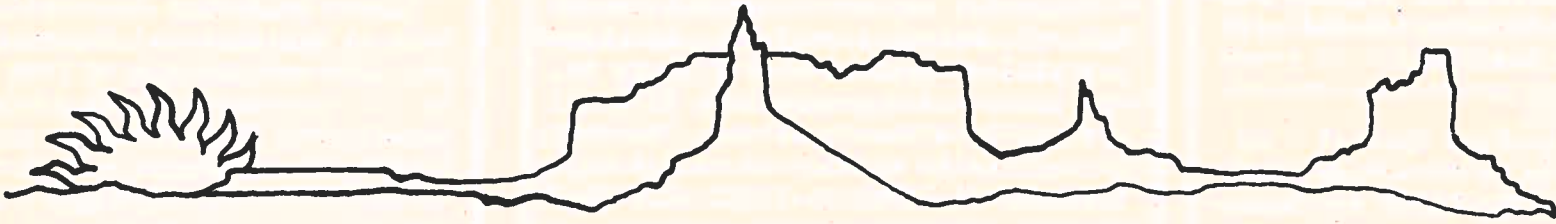


# The Rio Grande SIERRAN



THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

APRIL 1982

## WILDERNESS ISSUE

### Watt-Lujan "Wilderness Destruction Act of 1982"

by Robert E. Howard

On February 24, 1982, New Mexico's Congressman Manuel Lujan, Jr. introduced the administration's "Wilderness Protection Act of 1982" (HR 5603), which environmentalists soon renamed, more correctly, "The Wilderness Destruction Act of 1982." It is known more briefly as the "Watt-Lujan Bill" since the legislative drafting service of Interior Secretary James Watt actually wrote the bill.

The Watt-Lujan Bill trades minimal short-term wilderness protection for major long-term wilderness vulnerability. It rides roughshod over public input and congressional authority, adds unnecessary secrecy, and changes existing Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management wilderness planning in midstream. It doesn't even protect or inventory anything not already covered by the Wilderness Act of 1964 and subsequent legislation.

In its statement of purposes, the Watt-Lujan Bill overemphasizes resource inventory and WSA release. It withdraws from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws (and disposition under all mineral leasing laws) areas currently designated as Wilderness, already designated BLM Wilderness Study Areas, RARE II areas recommended for wilderness designation, and Congressional BLM Wilderness Study Areas. However, these withdrawals are only until January 1, 2000! The 1964 Wilderness Act provides sufficient protection to Wilderness except that it permits hardrock mining claims and oil and gas leasing until December 31, 1983. And Interior Secretary Watt currently has authority to NOT issue oil and gas leases in Wilderness at all. Thus, the Watt-Lujan bill trades 18 months of short-term wilderness protection for wilderness vulnerability after 18 years.

The bill provides for the reopening of withdrawn Wilderness lands by the President, upon his finding of an urgent national need. The Congress has only sixty calendar days to pass a bill, which the President could veto, to reverse the President's decision. This tactic allows a President to order opening of Wilderness without public input and without congressional approval.

The bill opens the door for prospecting, seismic surveys, and core sampling in the withdrawn areas, although it does prohibit road construction or improvement of existing roads for exploratory drilling of oil and gas wells. It specifically allows both seismic and helicopter drill rig

exploration, which would have a major impact on the wilderness. Furthermore, any information gathered may be kept confidential by the government. We believe that both the public and Congress have a right to know resource inventory information about the public lands.

HR 5603 exempts certain lands from the withdrawals. These include: RARE II and BLM Wilderness Study Areas released by a statewide bill or other Act of Congress, National Forest lands or BLM lands in Colorado and Idaho designated as Wilderness Study Areas, lands released pursuant to other sections of HR 5603, and Alaska lands. The Watt-Lujan Bill provides no protection for de facto wilderness lands, despite major disagreements between the public and the agencies, and despite slow action of the Congress.

The bill opens the door for mining and mineral leasing in withdrawn lands if it can be done without surface occupancy, and allows the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to promulgate regulations and stipulations with respect to mining or mineral leasing on lands adjacent to withdrawn lands. This "without surface occupancy" clause is the (extractive industry) camel's nose under our wilderness tent. Adjacent lands activity should have specific legislative guidelines, prohibiting slant drilling under existing or potential wilderness.

Another section of the bill provides for the release of BLM Wilderness Study areas determined unsuitable for wilderness. The release would take effect upon submittal of a recommendation by the President to the Congress. Areas recommended for wilderness to the Congress must be enacted within two years or they are automatically released. In effect, it releases BLM Wilderness Study Areas either on recommendation of the Secretary of the Interior, or automatically after two years.

(Continued Pg. 7)

Rio Grande Chapter  
Sierra Club  
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THE RIO GRANDE  
SIERRAN

**OUTINGS****ALBUQUERQUE**

April 24 - Embudito Trail Maintenance  
Nick Nicolaus needs 18 people to make up three work parties; work will last about 3 hours. Bring a shovel, gloves, water and a snack. For information call Nick (268-2040) or Mike Jackson (266-4909).

Albuquerque needs an Outings Chairman and people interested in leading outings. Anyone interested should call Ron Grotbeck at 296-0944.

