

The Rio Grande SIERRAN



THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

March/April 1987

NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE REPORT

by Susan Tixier, Santa Fe

Legislative Lobbyist for
the Rio Grande Chapter

The First Session of the 38th New Mexico State Legislature was not particularly generous as regards the issues the Sierra Club chose to champion. The initial listing of priorities presented by the Club for action, support, or monitoring was as follows:

ACTION

1. Wildlife
2. Instream Flow
3. West Mesa Petroglyph Park

SUPPORT

4. Water Quality Control Commission Reauthorization
5. Leaking Underground Storage Tanks - permitting and cleanup
6. Government Reauthorization
7. EID Budget
8. Bottle Bill

WILDERNESS COALITION MEETING IN LAS CRUCES

BY Jim Fish, Placitas

The New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition plans to hold a workshop in Las Cruces on Saturday, May 9, with a field trip to one of the WSAs near Las Cruces the following day. Call Brant Calkins at 982-0393 or Jim Fish 867-3062 for details.

The purpose of this meeting is to begin mobilizing ourselves in anticipation of statewide BLM wilderness legislation this summer. Saving many of the areas in the southern part of the state, in particular, is going to be a long, uphill battle. We need people who are willing to get to know the areas intimately, who can write letters and testify in support of them, who can counter the false claims of those wishing to abuse public land for personal profit. We need photographs, data on visitor use, surveys of flora and fauna, research on minerals and energy potentials, field checking of boundaries....

If you cannot make the meeting but would like to help, get in touch. The work is more important than the workshop. ★

MONITOR

9. Toxics
10. Right-to-Know

Long days and (eventually) longer nights were spent by many Club volunteers working on these and other issues as they were introduced. Following is a summary of the issues and their disposition during the session.

WILDLIFE

There were two pieces of legislation which, had they succeeded, would have had an impact on wildlife. One was the proposal from the Governor's office to combine the Game and Fish Department with the Natural Resources Department, to which Game and Fish is now administratively attached. This proposal was withdrawn before it was introduced (see section on government reorganization, page 7).

The other bill, Sen. Martin's Wildlife on Public Land bill (SB 529), would have essentially privatized wildlife management by placing control of it in the hands of private landowners/lessees/permittees. The bill died in committee after the sponsors were given second thoughts about the likelihood of its success in the form in which it was introduced. The Club should be forewarned that the New Mexico Cattle Growers and others have made it known that they will try something like this again next year. The Sierra Club should be involved in the drafting of future bills--or be prepared to oppose them.

Sen. Steele's Interference with Hunters bill (SB 220) was in response to wildlife protectors' efforts to scare away game animals. It would have made it a felony to interfere with hunters on private and

see Legislature, page 6

BLM DEVELOPING ACEC PROTECTION PLANS

The Bureau of Land Management is currently developing protection plans for seven areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) located in the Rio Puerco Resource Area. These areas include: Canon Tapia, San Luis Raptor Area, Tent Rocks, Elk Springs, Ojito, Cabezon, and Ball Ranch.

Specialists are developing management prescriptions and physical and administrative actions necessary to maintain, protect, or enhance the values and opportunities identified for each ACEC.

Management objectives for these areas range from protecting rare plant habitat and paleontological, geologic, and scenic values to emphasizing primitive recreation and protecting wildlife habitat. Planned actions range from acquiring non-public lands adjacent to or within the public land portions of the ACECs to restricting vehicular access and designating portions as Research Natural Areas.

The BLM plans to release the draft ACEC plans in June and to hold an open house in July to explain the plans to the interested public. ★

ANOTHER FOX IN THE HEN HOUSE?

By a vote of 30 to 3, the appointment of Bob Jones to the NM State Game Commission was confirmed by the State Senate on (Friday) March 13. Jones has been an outspoken critic of national environmental groups and a long-time "Sagebrush Rebel," advocating the privatization of public lands. Governor Carruthers' nomination of Jones was met with protest from conservationists and sportsmen throughout the state.

Jones, who believes the cougar should be taken off the big game list and returned to the status of "varmint", made some of his most memorable and misguided statements while serving as president of the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association. For example:

"Jim Watt is a bonafide, silver-plated hero...molded in the image of Washington, Henry, Franklin, Jefferson, and Payne...a red flag to those professional environmentalists who are intent on making America dependent on foreign countries for natural resources...if those subversive groups have their way."

