



PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT



Photograph by Ike Eastvold

Looking over one of the more than 15,000 petroglyphs on Albuquerque's West Mesa escarpment are Dr. Jane Young of UNM American Studies Dept, Herman Agoyo, Chairman of the All-Indian Pueblo Council, and Ike Eastvold of the Sierra Club. Legislation to create the Petroglyph National Monument, supported by more than 50 local and national organizations, cleared the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee unanimously before Congress adjourned last year. Letters are needed to NM Congressman Bill Richardson, Steve Schiff, and Joe Skeen this year urging swift action in the House of Representatives (address in directory). The petroglyph area is probably the nation's most endangered prehistoric site, and is being rapidly lost to vandalism and development projects.

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The Rio Grande SIERRAN



THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

FEBRUARY/MARCH 90

EARTH DAY - April 22, 1990



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The Rio Grande SIERRAN



THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

FEBRUARY/MARCH 90

The Senator, the Representative, and Wilderness

by Pat Penfield

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[ed. note: Pat Penfield writes in support of the wilderness proposal of the New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition. The Coalition is a group of New Mexicans who have spent many years researching which federal, publicly-owned Bureau of Land Management wildlands within our state are suited for wilderness designation by the U.S. Congress. The Wilderness Coalition's book, Wildlands, documents its support for 55 such areas in New Mexico--about two percent of New Mexico's land.]

Why Wilderness?

People have thought about the need for wilderness from many points of view, most of which boil down to asking the question: What does wilderness do for us? And they have answered: it gives us pure air, and collects and filters our water. It makes our hearts glad when we visit it to hike or hunt, to fish, ride and refreshes our spirit. It provides a gene pool for our future medical and agricultural needs. It is a living laboratory that shows us how real ecosystems operate, and may show us how better to manage other lands. And, finally, instead of robbing our descendants of the bounty which we have enjoyed, it leaves them a heritage of protected wildlands.

And with our great power to destroy, and our limited wisdom, what do we humans do for wilderness? Very little. But we can do one thing: while elsewhere we exploit and degrade the land, here, as wilderness, we can let the land--this, wild, searingly beautiful New Mexico land--live.

But some of our Congressional representatives do not seem to share these feelings. Take Representative Skeen and Senator Domenici, for example. They pretend to want a good wilderness bill for New Mexico, while simultaneously working against it. Joe Skeen and Pete Domenici have pulled two red herrings out of their magical political hats to stymie an adequate wilderness bill for New Mexico's BLM lands--the "issues" called "grazing" and "water rights". Yet these are essentially bogus issues, largely irrelevant to the New Mexico wildlands under consideration for wilderness designation by the U.S. Congress.

Wilderness see page 2

Jemez Land Coalition Fights Public Land Seizure

by Randy Freeman

Eight northern New Mexican conservation groups have pooled resources to form the "East Fork Preservation Coalition". The new group takes its name from the East Fork of the Jemez River which flows through an area threatened by pumice mining in the Santa Fe National Forest. The first priority for the Coalition is to fight Copar Pumice Company's attempt to seize 1700 acres of public lands in the Jemez Mountains. Members or supporters of the Coalition include the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club, the Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society, Project Lighthawk, New Mexico Citizens for Clean Air and Water, Elk Mountain Action, Save the Jemez, the Jemez Action Group, and Jemez Pueblo.



According to the group's founder, Henry Oat, the group has raised almost \$3,000. Major donations have come from both the Sierra Club's Santa Fe Group and the Rio Grande Chapter. Non-cash contributions of volunteer time, office space and supplies, and technical assistance have also boosted the Coalition's efforts. Fundraising remains a key focus of the group. "Copar's patent claims could be finalized in one year" explained Oat. "The next three months are crucial in the struggle to retain public ownership of this area. It will take an intense burst of activity starting now. We need to raise funds during this short period when an opportunity to stop Copar still exists."

Jemez see page 3

Petroglyph Struggle goes to Santa Fe

by Ike Eastvold

The New Mexico State Legislature convened in Santa Fe on Jan. 16th. We need an avalanche of letters and phone calls to fend off two threats to the proposed Petroglyph National Monument. Please make a commitment to write just three short letters and/or phone call, one to your representative, one to your senator, and one to Gov. Garrey Carruthers. The mailing address for all three is "State Capital, Santa Fe, NM 87503". The Legislature's switchboard is 984-9300, and the Governor's Office is 827-3000. If you are unsure of your legislator's name, call the County Voter Registrar's Office.

The first threat would endanger not only Albuquerque's petroglyph area, but every historic and prehistoric site of significance in the entire state. Last year, the State Legislature passed an excellent bill called the New Mexico Prehistoric and Historic Sites Preservation Act. Legislatures have promised to repeal or otherwise attack this bill because they feel it is being used to stop the construction of Montano bridge across the Rio Grande.

They take offense to Section 18-8-7:

"No public funds of the state or any of its agencies or political subdivisions shall be spent on any program that requires the use of any portion of any land from a significant prehistoric or historic site unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to such use, and unless the program or project includes all possible planning to preserve and protect and to minimize harm to the significant prehistoric or historic site resulting from such use. The provisions of this section may be enforced by an action for injunction or other appropriate relief in a court of competent jurisdiction."