**SW REGIONAL GROUP**

April 17 - Nuttpeakers Special - an exploratory trip to Nutt Peak. Call Sandy Anderson (523-5179) for information.

April 24-25 - A strenuous overnight into the Florida Mountains. Call Sandy for information

**EL PASO**

April 16-18 - Car camp in the Guadalupe. Reservations required for this new cave hike. Call Kathie Morrison at 566-4305 (home) or 541-2059 (work.)

May 1-2 - Holden Prong Backpack - Moderate hike, reservations req'd. Call Jim Owen (598-9332)

May 28-31 - Mogollon Range Key Exchange, Gila Wilderness - Moderately strenuous, reservations and leader approval required. Call Rollin Wickenden (598-8042)

June 4-15 - Trans-Gila Wilderness Backpack. Moderately strenuous, reservations required. Call Carl Ostertag, 593-0220.

**SANTA FE**

Call Norma McCallan at 988-4026 for Outings information

**MEMBERSHIP**

At the recent Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee it was reported that the Chapter membership was at 2600 plus members, and that the National membership was approaching 300,000. Sierra Club seems to be experiencing a period of enormous growth; we are pleased, of course, to see such an influx of new members.

We want all you new members to know that you don't need to be an "expert" to become active in Sierra Club: to go on a hike you don't need to be able to do 30 miles a day with 5000 ft. elevation gain with a 100 lb. pack; to work on a committee you don't need a Ph.D, and to write a letter you don't need to be an attorney.

Sierra Club needs YOU. Call anyone on the Chapter Directory in this newsletter and let them know you'd like to help. You'll be surprised at how quickly they'll put you to work!

Published every other month by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club. Subscription rate for non-members is \$2.00 per year. Articles, clippings, letters to the editor, cartoons, drawings, photographs, outings information, personals, etc. may be sent to the editor: Barbara Davis, P. O. Box 739, Sandia Park, NM, 87047 (505-281-1248).

**Museum Activities & Fundraising**  
By Jeffrey Gottfried

The New Mexico Museum of Natural History has been co-sponsoring a series of events that are educational and serve as fundraisers. Below is a calendar of upcoming events; these programs are just a sampling of the type of programming that can be expected from the Museum once it is in full operation.

Financial support is needed now to make the Museum a reality. Donations and pledges payable over 5 years in the amount of approximately \$1.2 million have been received. However, a total of \$2 million is needed by December 31, 1982 OR THERE WILL BE NO MUSEUM. Donations and/or pledges may be sent to: Natural History Resource Management, Inc. (NHRM), P. O. Box 7010, Albuquerque, NM 87194.

**April 23 - Donald C. Johanson Lecture**

Dr. Johanson, the anthropologist credited with having discovered a 3.5 million year old primate skull, will speak about his discoveries and theories. Following his presentation, an autograph party will be held for those who would like to purchase his book, "Lucy, the Beginnings of Humankind."

**Carlsbad Caverns Trip, May 1-2**

Dr. Steve Wells of the UNM Geology Dept. has made arrangements for the group to tour parts of the caverns generally closed to the public and to stay at the Cave Research Institute's Headquarters. Only 40 places will be available.

**"Plants, Life Zones & Ethnobotany of the Albuquerque Area" June 4-5**

Paul Knight, botanist for the State Heritage Program, will acquaint participants with common and useful plants and their life zones. A field trip is planned on the second day, starting at the Bosque and ending at the Crest.

**HIKE COMMITTEE TO MEET  
REGULARLY IN HOT TUB**

Getting people to come to meetings and volunteering to do something is a continuing problem for all Sierra Club groups. I think the Hawaii Chapter has the solution to the problem. This cartoon appeared in the Hawaii Chapter newsletter along with a note saying that a member had donated the use of his hot tub (and house, too) for all Outings Committee meetings. Needless to say, they have a very successful outings program!

**'John Muir's High Sierra'**

By Kit Sargeant

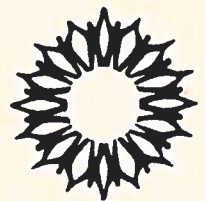
The birthday of conservationist John Muir will be celebrated on April 21. Appropriate to the mood of all who rejoice that Muir was born to lead the fight for environmental protection is the presentation of the film "John Muir's High Sierra." It will be shown on Sunday, May 2 in Woodward Hall on the UNM campus at 7:00 P.M.

Filmed by DeWitt Jones with sponsorship of the National Geographic Society, the life and travels of Muir are used to tie together a story of California's magnificent Sierra Nevada mountains. Highlights of the film include majestic Yosemite Valley; climbing the 2000 ft vertical face of Washington's Column; time-lapse photography of summer storm packing into the high country; and a three week ski touring and mountaineering expedition into the Sierra in winter. DeWitt Jones will be on hand to personally present and narrate his award-winning film.

Proceeds from the film presentation will benefit the Chamisal Archeological Site, a project the film maker became interested in during 1981, when he photographed the ongoing excavation of the North Valley site as part of an assignment for National Geographic magazine. The site is on property belonging to Arnold and Kit Sargeant. Kit is an archeologist and has been excavating the Pueblo IV village with the help of paid crew members and volunteers for the last two years. The site is sponsored by the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology jointly with the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque (sponsorship does not include financial help).