"The Interior Department is

see Fox, page 7



Photo by Ike Eastvold

The southern escarpment tip, only one mile from I-40, contains over 1700 fine Indian and hispanic petroglyphs in their environmental context, plus spectacular views up to the five volcanoes, all of which are currently in public ownership.

Petroglyphs (from back page)

decimated. Thousands of Rio Grande style petroglyphs were flooded by the construction of Cochiti Dam, and thousands more were destroyed by the construction of Interstate 25 through the Isleta Escarpment and by the use of basalt cliffs on Los Lunas Mountain, rich with petroglyphs, as highway fill. In short, the Rio Grande style is critically endangered, much as would be an endangered species.

Thirdly, nowhere is that endangerment greater than on Albuquerque's West Mesa. The population growth of Albuquerque is now toward the west, and development pressures are intense. Houses already have been built right up to the rocks without protection for the petroglyphs and other archeological sites. Many more developments are planned, as well as major highways like Paseo del Norte and Unser Blvd., which cut through the escarpment. Vandalism and theft have taken their toll over the years as well, destroying perhaps as much as 30% of the original magnificence of this vast cultural feature already. Preservation efforts now underway literally come in the eleventh hour. At best, only splendid fragments can be saved.

Finally, with the more pristine southern tip of the escarpment just a little over a mile from Interstate 40 and situated at Albuquerque's western gateway, tourist revenues offer a potentially significant boost to the local economy. Comparably located and with similar geological and cultural attractions to Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona, a Petroglyphs National

Monument could eventually match that park's performance, currently approaching 800,000 visitors per year. Even half that would, according to the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau, create a total economic impact of \$38 million annually and generate \$2.3 million in new state and local taxes. Tourism is truly said to be the "new oil" in New Mexico's search for economic diversification, and nowhere else does the opportunity seem greater than on the West Mesa. Linked with other sites on the Congressionally-proposed Masua Trail Automobile Tour of ancient Anasazi and other contemporary Pueblo areas, a Petroglyphs National Monument would be an integral part of a regional tourist system designed to educate visitors to the Southwest's cultural history and keep them in New Mexico a few days longer.

Also of local significance is the educational potential of the West Mesa to all school systems and museum programs and the open space amenities such an area would provide to the burgeoning West Mesa communities. An 8-10,000 acre National Monument would be like the Golden Gate to San Francisco or the Santa Monica Mountains to Los Angeles as Albuquerque grows steadily westward, swallowing all open land except what can be saved now.

Your support is urgently needed if this multi-value area is to be preserved. City of Albuquerque and National Park Service studies will soon issue draft documents and have public hearings. Elected officials will then make decisions on both levels. Begin by writing the city and NPS to request draft documents and notifica-

tion of hearings. Then write your elected representatives to support swift, significant commitments to preservation for some of the reasons in this article and any of the many other good reasons that come to mind. Names and addresses are as follows:

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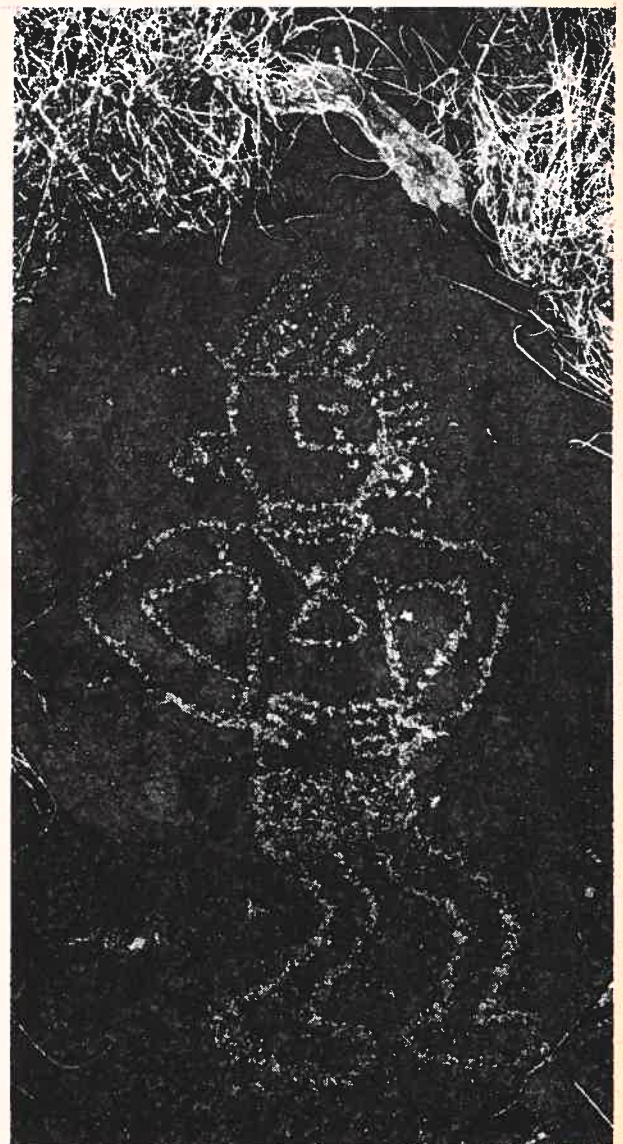
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Senator Pete V. Domenci
(see Congressional Directory, page 5)

