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The Rio Grande SIERRAN



THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

SEPT. 1983

SAN JUAN BASIN BILL PENDING

COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION LEGISLATION FOR THE BISTI INTRODUCED
by Dave Glowka

Comprehensive protection for the Bisti Badlands moved one step closer to reality in early August with the introduction into Congress of the San Juan Basin Wilderness Protection Act. Introduced by Representative Bill Richardson and Senator Jeff Bingaman, the bill would designate the Bisti, De-na-zin, and Ah-shi-sle-pah areas as Wilderness and would direct the Bureau of Land Management to establish regulations for preventing significant disturbance to the Fossil Forest.

These four areas encompass over half of the 70,000 acres of highly eroded badlands North of Chaco Canyon known as the Bisti. The Bisti, physically broken into three badlands units surrounded by arid grasslands, contains beautifully sculptured rock formations, colorful surface minerals, intriguing clay hills, and important fossil beds. The area has been the focus of considerable interest and debate over the past decade as energy companies have tried to persuade the BLM to open the region to coal strip mining.

Specifically, the San Juan Basin Wilderness Protection Act would accomplish the following:
*It would designate 3968 acres of federal land as the Bisti Wilderness.
*It would designate 23,872 acres as the De-na-zin Wilderness. This wilderness would include the present BLM Wilderness Study Area of the same name, plus 1,368 acres dropped from this WSA by Interior Secretary James Watt in December 1982, plus over 2000 acres of state lands and mineral rights which would be exchanged for federal lands and mineral rights elsewhere.
*It would designate 7,193 acres as the Ah-shi-sle-pah Wilderness. This wilderness would include the present BLM WSA of the same name, plus 640 acres of adjacent federal land which had been dropped earlier in the wilderness study process. (Continued Page 4)

WATT DROPPINGS...

WILDERNESS UPDATE - BLM STATEWIDE STUDY
by Judy Bishop

In the comment period that ended June 30, 1983, for the Draft Environmental Assessments (DEAS) for the Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) not affected by Watt's acreage dropping in December, 1982, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received 530 comments statewide. Most of the comments were letters which favored wilderness for the study areas. Approximately 200 (38%) of the comments were received during the extension in June. The Las Cruces District received 420 comments; the Albuquerque District, 75, and the Roswell District, 35 comments. A heartfelt thanks goes to all of you who wrote to BLM and expressed your desire for wilderness. It seems the folks in the south really had their act together and did a fantastic job getting in comments. BLM is now seriously looking at some of the areas it recommended as unsuitable for wilderness with new eyes and may reconsider the recommendation. Every letter, phone call and visit to the BLM office counts. Keep up the good work.

We are in the middle of the comment period for the WSAs that were affected by Watt's December 1982 dropping of potential wilderness acreage. The comment period ends October 15, 1983. Make certain you are heard and get your letter to the BLM. There is one qualifying factor in this comment period. In January, 1983, the Sierra Club and other environmental groups filed suit against Watt for his December dropping of potential wilderness acreage. The suit filed in California for all states affected went before the judge on Sept. 9, 1983. At press time there is no announced decision. If we win the suit, the DEA now being commented upon will have to be redone by BLM. All the acreage that Watt dropped will once again be back in wilderness study. Congressman John Seiberling of Ohio has tentatively scheduled Oversight Hearings in the BLM wilderness study program nationwide for the first week in October in Washington, DC. The hearings will address the Interim Management Policy (IMP) violations as well (Continued Page 5)

WATT DROPS MORE WILDERNESS from Sierra Club NNR

The Interior Department has deleted another 735,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in nine western states from wilderness study plans, bringing the total of BLM wilderness dropped from review to 1.5 million acres in the last nine months. In December 1982, Interior Secretary James Watt announced he was dropping 805,000 acres from wilderness study, a move which sparked lawsuits and public criticism nationwide... (Continued Page 5)

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RIO GRANDE
SIERRAN

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The list of participants read like "Who's Who In The Sierra Club"--people who have been at the forefront of every conservation battle the Club has fought for nearly the last half century--and they came to New Mexico to visit what is shaping up to be the major battle of the 1980's. For four days, August 26-29, the members of the Board of Trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation and the Foundation's National Advisory Board and their spouses were in Santa Fe for their annual meeting and to learn about some of the problems involved in the stewardship of the nation's public lands.

I wish that all of you could have been there to hear the praises everyone gave to the Rio Grande Chapter for its continuing work in the preservation and wise use of those lands. While environmentalists in other western states are doing their share, it is here in New Mexico that one of the first major battles is being fought, and what we do could set the pattern for the battles in the other states.

I would like to add my thanks to those of Steve Stevick, managing director of the Foundation, to Dave Glowka, Jonathan Teague, Kay and Ron Grotbeck, Jack Kenney, Gail Bryant, Judd Ford, and Betsy Fuller for conducting tours and outings for our visitors.

The congratulations of the entire Rio Grande Chapter are extended to Brant Calkin who was recently named Secretary for Natural Resources for the State of New Mexico. Brant has been president of the Sierra Club, chairman of the Rio Grande Chapter, and Southwestern Representative for the Sierra Club prior to his earlier appointment as Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources by Gov. Toney Anaya.

Congratulations are also offered to Phyllenore Howard of Albuquerque who has been appointed to the Environmental Improvement Board by Gov. Anaya.

It hardly seems possible, but 1983 is winding down, and elections for group and chapter executive committee members are coming up. These are the people who make the decisions that determine what the Sierra Club does here in New Mexico and western Texas, not some bureaucrats in Washington or San Francisco.

