

The Rio Grande SIERRA



THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

March/April 1985

1985 NM LEGISLATURE:

ENVIRONMENT SCORES FEW VICTORIES

by Ned Sudborough

The events in the Senate that closed the first session of the 37th New Mexico Legislature had several significances for us. They signaled the end of conscienceless block voting by a Conservative Coalition that had halted virtually every pro-environment bill introduced. They stopped Senator Jack Morgan's coal railroad bill (SB 243), the most recent attempt by coal interests to subsidize San Juan Basin coal production with public monies. They prepared the House for a determined action against SB 287, a bill that would have added representatives from each of the three most water-polluting industries in the state to the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission.

Of fifty-four (pro- and anti-) environmental bills introduced, only ten passed. Six were benign. Representative Linn Tytler's "Clean Indoor Air Act" (HB 48) calls for half of the area of public meeting places to be free of smoking beginning January 1, 1986. Representative Kiki Saavedra's "Litter Control and Beautification

Act" (HB 198) would add 30 cents to vehicle registration fees to pay for a "Keep New Mexico Beautiful" program of education, litter bags, clean-up enforcement, and summer youth employment to aid in litter control projects. This is widely regarded as an ineffective substitute for the bottle bills which were defeated. Representative Mary Thompson's "Water and Water Rights Act" (HB 399) requires a forty-year planning period in municipal applications for more water rights.

New Mexico's state heritage protection program for endangered plant species received some teeth with Representative Vernon Kerr's HB 347, providing enforceable protection for the endangered plant species on state lands. HB 191, sponsored by Representative Ralph Hartman, funds groundwater studies in the Hueco and Mesilla bolsons serving Alamogordo and Las Cruces. SB 128 and 129 by Representative Don Silva relate to the automobile emissions inspection and maintenance program for Albuquerque, setting up funding mechanisms and a

ballot initiative for citizen approval.

A "Rangeland Protection Act" (SB 24), sponsored by Senator Timothy Jennings and authorizing the use of mechanical and chemical means to manipulate vegetation on rangeland, was altered to emphasize "an integrated management approach" and passed the legislature. Another bill by Representative Dan Berry (HB 529) extends from thirty to sixty the number of days between notice and hearing on regulations before the Environmental Improvement Board, thereby encouraging appeals of rulemaking by the EIB. Representative Kelly Mora's HB 569 alters the internal structure of the Energy and Minerals Department; the present Energy Conservation Management Division is to be absorbed into a Resource Development and Management Division with certain other changes.

HB 365, giving statutory independence to the Environmental Improvement Division and cabinet status to its secretary, passed the House Energy and Natural Resources

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WILDERNESS BANDIT IN THE BADLANDS

New evidence developed by the Bureau of Land Management suggests that fossil log thefts recently discovered in the Bisti Wilderness and the Fossil Forest may not have occurred recently. Photographs taken several years ago of the specific locations in question reportedly show that the fossils have been missing for some time. BLM police are still investigating the incidents.

More recently, at least one incident of illegal trespass has occurred in the Bisti Wilderness. Sometime in mid-March, a vehicle was driven past the sign prohibiting vehicular access, into the wilderness area, and up to the fence strung across Gateway Wash. Due to the wet conditions at the time, deep tire tracks were left behind. Operators at PNM's Gateway mine (on state land in the heart of the federal wilderness area) reportedly saw the incident and reported that the perpetrator was driving a four-wheel drive vehicle bearing Colorado license plates. The BLM is investigating the incident. The violator, if caught, could be fined \$1000 and/or sentenced to 12 months in jail.

To its credit, the Farmington Resource Office of the BLM, headed by

see bandits, page 9

REORGANIZED BLM TO BE REORGANIZED AGAIN

by Bob Wilbur

The much maligned U.S. Bureau of Land Management has endured more conflict and change in recent years than most bureaucracies experience in a lifetime. Interests that covet public lands for everything from wilderness solitude to open pit coal mines have hauled BLM back and forth between the Courts, Congress, and the Reagan administration. This has left BLM shook up, reorganized, politicized, multi-oriented, and merged with the Minerals Management Service, an agency with a different background and mission from BLM. And now, the second Reagan administration has touched off another controversy with its proposal to swap millions of acres, thousands of people, and scores of offices between BLM and the U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service, secure in its history and sure of its mission, is probably strong enough to handle such a massive change, but what about BLM? Can an agency still reeling under the impact of so many recent changes survive another reorganization? A rhetorical question, but to get a feel for how well BLM is prepared, the author recently spent some time visiting with State Director Bill Luscher and various members of his staff at their

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CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE 99th CONGRESS

by Senator Jeff Bingaman

The 99th Congress will consider many important issues this year that affect all New Mexicans. I am fortunate to have been named to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee—a committee charged with shaping all major energy and natural resources policy. Its jurisdiction embraces energy policy, energy research and development, public lands and minerals policy and management, national parks, recreation areas, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, and mining issues. The Committee exercises wide-variety oversight of key federal agencies—among them the Department of Interior, the Department of Energy, and the Forest Service.

Among the critical issues that will be coming before the Committee in the 99th Congress are consideration of federal coal leasing and oil and gas leasing on-shore and in the intercontinental shelf. Also on the agenda are coal surface mining and reclamation issues. Federal rangeland and management issues are also expected to surface, together with national park, refuge, and public land user fees, energy emergency preparedness, and natural gas policy.

One of the most critical legislative

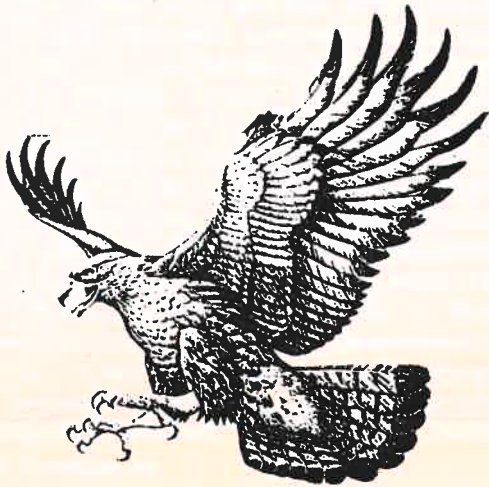
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congress (from page 1)

initiatives to be considered by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee is the proposed land exchange between the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. This proposal has important consequences for public lands management in New Mexico and throughout the West. I think any such proposal must receive as much public participation as possible. In an effort to invite involvement by interested individuals and groups, I asked both the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to conduct public hearings on the land exchange. The agencies have set up the schedule of hearings shown below.

I strongly encourage all interested parties to attend these briefings and make your feelings known. I look forward to reviewing your ideas. I think it is very important for all citizens who care about the management of our public lands to participate in these briefings.

Please contact Mitchell Foushee at 202/224-5521 for further information.



