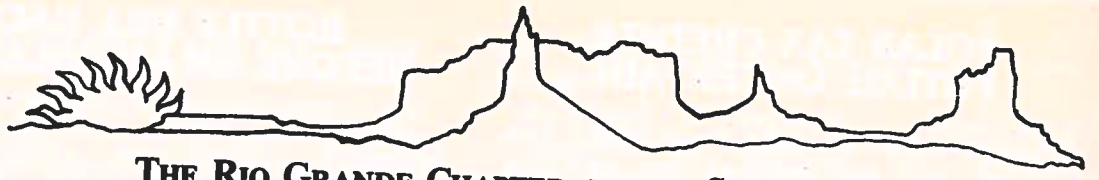


The Rio Grande SIERRA



THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

January/February 1985

ISSUES FACE NM STATE LEGISLATURE

by Lynda Taylor, Albuquerque

The 1985 Legislature will see a number of new faces since the November elections as well as a number of favorable environmental bills coming out of state agencies. The fate of these bills is another issue. Environmentalists should be prepared to act on items of interest through phone calls, telegrams, or direct contact with their senators and representatives. The New Mexico Conservation Voters Alliance (NMCVA) has once again set up its statewide phone tree network of environmentalists. The Sierra Club is part of this phone tree. In addition, CVA now has a full-time representative (John Daniel) at the State Legislature to monitor environmental bills. John will be available to provide insight into legislators' actions and votes, and assist environmental lobbyists from other groups who may go up to Santa Fe intermittently, in addition to providing the information necessary for CVA's targeted phone alerts.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY LEGISLATION PLANNED FOR 85 SESSION

The following is a list of bills that will probably come up this session which should be of interest and concern to environmentalists. The list is not complete, since bills can be introduced up to thirty days after the session begins, or up through February 15.

(1) Environmental Improvement Division - General Funding/Creation of New Department.

(A) Provide adequate base funding to carry out monitoring, inspection and enforcement programs as well as funds to implement expansion items which include water resource specialists to deal with radioactive and hazardous wastes, environmental scientists and program support personnel.

(B) Special legislation to establish a separate Environmental Department. This would essentially separate the Health and Environment Department into two separate cabinet-

level departments and would result in environmental issues getting greater attention (especially under the directorship of Denise Fort).

(2) Occupational Safety and Health Administration - General Funding. Last year attempts were made to cut NM OSHA funding to carry out its programs of worker education on environmental and safety hazards in the workplace and inspection and enforcement of workplace protective standards. We need to watch to make sure any attempts this year are unsuccessful.

(3) Star Lake-Bisti railroad. Although as of press time we had not obtained a copy of any bills on this, the energy lobby will seek to create a state transportation authority with eminent domain and other powers, the main purpose of which is to create a railroad to that will enable coal stripmining in fragile, environmentally pristine and culturally important areas near Chaco Culture National Historic Park and the

See Legislature, page 4

RAID ON NM PERMANENT FUND LOOMS Railroad Sought to Serve San Juan Strip Mine

By the time this goes to press, Senator Jack Morgan may have introduced into the New Mexico Legislature a bill to create an Energy Transportation Authority (ETA) that would commit a substantial fraction of New Mexico's severance tax permanent fund to building coal-hauling railroads in the northwestern part of the state. It is expected that Senator Morgan's bill will be structured along the lines of the 1983 version, which was embodied in two bills, SB 89 and 90. A new state agency with broad powers, the Energy Transportation Authority, would be created. The role of the ETA would be to facilitate construction of railroads and pipelines (including coal slurry, natural gas, carbon dioxide and oil); it is widely understood that a primary purpose of the ETA would be to finance the Star Lake-Bisti Railroad.

The ETA would exercise powers of condemnation and eminent domain and issue up to \$200,000,000 (two hundred million!) dollars in bonds to fund construction and operation; these bonds would be secured by monies in the State of New Mexico severance tax

See Railroad, page 5

RANCHERS PUSH FOR LION ERADICATION

Game Commission Besieged
by Carol Cochran, Albuquerque

It's hard to believe, but once again the mountain lion is in trouble, this time more than ever. Our success last February in gaining protection for the cat was nearly undone. That protection could still be undermined by the very same commissioners who provided it in the first place.

At a January 25 meeting in Santa Fe, the Game Commission took up a proposal made a month earlier by Commission Chairman James Koch to allow four ranchers in the Carlsbad area carte blanche treatment of mountain lions on their land and their leased land. These ranchers and anyone whom they allowed on their land would have been allowed to kill as many lions as they wished, regardless of sex or age (kittens, too), any time of the year, any time of the day, using any means except poison or aerial gunning. What this would have meant is that in these four areas the lion would have lost its status as a protected game species and become a varmint.

Instead of this murderous revision to the regulations, a compromise was presented by the Commission, setting up special measures for "preventative mountain lion control" on qualified ranches. The qualified ranches are

See Wildlife, page 6

DOE NAMES NUCLEAR WASTE SITES Canyonlands Still Menaced

In late December the Department of Energy released environmental assessments on nine sites considered candidates for the nation's first geological repository for high-level radioactive waste. Along with the studies came a tentative selection of three sites for site characterization: Hanford in eastern Washington, Yucca Mountain in Nevada, and Deaf Smith County in the Texas panhandle. Two other sites, Davis Canyon, Utah and Richton, Mississippi, were nominated as back-up sites that could be studied intensively if work at one of the first three sites were halted because of technical or other difficulties.

The Sierra Club has announced its intentions to join the Environmental Policy Institute and the National Parks and Conservation Association in a lawsuit challenging the site selection guidelines used by DOE. Rather than conducting a comprehensive study to determine the safest possible sites for further study, DOE has moved too quickly and merely chosen sites that are either under its control or for which some geotechnical data already exists. As a result, sites with obviously serious flaws have been moved forward in the study process.

The Hanford site is near the inter-

See Canyonlands, page 6

SOLAR TAX CREDITS FUTURE UNCERTAIN

Unless Congress acts this year, the business and residential tax credits for solar and other renewable energy capital expenditures will expire in December. Since its passage under the Carter Administration, these tax credits have played an essential role in promoting a viable solar industry in this country, by giving tax credits of up to 40% of the cost to purchasers of active hot air, domestic hot water, and photoelectric solar energy systems. This has fostered a rapid growth in the use of solar energy, particularly in New Mexico where an additional 25% credit allowed by the State has brought the costs within the reach of more consumers. Only sustained sales volumes will allow implementation of the improved design and manufacturing techniques that are needed to bring these costs down. An extension of the credits by both the federal and state governments is needed if the industry that has been established is to survive.

In the last session of Congress, an extension of these credits passed the full Senate but was killed in the tax conference with the House. Two members in particular were responsible: Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) and Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL). Although Rep. Rostenkowski contended there is still time to review the credits and promised to hold hearings, he failed to recognize that the uncertainty that will prevail for most of the year will erode investors' confidence in renewables and prevent proper planning by solar companies.

The tax conferees that shot down solar gave special tax credits to the nuclear utilities. They supported a huge tax-deductible trust fund to help utilities and nuclear companies decommission and clean up nuclear facilities, at a cost of about \$250 million of the public's money over the next three years. Even this is only a small fraction of the total tax break to the nuclear industry, which some experts estimate at \$10 billion annually. By comparison, the cost of extending the renewable energy tax credits for the next four years would amount to \$455 million for residential credits and \$317 million for business. These costs combined are less than the estimated costs of cleaning up the damage from the Three Mile Island nuclear plant accident.

Public support for the renewable energy credits will be required to ensure passage by both Congress and the New Mexico State Legislature. If you feel that there is still a deep-rooted energy problem that we must confront to ensure an adequate supply of low-impact, low-pollution energy for the future, please write your congressional and legislative representatives in support of renewable energy and the industries that support it.