Following the film presentation there will be a reception for DeWitt Jones in the lounge of the Newman Center, 1815 Las Lomas Rd.

Tickets are available at the door at \$4 for adults and \$2.50 for students. Tickets may also be purchased at the Maxwell Museum, the UNM Student Union Mountains & Rivers, Sandia Mountain Outfitters, and Backwoods.

**CHAPTER AWARDS PRESENTED**

The Rio Grande Chapter has presented awards as follows to members for outstanding efforts on behalf of Sierra Club:

John Sproul for work on the Capital oil and gas leasing issue  
Jay Sorenson, for work on Elena Gallegos, wilderness & water quality  
Ray Grotbeck & Raphael Harpaz for work on clean air  
Kathy Charney for work on outings in Albuquerque  
Ed Burns & June Price for work in the Southwest New Mexico Group  
Our thanks to all for a job well done!

## GROUP NEWS

### EL PASO by Jim Owen

The El Paso Group would like to thank June Secrist, air quality expert, for that "above and beyond" work gathering technical data, coordinating public air hearings, etc. Paradoxically, June will soon be leaving El Paso because of medical advice that El Paso air quality was creating a chronic respiratory problem for her. We will miss June's expertise and her warm personality.

Besides air concerns, the Group has adopted a trail in the Gila (Ruin Creek), is plugging into a Texas state-wide water planning process, is continuing work on the Franklin Mountain Wilderness park, trying to stay on top of the Capitan oil and gas leasing suit, trying to figure out SCCOPE, and keeping very busy.

Our group also needs to complement George Mader for agreeing to be our representative to a group planning a proposed river park in El Paso, and Gene Bullock for his work as Outings Chairman. Unfortunately for us, work commitments will be taking Gene to Bedford, Mass.

### SOUTHWEST REGIONAL GROUP

Roger Steeb deserves a halo for his labors in organizing the March 6 Wilderness Workshop. Roger has volunteered his services to the Las Cruces City Engineer as a bikeways advisor. Farewell to Karen Bailey, to whom we are indebted for the past year's newsletters. Anyone interested in that job should call 522-9084.

### ALBUQUERQUE

Goodbye and thank you to Kathy Chaney, Outings Chairman, who has had a son and is moving to Colorado.

## JIM BACA ENDORSED BY CHAPTER

### SIERRA CLUB ENDORSES JIM BACA FOR STATE LAND COMMISSIONER

Jim Baca, candidate for state land commissioner on the Democratic primary ballot, was endorsed by a unanimous vote of the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee at its March 27 meeting in Santa Fe. Baca, who for the last three years has been the reform-minded state liquor director during the radical changes in New Mexico's liquor laws, is challenging the present state land office's decades-old policy of ignoring environmental values and long term planning for use of the state owned lands and nonrenewable resources.

Baca, age 36, is a former television news reporter, anchor man and producer. He served as Governor Bruce King's news secretary during the Governor's first term, as well as liquor director during the second term. His platform includes:

- long range planning, including environmental considerations for lease and use of state owned non-renewable resources,
- encouragement and facilitation of a lease exchange to keep PNM's subsidiary from strip mining the state owned land in the Bisti Badlands,
- public involvement in decisions concerning state owned public land, including establishment of an advisory board,
- reforming the state land office so that it acts as true trustee of state lands rather than as handmaiden of the energy and mineral interests.

This formal public endorsement is the first for the Rio Grande Chapter and was made under the National Sierra Club's new guidelines which allow and encourage political involvement by club entities with respect to environmental issues. Endorsements are allowed only under strict rules and requirements. Political involvement by the Club has evolved as a necessary means to influence governmental decisions concerning the environment.

"This is the first time we've had a candidate for state land commissioner who promises to make environmental quality a part of the decision-making process for state land management," says Chapter Chairman Phyllenore Howard. "I encourage all Club members who are Democrats to vote for Jim Baca for state land commissioner in the June 1 primary, and to encourage their friends to do likewise. Mr. Baca's opponent in the primary is a 20-year employee of the land office and is well funded by exploiters of our state public lands."

Club members can help get the word out by talking to friends and using the enclosed bumper sticker. Anyone who can help further the campaign should contact Sierra Club campaign coordinator Kay Grotbeck (296-0944) or the Baca campaign office.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The last meeting of the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee was held March 27-28 in Santa Fe at the Sierra Club office on Saturday and Sunday at the home of Santa Fe Chairman Wes Horner. About 25 people attended the meeting on Saturday, which was followed by wine and cheese (thanks to Patty Adam) and dinner together at a local restaurant. Thanks to the Horner's who provided breakfast for those able to stay over for the meeting Sunday.

Executive Committee Chairman Phyllenore Howard managed to keep the group moving right along on agenda items (despite their best efforts to go off on numerous tangents!), so lots of work got done. Some major agenda items discussed were SCCOPE guidelines, the Molycorp tailings problem in Questa, and an update from the Bisti Task Force.

The next Executive Committee Meeting will be held on May 8. Contact Phyllenore for details: where, when and housing arrangements if you need them.

Dear Sierra Club Member,

The campaign for the office of Commissioner of Public Lands is one which should be of great importance to all conservationists. The philosophy of the present Land Office, which stresses immediate monetary gain from our state lands without considering other factors is foolish.