**DATES AND LOCATIONS OF
BLM/FOREST SERVICE
LAND EXCHANGE BRIEFINGS**

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
Santa Fe Sierra Club group meeting 1709 Paseo de Peralta	4/9/85	7:00 PM
Grants Community College Auditorium	4/9/85	7:00 PM
Carlsbad Public Library	4/11/85	7:00 PM
Clayton First National Bank	4/16/85	7:00 PM
Taos Holiday Inn	4/16/85	7:00 PM
Socorro Western Grazing Permittees Association		to be announced
Roswell Roswell Lions Club		to be announced
Albuquerque Albuquerque Advisory Council BLM District Office		to be announced
Las Cruces Las Cruces Advisory Council BLM District Office	4/23/85	9:30 AM
Roswell Roswell Grazing Advisory Board BLM District Office	4/24/85	9:30 AM
East Carson Grazing Advisory Council		to be announced



Tent Rocks, Jemez Mountains

Photo by Rhoda Riley

year's Commission meeting. They argued that there were "too many" mountain lions and that the lions were "killing too many deer and other wildlife." One outfitter said that every dead lion will save 100 deer a year. These mistatements are contradicted by Game Department studies that show that mountain lions account for less than 3% of deer mortality annually; poachers kill more deer than lions do. And the only statistic there is shows that the mountain lion population statewide is declining. Nevertheless, most of the Commissioners ignored the facts. Dr. Gutierrez made the motion to extend the season because, he later told me, he is convinced that there are too many lions and too few deer in the Carlsbad area. Mr. Alcon seconded the motion, and Mrs. DiGregorio cast the deciding vote. Chairman Koch and Dr. Arvas voted against the motion.

The Commissioners should hear from us. But we should also be hard on ourselves, for we did not show up at the meeting in sufficient numbers to counteract the outfitters and the few ranchers present. In fact, there were very few lion supporters in the hall (and the only ones who were present were Sierra Club members). Perceiving no crisis, we did not mobilize our efforts. It is to be hoped that we've learned from this experience that the lion will not be protected without tremendous public pressure, applied continuously, and that each one of us is individually responsible for applying that pressure. We should remember that the horrendous 11-month season and 2-lion bag limit which we defeated last year came into being as a steady, gradual erosion of the regulations protecting the lion. With last month's decision, that process of erosion has begun again. Moreover, this four month season is more serious than it might seem, since typically 70% of the lions killed are shot during those four months.

Please begin the next round of this battle by writing to the individual commissioners, expressing your opinion of their vote. If you have any ideas on future strategy, please let the Wildlife Committee know.

GAME COMMISSIONER ADDRESSES:

Mr. James Koch, Chairman, P.O. Box 1926, Santa Fe, NM 87501
 Mrs. Christine DiGregorio, 1103 Susan St., Gallup, NM 87301
 Dr. A.H. Gutierrez, 2402 W. Pierce, 2A, Carlsbad, NM 88220
 Dr. Thomas Arvas, 7905 Spain Rd. N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87111
 Mr. Jake Alcon, Alcon's Harley-Davidson, 5210 San Mateo N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109

1412.

MEXICAN WOLF: On March 30, the Chapter Executive Committee voted unanimously to support the recovery of the Mexican wolf, or lobo, and the efforts of the Wildlife Committee to educate the public on the wolf and to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on plans for recovery. The Wildlife Committee is forming a wolf support group of individuals willing to work on this issue. For further information, call Gill Woodall: (505) 266-8932 (home); (505) 277-6450.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT REAUTHORIZATION: Extinction of species, most of it caused by humans, is now occurring at a faster rate than ever before. Many believe that by the end of the decade, the earth will be losing more species each week than disappeared over the previous three centuries.

In 1973, Congress passed the landmark Endangered Species Act (ESA), which established a legal process to help prevent plant and animal extinction and encourage the recovery of threatened species. This year the ESA is up for renewal. Conservationists are urging the adoption of several strengthening amendments and are opposing anticipated attacks on the law's provisions. Senator Pete Domenici is a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee which will review the Act in mid-May. Please write to him now and urge him to support the following strengthening amendments:

1. Increased funding for species listing, recovery plans, and matching funds for state endangered species programs.

2. Strengthened plant-taking prohibitions. Currently the ESA forbids only the collection of listed plants on federal land; vandals can destroy, cut, or uproot endangered plants on federal land and take plants from private lands without violating the ESA. We must increase protection.

3. Establishing protection for candidate species. Over 1000 species are known to be declining to extinction, but because of budgetary limitations they will not be considered for listing as endangered for years. The ESA should grant these species the same protection as "proposed" species, requiring that federal agencies must confer with the Secretary of the Interior or Commerce (for marine species) before proceeding with any project which is likely to place them in jeopardy of extinction.

Senator Domenici should also be urged to oppose the following weakening amendments that threaten the

the Minnesota gray wolf and the grizzly. This would subvert a recent court victory by the Sierra Club that established that a threatened species cannot be hunted unless its population is clearly excessive and thereby exerts pressures on its ecosystem that cannot be otherwise relieved.

Please write or call Senator Domenici today: The Honorable Pete V. Domenici, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510, (202) 224-3121. If you want to receive alerts and mailings on the Endangered Species Act, write: ESARB, P.O. Box 27056, Washington, DC 20038.

WILDLIFE COMMITTEE: The Rio Grande Chapter's Wildlife Committee, chaired by Carol Cochran, meets at the Albuquerque Group office on the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 PM; everyone is welcome. If you would like to receive the wildlife committee newsletter and local alerts, please contact Carol (address above).



THE SIERRAN READER NATIONAL PARKS OF NORTHWEST MEXICO

Reviewed by Richard D. Fisher

A new book entitled National Parks of Northwestern Mexico has come to our attention at the Albuquerque office. This 28-page slick paper pamphlet is published in Tucson, Arizona by Sunracer Publishing Company, P.O. Box 40092, Tucson, Arizona, 85717. The full-color photography and maps are excellent and the information on the park areas is very comprehensive.

The Mexican National Parks (as well as natural areas surrounding most parks) covered in this book include Casas Grandes Ruins, Basaseachic Falls, Barranca del Cobre, Pinacate, Constitution of 1857, San Pedro Martir and Guardian Angel National Park and Natural Area. These parks are located in Chihuahua, Sonora, Baja Norte and one, Scamons Lagoon, which is just over the border into Baja Sur.

If we can hear from those of you who are interested in purchasing one of these books in the next few weeks, we will order a supply. We will need at least ten to make the order and they should cost around \$6.00 each. Call or write the Albuquerque Office, 207 San Pedro N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87108, (505) 265-5506.



THE CHAIR'S COLUMN

by Jack Kenney

THANKS to all for the honor of serving you as chair in 1985. We will not let you down if you input to me, to the Executive Committee, and your Group Chairs your desires, priorities, and concerns! In a volunteer organization we need grassroots views and a constant flow of comments upward to ensure that what is important to all of us is perceived as important to the Club.

In March of 1985 it is apparent that in New Mexico and West Texas we have three major things happening. I hope that you will get involved with one or more of them.

1. FOLLOW-UP from the WILDERNESS WORKSHOP SEMINARS in El Paso, Albuquerque and Taos.

2. Preparation for comments on the BLM Draft Environmental Impact Statement (due for release on May 1) on Bureau recommendations for wilderness versus development.

3. Forest Plan Inputs:

Carson N.F. Comments due May 1

Gila N.F. Plan expected o/a April 12

Lincoln N.F. Plan expected o/a June 7

Cibola N.F. Final EIS due this summer

Santa Fe N.F. FEIS due late spring

You/we can make a difference.

Don't forget our chapter fund appeal, which should have arrived in the mail by now. The Chapter uses the funds raised during this once-a-year drive primarily for conservation issues. One change this year: we won't be sending out thank-you letters to contributors. We'll redirect the volunteer time and expenses to more issue-related tasks.