This is the closest thing New Mexico presently has to an Environmental Quality Act, although it is only for protection of one part of our environment, ie, cultural resources. It picks up where Federal laws--which only apply to Federal lands and Federally-permitted projects--leave off: all State, City, County and other local government projects are covered when they involve a significant cultural site.

Petroglyphs see page 3

Wilderness from page 1

"Water Rights"

Mr. Skeen says that New Mexico's need for water--even in federally-designated wilderness areas--should supercede federal water rights that would protect water in wilderness areas. Yet, here in New Mexico, most of the proposed wilderness areas are in the southern portion of our state, where there is little harvestable, free-flowing water. In fact, in only one of the Wilderness Coalition's 55 proposed BLM wilderness areas could this even be a substantial issue: only the Gila Lower Box has sufficient water flow to be of any concern to the water thirsty. Here, then, is a non-issue raised and perpetuated by Messrs. Skeen and Domenici to obstruct a wilderness bill.

But let's not shirk this issue. We need to think long and hard about water in any Congressionally-established wilderness area within New Mexico. What would be the meaning of a wilderness established without adequate protection of the water to support the plants and animals that live there? Ecologically, biologically, it only makes good sense not to drain the land's life-blood--its water supply. Wilderness must be allowed to thrive with adequate water or there is no sense in bothering to designate it.



The "Grazing Issue"

Then these politicians raise another red herring: that in any wilderness bill for New Mexico there is a "need" for what they call "special grazing language"--that is, extra language to protect the economic interests of ranchers who graze their animals on arid public lands that Congress designates wilderness. These lands, they argue, are very different from those forested wilderness areas of other states. But Congress already anticipated and addressed this issue in detail when it passed the Colorado wilderness bill. In particular, the Colorado bill was constructed to provide legal protection for ranchers grazing animals under each of four different government jurisdictions with habitats as diverse as mountain forests and BLM lowland deserts. This same protective language in the Colorado bill has been included by reference in every wilderness bill passed since Colorado's. It can similarly be included in a New Mexico wilderness bill.

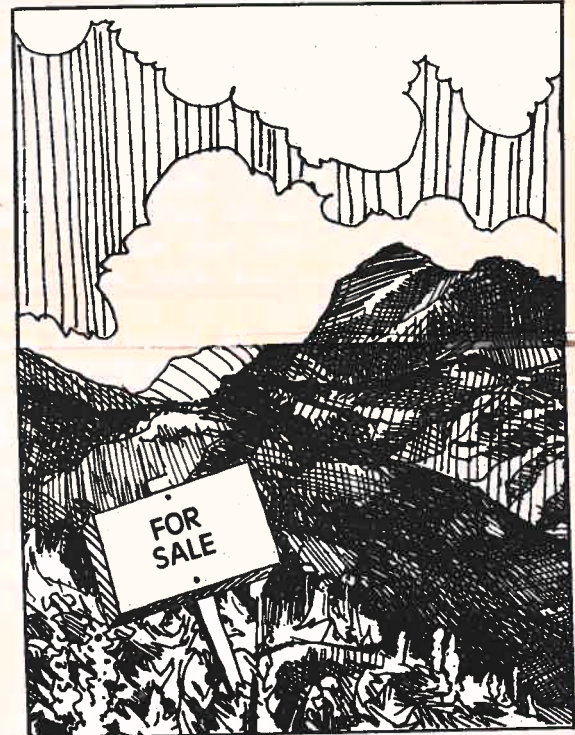
Moreover, ranchers are already grazing their animals on New Mexico wildlands designated by the BLM as Wilderness Study Areas under virtually the same rules that will apply when they are designated wilderness. If they can graze their animals here now, surely they can do so when the land is given wilderness designation by Congress.

The idea that New Mexico requires "special grazing language" turns the north prairie--already degraded from overgrazing, it is our more fragile, drier southern lands. Here, more limited and erratic rainfall, coupled with continued grazing, can prevent the recovery of overgrazed vegetation. Here, the land is easily impoverished.

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." John Muir

And so, I put it to the Senator and Representative: if you really understand the importance of wilderness, stop holding the New Mexico wilderness bill hostage to trumped-up issues. If you really care about wilderness, get on with it. Support adequate amounts of wilderness to counterbalance New Mexico's burgeoning population and development, ranching, mining and the other "user" interests that are eating at the wildlands of our state. What we desperately need in this state, and in our world, is a balance between wild, untrammled lands--wilderness--and urban, tamed ones. Is it too much to ask that 2% of our state's land be saved as BLM wilderness?

Please write to our politicians. Bring them back to their senses. Make them accountable to the need for adequate wilderness in New Mexico. Urge them to support the Wilderness Coalition's proposal.



PHOTOS OF CHAPTER RETREAT NOVEMBER 10-12, 1989 CAMP THUNDERBIRD

Photograph by Ike Eastvold

Petroglyph from page 1

The NM Prehistoric and Historic Sites Preservation Act is very good law, and much-needed in a state like ours where our tri-cultural history is one of our greatest assets.