As Land Commissioner, I will institute a policy of public input in matters involving the use of our State Lands. All New Mexicans, rather than just special interests, should be the greatest beneficiaries of State Lands.

I promise to institute real and effective land use planning. This is crucial to the future of our lands, our children and the protection of our resources.

Jim Baca

**JIM BACA** LAND **COMMISSIONER**

Paid for by Comm. to Elect Jim Baca, Vickie Fisher, Treasurer

What is Wilderness?

Most people when asked, "What is Wilderness?" would probably answer something like, "A wooded area with no roads, no development; a wild area." Actually, there's a technical difference between a wilderness and a Wilderness.

In 1924 Aldo Leopold, a Forest Service official in New Mexico who understood the value of wild lands persuaded the Forest Service to set aside 433,000 acres of the Gila National Forest as a wilderness area which would be protected from mining, roads, timber cutting, and other development. The Gila was the Nation's first wilderness area to be protected as such by an administrative action.

In 1960 Congress passed the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act affirming wilderness as a resource worth protecting as one of the "multiple uses" of Federal land.

In 1964 Congress adopted the Wilderness Act... "to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness." This Act provided a mechanism for protecting by law de facto wilderness as Wilderness.

In 1976, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act directed the Bureau of Land Management to look at 13 million acres of public land in New Mexico to identify tracts suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The first part of the review to inventory this land was completed in New Mexico in November 1980. Only about one million acres were included in the wilderness study process. (On a National level, all but 24 million acres out 174 million acres were eliminated from any further consideration as wilderness.)

BLM has started on the second phase, the study process, which is scheduled for completion by the end of 1983. This phase will look at all of the potential and present land uses in each area. Forty-four wilderness analyses (where most of the 1 million acres is contained) will be the basis for eight draft environmental assessments. These drafts will be compiled into four final environmental assessments, one from each of the four districts in New Mexico. These assessments will then be used in the preparation of a statewide draft environmental statement, followed later by the final statement.

Although this review is required by The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Department of the Interior, under the Direction of James Watt, has sought to weaken the program at every opportunity. Citizen support for this program is now essential.

Citizen participation in the study process is crucial. Because of the monumental task of monitoring the study areas, Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society has developed the "Adopt a Wilderness Study Area" program to encourage individuals and groups to "adopt" one or more Wilderness Study Areas and monitor their progress during the BLM study. This includes participating in the BLM study of the area, "watchdogging" the area to ensure that BLM does not allow activities that would damage its wilderness quality, and providing support during the public comment period.

'82 Wilderness Workshop a Big Success

By Robert E. Howard

A statewide workshop on Wilderness issues was held at the Albuquerque Garden Center on Saturday, March 20. The all day workshop was sponsored by a coalition of environmental groups including the Sierra Club, the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, and the Wilderness Society. Almost one hundred enthusiastic wilderpeople attended from all over northern New Mexico.

The main topics of discussion centered around the use and management of existing Wilderness areas, and citizen involvement in the creation of new Wilderness areas.

Both introductory and advanced sessions were presented. Debbie Sease, Specialist on BLM lands in the Sierra Club's Washington, DC office, returned to Albuquerque for the event. She provided overviews of both the BLM's Wilderness Review Process and of the politics of obtaining Wilderness legislation. Mike Scott, Southwest Regional Representative for the Wilderness Society in Denver, talked on Forest Service Planning for Wilderness.

The Bureau of Land Management provided videotapes, slides, and speakers on Wilderness Study Areas in both the Socorro and Albuquerque Districts, and on the accelerated two year Wilderness Review Process of 44 BLM areas in New Mexico.

The Club's own Southwest Regional Representative from Santa Fe, Brant Calkin, sparked both morning and afternoon sessions. Other New Mexico leaders reviewed current information on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Wilderness programs in the state. At lunch, specialists led small group discussions on a variety of Wilderness-related topics. After the workshop was over, wine was served and the group adjourned to dinner.

A good deal of time was spent on the "how to's" of citizen participation and citizen organization. The emphasis was on protection of existing Wilderness and designation of new Wilderness. Hopefully, many who attended the workshop will participate in field studies this summer designed to gather information on wild areas which might become designated Wilderness in the future.

The "Adopt a Wilderness" Program was explained, and many attendees did fill out an "Adopt a Wilderness" Questionnaire. The program is designed to put together people interested in Wilderness activities and Wilderness Study Areas needing that interest. If you didn't attend the Workshop but would like to learn more about Wilderness help in preserving it, please complete the questionnaire below and return it to Bob Howard, Chairman Rio Grande Chapter Wilderness Comm. 1522 Stanford Dr. NE Albuquerque, NM 87106 (505) 268-8185

NEW MEXICO "ADOPT A WILDERNESS" QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME.....PHONE.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....STATE.....ZIP.....

What WSA (Wilderness Study Area) do you want to adopt or what part of New Mexico are you most interested in?  
.....

What special skills do you have?.....

What equipment, vehicles, equipment for packing, etc. do you have? .....