Rep. Manual Lujan
(see Congressional Directory, page 5)



The roots of contemporary Pueblo Indian religion are found in this Kachina Dancer.

WILDERNESS COALITION STATEWIDE PROPOSAL PUBLISHED

by Jim Fish, Placitas

WILDLANDS, the long awaited documentation of the New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition's statewide proposal, has finally hit the streets. Copies are available from the Santa Fe, the Albuquerque, and the El Paso groups of the Sierra Club; several of the backpacking stores in Albuquerque; or directly from the Coalition. By mail, copies are \$10 plus \$1.50 to cover postage. Send check to Jim Fish, PO Box 712, Placitas, NM 87043.

WILDLANDS contains 232 pages and approximately 80 photographs. Offset printing and "perfect" binding resulted in a book that could visibly hold its own on a coffee table. Beyond the slick cover, an overview section presents a summary of the Coalition proposal vs. the BLM recommendations and a discussion of the background and the issues. The bulk of the document consists of the 55 area packets, each consisting of four parts:

1) a description of the area with information on location, access, special features, and wilderness characteristics;

2) acreages of both the BLM recommendation and the Coalition proposal by ownership;

3) a description and rationale for the differences; and

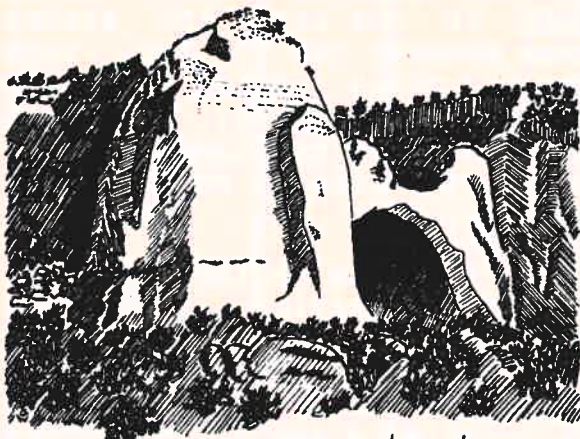
4) a detailed map of the area showing boundaries and ownership.

For anyone interesting in joining the fight to protect these areas, **WILDLANDS** is an invaluable tool. It is also the best (only) guide available to 1.88 million acres of possibilities for hiking, climbing, camping, birding, photography, caving, horse-back riding, fishing, exploration, and solitude. ★



Angel Peak

Drawing by Walter K. Graf



Natural Arch

Drawing by Walter K. Graf

CABEZON COYOTES BACK ON THE PROWL

by Jim Fish, Placitas

After a long, wet winter, the Cabezon Coyotes are back in action with several new members, increasing support from the BLM, and an expanding role.

Illegal fuelwood cutting and the off-road damage associated with it remains a major concern. Our patrols last fall documented the extent of the problem and identified the key locations. Steps being either taken or considered as a result include more publicity, more signing, physical barriers across some ways not used for range management trips, temporary road closures during critical periods, and stronger regulations with respect to the fuelwood permitting requirements.

Recently, the Coyotes have been helping the BLM prepare a slide presentation on the wilderness study areas in the Albuquerque district. Two new activities in the planning stage are a raptor survey for the BLM biologist and assistance of the BLM range conservationists.