Regulations implementing Section 18-8-7 are in place, and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is the designated enforcement officer. The SHPO has recently worked with the City of Albuquerque regarding the application of this law to Unser Blvd where it would border and bisect the Las Imagines National Register District containing the West Mesa escarpment with its array of over 15,000 petroglyphs. A determination was made that the 4-lane parkway design for Unser was the project alternative of least harm, and therefore satisfied the test of Section 18-8-7. In the case of Unser, the NM Prehistoric and Historic Sites Preservation Act has worked very well to protect Albuquerque's opportunity to establish Petroglyph National Monument while simultaneously allowing the Unser project to go forward. The law can and will serve New Mexico beneficially in similar future instances if kept on the books. Its application is State-wide. But most immediately, we need to retain this law to minimize impacts from Unser Blvd. and Paseo del Norte where these roads would cut through the West Mesa petroglyph area.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: REQUEST YOUR CALENDAR GUIDELINES NOW

Sierra Club Books invites all nature photographers to submit transparencies for this season's annual selection of calendar photographs, but FIRST they must send for a packet of guidelines. Submissions will be accepted in March and April, 1990. Request guidelines by postcard only to: Calendar Station, Sierra Club Books, 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.



TRIP TO ZION
by Kimberly Ruckman

The trail to Angel's Landing is hotter than hell.
We ask for wings:
our Nikes fill with sand.
The summit is a sheer wall a thousand feet down.
Descending to baked roads and parking lots, we decide to swim in the river.

The water is clear and blue.
We strip in the last sun that fades behind the West Rim.
In the deep water fish slide past our legs.
The bottom is soft clay.
On all fours we crawl out, crustaceous monsters testing the hard sand.

When the moon rises above the Watchman our skin breathes in.
We sprout wings, transparent, lifting-- far below, the Virgin River is a snake glistening, a silvery-backed adder siphoning the night.



PROTECTING WATER QUALITY IN THE NATIONAL FORESTS: A WORKSHOP PRESENTED BY THE FOREST TRUST. March 3, 1990 from 8am to 5pm in Room 2405, Bratton Hall, UNM Law School, 1117 Stanford NE, Albuquerque, NM. To register or obtain further information, contact: Lane Krahl, Forest Trust, PO Box 519, Santa Fe, NM 87504, (505)983-8992

Jemez from page 1

The Coalition is working with Sen. Bingaman and Rep. Richardson on legislation strategies to head off the patent claim. "Land patenting" is a process authorized by the 1872 Mining Law. It gives holders of valid mining claim for certain minerals the right to convert public land to private ownership for \$2.50 per acre. The claimholder only needs to demonstrate that profitable mining of the land is possible. Once a patent is granted the claimant is under no obligation to actually mine for minerals on the property. The land can be sold, developed or used as any other private property may be used.

Since its formation, the East Fork Coalition has held citizen's meetings in Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Jemez Springs and Jemez Pueblo. Mr. Oat has found public opposition to the patent claim to be overwhelming. A petition drive requesting Congressional action is also underway.



The Copar case offers a chance to set a national precedent for the protection of unusual scenic, recreational, archaeological and biological resources from the patenting process. Although national outrage over the mining act has grown in the last decade, special interests have so far prevented its outright repeal. The Coalition hopes to pioneer a new legislation protection scheme for the Jemez which may be applicable to similar struggles in other areas.

The future of the often-abused, but still remarkable, Jemez Range hangs in the balance. Over 20,000 acres of pumice, gold and silver claims dot the area south of the great caldera. If those claims are converted to private ownership, mining companies will be free from any reclamation requirements. A fragile ecology that has supported human occupation for a thousand years and nurtured a diverse community of other species for tens of thousand of years will be damaged beyond recovery.

For more information or to help, contact Henry Oat, East Fork Preservation Coalition, c/o The Sierra Club, 440 Cerrillos Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87501. phone: (505) 983-2703

Note: Could the person from El Paso who contacted me regarding damage to El Paso's sewage facilities due to pumice from fabric washing facilities please contact Henry so that he can do further research - I lost your name, sorry.



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

When you write and/or call your legislators and Gov. Carruthers, in your own words, support the NM Prehistoric and Historic Sites Preservation Act with these and other thoughts:

-- The act has served New Mexico well in reinforcing the 4-lane parkway design for Unser Blvd. as the project alternative of least harm to the proposed Petroglyph National Monument. Its application has not stopped the construction of this road. Transportation and preservation needs have been balanced and simultaneously served, proving that the act is very good law and should be retained.

-- Tourism in our state accounts for nearly 50,000 jobs and \$2 billion in revenue. This act helps protect the very cultural sites which attract tourists here, and is of great importance to our economy.

-- Thank your legislator and the Governor for approving \$6 million to help purchase Petroglyph National Monument. Ask them to strongly resist any attempts to withdraw this wise investment - the second threat.