EDITOR'S NOTE BLM/USFS LAND SWAP

In view of the secretive and antienvironmental *modus operandi* of the Reagan Administration, our first response to news of the proposed 35 million acre BLM/Forest Service land swap was, "What's the real purpose behind this?" The announcement on January 30 of this year caught nearly everyone by surprise, including Congress, the public, and many employees of both agencies. No public input had been obtained and no discussion of the issues occurred.

According to Administration figures, the costs of the land interchange (surely underestimated, especially in terms of lost resource protections) are billed at up to \$45 million. The benefits (undoubtedly inflated) are estimated at \$35 million annually. Yet the actual magnitude of these alleged savings is nowhere compared to total agency budgets or to the annual public losses of revenue from deficit timber sales and below-market grazing fees. The Reagan Administration and OMB have shown themselves inclined to "economize" only when it means reducing long-term resource management and public investments in stewardship in favor of short-term commodity production and resource giveaways.

The assurance of NM State BLM Director Bill Luscher that adequate on-the-ground resource management will not be impaired seems fatuous to us,

especially when both the BLM and the FS lack adequate staff and budget at present to cope with their responsibilities and both agencies are compelled to rely more and more on citizen volunteer programs to help manage public resources. Where duplicate management functions now exist, this serves as a check on the worst tendencies of either agency and has in effect increased total staff in the field. Moreover, while we hold no brief for the Forest Service's abdication of multiple use principles in its massive road-building and timber sales plans, we are even more unconvinced that the BLM is equipped to do a better job in such areas as Mount Taylor and Zuni Mountains.

The handling by the BLM of Perma Resources's application for a coal lease in the San Juan National Forest in Southern Colorado serves as a warning example and a sorry precedent for future BLM management of our forests. In this instance, the FS in its Forest Plan had designated as an archeological protection site the Chimney Rock ruins, a large Chacoan outlier community. In 1984 Perma applied to BLM for an "emergency lease" on the tract; BLM is charged with managing leasable minerals in the National Forests as well as on public lands. Only the refusal by the Forest Service to abrogate its own management plan prevented the BLM from proceeding to issue a lease to stripmine part of the site. Had BLM had complete control of surface and subsurface estates, a lease would have been issued and the matter settled for the worst. Clearly, the BLM does not have a good record in managing surface resource values.

Linda Wade with the Sierra Club in California expressed the problem well: "As personnel from one agency attempt to function under the rules of the other, an even greater muddle of mismanagement than now exists will surely ensue. How many more illegal developments on 'protected' land will slip through the cracks while everyone is distracted with reorganization? How much less well-equipped to monitor conflicting land uses will staff be while learning new rules, new planning procedures and new territory and resources?"

"This cart-before-the-horse approach creates an environment where the potential for resource abuse far exceeds any potential for improved management. The BLM/FS Interchange Program should be stopped dead in its tracks, and the agencies forced to go back and develop their plans in the full light of day."

Despite the fact that no legislation legitimizing the land swap has been introduced into Congress, we encourage readers to write to the New Mexico Congressional Delegation and to their local newspapers to alert the public to the hazards of this scheme. As Representative Morris Udall, Chairman of the House Interior Committee stated, "Something as sweeping as this plan is likely to shortchange revenue to local government, shrink the economic base, disrupt the fabric of western communities, and have dangerous implications for good land management." Write today.

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Thanks to the Albuquerque Group for helping to mail the Sierran.

The Rio Grande Sierran is provided at no charge to Sierra Club members as a membership service. Otherwise, subscriptions to the Sierran may be had by contacting Jane Colburn, Chapter Membership Chair (see directory).

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OUR EDITORIAL POLICY:

Opinions expressed in the Rio Grande Sierran are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the Sierra Club or the Rio Grande Chapter unless so stated. Other organizations may use non-copyrighted materials appearing in the Rio Grande Sierran as long as acknowledgement is made. We welcome contributions of prose, poetry, photographs, drawings, and other submissions as well as announcements and advertising. Quotes for advertising available on request. We request that all submissions be signed and accompanied by a telephone number and address at which the author may be contacted.

HELP WANTED:

We need help getting this newsletter out! We specifically need volunteers interested in typing articles into a word processor, helping with editing and electronic layout, and organizing mailing parties. We would be happy to offer training to anyone who is willing to help! Please contact the editors.



**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:
May 15th**

reservations for the Group Campground at the park. Limited space available for this trip to a world class archeological complex. Call Guy for details, (505) 861-3194.

Denazin Wilderness

April 26th-28th. Dave Glowka and Jonathan Teague will lead a moderate to strenuous weekend backpack through this recently-designated badland wilderness. Dry camp; bring ample water! Car camp Friday night at the trailhead, return Sunday afternoon. Space limited; call Dave at (505) 261-1488 for details.



Stallion WSA

April 27th. Steve Scheri will lead a trip to study this proposed BLM wilderness area. Known for its wild horses, the area consists of nice east-side escarpments and highlands/grasslands. Meet at 9:00 AM at the Socorro Plaza: one block west of California (Business Route 85) at Panzares (signal light). Access is by dirt road passable to passenger cars. Bring water and lunch, of course!

ORGAN MOUNTAINS

April 28th, to Rabbit Ear Plateau. Southwest New Mexico Group. Sandy will lead a strenuous hike through boulder field and brush. From the top there is a good view of "Rabbit Ears". Wild flowers should be blooming. Meet at Brannigan Library, Las Cruces - 8:00 AM. Suggested donation to drivers: 50 cents. Call (505) 523-5179 or 646-4118 for information.

ADEN CRATER

May 4th. Southwest New Mexico Group. Phil Smith will lead an easy to moderate hike to the real Aden Crater. This is a new trip for us and should be interesting. Meet in Las Cruces at New Mexico State University North Ag Parking Lot (corner of University and Espina) at 8:00 AM. Suggested donation to drivers: \$2.00. Call (505) 522-4474 for information.



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 PO Box 2862 Santa Fe NM 87504
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 ✓ **TULAROSA BASIN**....Hal Reynolds. (See above)

Clip and Save this Page!

**FOREST PLANNING
IN FINAL STAGES
Last Chance to
Comment for a Decade**
by Jack Kenney

This year--1985--is THE year of decision for the five National Forests within the Chapter Boundaries. The Forest Plan required under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) will be issued in draft (or final) form, commented upon, finalized (or possibly appealed) and become THE management guidelines for the U.S. Forest Service until the next review, now scheduled more than a decade away, in 1995-2000!

The Sierra Club game plan is to involve you--each of you--in inputs to the Forest Service. Get a copy of the Plan/DEIS Map supplement from your District Ranger! Get on his/her distribution list so you receive the mailings on the plans. Study the Plan. Review it with friends. And then comment on it, especially on areas of particular expertise that you may have. Comment on areas of your experience. Comment on your views of the future of New Mexico. But PLEASE COMMENT! Submit individual comments, but share your comments with your Group/Chapter. Phone your coordinator, and send a photocopy of your comments to your Group/Chapter. With the assistance of each of you we will prepare and submit formal Group and Chapter comments on each forest plan.

A summary of the status of the forest plans for our Chapter area is given below. The Plan Comment Coordinators are listed also. Our Chapter Coordinator is Hal Reynolds, 1817 College Avenue, Alamogordo, NM 88310, (505) 437-0961.