Nominating committees are forming, and they will be seeking out people who want to have a part in the operation of the chapter and the various groups. Get in the act--be an actor, not a spectator. Let the nominating committees know that you want to help shape the policies that will affect our environment and quality of life.

The Sierra Club has become a force that the politicians and bureaucrats are having to consider when they make decisions regarding the environment. You can be an important part of that process by serving on one of the executive committees. Be more than just a volunteer; be a leader!

John Colburn
Chairman

GROUP NEWS

ALBUQUERQUE GROUP

by Kay Grotbeck

The Albuquerque Group is going to the Barn Dinner Theater on Sunday, Sept. 25. The play is "Artichoke," a light comedy about a Canadian farm family in the 50's. Tickets will be available until the day of the performance. The cost is \$20 per person or \$37 for two. The price is right for a sumptuous buffet supper, an entertaining play and good conversation among friends.

The evening at the Barn is just one of the fundraising events the Group is sponsoring to raise money for a much-needed office. We are also selling T-shirts with a wildlife message and coupon books with discounts from local merchants. With over 1400 Group members to serve with activities, meetings, newsletters, etc., fundraising is very important.

Each month about 25 new members join us. We welcome them with a personal call and a letter containing a Group directory and roster of activities. We try to learn the interests of each of our new members. Soon we will have a volunteer coordinator to help new members get more involved.

Jim Baca, New Mexico Land Commissioner, was our guest speaker at the August issues meeting. Mr. Baca talked about a broad range of topics, including the internal operation of his department and the development of Mesa del Sol. The next issues meeting on September 28 will be a discussion of the WIPP Project.

EL PASO GROUP

by Shirley Phillips

Our members have been busy. The annual picnic was enjoyed by a large group in May. Eight people hiked with leader Carl Ostertag on his annual 10 day trek through the Gila in June and reported a grand time and perfect weather for the whole trip. An Air Quality Coalition spearheaded by Mark Post, Louis Lopez and John Hamilton is being formed to address El Paso's pollution problems. Hardworking Inner City Outing leader Jeanne French attended a national workshop for ICO leaders in San Francisco. Under her leadership, El Paso continues to have one of the most viable ICO programs in the country. The wilderness task force has continued to comment on the BLM's action in deleting several areas from the WSAs, and as a result, the comment period was extended for those areas. Work continues on our hiking book. The group again responded to El Paso's public TV station to man the telephone during the recent fund drive. That's positive publicity with very little effort.

SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO GROUP

by Jim Graham

We're hosting the State Executive Committee Meeting, September 24-25 - ya'll come. There'll be a potluck or barbeque Saturday evening for the general membership and Excom attendees.

The BLM has come out with further wilderness recommendations, and southern N.M. did much better this time around. Everyone please write to:

William J. Harkenrider, Jr.

P.O. Box 1420

Las Cruces, NM 8004

and express support for pro-wilderness recommendations for Aden Lava Flow, Big Hatchet Mtns., and especially West Potrillo Mtns. (147,000 acres!). Also express regret that they didn't find a method to make a feasible wilderness possibility out of the Alamo Huecos and suggest that they investigate land swaps to make this important area a manageable and viable wilderness. WRITE! (Did you know that anti-wilderness letters outnumber pro-wilderness letters three or four to one?)

Conner Dam. The BuRec still hasn't got their computer study of the Upper Gila Water Supply proposals going (they said July, but it looks like months more yet), so I'm going to get out a fact sheet on this issue. This is a biggy. The Upper Gila is very important for recreation, history, scenery, uniqueness and especially wildlife and endangered species. The river itself is an endangered species; it is the last major section of the Colorado River system in a natural state. If you want information on it, please write or call me: Jim Graham, 526-9293, Box 986, Mesilla Pk., NM 88047. This river desperately needs a Wild & Scenic designation; anyone with experience or knowledge please write. It also needs political pressure to stop this boondoggle. (Continued Page 3)

THE SIERRA CLUB FOUNDATION

530 Bush Street, San Francisco, California 94108 (415) 981-8634

by Philip Hyde
in The Last Weekend

August 31, 1983

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter
c/o John Colburn, Chair
Post Office Box 37199
Station D
Albuquerque, NM 87176

Dear John,

On behalf of the Trustees and staff of The Sierra Club Foundation, I wish to thank the Rio Grande Chapter for the warm hospitality and valuable technical assistance extended The Foundation during our meetings last weekend in Santa Fe.

The success of the weekend's events was far beyond our expectations. The Trustees were treated to a unique insight on public lands issues in a most enjoyable and congenial setting.

We would like to extend a special thanks to Dave Glowka and Jonathan Teague of the San Juan Basin Task Force, whose dedication and hard work are an inspiration to all of us, and to Ron and Kay Grotbeck, Jack Kenney, Gail Bryant, Judd Ford and Betsy Fuller for their kind assistance in leading our outings.

Again, thank you for a very successful weekend.

Sincerely,



Stephen M. Stevick
Managing Director

BMS/mhr

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MORE GROUP NEWS

SANTA FE GROUP
by Jack Kenney

Summer, 1983, has been active, productive, and fun for the activists in the Santa Fe Group. Hiking and camping trips reached a new peak; the Rio Grande "White-Water" trips were oversubscribed; the trail maintenance and Adopt-a-Site programs got off to a good start; and contacts with our representatives and senators has been continuous and productive. Our effort to change the western spruce budworm management program was unsuccessful, but we will keep working. The Board of Trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation enjoyed their weekend in Santa Fe and their mini-hike in Bandelier. We are watching the proposal to turn over 25,000 acres of Santa Fe National Forest to the Cochiti Pueblo, but to date have not developed a strong position.