The Rio Grande Sierran

Sierra Club Endorses JIM BACA for Land Commissioner
by Chuck Wiggins

The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club has endorsed Jim Baca in his bid to become New Mexico's Commissioner of Public Lands. "I am proud to have endorsement of this esteemed conservation group," Baca said. "It is especially welcomed as we enter the 'decade of the environment'. I am honored that this organization would acknowledge my work as conservationist during my first term as State Land Commissioner." The Club backed Baca in his successful bid for office in 1982. He subsequently served as Land Commissioner from 1983 to 1987. The Land Commissioner manages over 13 million acres of state-owned land and mineral rights. Royalties from these lands are a major source of funds for the state's educational institutions.

Many people credit Baca for bringing New Mexico's land office into the 20th century. He modernized the procedures of the land office, and recognized that sound management of public resources makes sense environmentally as well as economically. Although well-respected for this work, Baca was unable to run for a second term because New Mexico law prevented incumbents in state-wide offices from serving consecutive terms. That law has now changed, and, starting in 1990, state-wide office holders may serve two consecutive terms.

"This endorsement is extremely important because of the number of Sierra Club members who will actively work in this campaign," according to Baca. "Past experience has shown that Sierra Club members are tireless in grassroot work. I am confident they will succeed in making this campaign victorious."

If you would like additional information or would like to help with this campaign, please contact Chuck Wiggins at (505) 266-3622.

Rio Grande Conservation Committee

The Rio Grande Chapter Conservation Committee will begin holding scheduled meetings for 1990. Mark the following dates and locations on your calendar:

- | | |
|--------------|---------|
| March 24 | Socorro |
| May 19 | Socorro |
| July 21 | Socorro |
| September 22 | Socorro |

The meetings will start at 10:00 a.m. and adjourn by mid-afternoon.

Participants at these meetings will include Chapter ExCom members, Chapter conservation and issue chairpersons, Group chairpersons, Group conservation and issue chairpersons, and other interested members.

The purpose of these Conservation meetings is to have in-depth presentations and discussions of conservation issues which are facing the Chapter. In the past these types of presentations and discussions have taken place at ExCom meetings. The Conservation committee will make recommendations to the Chapter ExCom for their action. Written reports will be submitted to the Chapter ExCom and reported in the Rio Grande Sierran.

It is hoped that this new method of operating will allow for all conservation issues to receive the time they deserve and for the Chapter to function more efficiently.

If you want to learn more about these meetings, please contact George Grossman and Tom Brasfield (see Chapter Directory).

Gray Ranch Update
by Pat Penfield and Storm Ser

"a rare opportunity to save landscape where wildlife can ro between rugged mountains a grassland valleys, unhampered fencing, roads, or url development."
--Sierra Magazine (Jan.-Feb., 1990)

Nestled in the remote bootheel southwestern New Mexico, the G Ranch encompasses over 300,000 ac of land truly remarkable for biological diversity. Gray Ra habitats include the Animas Mounta with their broadleaved and decidu forests, woodlands, chaparral, surrounding native grasslar interdigitated with riparian are The Ranch is home to 24 federal state endangered species, with 1 species of mammals (75) than found anywhere else in the refuge national park system of contiguous 48 states.

After a long period of deli negotiation, The Nature Conserv has succeeded in purchasing the body of the Ranch, and will lease remaining private, state, and inholdings that together make up Gray Ranch. Currently, TNC developing a management plan. I our fervent hope that such a will mandate management of the F as a single, intact ecological that preserves, protects, promotes the biological diversit its indigenous species. Stay tur

Susan Tixier to Lo for Sierra Club
by Chuck Wiggins

Susan Tixier will lobby on t of the Sierra Club during Mexico's 1990 legislative ses Tixier, an attorney and member of New Mexico Bar, previously serv the Club's lobbyist in 1987.

Susan is well known to New l environmentalists. She w founding member of the New Environmental Law Center, and as an aide to former Governor Anaya. A long-time environ activist, Susan has worked numerous political campaigns a employed by the Wilderness Soci a grassroots coordinator to t the New Mexico Wilderness Coal: BLM Wilderness pro



DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

MARCH 3RD

Earth Day
April 22, 1990

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE RIO GRANDE SIERRA

Please consider the above deadline to be just what it says a DEADLINE. We will no longer be able to except articles after the deadline as late articles severely complicates our ability to get out six issues a year. Thank you for your support. Editor

DIRTY WORDS
LIKE "OIL SPILL" ARE AN AFFRONT TO ALL OF US.

The Exxon Valdez oil spill is a tragic lesson for Americans. Help us eliminate dirty words like "oil spill" from the evening news. Join the Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club's Vision for its' Second Century

by Tom Brasfield



The centennial year of the Sierra Club is fast approaching. We will be 100 years old in 1992. Many activities are being planned to celebrate this momentous occasion. Recently the Sierra Club Board of Directors adopted the following statement of vision for our second century:

The Challenge

We are facing a global environmental crisis that grows more urgent every day. Threats that were once inconceivable--such as massive oil spill disasters, global climate change, and the poisoning of our air, land, and water--are becoming common events. Species are being annihilated and wilderness is being destroyed at an alarming and accelerating rate.

We live each day knowing that in a few generations--unless humankind takes drastic steps to protect our planet--it is possible that the Earth will hurtle around the Sun devoid of life as we know it.

There is no priority more urgent than saving the Earth.