The efforts of the Coyotes were endorsed by **THE ALBUQUERQUE TRIBUNE** in a front page article on April 8 followed by an editorial the next day urging others to follow the Coyotes' example.

Anyone wishing to join the Cabezon Coyotes should contact Jim Fish (505/867-3062). See the article at right on Los Amigos del Malpais for another opportunity along the same line. ★

LOS AMIGOS DEL MALPAIS VOLUNTEER GROUP FORMED

by Chuck Wiggins, Albuquerque

The lava flows near Grants, New Mexico, and the surrounding environs are the focus of much attention these days. The area is called El Malpais, the badlands, and is currently under consideration as a National Monument and National Conservation Area. Selected lands within the Monument and Conservation Area would also be designated as Wilderness.

Public interest in this area continues to grow, increasing the demands placed on the limited resources of the Bureau of Land Management. A group of volunteers have banded together to form Los Amigos del Malpais to help the BLM administer the lands in and around El Malpais. Los Amigos were inspired by the Cabezon Coyotes, whose members assist the BLM by patrolling Wilderness Study Areas within the northern reaches of the Rio Puerco Resource Area.

Los Amigos are gearing up for a busy summer. On Saturday, May 30, Los Amigos will assist in an erosion control project in Brazos Canyon to the east of El Malpais. Los Amigos will be scrubbing contemporary rock art (i.e. graffiti) from boulders near the lava flow on June 13. In the coming weeks, members of Los Amigos are also scheduled to lead hikes, patrol Wilderness Study Areas, and assist in trail maintenance projects.

Volunteer groups such as the Cabezon Coyotes and Los Amigos del Malpais provide an opportunity for environmentalists to "put your money where your mouth is," or, more precisely, to "put your muscle where your mouth is." The work is rewarding, provides an opportunity to explore new areas, and enhances our political credibility. Interested? Contact Chuck Wiggins (505/266-3622) for more information. ★

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT
ISSUE IS JUNE 1**

CHAIR'S COLUMN

by Tom Brasfield, El Paso

Although the Rio Grande Chapter has always been involved in lobbying the New Mexico Legislature, 1987 marked the first time that we hired a paid lobbyist. Susan Tixier did an outstanding job of representing the Chapter and staying on top of environmental legislation at the state capital (see article, page 1). We did not win all of the battles, but Susan and many, many volunteers were there making our positions known and lobbying for a better New Mexico environment.

However, this is only a start. The various state agencies write regulations interpreting the laws that the legislature has passed. Many times this process can be more important than the passing of the law. Therefore we have to lobby the agencies during the regulation process to ensure that environmental laws are properly interpreted.

These same agencies also enforce the laws. They issue permits and assess fines against violators. We need to be constantly evaluating the agencies who have responsibility for environmentally related laws to ensure that they are doing their job.

These tasks are performed totally by Rio Grande Chapter volunteers. These volunteers do an excellent job of tracking these agencies, but all are very busy with jobs, family, and other activities. We cannot expect volunteers to cover all the bases.

The Rio Grande Chapter needs a year-round lobbyist to keep up with New Mexico state issues. This person would track environmental issues in all state agencies. She/he would make statements at hearings before these agencies and coordinate volunteers to make statements and write letters. A half-time person could possibly handle this function, at least initially.

Why don't we have such a lobbyist? MONEY! Such an endeavor requires funds for salary, office, supplies, travel, etc. Our budget simply does not have any funds for this.

YOU, OUR CHAPTER MEMBERS are the only ones who can correct this situation. Last month each of you received a Chapter Fund Appeal. If every member would make a contribution of only \$5 or \$10, the Chapter could fund an initial effort for a year-round lobbying program. Won't you help to get this program started by sending in your contribution today?

Send your contributions to:

Joy Ann Owen, Treasurer
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9905 Cork
El Paso, TX 79925

CONSERVATION NEWS

by Jack Kenney, Santa Fe

We win some, and we lose some. Remembering, however, Murphy's laws and, in particular, that everything takes longer than anyone would believe, we keep charging in all directions. The Chapter Chair of the Angeles Chapter notes that IF YOU LAID ALL SIERRA CLUB MEMBERS END TO END, THEY WOULD STILL POINT IN ALL DIRECTIONS. Hence, thanks to all who have produced the impacts and efforts noted below by pointing in YOUR OWN direction.