TULAROSA BASIN GROUP

by Norm Martin

The Tularosa Basin Group is excited about our latest and most interesting project, which is saving the virgin timber in the Lincoln National Forest. To date we have located at least three of these areas and have had outings to the Brown Timber area, which is also habitat for the endangered Sacramento Salamander. On Sept. 3 some of our members accompanied Forest Service personnel to this area to learn what will be done for the endangered species protection. Ron Schotter is chairman of this project and questions should be directed to him at 437-4568.

The other project we are involved in, starting the end of September, is our second Community Education class. Elizabeth Vincent (437-2578) is chairman of this committee and tells us that this class will be an improved version of the Spring class that the CE people were very impressed with. We have many splendid volunteer teachers in this project, most of whom are members of the TBG and very generous to donate their time and expertise. We would encourage all the groups to get involved in this type of educational program. It makes the public aware of what the Sierra Club is all about.

SIERRA CLUB

BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

"Artichoke"

Sunday, September 25, 1983 — 4:00 P.M.

at the

BARN DINNER THEATREDONATION: SINGLE \$20.00
COUPLE: \$37.00**DOOR PRIZES****GOOD WORDS FROM SNOWMASS**

sent by Ned Sudborough

Armory Lovins: "Environmentally destructive projects tend to be uneconomic and fail..."

Noel Brown: "Who speaks for nature in wartime?"

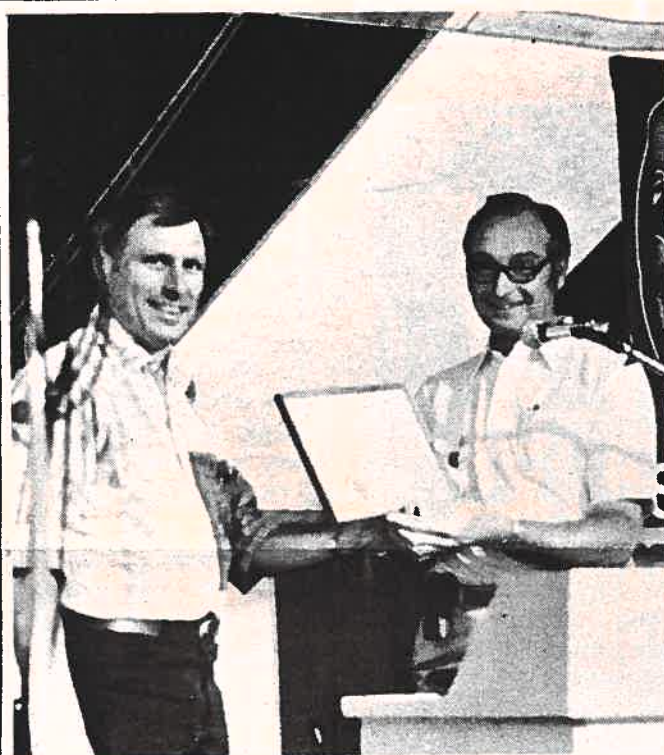
John Denver: "It's not that people don't care; it's that they don't know how to care."

Morris Udall: "A love of the land is a special thing about our country...Learn the nuts 'n bolts of politics."

Brock Evans: "What works is endless pressure, endlessly applied."

Dom D'Ambrosio: "Visits with legislators in home offices are more effective than those in Washington."

Denny Schaeffer: "The environment is as much a mainstream Republican issue as a mainstream Democratic one...we have resources. 350,000 members, up from 172,000 when President Reagan was elected...We believe we can get the job done...and that's the first of the reasons we do...we have the best people that money can't buy."



Bob Howard receives the William E. Colby Award at Snowmass. Story below.

SIERRA CLUB COUNCIL

by Ron Grotbeck

The Sierra Club Council will gather for its semiannual meeting in early November. As your representative, I want to carry your concerns and suggestions to San Francisco for consideration by the Council. One issue which was hotly debated at the last meeting was the telephone funds solicitation being carried out by the National organization. If you have been contacted within the past six months by a telephone solicitor from Boston asking for a donation to the Sierra Club, I would appreciate knowing the details of that call. Of interest are the caller's attitude, responsiveness to questions, and persistence, as well as your own reaction to the call (positive or negative), and such details as time of day, length of call, date, etc. If you have been the recipient of such solicitations, please send me a note (8812 Harwood NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111) or call evenings at 505-296-0944. I will compile all responses into an oral report to the Council when this issue is again discussed, and I will handle any other suggestions and concerns in the most appropriate way when I am at the National Headquarters.

INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT SNOWMASS

by Phyllenore Howard

Our week at the Sierra Club International Assembly in Snowmass, CO this summer was a magnificent week to be remembered! About one thousand people attended from the U.S. and Canada. Everyone went back home raving, so the next time the Club does this (perhaps in two or three years) I know the attendance will be many times that

"The Politics of Conservation" was the title of the assembly. Perhaps that implied "electoral politics" to many of you, but it was really much, much more. Electoral politics was certainly a major subject. Congressman Mo Udall, as well as presidential candidates Hart, Cranston, Askew, gave addresses to the assembly attendees. At the last minute both Mondale and Glenn decided they should attend, after initially having declined. The assembly organizers accepted Cecil Andrus as a spokesman for Mondale, since Andrus, as former Secretary of the Interior, had personal national status, but no room was left on the agenda for the appearance of John Glenn at the last minute.

"The Politics of Energy and the Environment" was ably considered by Amory and Hunter Lovins, Winona LaDuke and David Freeman--all outstanding speakers and nationally recognized.