*** SANTA FE NATIONAL FOREST: (1,587,550 National Forest System Land acres). Final Plan was released by the USFS, appealed, and then withdrawn. Reissue expected this spring. Coordination: Santa Fe Group (Norma McCallan).

*** CIBOLA NATIONAL FOREST: (1,634,290 System acres). Draft plan and EIS issued; comment deadline was December 10, 1984. Final due this summer. Coordination: Albuquerque Group (Roger Nagel).

*** CARSON NATIONAL FOREST: (1,391,692 System acres). Draft plan issued; comment deadline May 1. Coordination: Santa Fe Group (Jack Kenney).

*** GILA NATIONAL FOREST: (2,704,981 System acres). Draft plan expected on or about April 12, with comments probably due about mid-July. Coordination: El Paso Group (Jim Owen) with the Southwestern (Las Cruces) Group and all area individuals to input as much as possible.

*** LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST: (1,102,979 System acres). Draft plan expected on or about June 7, with comments due about mid-September.

**DEDICATION SET FOR
BISTI BADLANDS**

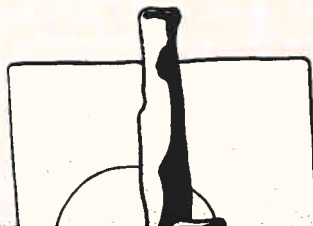
by Dave Glowka

The Bisti Wilderness will be dedicated in formal ceremonies sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management on Saturday, May 4, 1985. The ceremonies, to be held on the western boundary of the wilderness area, will begin at 11 am and feature several speakers from state and federal agencies and local organizations. New Mexico's congressional delegation was invited, but it was not certain at press time how many would attend.

The ceremony is scheduled to last about an hour. The BLM is hoping to find a sponsor to supply lunch and has scheduled guided hikes into the wilderness in the afternoon. This is a good opportunity for conservationists to celebrate the permanent protection of some of the most unique badlands in the Southwest. Early May is the best time of the year to visit the Bisti--the weather is generally perfect, and the desert vegetation is in full bloom. This event should be an exciting way for newcomers to meet the Bisti. For those scores of volunteers who have worked hard over the years to save the Bisti, it will serve as a milestone in the struggle for adequate environmental protection for the San Juan Basin and a reminder that the job is not yet done.

The site for the ceremony is 0.6 mile south of the Gateway mine entrance (landmark courtesy of PNM). The site offers a wonderful view of the Bisti wilderness, as well as a not-so-wonderful of the Gateway mine. Such a view is actually fitting for this ceremony, as it provides a clear contrast between the development vs. preservation issues that so occupy the basin today. To reach the site from Farmington, take NM 371 south for approximately 30 miles and watch for the signs posted at the turn-off. From Albuquerque, take I-40 west to Thoreau, turn north on NM 57, continue north on NM 371 when NM 57 turns east, and watch for the turn-off signs approximately 40 miles north of Crownpoint.

Due to the uncertainty of a catered lunch, you should be prepared to bring your own unless you hear more current information. The BLM State Office in Santa Fe can provide such information (call Lee Keesling at 505/988-6316). You can also contact Dave Glowka, Sierra Club, at 505/281-1488. We urge you to come to the dedication and show your continued support for the San Juan Basin.



**SIERRAN BULLETIN
BOARD**

BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS OUT FOR REVIEW

The Bureau of Land Management is required under the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to prepare land use plans for all areas on which it has surface management responsibility; these Resource Management Plans (RMPs) are supposed to embody the principles of multiple use and sustained yield in utilizing commodity resources such as minerals and grazing and non-commodity resources such as wildlife habitat and watershed. Much BLM land is still being administered under outdated Management Framework Plans, including the Chaco-San Juan region of New Mexico.

In March BLM released RMPs for the Rio Puerco Resource Area northwest of Albuquerque and the White Sands Resource Area in the south central part of New Mexico. These plans lay the framework for management of all federally-owned renewable and non-renewable resources within these areas; all agency actions on these lands will be guided by the plans until the next plan review a decade or more away. The White Sands Resource Area encompasses about 7,000,000 acres, and the Rio Puerco some 8,000,000 acres of land. If you are concerned about the stewardship of our public lands and minerals, you may obtain copies of these plans and the associated environmental impact statements from: Larry Nunez, Area Manager, White Sands Resource Area, 1800 Marquess Street, P.O. Box 1420, Las Cruces, NM 88004, (505) 525-8228; Merrick Hanks, Area Manager, Rio Puerco Resource Area, 3550 Pan American Freeway N.E., P.O. Box 6770, Albuquerque, NM 87197, (505) 766-3114.

Hearings on these plans are scheduled as follows:

Rio Puerco -- May 29, 1985, 7:00 PM at the Municipal Complex, Cuba, NM; May 30, 7:00 PM, at the Albuquerque Convention Center; June 3, 7:00 PM at the Catholic Center in Estancia, NM; June 4, 7:00 PM at the Holiday Inn in Grants, NM. Comments are due by July 1.

White Sands -- April 16, 1985, 10:00 AM and 1:30 PM, at the Media Center of the School for the Visually Handicapped, 1900 North White Sands Blvd, Alamogordo, NM; April 17, 10:00 AM and 1:30 PM at the Convention Center in Truth or Consequences, NM. Comments due by May 29.

The Sierran encourages knowledgeable people to share their views on these plans with other readers; please submit articles on these plans to the editors as soon as possible so that others may comment on the plans.

JACKPILE-PAGUATE URANIUM MINE RECLAMATION

Management and the Bureau of Indian Affairs are now considering different plans for reclamation, ranging from simple abandonment of the site to extensive backfilling and regrading. Public hearings are scheduled for April 23-24 at the Albuquerque Convention Center at 7:00 PM and on April 24 at the Community Hall in the Village of Laguna, also at 7:00 PM. Copies of the Draft EIS may be obtained from Mike Pool, BLM Rio Puerco Resource Area, 3550 Pan American Freeway N.E., P.O. Box 6770, Albuquerque, NM 87197; (505) 766-3114. Comments on the various proposals are due by June 6, 1985. For additional information, contact Paul Robinson, Southwest Research and Information Center, (505) 262-2862.

FOREST PLANNING TEAM NEEDED

The Rio Grande Chapter has a big job to do in the near future: the review and response to the new Forest Plans which are coming out soon. The Carson NF plan is out now, the Lincoln NF plan is due in April, and the Gila NF plan is due in June, with a revised Santa Fe NF plan in the near future. To do this job effectively, we need to pool all of the interest and expertise of the Chapter so that the individual groups can obtain assistance when they need it. The Tularosa Basin Group will review the Lincoln plan and the El Paso Group will tackle the Gila plan, but these groups will need help.

If you have interest and/or expertise in National Forest resource management, forest and rangeland economics, computer applications, or other areas applicable to these plans, please call or write to Hal Reynolds, Rio Grande Chapter Forest Planning Chair, 1817 College, Alamogordo, NM 88310, (505) 437-0961. You don't need to be an "expert" to work on these plans--everyone is needed. We need to get our team organized soon so that we will be ready to respond to the plans, so don't delay!

