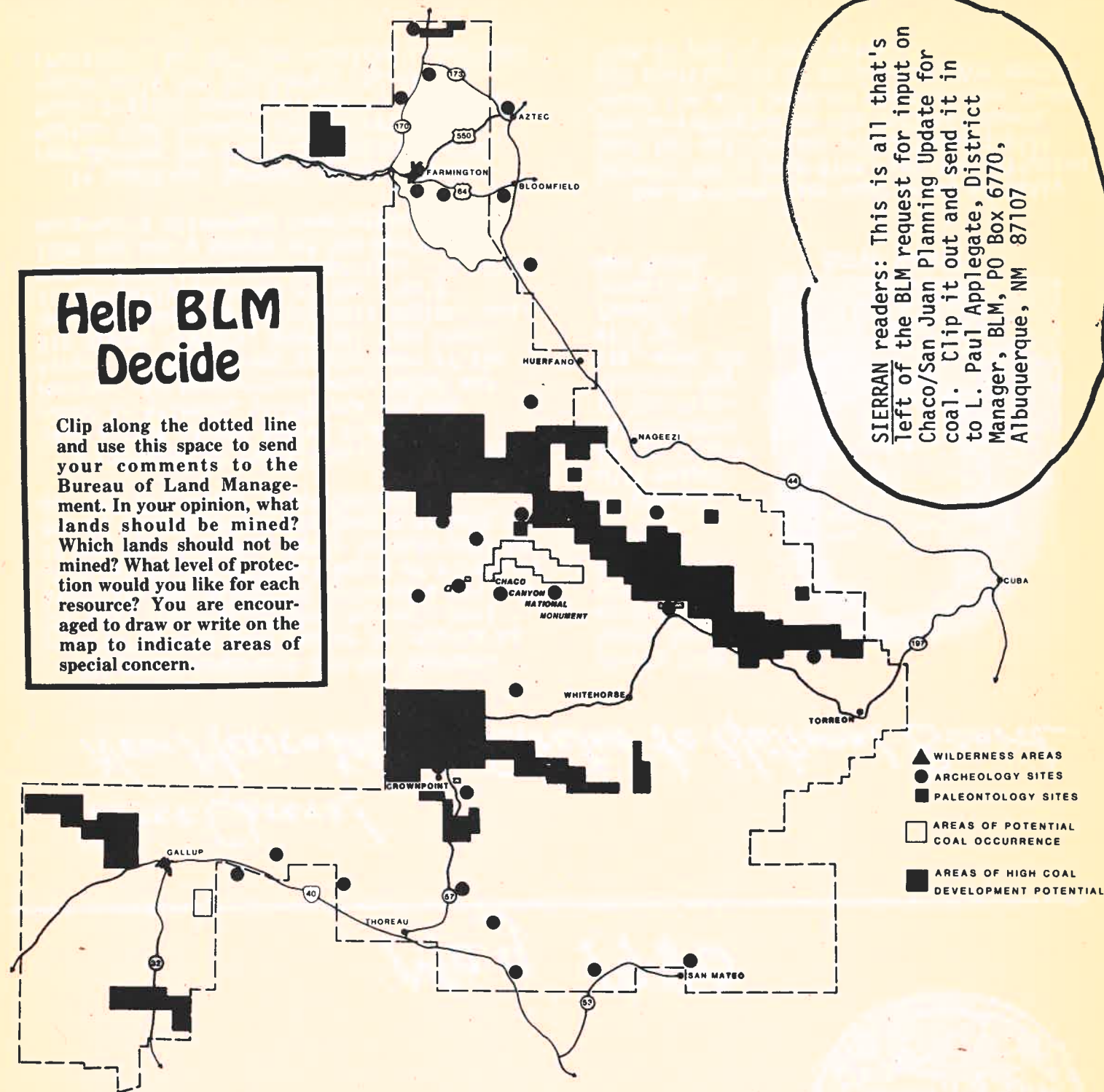
The lives and traditions of area residents may be seriously disrupted.

How would YOU resolve this conflict?

Coal mining would bring both positive and negative socio-economic impacts. Affected most heavily will be several hundred Navajo people who might have to be moved from their homes to allow strip mining. Also, boomtown problems are predictable for many of the region's towns and cities, which are already finding it difficult to cope with expansion.