"The Politics of Labor and the Environment" was considered by a "blue ribbon" panel including Robert Goss, President of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, Int'l., Keith Johnson, President of the Woodworkers Union, and Dom D'Amrosio, President of the Allied Industrial Workers Union.

"Politics of International Environmental Protection" was addressed in an outstanding speech by Dr. Noel Brown, Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Programme. That was one of the most stimulating and exciting speeches I have ever heard.

And then there was much more! Outstanding small-group discussions on any subject of your choosing, award-winning environmental films, a sing-along with John Denver, a square dance, a barbeque, a marvelous address by Club President Denny Schaeffer, hikes, awards, fireworks,.....

Everyone was put up in condominiums and hotels at Snowmass so that expenses were shared and we walked to all events. The vast majority of attendees said that the week was a little expensive, but well worth it. We certainly could not have beaten the beauty of the location and the adequacy of the accommodations for so many people.

Hope to see you there next time!

WILLIAM E. COLBY AWARD TO BOB HOWARD

Bob Howard of Albuquerque was awarded the William E. Colby Award at the Sierra Club International Assembly. This award honors an outstanding record of leadership, dedication, and service to the Sierra Club on the model of Will Colby.

Among the things Bob has done over the last 15 years: help organize the Albuquerque Group, serve as Chairman and Secretary of the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee, serve as Chairman of the National Council, serve the Sierra Club Internal Organization Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Finance Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee, the International Committee, and he is also currently the Board-appointed Vice President for Planning.

BISTI BILL (CONTINUED)

*It would withdraw 2,720 acres of the Fossil Forest from mining and mineral leasing to protect its aesthetic, natural, scientific, educational, and paleontological values. It would further direct the Secretary of Interior to manage the area to ensure that no activities are permitted which would significantly disturb the land surface or impair the area's natural and scientific research values.

In drafting the bill, Rep. Richardson and Sen. Bingaman showed their sensitivity to native Americans and well as environmental concerns. A provision of the Act would allow Navajo residents living on lands surrounded by the De-na-zin Wilderness to select other federal lands of equal value if those residents so desire. A second provision makes it clear that the Act would not affect the transfer of lands selected by the Navajo Tribe in the De-na-zin and Ah-shi-sle-pah Wilderness. Several sections of land in these areas have been selected by the Navajo Tribe as part of the Navajo-Hopi Resettlement Act. If these lands are ultimately transferred to the Tribe, they would cease to be Wilderness. The Sierra Club supports this provision, recognizing the legal right of the Tribe to select such lands under the current congressionally-mandated solution to the complex Navajo-Hopi land dispute.

There are many people who deserve our thanks for the introduction of the San Juan Basin Wilderness Protection Act. Rep. Richardson and Sen. Bingaman are to be commended for taking the time to listen to their constituents and acting accordingly. The Santa Fe field hearing in May set up by Rep. Richard and attended by both Richardson and Bingaman showed them that the people of New Mexico care about the Bisti and coal development impacts throughout the San Juan Basin. State Land Commissioner Jim Baca, who announced his candidacy for that position by using the Gateway mine on state land in the Bisti as an example of the way state lands should not be managed, fulfilled his pledge by drafting language in the bill that would add state lands to the De-na-zin Wilderness through a trade with the federal government. Governor Toney Anaya should be given a lot of credit for helping to bring national attention to San Juan Basin coal development plans and for supporting unequivocally wilderness designation for all three WSAs in the Bisti. Navajo Tribal Chairman Peterson Zak is commended for supporting the language in the bill in spite of the legal claims the Tribe has on much of the lands in question.

It should be made clear that we have a long way to go before the bill becomes law. No BLM area in the country has yet been designated Wilderness, other than isolated tracts adjacent to existing Forest Service wilderness areas. Furthermore, Sen. Pete Domenici and Rep. Manuel Lujan introduced a bill last spring which would designate only the Bisti WSA as Wilderness. Hopefully both will recognize the importance of the other three areas and support protection for those as well.

Please take the time to write Rep. Richardson and Sen. Bingaman, thanking them for introducing the San Juan Basin Wilderness Protection Act. Also, write to Rep. Lujan and Sen. Domenici asking them to support the more comprehensive protection this bill would provide.



NAVAJO VOICES; COAL MINING IN NORTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO

by Jonathan Teague

The social and human consequences of resource exploitation are perhaps nowhere so clear as in the San Juan Basin of New Mexico.

The complex legality of land claims and water rights may cloud the present picture, but certain issues and concerns remain simple. They are represented in excerpts from the transcripts of a Bureau of Land Management public hearing held in Pueblo Pintado (East of Chaco Canyon) on March 17th of this year. People from communities in the San Juan Basin - White Rock, Star Lake, Nageezi, Torreon, and others - traveled long miles over often unimproved dirt roads to present their concerns about planned coal mining and power plant construction to a panel of BLM officials. It was another step in an already long process of unanswered questions and officially unacknowledged local opposition to development plans. Their statements reflected a clear and articulate understanding of essential issues surrounding San Juan Basin energy extraction which should be shared by the larger environmental community.

Many people testified at this hearing. Most of the statements were given in Navajo and not translated at the time of the hearing. The transcript is available at the BLM state office in Santa Fe.

(Editor's note: It is not possible to print the entire transcript here, although it certainly is moving and deserves publication. I would encourage you to obtain a copy and read it.)

NEW COAL DEIS COMING

by Allison Monroe

As we went to press BLM announced that a second draft of the San Juan Coal Environmental Impact Statement would be released for comment in October. At least one more hearing will be held (in October or November) and the leasing itself may be delayed, probably until late Spring 1984.