EL PASO MEMBERS PATROL WSAS from BLM Adviser

Ten volunteers from the El Paso Group of the Sierra Club and two individuals from Las Cruces participated in a formal BLM volunteer orientation program on February 2 at the Las Cruces District Office of the BLM. The volunteers will patrol Wilderness Study Areas in the Lordsburg Resource Area in the coming year to monitor

Resource development.

G. Theodore Davis, author of the article and president of the citizen group Save the Jemez, describes how the Forest Service's mandate of "multiple-use/sustained yield" has been degraded to "multiple abuse/declining yield". The article documents past episodes of destruction in the Jemez, including logging of popular public recreation sites and the bulldozing of prehistoric pueblo sites; and it explains the implications of the Forest Service's large-deficit timber harvesting schemes.

Davis also focuses on the successes of the citizen alliance among Indian Pueblos, archeologists and environmentalists, such as the forced withdrawal of a forest plan heavily biased towards timber and the blocking of industrial geothermal energy development in the heart of the mountains.

For further information, contact Ted Davis, Save the Jemez, P.O. Box 4067, Albuquerque, NM 87196, (505) 864-2100. The Workbook is published by Southwest Research and Information Center, Julie Jacoby, Editor, P.O. Box 4524, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106, (505) 262-1862.

RECOMMENDED PUBLICATIONS

HIGH COUNTRY NEWS - Styled by its publishers as "a paper for people who care about the west", this biweekly black-and-white illustrated compendium covers the gamut of environmental news from the Rocky Mountain states, from energy leasing to grizzly bears, from forest plans to nuclear dumps. With feature articles funded by the High Country Research Fund, HCN offers in depth feature reporting on the vital issues of the region by talented writers such as C.L. Rawlins, Marjane Ambler Ed and Betsy Marston. Subscriptions are \$18.00/year or \$32.00 for two years; write P.O. Box 1090, Paonia, Colorado, 81428, (303) 527-4898.

NORTHERN LIGHTS - If you are an expatriate from the Northern Rockies, this regionally oriented newsprint magazine will make you long for home. Edited by Dan Whipple and designed by Kathy Boyan, Northern Lights represents a strong current in the vital literary culture of the Rocky Mountain west. It is more than a literary magazine, however, focussing on crucial economic development and environmental issues confronting the

valleys has declined catastrophically over the last five decades, and with this decline has come the loss of the original pure strains of seeds for the well-adapted, drought-hardy traditional crops of the region, to be replaced by uniform, commercially patented hybrids. The Talavaya Center seeks to find these ancient strains of seed and preserve and distribute them through a seed search program, seed bank and conservancy gardens, and educational and outreach programs. A \$15.00 membership fee provides access to the seed bank and a quarterly newsletter. Volunteers to participate in this program are needed. For more information, contact John Kinney, Director, P.O. Box 9289, Santa Fe, NM 87504 or 324 McKenzie Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501; (505) 984-0373.

[Note: Talavaya is a Hopi word for that sacred time just before sunrise, when the farmers should be in their fields communicating with Nature.]

EVENTS

ALL SPECIES DAY (DIA DE TODAS LAS CREATURAS), Saturday, April 27th, beginning at 11:00 on the Plaza in Santa Fe. This has become an annual event in Santa Fe and elsewhere. Come join the festivities and represent the Earth for future generations! Parade at 12:00, and "Creature Congress" with dancing, booths, refreshments from 1:00 to 4:00 at De Vargas Park by the Guadalupe Sanctuary. Contact Joan Price in Santa Fe for details.

GROUP MEETINGS

Abuquerque Group
Third Monday of the month, at 7:30 pm in Bratton Hall, UNM Law School Library.

Southwest New Mexico Group
First Tuesday of the month, at 7:30 pm in Branigan Hall, Room B, NMSU.

El Paso Group
Last Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm at St. Paul's Methodist Church, 7000 Edgemont, El Paso.

legislature (from page 1)

Committee by a 7-3 vote. This was a personal victory for EID's director, Denise Fort, who has earned the respect of many legislators. However, Representative Tytler, Chairman of the House Appropriations and Finance Committee, allowed a bare five minutes to present the bill before tabling it, where it languished until the close of the session. Most representatives that I talked to felt that an independent EID is in the future. Next year's EID budget came through at \$10.6 million, lower than this past years budget.

On the last Saturday morning of the legislature, the House was sensitive to the filibuster in the Senate. The House convened late because of caucuses, spent the first hour entertaining itself, did not begin work until 10:15 AM, and voted on only the first ten items on its fifty-six item calendar before adjournment. SB 55, a measure requesting \$350,000 for a study of hazardous waste transfer facilities among other provisions, was an unfortunate item number 39 on the agenda. SB 480, which would have developed a revolving fund to protect Christmas trees from unauthorized commercial mass cutting, was also left hanging as item 35.

If the House had not delayed that morning, it would have reached item 18, SB 287 mentioned above, the bill to stack the Water Quality Control Commission. This bill had slipped easily through committees because by concept it belonged to the Conservative Coalition and by politics it belonged to the loyalist democrats; it ran under the signaling single signature of Santa Fe's Eddie Lopez. The only House committee vote cast against the bill was by Las Cruces' Mary Thompson.

SB 287 fared equally well in the Senate, without a single negative committee vote. Testimony by Gary Sanders of NMVA against the bill was rudely received, and on the Senate floor only Gonzales, Rutherford, and Hatchman opposed it.

In anticipation of HB 287 reaching the floor of the House, conservation-minded legislators were busy lobbying other representatives for commitments to vote against it. The fight against SB 287 had begun the previous week with the distribution to legislators of letters and editorials opposing the bill, under the letterhead of the League of Women Voters [editor's note: thanks to Ned Sudborough and Patty Adam. Thursday night the House Appropriations and Finance Committee unanimously passed the bill to the floor, without a word of testimony in opposition.

Representative Max Coll was crucial in lining up a committed group of legislators, including Bill Camp, Pauline Eisendstadt, Dick Finzer, and Mary Thompson, to oppose SB 287 on the House floor. Slated for discussion on Friday evening, the bill was deferred as a result of early adjournment that evening. On the morning of the final day, copies of a New Mexican editorial against the bill were again circulated among legislators. As the opponents rolled up their sleeves to fight the

bill, the clock ran out. Although throughout the session anti-environmental bills fared better than pro-environmental bills under the reigning Conservative Coalition, in the final hours conservationists sent a clear message that we would battle this ill-conceived legislation.

On other issues, while legislative committees agreed to extend the solar tax credit through a four-year phase-out, this extension was hung on the Senate floor calendar. As a result, this is the last year that the state will offer a solar tax credit.

Representative Mary Thompson should be complimented for introducing the "Independent Power Production Act" (HB 185) which would have enabled electrical energy produced by cogeneration or from photoelectric cells or wind generators to be sold back to electric utilities at the utilities' avoided costs of production.

Several environmentally destructive bills failed to make it past the committees. Representative Dan Berry introduced a bill that would have prohibited state clean air or water standards from being more stringent than federal standards; this bill was stalled by behind-the-scenes negotiations. Out-front confrontation before the House Appropriations and Finance Committee by Carol Cochran, Wildlife Chair for the Sierra Club, and by Jamie Koch, Chairmand of the NM Game and Fish Commission, nailed the "Wildlife Damage Act". This bill would have drained the Game and Fish Department of funds to pay for rancher claims of wildlife depredation.