Help BLM Decide

Clip along the dotted line and use this space to send your comments to the Bureau of Land Management. In your opinion, what lands should be mined? Which lands should not be mined? What level of protection would you like for each resource? You are encouraged to draw or write on the map to indicate areas of special concern.



SIERRA readers: This is all that's left of the BLM request for input on Chaco/San Juan Planning Update for coal. Clip it out and send it in to L. Paul Applegate, District Manager, BLM, PO Box 6770, Albuquerque, NM 87107

TO BLM:

(Please comment here)

(Print Name & Address)

New Mexico Congressional Delegation Rolls Out Anti-Wilderness Bill



Our congressional delegation released its draft RARE II legislation April 15. This bill is written for the mining, timber and ranching industries. Many of our most spectacular wilderness areas are now on a give-away list! They may possibly be considered for wilderness once every ten years. Compare the proposals made by the conservationists' Alternative W, the Forest Service for RARE II, and those in the Domenici bill. The chart below shows acreages proposed, with FP indicating Further Planning and NW Non-Wilderness designation.

As if this were not bad enough, the proposed bill would eliminate 12 of the 13 areas designated for further planning by the Forest Service. These areas were to be studied so that suitability for wilderness designation would be decided in the future.

The New Mexico delegation has not acted in good faith. In December of 1979, the delegation requested personal comments from all New Mexicans, and promised to use all of this input to design a New Mexico Wilderness Bill.

It now appears that the whole exercise was merely a ploy to ax the Forest Service recommendations. Nowhere did the delegation add acreage to the wilderness recommendations, although many deserving proposed additions were submitted. The delegation used only the input from the "rape, ruin and run" special interest groups to gut the already minimal Forest Service recommendations.

A number of wilderness bills addressing the RARE II recommendations in Western states have already been introduced in Congress, and many have drawn complaints from conservationists. But none contain such outrageous slashes to a state's wilderness heritage as does the proposed bill for New Mexico. Our delegation has set a new low in bowing to the ruin and run special interests -- even for a region that is notorious for such conduct.

- Jim Smith, Socorro
Chairman, NM Wilderness
Study Committee

Area	Alt.W	USFS	Bill
Lincoln National Forest			
Capitan Mt	38,000	36,400	36,400
Guadalupe Escarpment	21,300	21,000	18,000
White Mt Adds	20,560	19,600	19,100
Sacramento Escarpment	43,440	42,730FP	NW
Little Dog/Pup	25,920	25,920FP	NW
Gila National Forest			
Aldo Leopold	315,000	251,000	178,000
Gila Adds	228,137	166,000	155,000
Blue Range	40,000	40,000	35,000
San Francisco Canyon	19,000	8,800	FP
Hell Hole	18,860	18,860FP	NW
Carson National Forest			
Latir Peak	26,500	24,600	15,600
Wheeler Peak Adds	17,000	14,700	9,100
Columbine/Hondo (Gold Hill)	50,500	46,050	NW
Santa Fe National Forest			
Dome	5,200	5,200	5,200
Pecos Adds	154,500	71,000	70,000
		17,530FP	
Chama Adds	4,800	4,800	NW
San Pedro Park Add	5,670	5,670FP	NW
Povadera	15,480	15,480FP	NW
Caballo	8,800	8,800FP	NW
Cibola National Forest			
Withington	19,000	19,000	19,000
Apache Kid	133,000	133,000	NW
Canadian River	3,460	3,460	NW
Ryan Hill	45,000	36,640	NW
Coronado National Forest			
Whitmore Canyon	18,000	12,740FP	NW
Bunk Robinson	15,850	15,850FP	NW

The New Mexico Congressional delegation has done a grave disservice to all New Mexicans concerned about preserving areas of outstanding natural beauty in this state. Under the guise of legislation to add National Forest lands to the National Wilderness Preservation System, all four members of the delegation have proposed a bill which would damage the future of the wilderness system in New Mexico.

During the RARE II (Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) program, the Forest Service selected certain lands in New Mexico to be designated by Congress as wilderness, in order to protect the naturalness of these areas as part of the state's heritage. At the time, conservationists objected to the minimal amount of land which received wilderness recommendations. The delegation now proposes that about 1/3 of these lands, which are now administratively protected for future wilderness designation, be released from that protection.