ANTI-PARKS ALASKA BILL FALTERS; THANKS TO SENATOR DOMENICI

by Phyllenore Howard

A significantly pruned S49, the Alaska Anti-National Park Bill, was reported "without recommendation" by the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee on August 4 by a vote of 11-8. As reported, the bill would open to sport hunting 5.49 million acres of Alaskan national parklands.

"Without recommendation," a rarely used legislative mechanism, means that the bill's sponsors, Alaska senators Ted Stevens (R) and Frank Murkowski (R), were unable to muster a majority of the committee for a favorable recommendation on their legislation.

Three recorded committee votes were of particular significance: two to remove Katmai and Gates of the Arctic National Parks from the bill, and the third to report the bill without recommendation. All were supported by the Sierra Club, all were passed, and Senator Pete Domenici voted by proxy (since he was recovering from surgery) for each of these amendments. Members should write to Senator Domenici, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510, and thank him for his support.



SCCOPE ACTIVITIES

by Jack Kenney

As the Rio Grande Chapter approaches the primary elections of 1984 and the 1984 election season, a number of preliminary planning activities are taking place:

1. A Chapter representative will attend a National Workshop in Denver Sept. 30 thru October 2.

2. Plans are in progress to hold a workshop in Albuquerque on October 16 to cover in some detail the New Mexico Republican and Democratic selection processes for delegates to the national conventions. The workshop will be in conjunction with CVA training program to be conducted in Albuquerque on October 15. Details will be announced at a later date.

3. SCCOPE "Green Vote" brochures are available from your group for those desiring to be placed on activist status and to be included in SCCOPE mailings.

4. Chapter has submitted a proposal for an Election Issue Project: "Stewardship of Public Lands." If approved by National, the project results will enable each of us to get a handle on the prime local environmental problems.

5. As the SCCOPE activities increase, we will need both national and local legal advice. If you know of a lawyer who would be willing to assist in this effort, please contact the Chapter.

NOW IS THE TIME TO CONTACT REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS - WE CAN MAKE AN IMPRESSION!

WATT DROPPINGS (CONTINUED)

This second round was done quietly, on a state-by-state basis, presumably to avoid further publicity. Watt said he is deleting the 735,000 acres from consideration as wilderness either because the federal government only owns some of the rights on the lands (split estate), or because the parcels are "too small," less than 5,000 acres. Six environmental groups, represented by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, have filed suit challenging the legality of these criteria for removing lands from wilderness study.

Conservationists are concerned because many of the deleted parcels adjoin parks or designated wilderness areas...



PROJECT DIRECTOR SEARCH

The Rio Grande Chapter has submitted a proposal for the development of an Election Issue, to be funded by SCCOPE. Approval and funding are awaited, and are by no means certain; however, the Chapter is preparing to move as soon as (or if) the project is approved.

We are searching for a part-time ~~Project Director, to work half-days,~~ five days a week for a three-month period starting late in September. Some compensated travel will be necessary. Input is expected from volunteers, and some consultants will be compensated.

The study matter will be "Stewardship of Public Lands" in New Mexico and westernmost Texas. The products of this effort will include a file of specific, contemporary instances of ethical stewardship and abuses of Public Lands and Public Lands, a Master Plan for dissemination and release of project-generated information; a "cook book" report for use by Sierra Club Groups and activists; and a strategy for effective use of project information during primary and general election campaigns.

Applicants will be judged by their environmental/activist background; local political/environmental experience; and writing and planning skills. Interviews will be conducted for those considered best qualified; and there will be no discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, creed, sex, handicap, pregnancy, etc.

Salary is negotiable, based on experience, and will not include workman's compensation, liability insurance, etc. Work will normally be performed in Club offices or at the place of work or residence of the Director, using his/her equipment. Administrative costs will be separately funded, and all files, products, and data will become the property of the Rio Grande Chapter.

Applications are desired prior to September 30. Send letter of application and resume of applicable experience to John J. Kenney, Chapter SCCOPE, 154 Santo Nino Place, Santa Fe, NM, 87501; phone (505)-988-3205.

WILDERNESS (CONTINUED)

as regulation interpretation by BLM. In New Mexico we have several IMP violations, such as the seven miles of seismic testing roads left in the Potrillo Mountains after it was made a WSA; the road in the Florida Mountains, a protested roadless area which should have been reclaimed and hasn't; a pipeline in Veranito WSA, again put in after it was made a WSA; an operating oil/gas well in the Bisti WSA. We have also had a problem with BLM dismissing areas from wilderness study because of lack of solitude when the areas have been large tracts of rolling grasslands and/or stabilized sanddunes. We have had BLM recommend areas as unsuitable for wilderness because the areas would be hard and/or costly to manage as wilderness; because area outside the WSA is "neater" than the WSA; because making the area wilderness would interfere with a motorized antelope hunt. New Mexico will have a representative to testify in Washington at Congressman Seiberling's

hearings. (Watch for WSA's that are made Areas of Critical Mineral Potential (ACMP). If you know of any, let Judy Bishop know.)

Other Wilderness Items. The Air Force is once again trying to do its supersonic testing over the Gila National Forest and Wilderness in Catron County. Needless to say, the ranchers are almost as upset by this action as we are; however, the military is still planning to do its testing. For a copy of the revised draft environmental impact statement on the supersonic flight operations in the Reserve MOA, Holloman AFB, NM, write to John Rittenhouse, HDQ TAC/DEEV, Langley AFB, Virginia 23665.

Congressman Richardson is working with both the Sandia and Cochiti Pueblos on land trades which affect National Forest lands and Sandia Mountain Wilderness. For more information, contact Judy Bishop, 3005 Calle Quieta, Santa Fe, NM 87501, 471-4439.