Along with the bad bills, much pro-environmental legislation that had been proposed before the session began never saw the inside of either chamber, including the "Youth Conservation Act", the "Urban Pesticide Management Program", the "Instream Flow Bill", and the "Non-Coal Mine Reclamation Act".

The following bills were aborted in various committees: The New Mexico Lands Endowment Act (SB 293), The Model Forest Proposal (HB 124), The Grasshopper Control Program (HB 70), The Economic Diversification Act (SB 85), The Asbestos Contamination Study (HB 334), The Utility Diversification Act (SB 301), The Solid Waste Management Proposal (SB 336, HB 543), The Ambrosia Lake Mill Tailings Act (SB 166, HB 46), The Hazardous Waste Emergency Clean-up Bill (HB 19) and all the Bottle Bills (HB 122, HB 193, and SB 106).

Over the entrance to this graveyard of legislation is inscribed "None shall pass that cost a cent." This legislature would not, could not meet the great and growing problems of pollution and environmental protection. But these problems remain, we in the conservation community remain, and the legislature will meet again. And our most effective efforts are in the political campaigns.



THE CONSERVATIONISTS' TEAM

Early in the legislative session environmental activists began meeting at noon on Fridays in the capitol lunchroom. Included were Katherine Adam, John Daniels, Kay Grotbeck, Edith Pierpont, Ned Sudborough, and other essential people. On two occasions June and Paxton Price and Steve Marlatt from Las Cruces participated, and the team eventually expanded to twelve people. As the strategy and teamwork developed, the meetings moved to a private conference room across the street from the capitol that the League of Women Voters made available. Many thanks are owing the the League, and especially to Katherine Adam and Edith Pierpont, for making available their facilities and working with conservationists as the occasion required.

[Editors' note: Ned Sudborough is the Chapter Legislative Chair.]

CLUB LAUNCHES RECRUITMENT/ INCENTIVE PROGRAM

"F.R.I.P." is going to be the up-and-coming buzzword for the Sierra Club and an important one for the individual Groups within the Chapter.

It stands for "Field Recruitment Incentive Program", and it is set up to benefit the local Groups of the Sierra Club while economizing on membership recruitment costs. It costs the Sierra Club about \$15.00 dollars for each new member recruited through programs such as direct mail, magazine advertising, etc. However, field-recruited members, the ones that we sign up on a one-to-one basis, cost the Club only about \$4.00 for membership processing, and the retention rate is much higher.

So, as an incentive for us to recruit more members out here in the field, the Club will refund \$10.00 to a Group or Chapter for each new member that it signs up, over a 2% threshold. This is in addition to the normal 18% dues subvention that the Groups and Chapters receive. For example, the Rio Grande Chapter has some 3500 members; for each new member over the first 70 that the Chapter recruits, its treasury will receive an extra ten dollars. For this system to work, the proper three digit numerical code must be included on each blank membership form that you distribute, so that your Group can be credited for the new membership. Membership forms for the use of each Group with its unique three-digit code are being prepared, but for the time being, the following set of codes should be used; the question of assigning members in outlying regions to Groups is now under study.

- Rio Grande Chapter: W 413
- Albuquerque Group: W 414
- El Paso Group: W 415
- Santa Fe Group: W 416
- Southwest NM Group: W 417
- Tularosa Basin Group: W 418

bandits (from page 1)

Pat Millenbach, has taken seriously its responsibility for protecting the Bisti from vandals and thieves. The BLM has established a volunteer patrol unit to help keep a watchful eye over the treasures of the Badlands. The unit currently consists of approximately 15 active volunteers from the Farmington area that have been trained in the use of radio equipment and licensed to operate government vehicles. The volunteers rotate patrol duty in the Bisti area with the objective of sighting and reporting anyone trying to steal or vandalize the natural wonders of the Bisti or to drive motor vehicles into the protected areas.

More volunteers are needed in order to improve coverage of the patrol. If you would like to help, please contact Marcia Petta at the Farmington Resource Office, 505/325-3581.

**workshops (from back page)**

Bob Langsenkamp (Santa Fe)
(505) 473-3136
Jan Cummings (Albuquerque)
(505) 897-0858
Carl Popp (Socorro)
(505) 835-0263
Steve Parlatt (Las Cruces)
(505) 522-3604
George Grossman (Santa Fe)
(505) 982-1024
Corry McDonald (Albuquerque)
(505) 265-2842

Sponsoring organizations included the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, the BLM Wilderness Coalition and the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee (NMWSC). The series of statewide BLM Wilderness Study Workshops will conclude with a workshop in Taos at the Harwood Library the weekend of April 13. See your group newsletter and the outings section of the *Sierran* for scheduled visits to BLM WSAs.

For additional information, contact Jim Stewart, chairman of the NMWSC, at (505) 831-5911 or (505) 277-5237. Contact John Josephs at the New Mexico State BLM office in Santa Fe or your local BLM office (listed in the telephone directory) for the wilderness inventory documents on your area. Now is the time to get out in the desert and explore these WSA's before the summer heat and the BLM's draft Wilderness EIS hit the state!

**VIGIL FOR PEACE AT NATIONAL BOARD MEETING**

A group of Sierra Club members in California are organizing a silent vigil at the Club Board of Directors and Council meetings in San Francisco next month. The purpose of the action is to urge the Board to include nuclear disarmament as one of its priorities.

The organizers point out that grass roots recommendations from chapters and groups across the country ranked nuclear arms as the eighth highest priority for the Club; yet the Board declined to adopt this issue as a priority at its December 1984 meeting. The primary concern of the majority of the Board is that such a commitment is unnecessary for an organization concerned exclusively with environmental issues and may, in fact, serve to divide the Club.

The vigil is scheduled for May 4 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Participants should meet in front of the Sierra Club office at 530 Bush St. for orientation. For more information, contact Nancy Erb, 6140 Aspinwall Rd., Oakland, CA 94611, (415)339-2578. Following is the text of a background statement about the purpose of the vigil.

"Why has the Sierra Club, one of the world's foremost environmental organizations, remained inactive in its concern about the nuclear arms race?"

"For over five years many Sierra Club members have urged the Club board to include nuclear disarmament as one of its priorities.

"Over the years, the Board has adopted several policies in this direction: supporting a comprehensive test ban (1972), favoring a bilateral and multilateral nuclear weapons freeze (1982), and opposing expenditure of public funds on destabilizing weapons (1983). In 1982, the board also established a national Committee on the Environmental Consequences of Warfare, and in 1983 endorsed the Nuclear Winter Conference which concluded that nuclear war is the ultimate environmental threat.

"However, the national Club has done little beyond make policy pronouncements. It has not raised its voice, it has done practically no lobbying or education, provided no support to grass roots efforts, and committed virtually no funds or staff (other than the small budget for the advisory committee's meetings) to address this fundamental environmental issue.

"In the summer of 1984, six Board members joined with many other Club members in asking the Board to make the prevention of nuclear war one of its top priorities. At a Board retreat the executive director of Physicians for Social Responsibility spoke with the Board, and nearly all expressed their feeling that the Club should get involved in this environmental and moral crisis of utmost urgency. The "grass roots" recommendations from chapters and groups across the country ranked nuclear arms as the eighth highest priority for the Club.

"Yet at its December 1984 meeting, the Board did not include nuclear arms

among its eight priorities for 1985-86. How can this non-involvement be explained or interpreted?"