Return to: Bob Howard, 1522 Stanford NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106

Elena Gallegos

On March 15, acquisition of the Elena Gallegos Grant was approved by the Albuquerque City Council, bringing to an end the struggle for at least the last ten years to acquire this property for inclusion in Cibola National Forest.

The acquisition will be funded by a temporary 1/4 cent increase in the gross receipts tax, effective July 1.

The 7600 acre tract of land owned by the Albuquerque Academy sits on the West side of the Sandias just outside the city.

Thanks to all Albuquerque members who helped in the lobbying effort to insure passage of this legislation.



### Wilderness Coalition Formed By Judy Bishop (Santa Fe)

The New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition has been formed as a result of the Wilderness Workshop held in Albuquerque (see separate article in this issue). The Wilderness Coalition has been formed to coordinate the field work necessary for the accelerated program proposed by BLM on Wilderness Study Areas.

Organizations supporting the Wilderness Coalition are:

Rio Grande Chapter of Sierra Club  
New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee  
The Wilderness Society  
The Gila Wilderness Committee  
The acting board is composed of:  
Judy Bishop, State-wide coordinator  
Roger Pattersen, Taos Resource Area  
Ken Robey, Rio Puerco Resource Area,  
Socorro District  
Tom Brasfield, Roswell District,  
White Sands & Carlsbad  
Bob Langsenkamp, Las Cruces/Lordsburg  
Resource Area

A "Wildervous" is planned in May to help update wilderness study skills. Also planned are excursions to all BLM areas. For further information contact Judy Bishop, 3005 Calle Quieta, Santa Fe, NM 87501, (505) 471-4439 evenings.

Wilderness Study Areas in New Mexico include the following:

#### Taos Area

Navajo Peak - 7,750 acres  
Sabinosa - 15,760 acres  
San Antonio - 7,050 acres

#### Rio Puerco Area

Cabazon Peak - 7,235 acres  
Ojito - 11,200 acres  
Chamisa - 11,091 acres  
Ignacio Chavez - 23,928 acres  
Empedrado - 8,419 acres  
La Lena - 9,359 acres  
Manzano - 845 acres

#### Jornada Area

Sierra Ladrones - 38,922 acres  
Petaca Pinta - 12,440 acres  
Devil's Backbone - 8,820 acres  
Veranito - 7,450 acres  
Stallion - 22,000 acres  
Jornada Lava Flow - 29,000 acres  
Las Canas - 11,000 acres

#### San Augustine Area

Rimrock - 29,430 acres  
Little Rimrock - 9,540 acres  
Pinon - 13,160 acres  
San Canyon - 8,320 acres  
Mesita Blanca - 19,400 acres  
Eagle Peak - 43,520 acres  
Horse Mountain - 5,140 acres  
Continental Divide - 70,000 acres

#### White Sands Area

Brokeoff Mountain - 28,600 acres  
Culp Canyon - 10,937 acres

#### Las Cruces/Lordsburg Area

Cowboy Spring - 6,710 acres  
Gila Box - 8,950 acres  
Blue Creek - 13,584  
Cooke Range - 19,870 acres  
Big Hatchet Mtns. - 65,950 acres  
Alamo Hueco Mtns. - 20,840 acres  
Cedar Mountains - 17,780 acres  
West Potrillo Mtns - 150,545 acres  
Aden Lava Flow - 24,725 acres  
Robledo Mountains - 11,640 acres  
Las Uvas Mountains - 10,680 acres  
Organ Mountains - 7,200 acres

#### Roswell Area

Carrizozo Lava Flow - 11,000 acres

#### Carlsbad Area

Lonesome Ridge - 2,400 acres  
Mudgetts - 2,700 acres  
McKittrick Canyon - 120 acres  
Devils Den - 320 acres

### Sierra Club Files Petition to Save the Bisti

By David Glowka

On March 18, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club filed an unsuitability petition with the State of New Mexico. This petition, which is an administrative pleading, seeks to have a section of state land in the heart of the Bisti Badlands declared unsuitable for all types of coal strip mining operations. The basis for the petition is our view that reclamation of badlands is not possible and that important scenic, wilderness, and scientific values would be permanently destroyed. The petition area is surrounded on three sides by the Bisti Wilderness Study Area and is characterized by acres of pinnacles, spires, and mushroom-shaped rock formations amid colorful clay mounds.

The filing of the petition coincided with the public hearing for Sunbelt Mining Company's mine permit application for the same section of land. Sunbelt, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Public Service Co. of New Mexico, wants to strip mine the Bisti land to provide coal for PNM's San Juan Generating Station, despite the fact that the existing strip mine adjacent to the generating station has enough coal to meet the lifetime needs of the power plant. Sunbelt is claiming that unless they can open a new coal mine soon, they will be out of business.

In addition to filing the petition, we also filed extensive comments on Sunbelt's mine plan for their proposed strip mine. We found the mine plan to be deficient in almost every aspect. It fails to meet 22 separate surface coal mining regulations.

We feel that the poor quality of Sunbelt's mine permit application reflects the true intentions of Sunbelt and PNM. It is obvious that they care little about the outstanding natural area their proposed mine would destroy. Perhaps their name for the strip mine—the "Gateway Project"—is appropriate, for it seems apparent that they would like to use this state section as a gateway to eventual mining of all the easily exploitable coal in the Bisti.