* The New Mexico Congressional delegation (Domenici, Bingaman, Richardson, and Lujan) have dropped in the hopper a bill to amend the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 to designate portions of the Rio Chama as a Wild and Scenic River. Among the heroes are Maggie Fox, the SW Regional Rep for the Sierra Club, and John Colburn, who has been the Sierra Club workhorse on this project for at least three years. Please thank your Senators and Representative.

* The Sierra Club/Save the Jemez appeal of the OLE' power line through the Jemez Mountains has been returned by the BIA, with a claim that they do not have jurisdiction. This confuses most of us, since they did have the responsibility of preparing the EIS and now avoid the obvious result of the one-sided EIS. Please write!

* A Sierra Club delegation met with the US Forest Service in Alamogordo on April 18 to discuss the Lincoln National Forest Plan appeal. (see related article, page 7).

* The Club is embarking upon a major campaign involving the reauthorization of the Clean Air Act. Organizationally, Kay Grotbeck is our Clean Air Committee Chairperson; Jack Kenney is the State Coordinator responsible for staying abreast of the campaign issues and communicating with the three New Mexico Congressional District Coordinators; and Jim Owen is the El Paso District Coordinator. You will be hearing a lot more about this campaign and will be called upon to support the efforts of the District Coordinators and to work with our Senators.

* Your Sierra Club representatives were extremely busy in lobbying efforts with the State Legislature (see article on page 1). Among the disturbing results were some causes we lost due to time, personalities, and New Mexico politics:

(1) The Cowboys outnumbered us about 250 to 20 as we unsuccessfully opposed the nomination of Bob Jones to the State Game Commission (see article, page 1). Dissappointing!

(2) The budget of the Environmental Improvement Divi-

sion is admittedly not that required to decrease or even evaluate the increasing contamination of New Mexico aquifers and contaminated water supply wells. The administration will "do the best we can" within available resources, although the legislature was warned that the state would "pay now or pay later."

(3) We need broader representation in presenting our testimony. In general, the same people showed up to testify for various issues. Special thanks to Dan Mitchem, Carol Cochran, Susan Larsen, Ike Eastvold, and their Albuquerque cohorts; to our steady supporters Patty Adam and George Grossman; and to our great Taos compatriots who drove down to try and stop Bob Jones. And to Susan Tixier for calling the shots so well.

On the plus side, we worked with other groups in support of the important Right-to-Know bill, which is now law. Networking helps us all.

* Your Sierra Club representatives attended the Albuquerque Seminar on the Future of the Superfund Program given by the Environmental Protection Agency. This should assist us as we take part in the required public participation phase of the clean-up. Some of us also attended the meeting of the Hazardous Waste Committee of New Mexico in Los Alamos.

* Congratulations, thanks, and a job WELL DONE to Jim Fish and the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition for their splendid statewide proposal for BLM Wilderness, called Wildlands. Get your copy from Jim or your group (see article, page 3). Now the work begins to make reality out of the proposal. Stay tuned! ★

SIERRA CLUB COUNCIL MEETING SET

by Ben Zerbey, Mesilla

The Spring 1987 Sierra Club Council meeting will be held at Club headquarters in San Francisco April 29-May 3. In addition to the meeting of the Council, there will be a training session for some 20 new Chapter Chairs, one of whom is our own Tom Brasfield. The gathering is topped off by a regular meeting of the National Board of Directors, as well as meetings of a number of national issue committees. Part of the daily meetings will be held at the Marin Headlands.

As your Council representative, I have taken part in the Council committees on Outings and Delegate Effectiveness. If any member has ideas to impart to the Council or National Board, please give me a call or drop me a line (see Chapter Directory, page 5). ★

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OUR EDITORIAL POLICY

Opinions expressed in the Rio Grande Sierran are those of the contributors and 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 Sierran as long as acknowledgement is made. We welcome contributions of articles, essays, prose, poetry, photographs, drawings, and other submissions. We request that all submissions be signed and accompanied by a telephone number and address at which the author may be contacted. Please send submissions to the Editor (see Chapter Directory).

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Legislature (from page 1)

leased lands. The bill died in committee.