Our Vision

For nearly 100 years, Sierra Club members have shared a vision of humanity living in harmony with the Earth. We envision a world where wilderness areas and open spaces are protected habitats sustaining all species...a world where oceans and streams are clean and the air is pure...a world where a healthy biosphere and a nontoxic environment are inalienable rights. In short, we envision a world saved from the threat of unalterable planetary disaster.

To save our planet, we must change the world:

- *Priorities must change: People must learn to live in ways that preserve and protect our precious resources.
- *Policies must change: Our institutions must abandon practices that recklessly endanger the environment.
- *Values must change: Progress must be measured by its long-term value to living systems and creatures rather than its short-term value to special interests or the economy.

To achieve this vision, people across the nation and around the world must speak out with a powerful voice that cannot be ignored. Aggressive grassroots action on an unprecedented scale is essential to protect our environment and our species. There is no other choice. It will require leadership that is visionary, experienced, and strong.

Our Role

The Sierra Club is uniquely qualified to lead this grassroots action to save the Earth. We are America's largest and most effective grassroots environmental organization--an experienced, respected, and committed fellowship of citizen activists. Within our ranks lie the expertise, wisdom, and vitality to find the new directions needed to meet the challenges of the future.

We offer proven ability to influence public policy and empower individuals to confront local, national, and global problems. From town halls to our nation's capital to global institutions, Sierra Club activists are scoring enormous victories for the environment through personal action, education, litigation, lobbying, and participation in the political process.

As the Sierra Club prepares for its second century, we offer to America and the world our vision of humanity living in harmony with nature. We dedicate ourselves to achieving this vision as we reaffirm our passionate commitment to explore, enjoy, and protect the Earth.

Celebrate the Occasion!



You, your family, or any group can share a special moment of pride, honor, and joy through the Sierra Club's Commemoratives Program. People have made commemorative gifts to celebrate a wide range of events from major accomplishments to those happy, smaller events in life which we all experience.

Commemoratives are unlike any other gift, and raise important funds which support efforts to protect the environment while paying tribute to those you love.

The process is simple. For more information call Teresa Sweeney at 415-776-2211.

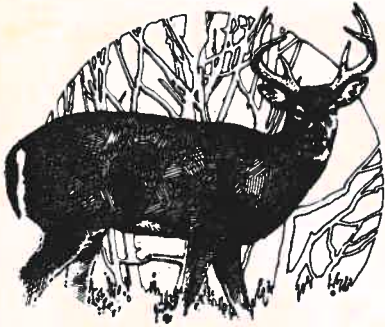
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Earth Day - April 22, 1990



Wildlife Legislative Council by Yvonne Chauvin

In early November, 1989, more than a dozen individuals affiliated with local environmental, hunting and fishing groups began meeting biweekly to discuss wildlife management in New Mexico. It was recognized that while the groups and individuals might disagree on some of the issues, much common ground existed.

The Wildlife Legislative Council (WLC) was formed to provide an information source and a communication network to facilitate a united front in addressing wildlife issues. The WLC will focus on the state legislative process, but will also work on national issues where New Mexico wildlife would be impacted. The WLC does not intend to preempt constituent groups. Rather, it will identify both short-term (reactive) and long-term (pro-active) goals, develop strategies, and coordinate the efforts of those individuals and groups working to maintain or to enact wildlife laws which best serve all wildlife species and the interests of the general public.

A major catalyst for the formation of the Wildlife Legislative Council was a series of articles published last fall by the Albuquerque Tribune. This expose galvanized public interest in protecting New Mexico wildlife from poaching, privatization and commercialization.

Four issues expected to surface in the upcoming session of the New Mexico Legislature are discussed below: game ranching, wildlife depredation, instream flow, and the E-team. The WLC recommends strong opposition to the first two and careful watching of the other two.

GAME RANCHING

During the 1989 session of the New Mexico Legislature, over sixty organizations (ranging from the National Rifle Association to National Audubon Society and Wildlife Rescue, Inc.) joined forces to defeat SB-415, David Hopcraft's attempt to privatize New Mexico wildlife on an experimental game ranch. Mr. Hopcraft, a rancher from Kenya, is back in Santa Fe lining up support for a second attempt.

Mr. Hopcraft's proposal is a form of "landscape conservation": improvement of habitat and species diversity in a defined area, while allowing free roaming organisms to move toward, and away from, the area, at will. The proposal is presented as a means to improve the quality of New Mexico's rangelands and, thereby, to increase wildlife numbers. For the last several decades, Mr. Hopcraft has been concerned with making landscape conservation profitable to large land owners. With the help of grants, Hopcraft has demonstrated, in Kenya, that more meat can be harvested by ranchers using many native species than by those raising only cattle and goats. Several realities, however, cloud the rosy picture painted by Mr. Hopcraft:

1. His proposal violates the tenet that wildlife is a public resource. Because the game ranch would not be fenced (in contrast to a Game Park), wildlife would be lured from surrounding lands, much of which has been devastated by overgrazing. Once on the game ranch, the wildlife would not be protected by State game laws.
2. Legalizing the sale of wildlife meat and expanding the demand for it would encourage poaching (already a serious problem) by providing a ready market for illegally taken animals.