BOTTLE BILL BACK BEFORE NM LEGISLATURE

The New Mexico Public Interest Research Group is pressing for legislation in the 1985 New Mexico Legislature to establish a 5-cent deposit on all beverage containers sold in the state. If passed, this would make New Mexico the tenth state to implement an effective bottle bill, following the lead of Oregon, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, Iowa, Michigan, Delaware, New York, and Massachusetts. In those states beverage container legislation has been proven to be an effective and economically beneficial means of controlling litter and resource waste, both creating new jobs and enhancing energy conservation.

The proposed bill contains provisions that should make it more palatable to retailers. In addition to instituting a 5-cent deposit, the conservationist-backed bill calls for easy and convenient redemption; however, retailers would not be required to redeem bottles and cans. Those opting to do so would receive a 1- to 2-cent fee for each redeemed container. Broken or dirty containers could be rejected. In order to help sustain the costs of recycling and to keep the economic benefits of the bill circulating within the state, the required deposit would be held by the local distributor, rather than distant national beverage manufacturers. This last provision is important since consumers fail to return some 5 to 10% of bottles and cans sold in the nine states with bottle bills. Unclaimed container deposits held by the manufacturers represent cash flow lost to the state's economy.

Typically, the beverage industry has stolidly opposed bottle bills, offering as a diversionary tactic relatively ineffective litter tax schemes and industry recycling programs. Yet these half measures fail to adequately address the problem of resource waste. The degree of recycling obtained by implementing beverage container laws is far higher than that now obtained by the industry-sponsored recycling programs. Nationwide, the U.S. recycles only 25% of its aluminum cans; meanwhile, we import 90% of the bauxite for aluminum that we consume. The amount of electricity required to recycle aluminum is one twentieth the amount it takes to refine new aluminum from ore; thus one can calculate that throwing away two aluminum cans wastes the amount of energy contained in a standard twelve ounce serving of gasoline! Beverage container laws are a proven measure for cost-effective resource conservation.

In addition to conserving energy and materials, a bottle bill would reduce the need for space now dedicated to landfills for waste disposal; this problem is becoming acute for major metropolitan areas as well as smaller towns. It also keeps our roadsides from becoming garbage dumps. According to a survey in Michigan, bottle and can litter decreased 84% in the first year after the implementation of that state's bottle bill. Moreover, other roadside litter decreased as well, confirming the theory that when people develop the habit of not littering with beverage

containers, they drop less litter of all kinds.

Contact your legislators and let them know that you support beverage container deposit legislation; remind them that this legislation would both create jobs and protect New Mexico's natural beauty. Only outspoken popular support will defeat the onslaught of nationally organized and financed industry lobbying campaigns opposing the bill.

(Editors' note: For more information, contact NMPERG, Box 66 Student Union Building, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131. For further reading: *Worldwatch* Paper 50, *Materials Recycling: The Virtue of Necessity*, by William Chandler, October 1983. Available from the *Worldwatch* Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.)

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:
March 10th**

EDITORS' NOTE BLM Wilderness Challenge

We live in exciting times. Future generations may be able to enjoy the fruits of our labors, but they will not have the opportunity to help determine which wild areas still left in this country will be preserved. That opportunity is our responsibility today.

The Bureau of Land Management is about to release its recommendations for wilderness from the large areas of BLM wild and scenic lands in New Mexico. The BLM will undoubtedly try to sell our lands short, releasing many jewels to development or general purpose, multiple use. We must make sure that no parcel of BLM land worth preserving as wilderness is excluded from the legislation that will result from the Bureau's recommendations.

But that won't be easy. The BLM originally identified 327 roadless areas in the state as having sufficient size and manageability to be designated wilderness. These areas encompass over 5.7 million acres of public lands. During the study process, many areas were dropped from further consideration--some justifiably, many not. Conservationists must work hard in the next few months to ensure that enough of the remote and rugged landscape that we can take for granted will be around in its unspoiled state for future inhabitants to discover and explore.

In order to be effective in winning more wilderness than the Reagan Administration wants, we must work from a position of knowledge about the treasures our *de facto* BLM and Forest Service wilderness areas hold. Volunteers are urgently needed to perform wilderness resource studies of the areas that the BLM would release to multiple use. If you are interested in conducting or participating in field trips to gather the necessary data, please attend one of the wilderness workshops described in Jim Norton's article in this issue.

CENTER FOUNDED TO FIGHT DESERTIFICATION

by Bruce Dyleski, Albuquerque

Holistic Resource Management is based on the philosophic doctrine that the determining factors in nature are wholes, and not their constituent parts. It might be said that nature is greater than the sum of all its parts. In Africa, twenty years ago, Allan Savory had the opportunity to observe the vast savannas thrive under the hooves of the natural wild herds. However, he observed that when the same land was subjected to domestic livestock, the entire ecosystem began to collapse, resulting in lost productivity and serious erosion problems.

Then, being in the Game Department, he recommended that livestock be removed from the land. This removal was necessary, he felt, and scientists from around the world concurred. These destocking policies were being carried out in Israel, Africa, and the U.S. Such policies were difficult to implement, and once Allan Savory stated in public that he was prepared to personally shoot every cow in the country and any rancher who stood in his way. He observed that the loss of productivity of the land was undermining the political stability of the Rhodesian government.

As he looked deeper into the problems facing his country he made another discovery. In areas where livestock were completely removed, there was little improvement in the land and rates of erosion were actually accelerated. In other words, with livestock and without livestock, the land deteriorated. Something was being overlooked. It was a time factor. All had looked at the number of animals on the land and ignored the time they were able to graze individual plants.

This key was discovered by observing the natural movement of wildlife herds. They grazed an area, not until all available forage was depleted, but for a particular time period; then they moved on. It was found that these animals traveled in herds, churning up the ground. As this was further explored, the discovery was made that this too had an important effect on the landscape. The effect was to break up the capped soil, preparing seed bed for the grass plants being trampled into the soil. This also helped incorporate organic matter and allowed rainfall to infiltrate. It was this intimate tie between the soil, the plants that grew on it, and the animals that depended on them for food that is the essence of holism--that all is connected, and when one link in the chain is upset, the entire chain is upset. We hadn't stopped to observe them all functioning together; we had tried to divide each and examine them independently to discover their individual secrets. Their secret was that they were all related, and to understand them, they must be looked at as one.

Savory's early observations were put to the test on a number of ranches in Zimbabwe, where they were refined and molded into a practical method of application. The results in many cases were phenomenal. Rangelands with no grass to speak of had in

several years covered over with dense perennial grasses and achieved healthy increases in wildlife populations. At the same time, livestock meat yields were increased to as high as five times per acre more than they were when the land was deteriorating under conventional practices.

Savory claims today that livestock are one of the best wildlife and land management tools we have, if used with the full planning procedures of Holistic Resource Management. In many cases, livestock can be used to simulate wildlife populations and thus rebuild the ecosystem to the point where wildlife can again thrive and add to the stability and productivity of the environment.

In August of 1984, the Center for Holistic Resource Management was formed in New Mexico. This Center, located in Albuquerque, was organized primarily to prevent and halt desertification. Desertification is the process of turning productive lands into desert. This process occurs world-wide and is a serious problem in New Mexico. Allan Savory, the Center's executive director, addressed the Albuquerque Group of the Sierra Club at their November meeting and explained the goals of the Center:

- 1) to produce stable environments with sound watersheds
- 2) to restore profitability to ranching
- 3) to increase wildlife species, numbers within species, and stability of populations
- 4) to improve water resources of cities, industry, and agriculture
- 5) to re-establish seriously damaged riparian (streamside) areas
- 6) to prevent wastage of financial resources by governments and international agencies, as well as private individuals, on faulty resource management
- 7) to increase citizen participation and concern in sound resource management.

The world headquarters of the Center are in Albuquerque. The New Mexico branch of the Center will be responsible for conducting training programs in Holistic Resource Management. Other branches have been formed or are planned for Montana, Oregon, Arizona, Texas, Nebraska, and Mexico.