About 560,400 acres would be formally added to the Wilderness Preservation System, an area about three-fourths the size of Bernalillo County. This emaciated list of areas omits much of the state's most spectacular wilderness: the Lower San Francisco River, one of the last riparian areas of its kind; the magnificent Apache Kid area in the rugged San Mateo Mountains; and 73,000 acres of the wild Black Range, one of the most significant wilderness areas in the entire Southwest.

WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THIS OUTRAGEOUS ANTI-WILDERNESS BILL?

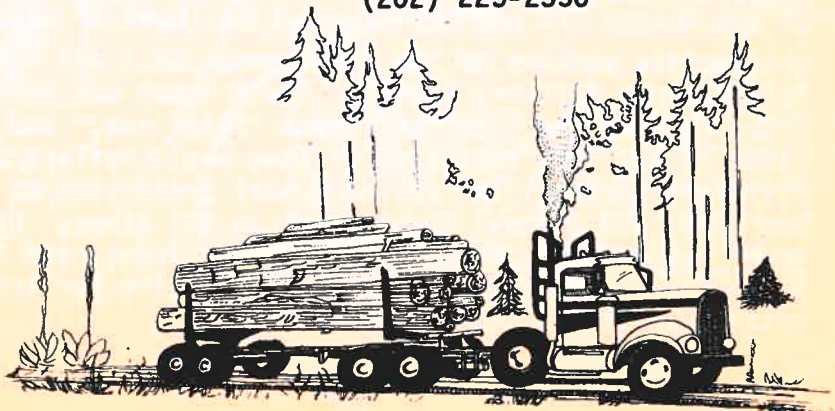
We phone; we write; we make it known to the delegation that this bill is totally unacceptable. Remember that deadline for comments is May 15. Following is a list of addresses and phone numbers for the delegation. Please use it!

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-6621

The Hon. Harrison H. (Jack) Schmitt
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-5521

The Honorable Manuel Lujan, Jr.
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 225-6316

The Honorable Harold Runnels
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 225-2356



El Paso Actively Educating

Our El Paso Group is not only working hard on major Sierra Club issues, but they are also actively seeking to improve the quality of life for some young folks in their area.

Since late 1978, nine outdoor experiences have been made available for 146 young people housed in orphanages or foster homes. The opportunities range from day hikes to overnight backpacks.

The reports we've been getting show that the Group is learning as much if not more than the young people about preparing for trips, programming and providing for the recreational experience. A total of 147 people have been directly involved with these ICO (Inner City Outing) programs in the last year and a half - and for all of them it has meant a chance to expand their lives and to appreciate the beauty around them.

I'll tell you about a more or less 'typical' ICO hike we made last February 16th. That was a nice day in El Paso - but not so nice a one in the Guadalupe where we were headed.

Our dayhike with the Department of Human Resources (a division of the Welfare Department) started out under balmy skies with moderately gusting winds in El Paso, and ended up with 100 feet of visibility due to the fog, searing winds, temperatures in the low thirties, and ice and sleet in the Guads by 10:30 a.m.

After examining all our alternatives, we decided to hike up Devil's Hallway as scheduled. It really was beautiful, with all the ice-encrusted vegetation and our ice-encrusted hair and bodies. (But - the next time I can't contact the Guadalupe Ranger Station for a weather report prior to a hike, I'll go prepared for anything!)

All the ICO's are great - and the weather doesn't usually have anything to do with that! Sharing hot chocolate and shivering is fun too; the key is sharing!

We encourage more of you to get involved in the ICO's - just give me a call. We also want to give a very special thanks to the Las Cruces Group Sierra Club for their contributions to Inner City Outings. We very much appreciate the gift of wool socks, stove and fuel combination pack. We're always needing equipment and clothing for our outings, and anything you might send will be most welcome. Write to:

Janice Cordero
1414 N. Piedras, #34
El Paso, TX 79930



Earth Day News from Santa Fe

John Turnbull, Santa Fe Group Chairman, used Earth Day as a good excuse to get some new people involved with the Sierra Club. On Sunday, April 20, we co-sponsored a native plant hike with the Native Plant Society in Santa Fe. It was a grand success. Close to 40 people turned out for a beautiful sunny morning hike.