You can help stop both this specific mine and all strip mining in the Bisti. Please write to the address shown below and let your views be known. If you have visited or seen pictures of the Bisti describe, in your own words, what the beauty of the area means to you. Mr. Arnold will be making the final decision on the unsuitability petition, so he needs to know that there are a lot of people who want to see the Bisti preserved. This petition, being the first in the country to ever be filed solely on state lands, could have implications far beyond this particular area. Your letters could not only help save the Bisti, but could also help to ensure that the spirit and intent of the important surface mining legislation in effect in this country are followed.

Address to write:  
Emery C. Arnold, Director  
Mining & Minerals Division  
Energy & Minerals Department  
State of New Mexico  
525 Camino de Los Marquez  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

### Capitan Mountains Wilderness - Sierra Club Files Suit

By John Tiwald (Albuquerque)

The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund has filed suit against Interior Secretary James Watt, Agriculture Secretary John Block, and others over their issuance last fall of three oil and gas leases in New Mexico's 34,000 acre Capitan Mountains Wilderness. The Club is seeking to have the leases cancelled because they were issued without public notice and without any environmental review, contrary to the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Capitan Mountains leases were the first and so far the only such leases issued by the Reagan administration in a wilderness area, although hundreds of oil and gas lease applications are now pending for wilderness areas throughout the country, including New Mexico.

The leases were secretly issued by the BLM on the recommendation of the Forest Service. Interestingly, the government agencies prepared an Environmental Analysis Report (an environmental summary upon which is based a decision of whether to prepare an environmental impact statement) on those lease lands lying OUTSIDE the wilderness boundaries, but the agencies explicitly excluded analysis of the 1,305 leased acres WITHIN the wilderness boundary. No reason was given by the agencies for this exclusion.

Albuquerque attorney John Tiwald, who filed the suit in New Mexico Federal Court, along with Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund attorney Michael Sherwood, said: "The failure to conduct any environmental analysis of oil and gas exploration and development within the wilderness is a blatant violation of NEPA, and indeed of the agencies' own regulations implementing NEPA. This violation of the law cannot be left unanswered when so many lease applications are pending and this administration seems intent upon leasing wilderness areas."

Trouble and public uproar occurred when issuance of the secret leases first became known, and New Mexico's Republican Congressman Manuel Lujan even advocated legislation that would immediately withdraw all wilderness areas from energy and mineral development. A couple of days later, however, after he "consulted" with James Watt, he withdrew his proposal. In fact, he has now introduced James Watt's "Wilderness Destruction Act" (see a separate article in this issue).

#### WILDERVOUS

LEARN AND/OR UPDATE YOUR WILDERNESS  
STUDY SKILLS AT A WORKING WORKSHOP

NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

JUDY BISHOP  
3005 CALLE QUIETA  
SANTA FE, NM 87501  
(505) 471-4439 (EVENINGS)

## WILDLIFE REPORT

By Carol Cochran (Albuquerque)

Ranchers, some half-dozen of them, claim that mountain lions, in unusually large numbers, are killing their sheep, also in unusually large numbers, and then heading across the borders of the national parks (Carlsbad and Guadalupe Mountains) to the south where they safely escape their trackers. At least they could. Now, however, the ranchers have convinced the Department of Interior, specifically assistant secretary of fish and wildlife Ray Arnett, to allow the lions to be pursued and killed within the park boundaries. Thus, a handful of ranchers have overturned national park regulations which permit the killing of an animal within the park only if that animal interferes with the function of the park or threatens human life.

The main enemy of large predators is politics, and this is a political issue. William Dunmire, Supt. of Carlsbad National Park and Guadalupe Mountains National Park, is both a biologist with a concern for the lion and a political realist. He is convinced by the testimony of his experts that neighboring ranchers do have a problem, although he will not give numbers of sheep killed as these figures come from the ranchers themselves. He is also sure that lions are escaping into the parks, probably because they offer preferred habitat. And he supports the plan to track and kill the animals in the park as the best cooperative arrangement possible at a time when cooperation with ranchers and with the state is necessary.

This plan, he feels is good politics and good biology. It contains safeguards: a park ranger must accompany the tracker and/or the state's predator control officer and supervise the kill. And it is a one-time, temporary experiment, not a precedent or the beginning of an established practice.

Many environmentalists are concerned. They argue that wild animals should be safe somewhere from guns and dogs and poisons, if only in our national parks which make up such a small portion of our lands. Although environmentalists generally support selective predator control, they worry that this one cannot really be selective. A lion's track will be "hot" for only a day in the warm, dry conditions that prevail in these parks. Can predation be reported and verified, a distant tracker summoned, a ranger called, the animal tracked and located all within a day? Or will the dogs chase after the first hot trail they locate, and the killing become indiscriminate? The lions must be killed, apparently, because places in which to relocate them do not exist, partly because for years lions have been tracked and removed from Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Yet even after years of removal, there is still pressure to remove more. Might not the same thing happen now, and this "experimental," "temporary" measure end up being just as long lasting and ineffective as other predator control measures. Because of these concerns and others, several environmental groups are expected to sue the Park Service.