There is broad representation on the New Mexico branch's Board of Directors, including environmentalists, members of several state and federal government agencies, and ranchers. There are provisions in our constitution for two more board members. We hope to fill these, possibly with tribal resource managers.

Any environmental organization can utilize the basic concepts of HRM. Since these principles involve not only the environment but the wise utilization of both dollar and people resources, an organization can apply HRM to build a more effective organization. Using HRM principles to analyze government agency policies affecting land use, one can quickly realize their shortcomings and see a clear path for reaching the desired management goals. When an in-depth understanding of HRM is gained, one can see why environmental impact statements are generally inadequate

and never really address the real issues.

Holistic Resource Management continues to develop and expand. There are ways it may be put to use that we have yet to discover. The potential for this new technology is to change how we look at the world around us and how we see ourselves in the world. It opens doors to a whole new era, a rebirth of natural resource management. It gives us the ability to be the kind of custodians of the planet that we will be proud to be.

(Editor's note: For more information, contact the Center for Holistic Resource Management, P.O. Box 7128, Albuquerque, NM 87194.)

SANTA FE PACIFIC SEEKS CHACO MINERALS EXCHANGE

Santa Fe Pacific Railroad Company, the operator (through its subsidiary Santa Fe Mining) of the coal surface mine at Lee Ranch in McKinley County west of Grants, NM, has offered to trade about 5000 acres of subsurface mineral estate to the BLM for 480 acres of federal coal adjacent to the Lee Ranch mine. Of the offered mineral lands, about 3700 acres underlie Chaco Culture National Historic Park; the rest is scattered beneath Chacoan outliers throughout the southern San Juan Basin. Santa Fe Pacific has stated that it cannot utilize these lands because of the protected status of the surface archeological resources. The National Park Service is eager to consummate such an exchange to consolidate the surface and subsurface ownership of parklands, and such acquisitions by exchange are authorized under PL 96-550, the law that expanded the park boundaries in 1980. The BLM is preparing an amendment to the Chaco Management Framework Plan covering the exchange.

The federal coal involved is in two parcels, one of which is considered to be "bypass" coal; should present mining operations not extract it, according to BLM minerals staff, it is unlikely that a subsequent mining venture would find it economical to recover the relatively small (1.25 million tons) quantity of coal involved. The second parcel holds about 2.65 million tons of coal; although it could be leased competitively as a separate federal tract, according to the BLM it could economically be mined only as part of the Lee Ranch operations. Since the proposal is for a fee exchange, no royalties would go to the federal government from the mining of this coal if it is traded to Santa Fe Pacific.

The BLM will be preparing an environmental assessment of the proposed exchange once the terms of the proposal have been finalized by Santa Fe-Pacific. The exchange may be incorporated into the McKinley County Coal exchange, a pending federal/private fee coal exchange analyzed last year. The Sierra Club is endorsing the exchange as now formulated. For more information, contact Russell Jentgen at the NM BLM State Office (988-6109) or Betty Sladek at the BLM Albuquerque District Office (766-2455).

Legislature (from page 1)

Bisti Wilderness Area in the San Juan Basin. The Committee on Coal has developed a fact sheet on this issue - contact Jonathan Teague at 262-1862.

(4) Reclamation of non-coal surface mined areas. This legislation would authorize the Energy and Minerals Department to reclaim areas that have been stripmined for minerals other than coal; the initial focus will be on sand and gravel pits, etc. EMB cannot now reclaim such abandoned areas, which contribute to soil erosion and sedimentation in nearby waterways as well as encourage illegal dumping into the abandoned pits.

(5) Hazardous waste emergency cleanup fund. The proposed legislation would put \$425,000 in state severance tax money to provide 10-percent state matching funds to the federal Superfund to pay for emergency cleanup at hazardous wastes sites and spills. Southwest Research (262-1862) will be actively supporting this bill.

(6) Hazardous waste transfer facility/small quantity pickup program. This proposed legislation asks for \$350,000 to study the feasibility of a hazardous waste transport facility (not disposal facility) which, if eventually built, would allow small hazardous waste producers (dry cleaners, paint and chemical manufacturers) to bring waste for packaging and shipment out of state. For many years some extremely hazardous materials have been unlawfully dumped in landfills, arroyos, and empty lots to avoid the cost of properly shipping the waste out of state. An additional \$150,000 is asked for the coordination of one-day small quantity hazardous waste collection programs in five to ten towns around the state. This important legislation would (1) educate legislators and the public on the problems of hazardous waste in the state and (2) clean out thousands of gallons of hazardous wastes in New Mexico.

(7) Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Project at Ambrosia Lake. Although the government will cover 90% of the cleanup cost of this abandoned uranium mill tailings pile, the state must kick in 10% (or approximately \$2 million dollars) to complete the program. Passage would ensure cleanup of the pile near Grants, give the state Radiation Bureau expertise to deal with tailings problems in the future, and most importantly, substantially reduce further environmental and groundwater contamination and reduce health risks from radiation exposure.

(8) Utility intervenor funding. This proposal would establish a process through which ratepayers who intervene before the Public Service Commission in energy development programs (such as the necessity for coal, nuclear, gas or other plants), rate cases, etc. and make a "significant contribution" may recover a portion or all of legal expenses incurred.

(9) Independent Power Producers Act. This legislation would set fair rates for utility companies to pay independent producers of electricity. It would promote energy conservation and efficiency, and mean more effective use of fossil fuels, less waste, and promote the development of renewable energy from solar, wind, co-generation, etc.

(10) NM Energy, Research, and Development Institute. This will be a request for the same budget as received in 1983. NM EKDI has done the best research, information gathering, and public outreach on alternative energy, renewables, and conservation in the state.

(11) Extend Solar/Wind Tax Credits. This would extend credits for purchases of solar and wind related equipment. See related article, this issue.

(12) Auto Emissions Inspection Program. The Federally-mandated Inspection Maintenance Program in Albuquerque, designed to solve a public health problem due to high carbon monoxide levels, was voided by the NM Supreme Court because of its funding arrangement. A new program must be designed to solve this problem by providing a funding source and a tie to automobile registration.

(13) Asbestos in Public Buildings. This is a request for \$1.3 million dollars for collecting and testing samples from public buildings to detect the presence of asbestos, known to cause a debilitating lung disease (asbestosis) to those chronically exposed.

(14) Low Level radioactive waste board appropriation. This bill would authorize \$70,000 for interstate compact board to support its activities until sufficient fees are collected.

(15) Bottle Bill. This bill would place a 5-cent deposit on bottles to encourage recycling and reduce bottle litter in the state. NM Public Interest Research Group at UNM will play the lead role in lobbying for this bill.

(16) Lands Endowment Act. This act, if passed would enable the state to acquire donated lands for the preservation of scenic wildlands and wildlife.

(17) Youth Employment Act. This would set up program under the Department of Natural Resources to hire 16-21 year-olds during summers to control erosion and sedimentation problems in upper watersheds in Northern New Mexico. This legislation would be beneficial for water quality, wildlife protection and scenic preservation and would also train our youth in conservation techniques.

(18) Integrated pest management funding. This would provide funding to research an integrated pest management approach (IPM) to protecting forests; IPM relies primarily on natural and organic methods to control pests, while utilizing chemicals (like carbaryl) only as a last resort. At present, almost exclusive reliance is placed on dangerous chemicals to control pests like the spruce budworm.

(19) Clean Indoor Air Act. This measure would require smoking and non-smoking areas in public buildings and health care facilities. Increasingly, researchers are showing that second-hand smoke can be harmful to nonsmokers; 30 other states have already passed such legislation.

(Editors' note: Lynda Taylor is a researcher at Southwest Research and Information Center in Albuquerque, NM.)