San Juan aspens. Photo by Alan Kennish

BACKPACKING IN THE SAN JUANS

by Alan Kennish

Anyone thinking about a late summer backpacking trip that wants a high country experience should consider the San Juan Wilderness. I spent four days there over the Labor Day weekend. The area that we packed in is at the head of Vallecitos Reservoir. There are a variety of trips that can be planned from this access point; all the way from a 50 mile round trip with several 5000 foot elevation gains and losses to 6-10 mile base camp hikes with day trips to higher elevations. We chose the easier route, hiking up the Los Pinos 8 miles with a day trip to Emerald Lake and another day trip farther up the Los Pinos river. As

you gain elevation hiking along the Los Pinos and its tributaries you begin to think that you've gotten lost in a Rocky Mountain calendar photograph. The scenery is spectacular; it ought to be even better as the aspens start to turn. There's lots of wildlife; many birds, deer and other high altitude animals. The fishing in the river is great. I had no luck at the high lakes, although you can see sizeable trout feeding from shore. The river is another story; I had two great evenings catching and releasing trout - all natives or native browns - not to mention the heartstoppers that broke me off in a few seconds. Fishing is flies and lures only. A highly recommended trip for those of you who want to venture into Colorado.



SAVE OUR WATER...SAVE YOUR DOLLARS
by Judy Ricci, NM Save Our Water
Project Director

Most of us are so accustomed to having an unlimited water supply that the prospect of running out of water is rarely considered. As New Mexico's population grows, however, it is becoming more difficult to meet the expanding and diversified demands for water. In response to this situation, the Albuquerque Sierra Club and the Southwest Resource & Information Center have joined forces to insure Albuquerque's participation in the statewide "Save Our Water" Project. This project is funded from the Governor's office by a federal ACTION grant. The other participants funded by the grant are Hobbs, Silver City, Alamogordo, Portales, Eagle Nest, Taos, Santa Fe, Sandoval County, McKinley County and Socorro. Each participant is engaged in activities which include distributing water conservation kits, making presentations, writing public service announcements, etc. To date, over 60,000 kits have been distributed statewide and over 2400 volunteer hours have been invested in this project. Assuming all the water displacement bags were installed from each of the 60,000 kits distributed, approximately 175 million gallons of water per year will be saved.

The main goal of the Albuquerque "Save Our Water" project is educate people how to conserve water in and around their home," says Kay Grotbeck, the project's coordinator from Sierra Club. "We can never forget that we live on a desert. Our water is limited, but there are definite water-saving practices we can adopt in our lifestyles that will stretch our water resources."



CLEAN AIR BACK IN CONGRESS

CLEAN AIR FORECAST IN CONGRESS from Sierra Club NNR

After many months of inactivity on air pollution legislation, committees in both the House and Senate are expected to begin consideration of clean air issues soon after Congress returns on September 12. The Sierra Club's efforts to strengthen the Clean Air Act will focus on acid rain and toxic air pollutants, and bills pertaining to both of these concerns have been introduced.

Acid Rain. The rain in the eastern U.S. as well as in pockets in the West averages 30 to 40 times more acidic than normal. Over the last 30 years sulphur and nitrogen oxide pollution has doubled, and pollution from power plants in the eastern U.S. has tripled. The Reagan administration's own reports document widespread damage from acid rain, and the National Academy of Sciences recommends that acid deposition be cut by 50%. This means reducing annual sulfur dioxide pollution by at least 12 million tons in the eastern U.S.

In the Senate, there are three major acid rain bills. S145, introduced by Sen. George Mitchell (D-ME), mandates a 10 million-ton reduction in sulfur dioxide emissions in 31 eastern states over ten years. Environmentalists would like to see S145 amended to increase this reduction by 2 million tons. S769, introduced by senators Robert Stafford (R-VT), Gary Hart (D-CO) David Durenberger (R-MN), and Gordon Humphrey (R-NH), requires a 12 million-ton reduction in 31 eastern states over 15 years; environmentalists will be working to reduce this deadline by 5 years. The third bill, S768, is the comprehensive clean air bill passed by

the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee in the fall of 1982, and would reduce sulfur dioxide emissions by only 8 million tons over 12 years.

In the House, the major acid rain bill, HR3400, has been introduced by representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA), Gerry Sikorski (D-MN), and Judd Gregg (R-NH). The bill mandates a 10-million-ton gross reduction in sulfur dioxide emissions, but because it would allow 2 to 3 million tons of future emissions growth, HR3400 actually reduces sulfur dioxide emissions by only 7 to 8 million tons. To achieve most of these reductions, the bill would require scrubbers on the 50 dirtiest power plants and institutes a federal fund to pay for a portion of the cost of this equipment.

Toxic Air Pollutants. Billions of pounds of potentially toxic chemicals are spewed into our air every year. Chemical carcinogens in urban air have been measured at 15 to 30 times naturally occurring levels, and production of synthetic organic chemicals has increased thirty fold in the last 40 years. In the 13 years since the Clean Air Act was passed, the Environmental Protection Agency has regulated only 4 toxic air pollutants.

In an effort to break the bureaucratic logjam at the EPA, environmentalists are urging that the Clean Air Act be amended to accelerate the agency's control of toxic air pollutants. Standards should be set that truly protect the public health, requiring at a minimum the best pollution equipment already in operation. This fall, Rep. Tim Wirth (D-CO) is expected to introduce legislation that seeks to accomplish these goals.