3. There are many more species of native hoofed game in Africa than in North America. Application of Mr. Hopcraft's concept in New Mexico would only serve to replace cattle, goats and sheep with elk, deer and antelope. The tendency would be to maximize the production of these species at the expense of all others. The same rancher that are currently overgrazing their land and calling for predator and rodent control would continue to overgraze and to wage war on anything not directly tied to crop species.
4. Game ranching would concentrate the earnings from New Mexico wildlife in the hands of a few. According to a recent study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexicans spent \$36 million on hunting, fishing, viewing and photographing wildlife in 1985. This money is currently distributed widely across all levels of the economy.
5. Economic incentives to landowners to favor wildlife exist under current laws and regulations. Both the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and the New Mexico State University committee appointed to address the question reached the conclusion that there is no compelling reason for the New Mexico legislature to change the law so as to encourage the commercial harvest of free roaming wildlife for the purposes of meat production.

Mr. Hopcraft's efforts are well-funded and well-organized. He seems to be intent on cramming his proposal down the throat of New Mexico. He is being assisted by powerful local lobbyists and real-estate brokers.

If SB-415 is resurrected at the 1990 session, the WLC recommends that it be dealt a swift and final death and that Mr. Hopcraft and his self-serving friends be sent a strong message to take their snake oil elsewhere.

WILDLIFE DEPREDAATION

Wildlife Depredation Legislation is defined as legislation designed to require payment to individuals for damage by wildlife to private property. Included in the potential damage claims would be such items as livestock losses to mountain lions or bear, crop damage by big game species, grain crop damage by birds, fence damage by big game, orchard damage by many species, irrigation ditch damage by beavers, and bizarre claims such as interference with livestock reproduction by elk.

Legislation of this nature was introduced by the New Mexico livestock industry in 1986. The 1986 bill required payment, from the Game Protection Fund, for damages attributed to wildlife. Surprising support was evident in the fact that it cleared two committees before it was finally defeated on the Senate Floor. If this bill had passed, the combined annual cost for actual payment and administration of the program was estimated at \$1.5 million.

It is expected that a wildlife depredation bill will be introduced in the 1990 session and that it will be disguised with no mention of wildlife or livestock in the early drafts of the bill. It is also expected that the source of funding will be the General Fund instead of the Game Protection Fund. Such a ploy could put the Department of Game and Fish in the position that they will be forced politically to refrain from opposing the bill.

The WLC considers wildlife damage to property a natural event and a "cost of doing business". If an individual chooses to place sheep in bear or mountain lion habitat or plant wheat in elk habitat, then damages should be expected and accepted. We are opposed to wildlife depredation legislation as long as any public funding source (i.e., the New Mexico taxpayers) is to be used for payment.

INSTREAM FLOW

Environmentalists are working with Senator Stephen Stoddard and Representative Max Coll to draft an Instream Flow Protection Act for introduction in the 1990 session. Although the proposed bill, as currently written, is not as encompassing as the WLC would like, it is a good step in the right direction.

The proposed Act consists of three basic elements:

1. Creates a process for establishing a statewide system protecting instream flows in streams with existing adequate and perennial flows that are not substantially affected by the full exercise of existing diversion rights, and prescribes the methods by which additional stream segments may be added;
2. Designates initial stream segments to be protected as the Pecos River and its tributaries from their headwaters to the confluence with the Mora Pecos River, and the San Juan River from Navajo dam to Archuleta;
3. Directs that a study be made to evaluate instream flow protection or enhancement measures for streams that are substantially unaffected by existing diversions. This study shall include the identification of the costs and benefits of the protection or enhancement methods identified.

The principal element of protection is that after legislative designation as a protected instream flow segment, the state engineer shall deny any new water diversions at points upstream from the downstream limit of the designated segment. No water rights, minimum flows, diversions, or seniorities are involved.

The proposed Act is a carefully constructed compromise. The WLC recommends that the bill be tracked to make sure that no undesirable amendments are attached to it as it moves through the Legislature.

E-TEAM

The Environmental Team (E-Team) is a proposal of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics and the College of Engineering at New Mexico State University. The objectives of the E-Team are:

1. To promote a clearer understanding of environmental issues among the general public;
2. To strengthen the range and effectiveness of the Waste Management Education/Research Consortium (WERC) recently formed under a Department of Energy grant to the College of Engineering and to benefit from a close, cooperative working relationship with WERC;
3. To foster a more cooperative relationship among environmental agencies and those affected by environmental regulations and policies;
4. To provide the opportunity to work on objective, socially harmonious solutions to incipient environmental problems before they become full-blown environmental crises.

New Mexico State University is asking the legislature for \$1.8 million to fund the E-Team.

While the WLC supports the E-Team in concept, we have several concerns with regard to its implementation. For example, the membership of the E-Team and its advisory board should specifically include biologists, trained environmentalists, and well-qualified faculty members from other New Mexico institutions. Such participation is suggested in the proposal, but not mandated.