"We are not asking that other issues be dropped, but only that we must make room for this . . . overriding crisis which, if it goes untended, will negate every other concern of the Sierra Club. In fact, the resource drain of the arms race already relegates vital environmental needs to token positions in society's agenda. Only by addressing this issue will the Club [ultimately succeed] in its other endeavors.

"Some members fear that such a commitment will hurt or divide the Sierra Club. But isn't the Club's silence a *de facto* acceptance of the arms race?"

"The momentum of the arms race is fueled by powerful attitudes ranging from apathy to revenge -- from noninvolvement to nationalism and fundamentalism. The crisis is pervasive and very frightening. When feelings of fear and hopelessness are strong it is understandable that we feel we can have no effect and thus become immobilized.

"However, through a renewed resolve we can reconsider our fear and transform it into commitment.

"As individuals and as members of an organization concerned with the health of life on our planet, we affirm our responsibility to overcome the considerable fears and obstacles, and to strive instead for a positive future, one in which humans live peacefully with all fellow inhabitants on earth.

"It is in this spirit that we are joining together in our vigil of silence. We hope our action will help the Club community, members and staff to reconsider our responsibilities to preserve the earth."

[signed] Nancy Erb, Lara Hilder, Margaret Koster, Danny Moses, Steve Kauh, Madge Strong.



John Muir's birthday is April 21

blm (from page 1)

multiple office locations in Santa Fe.

The New Mexico State Office of BLM is located in no less than five different buildings scattered from one end of Santa Fe to the other. It's almost as if the State Office was designed to reflect BLM's varied and sometimes conflicting responsibilities. I was told this situation, which greatly hampers internal coordination and communication, has existed for a decade. Luscher has tried to correct it ever since he came to Santa Fe in 1981, but government red tape and budget restrictions have stymied his efforts.

BLM manages about 13 million acres of public lands in New Mexico and about 30 million acres of Federal mineral estate. It has three District offices located in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Roswell and eight Resource Area offices located in Taos, Farmington, Albuquerque, Socorro, Las Cruces, Roswell, and Carlsbad. A Resource Area is a sub-division of a District. The Bureau has about 650 permanent employees in New Mexico, a third of which are housed in its far-flung State Offices. Field-going specialists represent just over one half of its workforce, the rest being supervisory, clerical, and administrative people, many of whom work with land and mineral records. BLM provides a wide variety of record services to other agencies and private parties with an interest in public lands or minerals. Since its merger with the Minerals Management Services (MMS), BLM also has some responsibility for minerals on Indian trust lands.

This article is not meant to provide detailed information on the proposed interchange of BLM and Forest Service lands. The Santa Fe Group expects to have a meeting with the BLM and the Forest Service on this interchange, which may provide information for a future article. However, the interchange is a dominant topic of conversation within the Bureau, and its potential impact is so pervasive that no article on BLM would be complete without mention of it.

Under the proposal, BLM would transfer approximately 1.2 million acres to the Forest Service and the latter would transfer about 1 million acres to BLM, a net gain of about 200,000 acres for the National Forests in New Mexico. Most of BLM's Taos Resource Area in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Taos counties would go to the Forest Service. That means that the Forest Service would assume responsibility for management of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River and for the wilderness portion of the Chama River, both of which are now administered by BLM.

The Forest Service would also gain several hundred thousand acres of BLM lands in and around the Cibola and Gila National Forests in Catron, Socorro, and Grant counties and scattered tracts of BLM land near the Lincoln National Forest in Lincoln and Otero counties.

BLM would acquire the Jicarilla Range in Rio Arriba county from the Carson National Forest, the Grants and Mount Taylor Ranger Districts in Sandoval, Valencia and McKinley Counties from the Cibola National Forest, the Magdalena Mountains in

Socorro County and the Big Burro Mountains in Grant County from the Cibola and Gila National Forests, respectively, the Guadalupe Mountains in Otero and Eddy Counties from the Lincoln National Forest, and the Kiowa National Grasslands in Union and Harding Counties.

In reference to recent budget cuts and the outlook for more of the same, State Director Luscher said the interchange may be the only way for BLM and the Forest Service to maintain present levels of on-the-ground management.

"I think it's long overdue. Present BLM and Forest Service Management land patterns are largely a result of historical accidents. We have many areas of overlapping jurisdiction and it would be more efficient for one agency to manage everything within a geographic area," said Luscher.

The Reagan administration estimates that the interchange would save taxpayers about \$30 million annually when fully implemented. There are no estimates at this time of potential savings in New Mexico. [Editors note: Also according to Administration figures, the implementation of the transfer will cost up to \$45 million dollars; no savings will be realized for several years. No independent confirmation of these estimates was available at press time.]

Luscher was asked to compare the proposed interchange with BLM's recent merger with MMS. "Compared to the MMS merger, it would be a piece of cake," he replied. "There's no difference between BLM and Forest Service people. We are all professional, multiple-use managers." Not all members of Luscher's staff shared his confidence, but there did seem to be a consensus that it would not be as difficult as the MMS merger. Some thought that the Forest Service would have greater difficulty administering BLM regulations than the other way around, since the Forest Service has never had responsibility for minerals management.

Under the interchange proposal, both agencies would eventually be given authority to manage all of the resources within their respective geographic areas. However, it would require an act of Congress. In the meantime, the interchange would proceed on an administrative basis.

Luscher said he has not received any protests of the proposal, although he anticipated some local resistance. "The public gets used to working with certain offices and people, and they can be just as resistant to change as any bureaucracy," he said. "Undoubtedly, we'll have some kind of meetings and public participation on this. Right now, we are working with the Forest Service on an implementation plan. It's very complex." That seemed like an understatement in view of the June 1 date for the administrative transfer of responsibilities.

Aside from the interchange, Luscher said priorities for fiscal year 1985 are about the same as last year. Oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development are very high, along with delineation of known Geologic Structures. The latter are used to determine whether leasing will be competitive or non-competitive.

Also, major emphasis is being placed on the processing of preference right lease applications (PRLA's) for coal in the San Juan Basin. Locally, BLM is waiting for direction from its Washington Office on how to handle fair market value and surface protection stipulations. Remaining Indian selections of some 35,000 acres of public lands in the basin have also delayed progress on PRLA's. Luscher said BLM is pushing for early completion of draft management plans for the recently designated Bisti and De-na-zin Wilderness Areas, as well as a management plan for the 2700 acres of the Fossil Forest withdrawn from mineral entry.

A major policy shift brought about by the first Reagan administration, which has affected public land surface resources, was to weaken BLM management of public rangelands and give livestock operators greater influence and discretion in the use of grazing allotments. This was done by reducing funds for range management, weakening the link between land use planning and range management, lowering the standards for grazing EIS's, and rewriting BLM's grazing regulations. At about the time the new administration was taking hold, BLM identified several situations where reductions in authorized grazing use were necessary to halt further deterioration of soil and vegetation, but they were side-tracked through implementation of a lengthy and complicated monitoring system. As a result, there have been no reductions by decision in New Mexico since the Reagan administration took office. There have been some voluntary adjustments taken by ranchers who agreed with BLM findings. However, they have not yet had a significant effect on range condition and trend.

In defense of the range monitoring procedure, Luscher pointed out that it has produced better information with which to rationalize changes in grazing use. He said the program has also involved the academic community, correcting a shortcoming of earlier procedures.