Contacting your Senator or Representative

Call your local County Clerk's Office if you don't know who your senator or representative is. You can call the Legislative Council Service in Santa Fe at 984-9600/9300 to reach any legislator. It is unlikely you will get to talk directly with him/her over the phone while the session is in full swing, but it is common to leave a message with the secretary simply stating your position on a particular bill or item. THIS SHOULD BE DONE PRIOR TO A COMMITTEE OR FLOOR VOTE on that issue. A telegram is also a good way to make your opinion known. They can be sent to: (Legislator), Round House, State Capitol Building, Santa Fe, NM 87503. Personal visits to your legislators are also very effective, although legislators are extremely busy during Session; such visits have their greatest impact when done other times during the year rather than just at the Legislature.

Information on Legislators and Legislative Committee Assignments

Contact the Legislative Council Service (LCS) at 984-9600/9300 to get copies of lists of Legislators with addresses and phones, Committees Assignments and Chairs, or simply go to the LCS at the State Capitol (3rd floor) and pick them up.

Copies of Bills/Information on Bills

Again, contact the LCS at 984-9600/9300 and ask for "Bills." You should have the bill number before you call to get a copy or ask questions about its status in committee, etc. You can call Kay Grotbeck (296-0944) or Lynda Taylor (262-1862) to get bill numbers and progress reports on key environmental bills.

Sierra Club Environmental Legislation Phone Tree

We need your phone calls to legislators to ensure that environmental concerns are represented. Call Kay Grotbeck at 296-0944 to get on the Sierra Club phone tree to receive regular action alerts throughout the session.

Railroad (from page 1)

permanent fund (STPF) and STPF monies could be invested in these bonds. Rates of return provided to the public on this investment of permanent funds would be allowed to sink several interest points below that now legally required for the STPF, potentially costing the public coffers millions of dollars yearly in lost revenues. The STPF represents money collected by New Mexico in compensation for the depletion of its nonrenewable mineral resources; it is the public financial inheritance that we pass on to our children in lieu of those extracted resources. Under the provisions of the past ETA proposals, there is virtually no public accountability for bad investments or conflicts of interest, since ETA directors would be appointed.

Railroads devoted to the transportation of bulk commodity coal are seen by hard path energy boosters as the solution to northwest New Mexico's coal transportation "problem," and are a crucial element in the rapid exploitation of coal deposits in the Chaco-Bisti area of the San Juan Basin. ETA proponents acknowledge that a San Juan Basin railroad would serve coal mines almost exclusively; only very limited amounts of mining equipment or agricultural produce from the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry would be moved on a seasonal basis.

The recommended route for such a coal railroad will almost certainly be that of the long-proposed Star Lake-Bisti Railroad, running north and west from near Prewitt, past Hospah, just outside the northeastern boundary of Chaco Culture National Historic Park across Gallo Wash, to the Bisti area and site of the the proposed New Mexico Generating Station. The BLM purportedly examined the environmental impacts of such a project in the Star Lake-Bisti Regional Coal EIS in 1979. The potential impacts were greatly understated in this EIS and the subsequent San Juan River Regional Coal Leasing EIS. Actual effects from the railroad and its attendant coal development on the dense archeological and fossil resources of the region as well as on the area's Navajo ranchers will be severe.

Such a proposal as Morgan's ETA legislation would guarantee life to any industry whatsoever and would enhance tremendously the value of present coal holdings by Public Service Company of New Mexico, Arch Minerals, Peabody Coal, and other companies. Moreover, like projects funded by municipal industrial revenue bonds, ETA projects could be tax exempt; hence they might provide little or no direct contribution to the property tax base of local communities or counties.

The constitutionality of the ETA proposal is itself doubtful, since the Article IX, Section 14 of the NM Constitution states that "Neither the state nor any county, school district, or municipality . . . shall directly or indirectly lend or pledge its credit" for the construction of a railroad. Unconstitutionality is no barrier to passage of an Energy Transportation Act, however, but this could then mean that environmentalists or other groups would face expensive court battles to

get the law overturned, if possible.

Even if the proposed ETA investment scheme were not unconstitutional, it would still be a bad investment by anyone's standards. The amount of New Mexico coal that the market is likely to be able to absorb is far less than that which would need to be mined in order to justify the cost of railroad construction.

Proponents of the railroad are banking on radical increases in electric power consumption. Most of the coal that could be hauled by the railroad would be steam coal, for use in electric generating plants in the region. Citing inflated electricity demand forecasts, railroad advocates argue the need for major coal mining in the San Juan Basin. One of the demand projections used to justify the construction of a railroad calls for production by the year 2000 of coal to meet the need of five and one half new power plants each the size of the 2000 MW Four Corners plant! This is at a time when more conservative forecasts such as one by the Environmental Defense Fund show a glut of generating capacity until the year 2000.

Once the massive financial commitment of constructing a coal railroad has been made, only the development of largescale coal strip mines could provide for paying off the debts of railroad construction and operation. As a result, construction of state-financed railroads in the San Juan Basin would then drive further coal development, even against market forces. Building such heavy transportation infrastructure in the basin is sealing New Mexico's commitment to hard path energy development with all its global consequences of acid rain and the Greenhouse Effect.

In order to justify seeking this scandalous massive public subsidy with its tremendous environmental costs to the state, the coal companies tout the potential for growth in employment that such a project would provide, while they ignore the unstable energy market. Compare this with what such a state investment in solar and other renewable energy construction could accomplish! Nearly any other state supported activity--be it education, energy conservation, or public works such as streets and bridges--would produce more jobs and financial return to local communities. And necessarily, tying up state funds in coal transportation projects will displace other kinds of productive, environmentally beneficial investment in both the public and the private sectors.

Conservationists are concerned that Anaya may propose legislation embodying the recommendations of a recent report from the Coal Transportation Task Force, the New Mexico Coal Transportation Study. Although no funding is advocated, major parts of the ETA proposal, including powers of eminent domain, would be put into place along with a funding mechanism at the county or local level. The Anaya administration has indicated that it may support such a version of the bill, but the administration is likely to oppose state financial support for construction of coal railroads.

The ETA bill that was introduced into

the 1983 legislature was narrowly defeated. With the altered make-up of the legislature and Morgan's new position as Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, prospects for rapid action on his railroad bill are strong. Only vocal public opposition to this act of fiscal piracy will forestall the coal companies from obtaining public subsidies to build an economically risky and environmentally damaging coal railroad.

Please write or call your state senator and representative and Governor Toney Anaya and urge them to oppose any state involvement in the creation or funding of a state energy transportation authority. State that you oppose the rash investment of state money in financially unsound coal railroad proposals, and that we should not commit ourselves to wholesale stripmining as our energy future. For telephone numbers and addresses and how to find them, see Lynda Taylor's article on the legislature, this issue.

BLM VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

by Bob Wilbur, Santa Fe

Volunteerism has been trumpeted by the Reagan Administration as an essential part of its plan to "return government to the people." In the last four years just about every Federal agency has put out at least one glossy brochure extolling the virtues of volunteering. Why, one might think that they invented this old American tradition, which comes as second nature to most environmentalists. However, with the possible exception of the National Park Service, environmentalists have not rushed to sign volunteer agreements with Federal resource management agencies.

Some might say that proves we prefer preservation over multiple use, but it seems more likely that this reluctance to ask what environmentalists can do for their government reflects a healthy skepticism about the motives of an administration that has shown more interest in resource exploitation than environmental protection. However, it would be short-sighted to let such skepticism keep us from volunteering if by doing so we could truly protect the environment and improve resource management.

In general, Reagan administration personnel appointments, reorganizations, and budget cuts have weakened the professional capabilities of Federal resource management agencies and lowered the quality of natural resource management. In a few cases they have had a devastating impact on the natural environment. However, there never has been a time when our Federal resource management agencies were able to meet all of their responsibilities for environmental protection. Even if the Reagan administration had not cut a penny from the budget of the Forest Service, BLM and similar agencies there would still be a multitude of environmental problems that could not be addressed without the help of volunteers.