## CLEAN AIR



### More Votes to Weaken Clean Air Act

Led by Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman John Dingell, a "polluters' caucus" has voted repeatedly over the past weeks to weaken major provisions of the Clean Air Act. The caucus, a bipartisan group of 12 representatives, has frustrated Health & Environment Subcommittee Chairman Henry Waxman's efforts to improve the Dingell "Dirty Air Bill" during subcommittee mark-up. The bloc has voted to:

- do nothing to control acid rain,
- allow pollution levels in national parks and wilderness areas to increase by as much as 500% to 1000%,
- do nothing to control cancer-causing toxic pollutants,
- extend deadlines for achieving national health standards for as much as a decade; and,
- gut the prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) program which protects the nation's clean air regions.

Here are some comparisons on the Waxman bill (HR5555) and the Dingell Dirty Air bill (HR5252):

#### On Auto Standards

The Waxman bill would:

- \*retain current new car emission standards
  - \*retain current certification & enforcement programs
  - \*retain the current clean-up standards for diesels & high altitude autos
- The Dingell bill would:
- \*double the carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide standards for new autos
  - \*weaken the certification and in-use testing procedure
  - \*eliminate recall of autos with defective emission controls by putting recalls in the hands of auto producers.

#### On Public Health

The Waxman bill would:

- \*give short deadline extensions for regions that agree to retain current controls & impose additional controls
- \*require EPA to adopt a national health standard for fine particles

The Dingell bill would:

- \*extend for up to a decade deadlines for meeting national health standards
- \*ignore the problem of fine particles
- \*eliminate requirements for installation of advanced controls on new sources.

#### On the PSD Program

The Waxman bill would:

- \*continue strong protection for national parks & recreation areas by retaining Class I and mandatory Class II protections
- \*continue the current requirement for installing best controls on new sources
- \*address industry's complaints about delays in permitting process by eliminating the requirement that sources monitor air quality for a year before applying for a PSD permit
- \*eliminate Class II and permit governors to redesignate an area out of the increment system without concurrency by the local governments involved

The Dingell bill would:

- \*quintuple air pollution in Class I areas and eliminate all Class II and II protection, including that for mandatory Class II parks, wildlife refuges, and monuments
- \*relax controls on new sources by requiring that they conform only to minimum national new source standards

#### On Acid Rain

The Waxman bill would:

- \*set a 10 million ton reduction in acid rain-causing emissions over ten years

The Dingell bill would:

- \*ignore the problem of acid rain completely

Congress is recessed until about April 20, but mark-up will continue when the session starts. Things are happening very quickly on this legislation; call the Clean Air hotline for up-to-date information (202 547-5551).

## Sierra Club Bike Raffle

ALBUQUERQUE GROUP

1st Prize - \$250 gift certificate on bike of your choice at Touring Cyclist Shoppe

2nd Prize - \$26 worth of bike accessories

Tickets: \$1.00 each

Drawing: May 17, 1982 at the General Meeting

Tickets available from executive committee members or at the general meetings.

For more information call: 881-0354



### Watt-Lujan Bill (Cont'd.)

A similar section provides for the immediate release of RARE II non-wilderness lands not already designated as wilderness by the Congress, RARE II lands recommended to Congress as wilderness but not designated by January 1, 1985, and RARE II further planning areas not recommended for wilderness by September 30, 1985, or designated as wilderness by the Congress by January 1, 1988. These provisions thus release Forest Service Wilderness Study Areas either on recommendation of the Secretary of Agriculture, or automatically after three to six years, depending on the area.



### Endangered Species Act

By Carol Cochran (Albuquerque)

Besides the Clean Air Act, Congress is currently considering the reauthorization of another act. This act is opposed by a similar conglomerate of anti-conservation forces - timber, utility, chemical, and mining industries - who'd like to gut this act, too. Yet, while the public has expressed its outrage at the weakening of an act which protects its air, it has not yet come to the same vigorous defense of the Endangered Species Act.

Some biologists estimate that 1-3 extinctions are now occurring DAILY and that the rate will increase to 1 per HOUR by the late 1980's. It is likely that 1 million species will be lost in our lifetimes, most of which have never been named, much less studied. Obviously the modern rate of extinction far exceed the historic rate of species formation. We are losing forever precious threads of the web of life.

The Endangered Species Act is this country's attempt to slow the loss of species. And it is in trouble. Congressional oversight hearings are now being conducted by the Senate Subcommittee on Environmental Pollution, Committee on Environment and Public Works, to review the 1973 act and its problems and proposed changes.

Special interest groups, and perhaps the Dept. of Interior itself, seek to gut every important provision of the act. They seek to limit the act's protection to vertebrate animals only, and not even to include subspecies of these; to eliminate critical habitat designations; to remove habitat destruction and harassment from the definition of "taking;" to make optional federal agency responsibilities (by which federal activities must conserve and not jeopardize listed species) and to limit the rights of citizens to ensure that the act is rigorously enforced.

If you're interested in the ESA and the value of species, I have a good deal of information I'd like to share. Contact Carol Cochran at 345-1412.