INSTREAM FLOW

HB 64 would have allowed water to be kept in its natural channel for wildlife populations and still be considered a beneficial use. This bill made it through the House and two of the three Senate committees to which it was assigned. This is farther than this often-introduced proposal has ever made it. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Coll, and many volunteers are to be applauded for their efforts--this one met with opposition in every committee. The Club should be buoyed by the success, however. We should make plans to reintroduce something like it in the future and to educate members of the ranching/farming community about the benefits to that industry that would flow from this proposal.

WEST MESA PETROGLYPHS

Senate Joint Memorial 1, introduced by Sen. Carraro, would have directed state agencies to support efforts to establish a federal park in Albuquerque's West Mesa Petroglyph Park area. The joint memorial did not make it through the House due to political maneuvering too complex to detail here. However, a similar memorial, Senate Memorial 116, was also introduced by Sen. Carraro and did pass the Senate; and a similar memorial, House Memorial 26, introduced by Rep. Hocevar, passed the House.

There was constant concern and vigil regarding the funding of Unser Blvd. to assure that the Unser Blvd. continuation would not impair the petroglyphs. HB 75, which would have provided funding from the sale of severance tax bonds, died in committee. The road was, however, funded in the highway funding bill without language pertaining to the petroglyphs. This issue is not dead, and the Club should follow Ike Eastvold's substantial direction in order to preserve what is so important, so lovely, and so threatened. (See article starting on back page.)

WATER QUALITY CONTROL COMMISSION REAUTHORIZATION

The Water Quality Control Commission was due to expire (sunset) but was reauthorized when the Governor signed HB 29. A second bill, which the Governor vetoed, would have stacked the Commission with four new industry members. The Club stridently opposed this second bill.

The reauthorized Commission should be watched closely by the Club. The state's ground-

water is a precious resource and commodity that must be guarded for the future citizens of the state. Because groundwater cannot be seen, however, the dangers threatening it tend to be overlooked. The activities of the Commission have a significant effect on what foreign matter is allowed to contaminate this resource.

LEAKING UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS (LUST)

Rep. Don Silva led the battle to control and to pay for cleanup of underground storage tanks on behalf of the interim Radioactive and Hazardous Waste Committee. HB 105, which will provide mechanisms and standards for building, monitoring, and decommissioning of storage tanks holding petroleum products to prevent groundwater contamination, passed and was signed by the Governor. However, HB 547, which would have funded the cleanup of leaking "orphan" tanks and other tanks whose ownership cannot be traced, died in committee, due largely to lobbying from the petroleum industry. These tanks pose a serious threat to our groundwater supply and must be managed in a way concomitant to the seriousness of the threat. Maybe next year!

GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

The Energy and Minerals Department and the Natural Resources Department are now one. The Sierra Club did not oppose the bill, HB 318, combining these departments.

The proposal from the Governor that the Game and Fish Department be subsumed by the Natural Resources Department was hotly opposed by the Club (and others) and was withdrawn before introduction. It might be imagined that, in light of the appointment of Bob Jones as a State Game Commissioner (see article, page 1), the Governor realized that he might do administratively what he may have had a fight doing legislatively: placing the Game and Fish Department into the category of direct funding from the legislature and out of the more or less direct control of the hunters' fee system. The Governor knew the Club and others would oppose both the reorganization and the appointment and chose the appointment on which to make a stand because there was a stronger likelihood that he could win--he did. But the Club should expect changes in the department to take place administratively.

EID BUDGET

The budget for the Environmental Improvement Division did not fare well, but no worse than the rest of the Health and

Environment Department. There is not much money for state government and very little extraordinary support of EID's functions, which resulted in an ordinary budget for the division. Mr. Gordon, the department secretary, commented that the budget was "minimal" but did not pursue efforts to expand the request.

BOTTLE BILL

Despite the efforts of Rep. Eisenstadt to finally enact a bottle bill for the state, her bills failed in the house. Rep. Thompson introduced a bill of much less magnitude, and it also failed to pass in either the House or the Senate. There were many hearings and very good testimony. The bottle, can, beer, wine, and grocery industries all opposed the bills in their various forms, and the legislators opted for industry (as they have for 10 years) rather than the environment.

It should be noted that the Litter Control and Beautification funding bills also died in committee.