The biggest concern that the WLC has with the E-Team is that it smacks of the Range Improvement Task Force (RITF), another committee of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics. The RITF has no credibility as a professional, unbiased voice. They support game ranching; they allowed themselves to be political pawns in the controversy on grazing of sheep on state wildlife areas; and many environmentalists feel that they consistently contribute to the overgrazing of public lands with their "research". Our concern is that the E-Team will become nothing more than another self-serving group, one controlled by those wishing to hide environmental degradation behind the facade of academe.

For more information on these issues and the Wildlife Legislative Council, contact Larry Caudill in Albuquerque (255-2515), Ron Mitchell in Santa Fe (983-5640), or Bob Tafanelli in Las Cruces (526-9380).

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The Rio Grande SIERRAN

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We welcome contributions of articles, essays, prose, poetry, photographs, drawings or other submissions. We request that all submissions be signed and accompanied by a telephone number and address at which the author may be contacted. Submissions in electronic format are desired. To inquire about electronic formats acceptable and to submit submissions please contact the Editor: VALERIE HORTON 2100 DESERT DR #7, LAS CRUCES, NM 88001 (505) 526-1968

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"Leave it as it is. . .
 The ages have been at
 work on it, and man can
 only mar it."

Theodore Roosevelt



Photograph by Ike Eastvold

A bullet-damaged petroglyph concentration in Rinconada Canyon on Albuquerque's West Mesa. A shield anthropomorph has evidently been used for target practice, resulting in a spray of bullet scars. Notice the plain, three-holed circular mask on the rock's very edge, possibly a Koyemshi or Mudhead Clown mask. Putting masks on the edges of rocks in this fashion is a common feature of Rio Grande Style rock art and its predecessor the Jornada Style of rock art found further to the south, and may indicate something to do with the spirit-being's "all-seeing" or "seeing in all ways" powers. The mask with a bird (possibly a parrot or raptor) perched on top is a common association on the escarpment, and is still used today on certain kachina masks by the Pueblo people.

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RIO GRANDE GROUP REPORTS

SANTA FE GROUP REPORT
by Randy Freeman

The Outings Committee is completing work on hike leader standards. Several standards have to do with first aid training, etc. Contact Norma McCallan (listed in the directory) for more information.

The Santa Fe Group is making a major effort to stop pumice mining in the Jemez. See the article elsewhere in the Sierran.

Other Santa Fe Forest issues include:
-- Comments have been filed opposing most of the major Santa Fe ski area expansion alternatives.
-- A decision is due soon on our appeal of the Bonito timber sale which includes steep slope cable logging.
-- An EIS on the timber sale proposed for Elk Mountain is also due soon. We've fought previous incarnations of this sale for more than 10 years.
-- We've asked the southwest regional Forester to halt timber sales in the Jemez Mountains until the current management of the Santa Fe Forest is removed. This request is a follow up on the disastrous Los Utes timber sale.

The BLM has approved Molycorp's application to construct a new tailing pond near its Questa molybdenum mining operation. Legal intervention is being studied.

Capital Developers of Santa Fe is attempting to buy the huge Greer Garson ranch near Pecos. Plans include residential subdivisions, golf courses, an airport, etc. as well as other ludicrously inappropriate developments. The local community is outraged and massive opposition may have killed the resort idea by the time you read this report.

SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO GROUP REPORT
by Storm Serway

Marianne Thaeler, our Membership Chair, has started an "Easy Hike" program to encourage the retirees in our community to become involved in the Sierra Club.

Our programs scheduled for the next two months are concentrating on education about the land in Southern New Mexico. We will have presentations on vegetation changes in New Mexico, public lands grazing, and desertification in the area.

The public hearings held by the Game Commission and the Game Commission meeting itself held on December 15, were well attended by Sierra Club members as well as many other environmentalists. We feel that this attendance was a big plus in the decision of the Game Commission to continue and extend the Sikes Act program.

EL PASO GROUP
by Gary Williams

Long time group member Tom Brasfield received the Rio Grande Chapter Environmentalist of the Year Award at the Chapter Retreat held in November 89. Our group congratulates Tom on the award and all of the hard work that preceded it. Thanks Tom!

A major goal for the 1990's is establishing an office and hiring a half-time employee. One possible means of funding this office is a grant proposal we submitted to the Texas Office of the Governor to establish a recycling center. The office would focus on educational and brokerage programs to match institutional producers with collectors.

Progress continues to be made on the expansion/protection of Franklin Mountain State Park. In December, 6,800 acres of land owned by the Public Service Board was officially transferred to the Park. The group has also responded vigorously to the Public Service Board's request to place four large storage tank within the boundaries of the park.

ALBUQUERQUE GROUP REPORT
by Chuck Wiggins

Heidi Fleischmann, the Group's coordinator for air quality issues, organized a clean-air discussion and press conference that was held on Thursday, Jan. 19th. Representatives from leading conservation organizations met to discuss national legislation that will affect the quality of our air for years to come. The Clubs National Director for Toxics and Pollution, Dan Weiss, briefed those in attendance on current efforts to reauthorize and expand the Clean Air Act.

Group activists met with Rep. Steve Schiff during the recent congressional recess. A number of issues were discussed, including clean-air legislation, the proposed Petroglyph National Monument, and W.I.P.P. Club representatives also thanked Schiff for his recent support of the Nevada Wilderness Bill.