### Lujan Changes Position on Wilderness Bill

By Robert E. Howard (Albuquerque)

The Watt-Lujan "Wilderness Destruction Act of 1982" (see separate article in this issue) caused a tremendous outpouring of protest throughout the country. Environmentalists were joined by huge numbers of other citizens furious about this blatant attack on Aermica's Wilderness Preservation System. Congressman Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-NM) is the senior republican on the House Interior Committee. He is also running for reelection in New Mexico's First Congressional District. After hearing from his constituents and meeting with New Mexico wilderness preservationists, he has significantly changed his position regarding wilderness legislation.

Rep. Lujan called a meeting with a dozen leaders from the Sierra Club and New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee on March 12 to explain his concerns and listen to comments about the Watt-Lujan bill. The discussion continued for over two hours, with lively participation by everyone. Although most of the environmentalists present argued that no legislation at all was necessary, the congressman did not agree. However, after virtually all of the original provisions of the Watt-Lujan bill had been discussed, there was agreement on several items.

Rep. Lujan has subsequently proposed major changes to the bill he sponsored for Watt. First, he proposes to make permanent the withdrawal of all Wilderness land from exploration and development, rather than reopening Wilderness lands after the year 2000. Second, he proposes that areas recommended for Wilderness by the Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management automatically become Wilderness if not acted upon by Congress within the session following the one in which the recommendations are made. Third, he proposes that new non-destructive technologies be used in any resource inventory studies in Wilderness. Fourth, Lujan prefers a positive action by Congress to open Wilderness on presidential request in a time of national need.

Other changes agreed to in principle include prohibiting slant drilling under Wilderness, and the desirability of buffer zones wherever possible around Wilderness. Slant drilling may alter springs or other watercourses important to Wilderness flora and fauna. Buffer zones would enhance the effective range and space of Wilderness characteristics such as freedom from man-made noise, structures, etc. without changing the actual size of the Wilderness area.

The Sierra Club's position is that no major new legislation is needed. If anything, only prohibition of mineral claims and oil and gas leasing in Wilderness between now and January 1, 1984, might be added. The original Watt-Lujan bill (HR 5603) is a disaster for wilderness. A completely revised, turned-around bill is unnecessary. The Wilderness Act of 1964, and subsequent legislation will do just fine. If Rep. Lujan doesn't agree, then perhaps he will arrange to hold hearings on HR 5603 in New Mexico, as we have requested him to do. Let him know what you think.

### THE CASE AGAINST THE REAGAN ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD

The Sierra Club and nine other major environmental organizations released "Indictment: The Case Against the Reagan Environmental Record," a 35-page book summarizing the hundreds of actions that endanger the quality of life of all Americans. The following indictments are substantiated in the book:

- Pollution will increase because the rules designed to control it and the agencies that enforce the rules are being systematically weakened.
- The Reagan administration has made a mockery of the multiple-use/sustained-yield concept that governs the public lands.
- The administration's energy policy has been to eliminate virtually every program that provides direct benefits to individuals and small businesses seeking to conserve energy or use solar energy.
- The administration is blind to the dangers of nuclear power. It has withdrawn safeguards against nuclear proliferation and has overridden a cautious process to deal with nuclear waste disposal.

For a copy of the Indictment contact the Sierra Club Office in Santa Fe (983-6331), or Chapter Chairman Phyllenore Howard (268-8185). To act, read the Indictment and contact your representative and senators when they are home for Easter and Memorial Day recesses.

The environmental laws were passed because the public demanded them. Public support can save them.



### Oil & Gas Hearings Held

By Judy Bishop (Santa Fe)

On March 6, the House Subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs held field hearings in Grand Junction, CO, on oil and gas leasing in the wilderness. Between 150-200 people testified; nine who testified represented industry, the remainder were environmentalists. The testimony presented overwhelmingly supported the Burton Bill (which bars any leasing in the wilderness forever) and was violently opposed to the Watt-Lujan bill (see a separate article in this issue).

George Grossman (Rio Grande Chapter of Sierra Club), Judy Bishop (New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee), and John Guild (Grand Canyon Chapter of Sierra Club) were among those that testified.

It was felt that further hearings should be held in New Mexico, probably in Albuquerque, so that New Mexicans can have input into what is happening in their state. Please write Congressman Lujan and request that he arrange to hold such hearings.

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# Worrying About Our Environment Won't Help!

Never have the challenges to wilderness, clean air and water, and a more healthy, liveable environment been so great. The present administration seems determined to lead us back to the environmental Dark Ages. Thousands of Americans are responding to that challenge by joining the Sierra Club. For almost 100 years, the Sierra Club has been fighting to protect the earth's fragile systems. We have won protection for wilderness and successfully lobbied for laws to limit air and water pollution, and to regulate toxic chemicals. Now, we must fight to preserve these victories. The unique power of the Sierra Club springs from our active grassroots membership. . . volunteers who give freely of their time and expertise.

Let's stop worrying and start working.

# Joining The Sierra Club Will.

## Membership Form

YES, I want to join! Please enter a membership in the category checked below:

New Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Gift Memberships: If you are giving this membership as a gift, please enter your name below (we will send a special gift card in your name):

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Check here if you would like to be billed for renewal of this gift membership next year.

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	Individual	Joint
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Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> \$44
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$104
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12	<input type="checkbox"/> \$16
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12	<input type="checkbox"/> \$16
Junior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12	

### LIFE MEMBERSHIP

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Member

(annual dues)

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