ADMINISTRATION CONSISTENT by Phyllenore Howard

When taking an international view of things, the Reagan administration appears to have been no more adept at spreading environmental goodwill than it has been domestically. Among the many global environmental programs the U.S. has blocked, damaged, or destroyed in its efforts to ease the burden of regulation on industry:

*The Law of the Sea Treaty, which the Reagan administration began to subvert after just six weeks in office, set forth a program for management of the world's ocean resources, and was a product of almost ten years of international negotiation. It was ratified by the United Nations last year and signed by 120 countries. The U.S., concerned about the restrictions it might place on deep-sea mining, refused to sign.

*The U.N. World Charter for Nature, which would commit U.N. members to "respect nature and its essential processes." The U.S. cast the only "no" vote while 135-member nations approved.

*A U.N. initiative that would prohibit export of banned hazardous products without consent and knowledge of the recipient country. The U.S. again cast the only "no" vote among 147 nations.

*A mandatory set of tests on chemicals before they enter the market place which was established by scientists and technical experts from 24 nations. The U.S. forced the panel to adopt a non-binding recommendation that European members regard as meaningless.

*International controls on the causes of acid rain. Insisting that there is no evidence that acid rain is caused by the emissions from coal burning power plants (although it has just been told otherwise by its own advisory panel), the Reagan administration has remained obstinately opposed to international efforts to confront the problem.

*The budgets of U.N. environment programs and other research projects with an international emphasis. Although funds have been restored by Congress, Reagan has advocated budgets of up to 70% below 1980 levels for the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and elimination of funding for research in Antarctica.

WILDLIFE REPORT

by Carol Cochran

Mountain Lion. Recently the Chapter included wildlife conservation as one of its top priorities. This came as welcome news to the Chapter's Wildlife Committee which has been working especially hard on issues involving the mountain lion in New Mexico.

We are concerned that the management practices of the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMDGF) are focused almost exclusively on the destruction of the lion and not at all on its protection. NMDGF has liberalized hunting regulations until there is virtually open season on the lion (128 were killed by sport hunters last year); it has enthusiastically responded to complaints about depredating lions, (last year it spent \$37,000 on lion and bear control and now employs three full-time lion hunters); it has been too liberal in allowing ranchers to kill lions themselves and has failed to enforce the few regulations that do exist to protect the lion. The department has killed 72 lions which it saw as a threat to desert bighorn sheep populations.

We are troubled by the Department's practices because they are the manifestation of an attitude toward predators identical to that which led to the extinction of the wolf and the grizzly from New Mexico and elsewhere. According to that attitude, the best way to solve a conflict between an animal and a human activity is to get rid of the animal. Assertions that "we would never kill off all the lions" aren't convincing when one finds in early literature the same words said of the wolf.

Whether or not the wasteful killing of lions is endangering their numbers is not completely clear, but evidence suggests that it is. The Department's analyzed hunter success rates for lion over the past 10 years, an index often used to gauge population trends of game animals. This analysis indicates that lion populations are declining at a rate of 10% per year, so that present population is less than 37% the population in 1972. This is a startling statistic and more than ample reason for a reversal of departmental practices.

So far the efforts of the Sierra Club have consisted of discussions with the NMDGF and pressure on them to adopt management practices more in tune with the reality of the lion situation in the state and with lion biology. We would like the Department to stop viewing the lion as a problem and start viewing it as a resource. In 1982, according to figures gathered by the

Fish & Wildlife Service, only 99 of the state's 610,000 sheep were killed by lions, and only one of the state's 4-1/2 million cattle. Clearly the lion is a problem, it is a highly localized problem. We would like NMDGF to work on ways to minimize conflicts between the lion and livestock in places where these occur, by, for example, managing lion species or by encouraging different management techniques.

Currently the NMDGF is preparing a study of the lion situation in New Mexico as the result of a memorial passed by the Legislature directing it to research lion depredation. This study will include suggested management practices and policies which will have to be approved by the Game Commission. Because the lion is a highly political issue, the Department and the Commission may be tempted to do little to manage the lion to its benefit, and thereby anger the lion's foes. It's important that these agencies know there is a large and vocal constituency for the mountain lion. We need letters or calls to Harold Olson, Director, NMDGF, State Capitol, Santa Fe, NM 87503, 827-7899. Letters should express a concern for the lion and a desire that it be managed in a way that would allow it to co-exist with man. I would like to receive copies of letters and any responses.

Wildlife Committee. The Wildlife Committee has focused on the mountain lion and on lobbying for its sound management. We are also putting together an educational package on the lion, consisting of a slide show and brochures. Soon we will have mountain lion T-shirts to raise funds for these activities.



Because we are focusing our energies on the lion, we are neglecting many important wildlife issues in the state. The committee needs more members with a desire for active involvement. There is an issue waiting for you, if you are interested, or you can help with the lion effort. We meet in Albuquerque the fourth Monday evening of every month; our meetings include both a discussion of issues and a program. If you would like to join us, come to a meeting or call me (345-1412). We would like more members from throughout the state.

Share with Wildlife. In August, the Game Commission approved proposal recommended by the Share with Wildlife panel for spending part of the \$137,000 collected this year from tax refund contributions. Among the projects approved were studies of the scarce Chihuahua chub and Rio Grande cutthroat, an evaluation of the leopard frog, surveys of the spotted owl and spotted bat, research into habitat requirements of the Socorro isopod, feasibility studies for the reintroduction of sage grouse, and construction of another facility to house Mexican wolves at the Rio Grande zoo. Additional proposals will be considered throughout the year.