The Sierra Club would like to thank David Deardorf of the Native Plant Society. Special thanks to our John Turnbull, Ann Young and David Douglas for their time and efforts.

Also on April 20, the Albuquerque Group participated in an Earth Day celebration along with more than thirty other environmental organizations.

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Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> 100	<input type="checkbox"/> 104	(annual dues)
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	All dues include subscription to Sierra (3.00
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	and chapter publications (1.00).
Junior	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	—	

Mail to:

Sierra Club

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Albuquerque Group Takes On Chaco Canyon Problems

Chaco Canyon National Monument is one of the most significant archaeological areas on the North American continent. Located about 100 miles northwest of Albuquerque in the heart of the San Juan Basin, Chaco Canyon is known by most New Mexicans as one of this state's most valuable resources.

The San Juan Basin also contains some of the world's richest strip-minable coal beds. The proposed stripmining activity and its accompanying development will have a direct impact on Chaco and its outlying archaeological sites.

Stripmining is not the only threat to the many special resources of the area. Now Public Service Company of New Mexico is developing plans for a 2,000 megawatt coal-fired power plant next to the Bisti Badlands (recently designated a BLM Wilderness Study Area) just a few miles from Chaco Canyon. The airborne emissions from this proposed power plant could have a severe impact on the archaeological sites of the Monument. According to Dr. Michael Williams (NM Citizen for Clean Air and Water), there is reason to worry about the effects of acid rain upon surface features of Chaco, especially the delicate pictographs and to a somewhat lesser extent the petroglyphs. The visibility problem, already noticeable in the area can only be expected to escalate.

The Chapter Executive Committee has recently identified problems associated with development in the San Juan Basin as a top-of-the-list priority for the immediate future. As a part of its efforts to protect such outstanding resource areas in the Basin as Chaco Canyon and the Bisti Badlands, the Albuquerque Group presented a well-attended meeting on April 21. Dr. Ken Yarborough of the National Park Service gave a dramatic slide presentation on Chaco and the already-visible threats to its preservation by developments in the area.

New Mexicans can make a choice: either they can let the San Juan Basin slip into its already-heralded designation as part of the "national sacrifice area" or they can make their voices heard as the land management decisions are made for some of the most outstanding public land areas in this state.

The project is too extensive and the goals too far-reaching to be accomplished by just a handful of concerned citizens. The Rio Grande Chapter urges your immediate response, whether it be in financial assistance for study and publication of the problems; or time and willingness to lend a hand in telephoning, mailing alert meeting with the Congressional delegation, and a host of other tasks.

There may be no higher stakes in New Mexico than the fate of the San Juan Basin. If you are willing to help in any way, please contact John Tiwald, Albuquerque Group Conservation Chair (266-4822); or the Chapter Office in Santa Fe (983-2703).

Share both in the effort, and in the joys of success. Northwestern New Mexico does not have to become part of the "national sacrifice area!" Help us change that dire prediction.

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DAVID R. BROWER,
President and Founder, Friends of the Earth

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The Authors: George Alderson was formerly a public-interest lobbyist with Friends of the Earth and The Wilderness Society. In 1968 he received the Special Achievement Award of the Sierra Club. Everett Sentman is a professional publishing consultant who has worked in various editorial positions for encyclopedias for over thirty-three years.

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The Contents of the Book

Acknowledgments	xi
Influence Without Money	xiii
1. How to Use This Book	1
2. How Your Congressman or Congresswoman Works	6
3. Correspondence with a Congressman	41
4. Writing Your Letters	53
5. If a Congressman Answers—Follow-Up Letters	79
6. Face to Face with a Congressman	90
7. Organizing for Influence	109
8. Care and Feeding of an Organization	119
9. Your Publications	143
10. Spreading the Word: Using the Media	157
11. Tactics for a Legislative Campaign	161
12. Preparing Your Arguments	228
13. Cooperating with the Congressional Staff	256
14. Your Role in Congressional Hearings	264
15. Getting Influence from Elections	285
16. Building Long-Term Influence	311
Appendix A: Your Visit to Capitol Hill	327
Appendix B: Getting in Touch	338
Appendix C: A Sample Fact Sheet	342
Selected Bibliography	345
Index	349

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