In addition, Federal volunteer programs offer many tangible and intangible benefits for both the agencies and the volunteers, such as

See *Volunteers*, page 11

Wildlife (from page 1)

those in Fish and Game Unit 30, near Carlsbad, NM; Fish and Game Department hunters would be directed to take by gun up to fourteen lions per year within that unit, in advance of any depredation incidents connected with the particular lions being shot. This is approximately the annual average of lions killed because of depredation over the last three years and is the limit now in effect. Fish and Game personnel would investigate any reported livestock kills.

What did these ranchers do to merit this extraordinary consideration? They yelled the loudest--and were listened to. Yet, despite the noise, official complaints about depredating lions have been dropped this year. Apparently only one person took advantage of the special hunting season in October designed to help with the depredation problem. And one of the four ranchers involved has switched from sheep to cattle and therefore shouldn't be bothered by lions.

So there was and is no reason to grant this huge exception to the hunting regulations. Had it been made, everyone who wanted to hunt lions on his land would have been able to apply for the same exception. Once a precedent is set, the commission and department will have a hard time denying its application to others. Ultimately the lion could be de facto delisted. This, in spite of the fact that statistics have shown the species is declining.

Even though the Commission rejected the proposed exemptions to the regulations, we expect ranchers to pack the February commission meeting asking for the same exemption or for other changes in the regulations. So we must be there too, urging that protection be strengthened. The February meeting will be February 21 and 22 in Santa Fe. As we get closer to these dates, we will know on which day the lion will be discussed. Please come if you can. For further information call Carol Cochran (505/345-1412 or 836-1111) or the Sierra Club Office in Albuquerque (505/265-5506). Meanwhile please write letters to the Game Commissioners (with a copy to Harold Olson, Director, NM Department of Game and Fish).



Canyonlands (from page 1)

section of two major rivers, the Columbia and the Snake. The Texas site is above the Ogallalla aquifer, the major source of water for the agricultural belt that extends from western Texas/eastern New Mexico to Nebraska. And the Davis Canyon site is on the eastern boundary of Canyonlands National Park, near the Colorado River, and within the original boundaries advocated for the Park by the Sierra Club in 1964. The Sierra Club has sought since that time to obtain wilderness designation for Davis Canyon and Lavender Canyon (located less than ten miles from Davis Canyon and another of the nine sites being considered by DOE) and to add them to the Park.

Site characterization will involve massive drilling and mining operations to determine the technical feasibility of containing high-level radioactive waste for 10,000 to 250,000 years. Two mine shafts 25 feet in diameter and 3000 feet deep will be excavated, requiring blasting at hard-rock sites such as Canyonlands. At least 47 deep boreholes and 740 shallow boreholes will be drilled. Hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of excavated material will have to be stockpiled, requiring extensive earth-moving operations and road building at the surface. If the Canyonlands site is ultimately chosen for characterization, drilling within the Park may be necessary to fully evaluate the

regional geology.

All studies are to be complete by 1990, when the president will nominate one site for the repository. The governor or legislature of the chosen state will have veto power but can be overturned by a vote in both houses of Congress. The facility is to open in 1998 and will ultimately store 70,000 tons of nuclear waste, primarily residue from nuclear weapons programs.

The repository would occupy a surface area of about one square mile. Surface features would include:

- five huge, crane-like structures, one as high as 220 feet, to lower waste and equipment underground
- a 50-acre, 35-foot high pile of excavated rock
- two 20,000 gallon holding tanks for liquid radioactive wastes
- new high-voltage electric transmission lines as well as natural gas and water pipelines paralleling a new railroad and truck route
- a sprawling complex of buildings, warehouses, and storage facilities

The entire complex will be fenced and floodlit for security and around-the-clock operation. When the repository is closed, monolithic, pyramid-shaped markers will be erected to warn future generations away.

Because of the topography of Canyonlands, the selection of this site as a repository would require haul roads and railway tunnels to be blasted into the scenic benchlands along the Park's eastern boundary and under two scenic viewpoints overlooking the park. Approximately 475 trucks or 105 rail cars hauling nuclear waste and excavated rock would rumble past the Park every day during the 20-30 year life of the repository.

Although the site selection process as a whole is flawed, the fact that DOE could even consider as a candidate a site adjacent to one of our most remote and unique National Parks is absurd; and it is conceivable that DOE could change its tentative decisions and move Canyonlands up into the first group. Site characterization itself would have tremendous impacts on the Park; moreover, the characterization process represents a substantial investment and therefore a powerful incentive for DOE to approve any characterized site as a repository--if not the first, then the second, or the third--since more than one waste repository will ultimately be proposed by DOE. The possibility of DOE selecting the Canyonlands site for characterization is very real as long as it remains on the list--particularly since Texas Governor Mark White has already vowed that the Beat Smith County site will be vetoed.

Please take the time to write DOE and urge them to reconsider the entire selection process. Public comments are being accepted until March 20, 1985. It is imperative that some permanent repository for the effluent of nuclear technology be found; but DOE should take the time and invest the resources necessary to locate the best candidate sites possible before spending billions of dollars to study any in detail.

Be sure to send copies of your letter to the Secretary of the Interior, your senators and representatives, and the Governor of Utah. A copy of the environmental assessments for the two

NEW MEXICO STATE GAME COMMISSIONERS:

Mr. James H. Koch, Chairman
P.O. Box 1926
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dr. Thomas P. Arvas
7905 Spain Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111

Mrs. Christine DiGregorio
1103 Susan St.
Gallup, NM 87301

Dr. A. H. Gutierrez
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Carlsbad, NM 88220

Mr. Jake Alcon
c/o NM Dept. Game & Fish
Villagra Bldg.
Santa Fe, NM 87503

Mr. Harold Olson, Director
NM Dept. of Game & Fish
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recommendations, which will be accompanied by a statewide Draft Environmental Impact Statement, will advocate wilderness protection for less than half of New Mexico's BLM Wilderness Study Area Lands--and when you consider that a large number of important lands were excluded from the wilderness study category, an even smaller fraction of the resource would be protected.

On numerous occasions Congress has rejected the Administration's recommendations and has designated far greater acreage as Wilderness. In almost every case, the reason that Congress rejected the weak Administrative recommendations is because conservationists did additional research, built public support, and presented stronger wilderness proposals to them. Now is the time for conservationists here in New Mexico to begin putting together a well-researched, publicly supported alternative wilderness proposal to ensure that the BLM wildland treasures in the state are adequately protected.

Because of the critical need to encourage more people to get involved in the process, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, and The Wilderness Society are jointly sponsoring a series of Wilderness Workshops in New Mexico this Spring. Weekend workshops, including a Sunday field trip to an interesting nearby area, are scheduled for Las Cruces/El Paso, March 9-10; Albuquerque, March 16-17; and Taos, April 13-14. Watch your local group newsletters for details on times and places.

New Mexico is at the forefront of the nationwide BLM wilderness battle because it is likely to have the first statewide recommendations released, because of its outstanding resources on BLM lands, and because of its history as the first to address statewide wilderness issues in Congress (such as the 1980 NM RARE II bill). As a result, the Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society are making it a top national priority to assist New Mexico conservationists in any way we can to develop the skills, data, and public support necessary. It's an exciting challenge and an historic opportunity to truly protect the outstanding qualities of our BLM lands. I'm looking forward to working together with you to meet that challenge.

(Editors' note: Jim Norton is

The issue of toxic substances in the environment has become one of the most important and threatening issues of the 1980's. Because many of the human effects of exposures to toxic substances - particularly carcinogens - have long latency periods, up to 20 years or more, only recently have we begun to cope with the serious implications of the proliferation of toxic substances in the workplace, in the home, and in the general environment. Prior to World War II, relatively few types of toxic chemicals were in widespread use; exposure to toxic substances rose dramatically after the war as we became more dependent upon petrochemicals. Yet it is surprising that this issue has lain dormant for so long. The debilitating and deadly nature of many substances such as asbestos and coal tar derivatives have been known for many years. Despite this knowledge about the severe health effects of certain industrial chemicals and byproducts, little concern has been shown for the people exposed to them.