RIGHT-TO-KNOW

Worker Right-to-Know (HB 95) passed and was signed by the Governor. Rep. Olguin and the Right-to-Know Task Force did a wonderful job of working with industry and the legislators to make this a successful effort this year. Employees are now guaranteed access to information regarding hazardous chemicals in the work place.

TOXICS

There were several attempts to rid the state of our Occupational Health and Safety Office, but they died in committee.

OTHER ISSUES

HB 96, Discouted Fishing Licenses for the Developmentally Disabled, died in committee.

HB 337, Regional Water Planning, provides funds for water plans to be developed by regions of the state, rather than one plan from Santa Fe. The Club supported this bill, introduced by Rep. Minzner. It passed and was signed by the Governor, despite opposition from the livestock and farming industries. Rep. Thompson proposed a similar bill which would have given funds to Natural Resources to do another study for a plan. The Club opposed this bill, and it died in committee.

SB 27, Offhighway Motor Vehicles, requires licensing of ORVs to make identification easier in case of illegal activity. It also provides more control of potential damage to natural areas caused by ORVs.

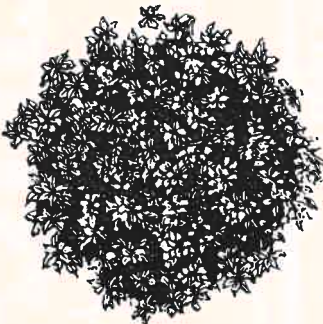
The Club supported this measure, introduced by Sen. Roman Maes, and it was approved by the legislature. The Governor signed it, and it is now law.

SB 199, the Natural Lands Protection Act, provides a mechanism for the state to acquire lands for endangered or threatened species, wildlife protection, and preservation of unique ecosystems. This bill, introduced by Sen. Marshall, passed and was signed by the Governor; however, the funding portion of the bill was deleted before it passed.

SB 229, Asbestos Control Act, would have provided for licensing of persons engaged in asbestos removal. This bill died in committee.

SB 13, Ambrosia Lake Site, provides funding from the severance tax fund for the state's portion of the cleanup of uranium mill tailings at Ambrosia Lake. This bill, introduced by Sen. Eoff, passed and was signed by the governor.

The Sierra Club presence was felt in this legislature due to the constant physical attendance of many Club volunteers who were willing to respond to the Club lobbyist's requests to speak at hearings or to telephone legislators. It was strongly recommended by fellow supporters and opponents alike that the Club continue its efforts to keep legislators informed about the issues of concern to the Club; but more importantly, it was clear that the members of the legislature were pleased to have someone readily available to assist them in obtaining data or testimony. Many legislators would like to see the Sierra Club not only during the session, but in the interim when there is also serious legislative work to be done.



Fox (from page 1)

working diligently to come up with a means of selling...land to ranchers...[w]e are attempting to get a small percentage of the mineral rights attached to the surface, as a kind of insurance policy when mineral development takes place."

"It seems to me that the National Wildlife Federation and many of its affiliates have shown selfish and socialistic tendencies in regard to this question...[of] fulfilling the constitution by disposing of the public domain in the western states...Possibly there are a few Fidel Castro and similar

Marxist supporters tied to these groups...forming a coalition with 'right-wing' groups like the Sierra Club..."

A confirmation hearing for Jones was held by the Senate Rules Committee on March 12. More than 200 ranchers attended the hearing in support of Jones. Only about 20 conservationists and others opposed to the nomination were in attendance. The committee voted 7-1 in favor of confirmation, with the full Senate concurring the following day. Despite 500-600 phone calls against the confirmation, only Senators Tito Chavez, Roman Maes, and Carlos Cisneros voted against.

While Jones refused to apologize for his past statements, he promised to start a "clean slate" in dealing with sportsmen and environmental groups.

OUTINGS

Robledo Peak
Saturday, May 16, 8:00 AM

This is the area featured in the Jan/Feb issue of the Rio Grande Sierran and at the March meeting of the S.W. New Mexico Group. We will be hiking into the Wilderness Study Area and to the 5,890 ft summit. The wild flowers usually bloom in May and should be especially glorious after our wet winter. This is a moderate hike, mostly off-trail but not rugged. The hike is 7-1/2 miles round trip. Elevation gain is 1800 ft, mostly in the last mile. About one mile of the route is a faint trail that we will improve as we go. Bring work gloves, garden snips, ice axe if you have one, water, and food. In Las Cruces, call Sandy Anderson (505/523-5179); in Truth or Consequences, call Chet Warwick (505/894-6427) for meeting place.