"This isn't new," said Luscher. "We have wanted to get into a range monitoring program for a long time. Monitoring studies are bearing out that one-time grazing surveys are not adequate."

The new regulations provide for a five year implementation period following decisions to adjust grazing use. Monitoring studies will be analyzed this year in the Farmington, Socorro, and Roswell Resource Areas. A BLM range specialist who is familiar with those studies said they all continue to show the need for reductions of authorized livestock grazing. However, under the new regulations it could take BLM another five years to implement the required reductions. To further complicate the matter, there are no guidelines on how to translate the monitoring findings into specific adjustments in livestock numbers. Why? Because BLM has not standardized its monitoring procedures - a problem that seems to stem in part from inadequate funding, as well as poor direction from the Washington Office of the BLM. It's a problem that will undoubtedly cause further delays in needed adjustments in grazing.

not enough into renewable resources like range, wildlife, recreation, and woodlands. The Bureau has received increased funding for environmental analyses and interim management planning in wilderness study areas and management planning for the new San Juan Basin wilderness areas.

BLM has been able to absorb many recent budget cuts through administrative realignments. Ironically, some of the realignments are leading to recentralization. The Reagan administration came in complaining about centralization and identified decentralization as one of its principal goals. Examples of the recentralization trend include increasing managerial and supervisory spans of control, consolidating some administrative functions like personnel and contracting, and requiring that all protests of BLM planning decisions be handled by the Washington Office. BLM planners indicated the latter procedure has delayed planning system implementation in some areas by as much as six months. Some of the delays in PRLA processing mentioned earlier also stem from centralization.

In reference to recent controversies and conflicts between BLM and the environmental community, Luscher said it has already died down. "People are talking. We have more communication today than at anytime in the last four or five years," he added. He said the best examples are cooperation between the wilderness coalition in New Mexico and BLM on wilderness area planning in the San Juan Basin and upcoming management planning for the 37 wilderness study areas in the state. Whether or not environmentalists share Luscher's views on communication and cooperation, it is a positive statement from a key official in a very important and controversial agency. Let us hope such a positive and constructive attitude can be extended to forthcoming BLM actions on planning, grazing, off-road vehicles, unauthorized firewood cutting, land exchanges, mineral leasing, and the proposed interchange of lands with the Forest Service.

At the beginning of this article I asked rhetorically if BLM could survive another reorganization, which would be inevitable if the Forest Service-BLM interchange takes place on the scale proposed. Having been

FOR WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLANS

The long struggle to save the Bisti Badlands is not yet over. We must not forget that some of the most beautiful and fragile badlands in the central San Juan Basin are those in the Ah-shi-sle-pah Wilderness Study Area, which is now more threatened than ever. There has yet to be any successful demonstration of long term reclamation of lands such as those found in the Bisti-Chaco region, yet plans are proceeding for large-scale federal coal leasing there. At the same time, we are fortunate to have three of the best badlands areas now under permanent protection. We are now reasonably assured that at least the Bisti Wilderness, the De-na-zin Wilderness, and the Fossil Forest are safe from strip mining.

Strip mining, however, is not the only threat to these areas. Fragile lands such as these are especially vulnerable to vandals, thieves, and vehicle drivers who have no respect for natural treasures. The task before the Bureau of Land Management and the public is to develop management plans that will ensure that the beauty of the protected areas will remain as it has been for thousands of years. This is a difficult task that could greatly benefit from extensive citizen involvement.

To help in the work, Nat Millenbach of the Farmington Resource Office of the BLM has assembled a task force of individuals representing several organizations. These include the Sierra Club, Navajo Tribe, Farmington Chamber of Commerce, NM Department of Natural Resources, Farmington Convention and Visitors Bureau, UNM Geology Department, and Paragon Resources, Inc.

The group has met once to become acquainted with the process being used to develop management plans for the Bisti and De-na-zin Wildernesses. The Fossil Forest is being handled in a different manner since a great deal of technical, professional work must be done on the paleontology of this area before the management plan can be developed and submitted to Congress. For the wilderness areas, the BLM hopes to have preliminary management plans out for public comment by October 1 of this year. Work on these plans is underway now, however, and the BLM

YES, I want to join! Please enter a membership card in your name.

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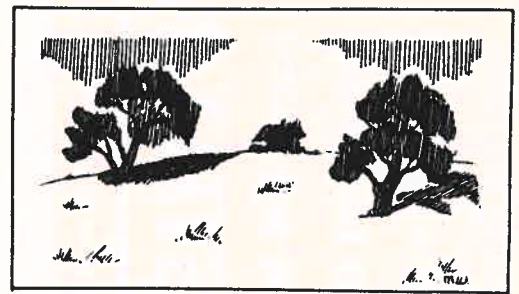
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 Rio Grande 6321 P.O. Box 7959, San Francisco

MEMBERSHIP BLANK CODES

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Albuquerque Group:	W 414
El Paso Group:	W 415
Santa Fe Group:	W 416
Southwest NM Group:	W 417
Tularosa Basin Group:	W 418



invites questions and comments regarding the management of these areas.

Some of the major issues involved include the location of any fences needed to prevent vehicle entry, location of trailheads, restrictions on uses such as camp fires and overnight camping, procedures for allowing paleontological surveys and excavation, and the use of motorized vehicles for maintaining grazing leases. Some of these issues are complex and do not have easy solutions.

Between now and October, the BLM will be writing its preliminary management plan. If you have any creative ideas on these issues, the BLM would be happy to hear from you. If you would like to help contribute to the development of the Sierra Club's input, please contact Dave Glowka (see address, page 5.)

New Apr 1985

WILDERNESS WORKSHOPS A SUCCESS

Nearly one hundred and fifty conservationists throughout New Mexico learned how to conduct wilderness studies and found out about the extensive BLM wilderness resources of New Mexico in three workshops held in El Paso, Socorro, and Albuquerque this past March. Local volunteers and national staff gave presentations on wilderness management, inventory, mining laws and wilderness, and skills such as map interpretation and photography for documentation purposes. Following the Saturday sessions in El Paso and Albuquerque, workshop participants enjoyed field trips to the Mount Riley Wilderness Study Area in southwest New Mexico and the Ojito WSA northwest of Albuquerque. Longtime wilderness activist and Earth First! founder Dave Foreman announced at the Albuquerque workshop that Earth First! will be preparing its own wilderness proposal for New Mexico, in addition to the proposal being coordinated by the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee.

Major tasks remain as outdoor activists gear up for field work on Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) to prepare for the BLM's statewide

Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement. This document, due out to the public on May 1st, will present the BLM's recommendations on areas to be protected as wilderness; it is the public's prime opportunity to support all areas that merit wilderness preservation.

More than one million acres of land is available for wilderness designation in New Mexico, and the statewide wilderness bill which will be proposed in this session of Congress, following review of the Wilderness EIS, is probably our last chance to save it!

Visits to the approximately forty BLM WSAs are needed so that first-hand testimony in support of these areas can be submitted for the record and an Alternative W developed for submission to the BLM and ultimately to Congress.

This is the most fun part of being an environmentalist — getting out and seeing the areas for which we are fighting. All interested people are urged to contact one of the following people to arrange trips to these WSAs. Comments and recommendations are due on July 30th, so time is short!

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View from Chisos Mountains into Mexico, Big Bend National Park

Photo by Jonathan Teague

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