We know that the problem is serious. Cancer now accounts for 20% of all deaths in the U.S. and is the second leading cause of death nation-wide. The American Cancer Society estimates that one in every four people will contract cancer in their lifetime, with some 60 to 90% of all cases of cancer caused or influenced by environmental factors, including workplace exposure to carcinogens, smoking, diet, and various consumer products. In 1980, the Federal Toxic Substance Strategy Committee attributed 22 to 38% of all cancer to workplace exposures. There is an element of good news in this: the incidence of cancer is therefore largely dependent on factors that mankind can control. Given the statistics, it is obvious that we all have more to do to prevent unnecessary exposures to the toxic substances that can cause serious illness or death.

The problem is not going away on its own. Thousands of new chemicals are introduced each year, many of which receive only limited testing. More than 55,000 chemical substances are now listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as subject to regulation by the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976. That number does not include mixtures of chemicals, drugs, cosmetics, pesticides, and numerous other chemicals - a total estimated at 525,000 - regulated by other federal agencies. Workplace

that they handled could cause serious health problems, including cancer, even though that information was known at the time. Increasingly, firefighters are exposed to toxic substances as they battle fires and chemical spills. Maintenance workers find themselves handling substances that cause chemical pneumonia, dermatitis, and other significant health problems. We all encounter toxins in the food we eat and the air we breathe. Electronics, long touted as a "clean industry", is being courted by state and local governments just as the news surfaces that this same industry elsewhere has contaminated community water supplies and caused serious occupational diseases for its workers.

In retrospect, lack of basic information about toxic chemicals on the part of workers and the general public has been a major obstacle to the prevention of chemical health hazards. In response to this deficiency, a national movement has arisen to ensure that those who work with chemicals are told about the hazards to which they are exposed. Since 1980, "right-to-know" laws have been enacted in some 17 states and five major cities. These laws all provide that workers shall have access to information about the toxic substances with which they work. About a third of these laws further provide that emergency response and health personnel, governmental agencies, and community residents must also be provided access about the chemicals used, stored, or transported by businesses. In late 1983, the federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) finally adopted a standard that covers all fifty states but which, however, applies only to employees in the manufacturing sector.

In New Mexico, the Environmental Improvement Board adopted the federal OSHA standard in May of 1984, but coverage of workers was not expanded beyond that of the federal standard. As a result, only 8% of New Mexico's workforce is included under the state standard and there is no provision enabling other governmental agencies or residents to find out if possible exposure hazards exist from workplaces within their communities.

There has been comparatively little press attention given to problems in New Mexico from toxic substances, but problems do exist. A recent survey conducted by the state's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau indicated

See Toxics, page 11

NEEDED: ALBUQUERQUE I/M PROGRAM

by Richard Holland, Deputy Director
NM Environmental Improvement Division

Individual rights versus the public good is a delicate issue. In the area of health and environmental protection, this issue finds a focus in the inspection and maintenance program (I/M), mandated by the federal Clean Air Act and administered by the Environmental Improvement Agency.

I/M is designed to reduce carbon monoxide (CO) as well as other pollutants at the source: the light-duty automobile. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, tasteless, and colorless gas which interferes with the body's ability to transport oxygen via hemoglobin in the bloodstream. Low levels of carbon monoxide-hemoglobin can cause dizziness, nausea, fatigue, and impaired judgement. At high levels, coma and then death result. Chronic low-level carbon monoxide poisoning has been linked to coronary artery disease.

Although ambient air CO concentration does not reach levels suspected to adversely affect the normal, healthy individual, risk does exist for the elderly, youth, and cigarette smokers. Ironically, the individual who several decades ago would have moved to New Mexico to seek relief of emphysema or chronic lung disease would now find those problems aggravated during Albuquerque's episodes of high CO concentration. According to the New Mexico Chapter of the American Lung Association, some 135,000 individuals are at risk because of age in the Albuquerque area. Over 19,000 individuals in the area are at high risk because of lung disease alone.

Albuquerque ranks fourth highest in 8-hour concentrations of CO, and fifth among U.S. cities in number of violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). In 1979 Albuquerque environmental officials notified EPA that Albuquerque would not achieve compliance with national air standards by 1982 as required by the Clean Air Act. Albuquerque and Bernalillo County also agreed to the mandated I/M program as a condition of extending the deadline for attainment to 1987. Because the light-duty automobile may contribute approximately 90% of Bernalillo County's CO pollution, this was a reasonable condition.

The city of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County began a joint vehicle inspection program in January, 1983. The program was immediately challenged in District Court. The decision was later appealed to the New Mexico Supreme Court, and in the high court's decision (*Chapman v. Luna*), the I/M program was upheld with two exceptions:

(1) The court ruled that the \$9.25 fee charged for the vehicle test was in fact a registration fee charged in violation of New Mexico law which makes illegal any other registration fee where state registration is required, and

(2) The maximum repair cap of \$75.00 was judged irrational and unconstitutional, permitting the worst violators to continue polluting.

In response to the Court's action, the Albuquerque City Council and the Bernalillo County Commission repealed their I/M ordinances, thus closing the program.

EPA immediately began the process to disapprove New Mexico's State Implementation Plan (SIP). Subsequent sanction of federal aid for air quality programs in the Environmental Improvement Division and in Albuquerque, and for federal highway aid to New Mexico will be announced this spring.

Since formal dissolution of the I/M program, the Albuquerque Environmental Health and Energy Department and the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division (EID) have worked on various elements of program reimplementation and SIP development. Albuquerque has requested action by the New Mexico Legislature to require vehicle inspection prior to reregistration of vehicles, and for a source of funding for the program, either a gasoline tax or a registration fee. The state has begun a study of the sources of CO during episodes of high concentration. Both the city and the state have begun the appropriate regulatory procedures. Enactment of requested legislation should be sufficient to convince EPA to forestall sanctions until the program is started again and can be evaluated for proper results by EPA.

I/M programs have met with opposition. Some scientific questions and legal concerns have proven difficult to address. Critics point to the lack of scientific evidence that I/M has improved the quality of the ambient air. Studies have been inconclusive on this point, but for good reason. The factors that influence air quality, such as weather variations, have proven difficult to account for accurately. The best indication of an I/M program's effectiveness is the reduction of pollutants at the tailpipe. The Albuquerque program showed a 75% reduction of tailpipe emissions of vehicles tested and repaired during 1983.

The debate about I/M will no doubt continue in New Mexico as it has in other states. Certain facts remain, regardless of one's scientific or constitutional opinion. I/M is mandated by the Clean Air Act for any area which failed to meet air quality standards by 1982. Without I/M, Albuquerque will not meet those standards. For these reasons, EID will continue working with EPA and the city to reinstate the program.

EPA WEIGHS SANCTIONS AGAINST ALBUQUERQUE

by Hollis Whitson, Albuquerque

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will soon decide whether or not to impose sanctions upon the State of New Mexico for its failure to comply with the federal clean Air Act. At issue is the State's failure to implement a vehicle inspection and maintenance program for Bernalillo County. Imposition of sanctions would mean the state's loss of millions of dollars of federal aid.

The EPA is currently focusing on Carbon Monoxide (CO), the "invisible

pollutant" which comes from autos and causes heart and circulatory disease, health problems in newborn infants, headaches, and other problems.

Albuquerque's CO pollution is among the worst in the nation. CO levels in the Coronado/Winrock area, for example, often exceed state and federal health standards by 100%. The major reason is the city's high altitude, combined with its "Los Angeles style" pattern of growth. A contributing factor is the inadequacy of Albuquerque's diesel bus-based mass transit system. The level of service is insufficient to displace much automobile traffic. Although the buses emit less CO per passenger mile than the equivalent number of cars, the diesel engines of the buses emit much larger quantities of respirable particulates in the form of clouds of black exhaust fumes. These respirable particulates have been tagged as potential carcinogens.