Gila National Forest
Sat. and Sun., June 6 and 7
Trail Maintenance Project

The trail is not yet selected but most likely will be in the southern end of the Forest. Arrive at car camp site near the trailhead Friday evening or Saturday morning. Set up camp, start trail work. Sunday work on trail until about 2 or 3 PM, return to camp, and depart for home. You will need food and water for the weekend, utensils, cooking gear, tent, sleeping bag, gloves, etc. Some extra cookstoves will be available. Tools will be furnished by the U.S. Forest Service. Some members will arrive at the campsite Friday evening. While overparticipation is not expected, the maximum practical group size is about 16 persons. Call Chet Warwick (505/894-6427) for details.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES, I want to join! Please enter a membership in the category indicated.

<p>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES</p> <p>Individual</p> <p>Regular <input type="checkbox"/> \$29</p> <p>Supporting <input type="checkbox"/> \$50</p> <p>Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> \$100</p> <p>Life <input type="checkbox"/> \$750 (per person)</p> <p>Joint</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$33</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$54</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$104</p>	<p>SPECIAL CATEGORIES</p> <p>Senior <input type="checkbox"/> \$15</p> <p>Student <input type="checkbox"/> \$15</p> <p>Spouse of Life <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 (annual dues)</p>
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STATUS OF FOREST PLAN APPEALS

from Tularosa Basin Group Newsletter

The Rio Grande Chapter is currently appealing the final EIS and plan for the Lincoln National Forest in southern New Mexico. The notice of appeal and statement of reasons were filed with the regional forester by Grove Burnett, legal council for the Chapter.

The major bases for appeal are:

- 1) the EIS did not consider nor fully analyze an alternative management program based on uneven-aged timber management;
- 2) the Supervisor changed his mind from the Draft EIS and plan and did not recommend the Guadalupe Escarpment Wilderness Study Area for wilderness designation; and
- 3) the plan proposes to continue overgrazing for 30 years before permitted livestock numbers are brought into balance with estimated grazing capacity.

In addition, the appeal finds fault with various timber management practices such as cable logging, deficit sales, and excess road construction.

In a related matter, the Rio Grande Chapter has been approved as an Intervenor in another appeal of the plan filed by a recreation vehicle group in Texas. The plan calls for vehicular use on designated and open roads and trails only. The RV group would like to see those plans dropped.

PROTECTION SOUGHT FOR ALBUQUERQUE'S PETROGLYPHS

by Ike Eastvold, Albuquerque

Although the western United States is richly endowed with more prehistoric art than any other comparable area in the world, not one of the 338 National Park System units presently showcases this cultural heritage as a principal interpretive theme.

This conspicuous void in the NPS Park Plan will be filled if the present NPS study of Albuquerque's West Mesa Petroglyph area ever reaches fruition as a new unit of the park system. With an estimated 14,000 examples of prehistoric Indian and colonial hispanic rock art, the 17-mile-long volcanic escarpment represents the largest concentration of prehistoric art near a major city in the world.

With so many rock art sites throughout the Southwest, what is so special about the West Mesa that it is being actively considered? First of all, the great majority of petroglyphs are examples of the richly dramatic Rio Grande style of rock art from the

Pueblo IV and V era, perhaps 1325-1680 AD. Being from such a comparatively recent time, many of the symbols can be directly interpreted through contemporary Pueblo culture and religion. Various Kachinas, Kokopelli, Awanyu, clan symbols, and other important figures in the Pueblo universe can be identified. And of course, the hundreds of cruciform petroglyphs carved by Spanish colonists can be related to various ritual implements of the mass in different styles of church art. In summary, the rock art offers an opportunity to showcase the two principal cultural traditions of central New Mexico on their own home ground.

Secondly, the Rio Grande style of rock art is limited in its distribution, being found mostly along the middle reaches of the Rio Grande from San Marcial northward to Velarde. Being found in this area of rapid development and population growth, many key sites have already been destroyed or

see Petroglyphs, page 2

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March/April 1987

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THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

March/April 1987



Wildlands Published (see page 3)

Photo by Dorothy Spenser

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