On behalf of the Sierra Club, John Somers prepared a careful and innovative proposal for a study of the mountain lion, including population dynamics and response to pressure by sport hunting and predator control. The panel did not approve this study, but left open the possibility of re-submitting a more specific proposal.

Also deferred was a proposal submitted by Ray Coppinger of the New England Farm Center to use dogs to guard sheep in the lion country of southeastern New Mexico--the emphasis being not so much on saving sheep as on keeping lions out of trouble and so saving them from predator control. Coppinger has recently visited the area (the ranches adjacent to the national parks) and will submit a revised proposal. There is an excellent chance that it will be funded.

Coppinger is the same person who (with Sierra Club help) placed some young dogs on ranches in the Chama area. One dog proved to be too easily distracted by the dogs and people in his surroundings and was not attentive enough to his sheep. But, the other dogs are working very well. One has eliminated predation entirely; the other two, working together, have reduced predation loss from 25 to 3 lambs.

BUY A DUCK STAMP

J.N. "Ding" Darling had a problem. As head of the U.S. Biological Survey (forerunner to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) Ding was responsible for our nation's wildlife refuge system. Darling could see opportunities for expansion in order to create a truly great refuge system. However, in the 1930's money for conservation was even tighter than it is today. Ding had no way to finance his vision.

After much consternation Ding had a brainstorm. He would impose a tax on our nation's waterfowl hunters, with the proceeds going to land acquisition for the refuge system. Thus the duck stamp was born.

Today our refuge system remains incomplete, with any ecosystems of invaluable wildlife habitat still unprotected. Each year millions of acres of valuable wildlife habitat are lost. Wetlands are drained, seashores sprout oil wells and mountains are mined. Prime wildlands become more difficult and more expensive to protect.

Because duck stamp revenues still are used exclusively for land acquisition, more and more hunters and nonhunters alike are recognizing what a valuable investment they make when they purchase a duck stamp. The 1984 budget for the Interior Department contains no funding for expansion of our refuge system, so this year duck stamp revenues are more important than ever.

You can buy your duck stamp at the nearest post office for \$7.50. Duck stamps feature beautiful artwork (this year's stamp pictures a pair of pintail ducks on a marsh), and some duck stamp issues have become quite valuable. But more importantly, your duck stamp purchase is an investment in wildlife's and your own future.

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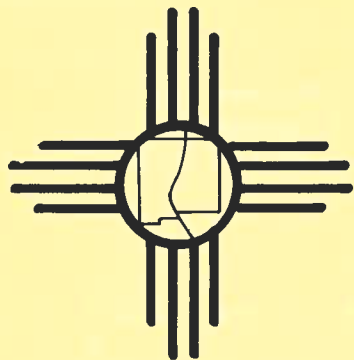
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RIO GRANDE CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB

WIPP ACTION ALERT

IS DOE TELLING THE WHOLE STORY ABOUT WIPP?

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) is scheduled to be the first permanent repository for nuclear waste in the United States. To be located in a salt deposit deep underground near Carlsbad, New Mexico, the plant is being touted by the Department of Energy (DOE) as a safe place to store "mid-level, transuranic" wastes produced by the military services and Department of Defense contractors.

But is WIPP as safe as the DOE claims?

New Mexico's Governor Toney Anaya doesn't seem to think so, and on May 31, 1983, he issued a statement that New Mexico "cannot cooperate with any decision by DOE to begin the construction of the permanent WIPP facility." These are some of the concerns expressed by Gov. Anaya:

1. New Mexico is the only state not given veto power over the placement of a nuclear waste repository.
2. There are no safety criteria or licensing for WIPP.
3. President Reagan is scheduled to make a decision in 1984 which might make WIPP a de facto repository for high-level military nuclear wastes.

Several respected scientists don't think WIPP is as safe as DOE claims either. Evidence they claim has been discounted or down-played by DOE includes:

1. Information concerning dissolving of the salt and earth barriers above and below the WIPP underground site.
2. Evidence of faults and fractures in the supposedly solid rock formations surrounding the repository.
3. Findings of highly pressurized brine and hydrogen sulfide gas within a mile of the WIPP site with possibility that the brine and gas could be located directly under the site. If this brine and gas should enter the repository, it could cause instant death to workers there and release nuclear wastes into the rock formations which carry water to the Pecos River.

The list could go on, but DOE still isn't providing satisfactory answers to the questions many citizens as well as scientists and government officials are asking. Meanwhile, construction has begun at the WIPP site.

CARD

Citizens For Alternatives To Radioactive Dumping
P O BOX 555 ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87103 505-842-1194

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club and C.A.R.D. (Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping) have asked Senator Jeff Bingaman to investigate DOE's mishandling of information and data relating to the suitability of the WIPP site near Carlsbad.

You can help get the facts about WIPP out into the open.

* * * * *
* Write or call: The Honorable Jeff Bingaman *
* 502 Hart Senate Office Building *
* Washington, DC 20510 *
* 1-202-224-5521 *
* *
* Or call one of his New Mexico field offices: *
* *
* Albuquerque: 766-3636 Santa Fe: 988-6647 *
* Las Cruces: 523-8237 Roswell: 622-7113 *
* * * * *

Tell Sen. Bingaman that you want an immediate investigation of DOE's handling of the information and data about the suitability of the WIPP site before any more of our tax money is appropriated for its construction.

Do it now because the appropriation hearings will be held in late September.

For more information, write or call:

Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping
P.O. Box 555, Albuquerque, NM 87103 (505) 842-1194

or contact your local Sierra Club Group.

* * * * * WIPP ACTION ALERT * * * * *

Rio Grande Chapter
Sierra Club (CARD)
P.O. Box 555
Albuquerque, NM 87103

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