The Federal Clean Air Act requires that each state adopt a plan to control, by 1982, air pollution caused by CO, total suspended particulates (TSP), ozone, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur dioxide. Some states, including New Mexico, failed to meet the 1982 deadlines for CO and were covered by a clause in the Act which allows such states until 1987 to clean up their air. By law, all states taking advantage of the extension must: 1) adopt a vehicle inspection and maintenance (I/M) program; and 2) make reasonable progress towards meeting the deadline. States which fail to do so are subject to EPA's sanctions on federal funds going to state and county air pollution programs and expansion in capacity on highways and wastewater treatment facilities. Sanctions are designed to halt EPA's encouragement of growth in areas which fail to meet standards.

Bernalillo County had an I/M program in 1983, but it was a voluntary program. Moreover, the county program had no effective enforcement component; it did not cover commuters in nearby Sandoval and Valencia counties; and it was based on an unconstitutional funding mechanism. When the Supreme Court struck down the program in 1984, the state legislature refused to correct the flaw, and the city and county refused to fund the program out of other available funds. The EPA, having already imposed sanctions in California, Utah, Kentucky, and Tennessee, began to focus on New Mexico.

On December 4, 1984, the EPA held a public hearing at the Albuquerque City Council Chambers. The vast majority of speakers encouraged sanctions and expressed their fears that the air pollution in Albuquerque would parallel that of Denver if nothing were done. Those encouraging sanctions represented a wide range of organizations, including: the Mayor of the Village of Los Ranchos, the American Lung Association (for sanctions except on air quality funds), the North Valley Neighborhood Association, the American Thoracic Society, the League of Women Voters, and the Rio Grande Valley Preservation Society. Several individuals also spoke up in support of sanctions, including a former member of the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Air

Quality Control Board, a medical specialist, and two local businessmen. Most of those who opposed sanctions were city and county officials. One South Valley group, People United for Justice, urged that EPA continue funding for improved wastewater treatment facilities.

Yet to be determined is whether Albuquerque's skies will clear up even if the State adopts an I/M program. The I/M program will improve the city's CO problem but it will not really attack the particulates (TSP) that make up much of the winter "Brown Cloud". Most TSP originate from the burning of wood in stoves and fireplaces and from diesel exhaust. At the EPA hearing, Dr. Edward Gerety noted that further study into the relationship of CO and TSP is essential to clean air in the future.

Much evidence suggests that changing Albuquerque's pattern of growth will be even more important than implementing an I/M program to curbing the city's air pollution. Albuquerque's CO "hot spot" is the Coronado/Winrock area; if similar shopping centers appear on Coors Road and other West Mesa sites, as planned, then even the best I/M program will fail to keep pace with increasing auto emissions. This is especially true if areas in adjacent counties, such as Rio Rancho in Sandoval County, are exempted from a new I/M program. Several speakers at EPA's public hearing recommended additional study into the meteorology of the area and suggested that urban growth should occur where planners can take advantage of wind patterns which disperse, rather than concentrate, pollution.

EPA's decision is expected sometime before mid-March. State action on an I/M program for Albuquerque is to be considered in the present session of NM's Legislature. For more information, contact the Albuquerque Group of the Sierra Club.

(Editors' note: For more on the legislature, see Lynda Taylor's article, this issue.)

TACB CHOKES ON EL PASO AIR POLLUTION

by John Hamilton, El Paso

There is kind of an aura of apathy about air pollution in El Paso, and to many folks the two terms are synonymous. The perception of El Paso as city of polluted air fits with our image as another cheap-labor border town.

Two years ago, when the El Paso Regional Group selected air quality as its number one conservation issue, the group Executive Committee saw the need for the development of a coalition to solve the problem of air pollution. At the same time, comments were made suggesting that such a coalition could not be formed because air pollution "is not a sexy topic"!

Today, there is a functioning coalition of nine citizen groups that are working together to improve the quality of air in the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez metropolplex. They are informed, involved, and committed to cleaner air

and a better quality of life for our community.

The El Paso Clean Air Coalition (EPCAC) is alive and well. A core group comprised of the League of Women Voters, the Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club met and organized the Coalition in January of '84. From this acorn has grown a mature tree. We have hope that it will send out roots into the rest of the community and be an effective voice for clean air in El Paso for years to come.

The focus of our work is on the federally mandated state implementation plan (SIP) which the Texas Air Control Board (TACB) is to develop. The SIP is to outline the measures which will be implemented in Texas counties that fail to meet federal standards for carbon monoxide (CO) and ozone (O₃); such areas are called nonattainment areas. El Paso County is presently a non-attainment area for both CO and ozone. The TACB must "demonstrate" through a modeling technique that their SIP will reduce CO and O₃ pollution levels in El Paso County to EPA standards by 1987. That is the nub of the problem.

It has been very easy for public-minded citizens and environmental groups to work up enthusiasm over air pollution because in the past the chief pollutants of public concern in El Paso were lead and sulphur dioxide. The chief sources were industrial, principally the smelting operations at ASARCO. With that tall tower, they are very visible in our community. That is as it should be because ASARCO has been a part of our air quality problem. However, they are not the principal source of CO and O₃. The culprit is us. Everyone who operates a motor vehicle bears a share of the responsibility for the poor quality of air in major urban centers.

The Coalition has sought through public and private meetings with the TACB to have them develop an SIP with a mix of pollution reduction strategies. The centerpiece of any plan, we believe, should be an effective inspection and maintenance (I/M) program. The EPA has made it clear that an SIP lacking an I/M program would not be acceptable. As of this writing, the TACB plans only on implementing a parameter check (look to see if anti-pollution devices are in place) as part of their I/M program. Even the TACB's own figures indicate that this will not bring El Paso County into compliance. The Coalition is pushing for an I/M program that would incorporate a parameter check with a tailpipe emissions check. This would go much further in reducing vehicular pollution because it would provide an accurate reading of the amounts of CO emitted by any particular motor vehicle.

Presently the statutes of Texas provide only for a parameter check, so the El Paso Group of the Sierra Club is drafting an amendment to that includes tailpipe emissions checks as well. We hope to have our legislative delegation sponsor and support this change in the 1985 legislative session.



FEDERAL COAL PROGRAM A Tale of Tiered EIS's

The Department of Interior said that it had suspended work on Round II federal coal lease sales, including one scheduled for New Mexico, pending an update of the 1979 environmental impact statement on the national coal leasing program. The 1979 EIS marked the revival of federal coal leasing following a 1973 Congressional leasing moratorium. The San Juan Round I lease sale will probably be delayed until mid-1985 by this EIS process, but processing of preference right lease applications (covering 2.2 billion tons of reserves will not necessarily be held up by the new programmatic EIS (PEIS).

The supplemental PEIS is part of a reworking of the coal program at Interior undertaken by DOI Secretary William Clark in response to public and Congressional criticism that halted federal coal leasing in 1982. The substance of DOI's proposals to correct the abuses of the Watt-era lease sales remains to be seen. Issues include competitive bidding, coal tract appraisal procedures, and the adequacy of planning and environmental analysis.

Environmental review under the federal coal management program (FCMP) is supposed to occur at least three different, hierarchical stages in the process of leasing, from the broadest overview level down to the most site-specific, local level. This scheme arose as a result of successful legal challenges to the coal program based on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). New Mexico has seen all three levels of environmental analysis within recent years.

The 1979 programmatic EIS and the present supplemental PEIS represent the most general and comprehensive NEPA review of federal coal management and are national in scope. They examine the role given to coal resources in the National Energy Policy plan (NEP), focussing on the regulations that govern the leasing of federal minerals. After the programmatic EIS came land use planning and then regional coal activity planning, leading to the 1983 regional coal leasing EIS for the San Juan River Region (about which you have read so much in this newsletter). This "second level" EIS is part of the regional coal lease sale. After leasing, the individual mine plan EIS's, such the one for a proposed mine at La Plata near the NM/Colorado border are prepared; these are supposed to be the most site-specific, containing detailed environmental analysis.

The three levels of EIS's are tiered: the more specific statements rely on the more general ones for assessments of cumulative, regional impacts of a number of similar, specific projects (such as the permitting of each of a number of individual mines resulting from lease sales in a given region). The narrowing of geographical focus provided by the later EIS's is intended to enable more site-specific, detailed environmental study.

This tiered process ideally allows for the rational direction of coal development, such as the avoidance of environmentally sensitive areas, and

See EIS, page 10

SIERRAN BULLETIN BOARD

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

The newly elected Chapter Ex-Com members are Jack Kenney, Leslie King, and Hal Reynolds. Since the election in December, the Ex-Com has met and chosen some of its officers. They are: Jack Kenney, Chair; John Colburn, Conservation Chair; and Dan Jones, Vice-Chair.

WILDLIFE SLIDE SHOW AVAILABLE

The Wildlife Committee, with the help of a grant from the Sierra Club Foundation, has produced two audio/slide programs, one for children (about 15 minutes) and one for adults (about 20 minutes). These may be borrowed by any interested school, group, or organization. Call or write Carol Cochran (1415 Phoenix NW, Albuquerque 87107, 505/345-1412 (H), 831-1111 (W)).

CLUB PUBLISHES NATIONAL PARKS PAMPHLET

The Sierra Club Conservation and Information Services departments have produced a publication that will help hikers, tourists, and conservation activists alike pinpoint the hundreds of units in the National Park System. The 16-page pamphlet, aptly entitled The National Park System contains a state-by-state listing of every park system unit, giving acreage (federal, non-federal, and wilderness classifications) and the local address for further information.

This comprehensive reference guide also briefly describes the difference between the various Park Service designations, e.g., national park, national monument, national historic site, as well as offering insights into management issues currently facing our parks. All park units are shown on a 2-page map as well.

natural history of the state, and Kues' Fossils of New Mexico is no exception. Dr. Kues is a professor at the University of New Mexico and author of numerous studies of San Juan Basin fossils. In readable fashion he introduces to the general public the rich paleontological resources of the state. The book opens with a general introduction to the nature of paleontology and the geological time scale, how fossils are formed and the methods and ethics of fossil collecting.

After providing an overview of the evolution of life forms as shown by fossil studies and familiarizing the reader with the main fossil groups, the author describes what types of fossils are found in the different geological strata that are exposed in New Mexico. Careful descriptions, a multitude of ink drawings, small maps and photographs enrich the text. Overall, the book neatly fills the need for a popular text as a bridge to the scholarly literature on New Mexico's fossils. Armed with Kues' book and standard topographic and geological maps, the novice student of fossils can learn what those traces of past life that turn up in New Mexico's rocks really are.

Available from UNM Press, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Paperback, 226 pages, \$10.95.

SIERRAN ADVERTISING POLICY

We welcome clean, camera-ready copy for layout in the Rio Grande Sierran. Prices: nominally \$50. Contact Dave Glowka for more information, (505) 281-1488.

RIO GRANDE CHAPTER EXCOMM MEETS IN SOCORRO; FOREST PLANNING SEMINAR OFFERED

The Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee will meet February 16th in Socorro at the Workman Room on the

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

Governor Toney Anaya
Office of the Governor
Executive Legislative Bldg.
Santa Fe, NM 87503
505-827-3000

Senator Jeff Bingaman
502 Hart Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
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Senator Pete Domenici
2317 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
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202-225-6318

Rep. Joe Skeen
1508 Longworth Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-2365

President Ronald Reagan
White House
Washington, DC 20500
202-456-7639



believe were caused by the substances with which they worked. There are six sites in New Mexico with contamination serious enough to warrant federal monies for clean-up, including four sites that are on the federal Superfund list; they are located in Rio Rancho, Clovis, Milan, Albuquerque's South Valley (2), West Albuquerque, and Churchrock.

It is high time that we in New Mexico give serious attention to the problems caused by toxic substances. Although the greatest threats from exposure occur primarily in the workplace, these substances also place at risk the communities in which the workplaces are located as well as the environmental and economic well being of the state.

Volunteers (from page 5)

better communications and rapport, stretching budgets and expanding workforces, gaining new skills and job experience, bringing volunteers under workman's compensation and reimbursing them for expenses and, of course, performing work that could not be done under existing budget and personnel constraints. Furthermore, volunteer programs can give environmental activists opportunities to confront the administration's choice of priorities directly by learning how agencies set priorities and make decisions, becoming acquainted with officials, and by demonstrating their own interest and commitment to environmental protection through volunteer projects.

A few months ago, I undertook a special assignment with BLM to report on the status of its volunteer program in New Mexico and Oklahoma. I was impressed with both the flexibility of the program and the wide range of opportunities available to both organizations and individuals. Volunteers can get involved in such things as patrolling wilderness areas, maintaining trails, inventorying archeological resources, land surveys, running wild rivers, campground hosts, management of off-road vehicle use, mineral surveys, trespass investigations, improvement of wildlife habitat, adoption of wild horses and burros, and much more. Volunteer programs are very flexible. You don't have to submit complicated applications or take difficult written tests. You can work full time, part time, or on a project basis. You won't need a medical examination unless you will be involved in strenuous physical work. You can receive training in special job skills, equipment operations, safety, and first aid. On some assignments housing and transportation are provided.

Volunteer agreements are negotiable between BLM and the individual volunteer or volunteer organization. They describe the job to be done, the

injured on volunteer assignment and they are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses. If they prefer, volunteers can write expenses and use of personal equipment off as deductions from their income taxes.

Volunteer programs in other agencies are essentially the same as in BLM. Most Federal offices have a volunteer coordinator who will be glad to answer questions about possible volunteer activities.

For more information contact your local Forest Service or BLM office.

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CONSERVATIONISTS ORGANIZE FOR BLM WILDERNESS

by Jim Norton, Phoenix

Which agency manages more wildlife habitat than any other in New Mexico? The Fish and Wildlife Service? No. The State Game and Fish Department? No. How about the National Park Service? Wrong again. Believe it or not, it's the BLM. Well, then which agency has more undiscovered cultural resources located on its lands? The U.S. Forest Service? No. It's the BLM again. And which agency has the most potential for significant additions to the national wilderness preservation system? You guessed it, the BLM.

Many agencies are better known than the Bureau of Land Management, but few can match the outstanding scenic, natural, and cultural resources found on its lands. From alpine peaks to desert lowlands, the BLM manages a diversity of natural environments that host an equally diverse array of plant and animal species. The Gila Lower Box, for example, is a riparian ecosystem that provides habitat for eight state-endangered species of wildlife. The Big Hatchet Mountains, an area with a class A scenic quality rating, hosts an important population of rare desert bighorn sheep. And Ojito Wilderness Study Area

contains well over 500 cultural resource sites that may someday help scientists to unlock the mysteries of early human civilizations. These are but a few examples of the varied and many times undiscovered wildland treasures on the BLM lands in New Mexico.

Unlike in our National Parks and Wildlife refuges, natural treasures found on BLM lands are largely unprotected. Wilderness Study Area (WSA) classification protects some important areas, but WSA designation only provides temporary protection, and many important areas were excluded from WSA status entirely. Fortunately, a groundswell of public interest and support for these lands is beginning to develop, and conservationists are becoming more active in the process of identifying the most outstanding resources and working with the Bureau and Congress to ensure adequate protection.

Around the first of May of this year, the BLM plans to release its draft recommendations as to which BLM lands in New Mexico should be protected as Wilderness and which should be released to development. It appears that these

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