Marc Bedner is now editor of the Group's newsletter. Marc received high marks for his first edition of Wildline which is now printed on recycled paper. Special thanks go to Ellen Loehman, who served as newsletter editor for the past two years.

Sierra Club members in Albuquerque plan to participate in a number of activities in celebration of Earth Day 1990. Among other events, the Albuquerque Group will sponsor hikes for the disabled, educational programs and outings, and a candidates forum on environmental issues.



TEACHERS: Is your class ready for Earth Day 1990?

Our planet needs help but rain forest destruction, acid rain, ozone holes, and now global warming seem pretty big problems - far beyond what most classrooms can handle. Solutions, however, start at home and students need to realize that they are as much a part of the problem as they are the solution. That's what Earth Day 1990 is all about.

A free ten-page packet chockfull of practical mini-lesson plans is available to you. Our selection of activities for students of all ages will make it easy for you to have a meaningful activity whether you work on it for a day, a week, a month or all year.

Write for yours today: Send a SASE (65 cent stamp) to Pat Suiter, P.O. Box 557953, Miami, FL 33255. Activities are listed by grade level and can be used by a class or a whole school. -- by Pat Sutter, Environmental Education Committee

JOHN MUIR DAY, APRIL 21, 1990

Materials on John Muir are available from Sierra Club Public Affairs, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109. Write for a price sheet of inexpensive materials you can use with your class.



John Muir's birthday is April 21

OUTINGS

by Norma McCallan

The following list of outings has been compiled from the Group outings schedules so that any Sierra Club member living anywhere in the Chapter can take advantage of our many and varied Group outings. In some cases, as noted, prior reservations are required. Hikers should bring lunch, sturdy hiking shoes, and clothing appropriate for the weather. Radios are never allowed; dogs are allowed only if noted. Leaders reserve the right to turn away anyone whose equipment, experience, or health conditions appear unsuitable for the particular outing.

- SAT. FEB 10 SANTA FE AREA
Moderate hike for dogs, their owners & friends. Ken Adam 983-1949. Leave PERA Lot 8am.
- SAT. FEB 10 SANTA FE AREA
Easy ski tour for beginners. Myles Brown 471-5075. Leave 9am. Must call for reservations.
- SAT. FEB 10 ORGAN MOUNTAINS
Day hike to Dripping Springs in Ice Canyon from Cox Ranch, recently acquired by the BLM. Rollin Wickenden 915-598-8042.
- SUN. FEB 11 BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT
Moderate/strenuous hike. Merrill Goodwin 471-5442. Leave PERA Lot, Santa Fe, 8am.
- SUN. FEB 11 LOS ALAMOS AREA
Moderate/strenuous ski tour. David Brown 662-2185. Leave 7:30am. Must call for reservations.
- SAT. FEB 17 ORGAN MOUNTAINS
Day hike to Achenback Canyon. Sandy Anderson 523-5179.
- SAT. FEB 17 BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT
Moderate/strenuous hike. John McClure 988-1751. Leave PERA Lot, Santa Fe, 8am.
- SAT. FEB 17 SANTA FE AREA
Moderate/strenuous ski tour on Borrego Trail. Roger Hathaway 471-0005. Leave Santa Fe 9am. Must call for reservations.
- SUN. FEB 18 SANTA FE AREA
Moderate hike on Buckman Mesa and Otowi Peak, mostly off trail. Norbert Sperlich 983-1962. Leave PERA Lot 8am.
- SAT/SUN. FEB 17-18 CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK
Backpack to Yucca Cabin. Wesley Leonard 915-581-0284.
- FRI-SUN. FEB 16-18 SANDIA MOUNTAINS
Overnight camp at lower Juan Tabo Canyon Camp, and dayhike to controversial Evergreen Hills Powerline Corridor. Stefan Verchinski 888-1370.
- SAT. FEB 24 SANTA FE AREA
Moderate hike near Santa Fe. Joe Whelan 984-0746. Leave PERA Lot 8:30am.
- SAT. FEB 24 SANTA FE AREA
Moderate ski tour on Pacheco Canyon Loop. Page Press 983-1523. Leave PERA Lot 9am.
- SAT. FEB 24 EL PASO AREA
Dayhike in Franklin Mountains State Park. Claus Christiansen 915-598-8304.
- SUN. FEB 25 SANTA FE AREA
Easy/moderate hike to Atalaya Peak, behind Santa Fe. Art Judd 982-3212. Leave PERA Lot 9am.
- SUN. FEB 25 PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT (ALB)
Hike the Geological Window Area in the proposed Petroglyph National Monument. Bring camera, water, binoculars, kids ok, no dogs. Ike Eastvold 255-7679 Meet at Ducan Donuts, corner of Coors & Sequia 1 pm.
- SUN. FEB 25 CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK
Dayhike to New Cave. Dan Opplinger 915-595-8943.
- SAT. MAR 3 LAS CRUCES/EL PASO AREA
Dayhike to Mt. Cristo Rey, near Sunland Park, NM. Rae Hamilton 915-544-7149.
- SAT. MAR 3 SANTA FE AREA
Moderate/strenuous dayhike along Railroad Spur line from Santa Fe to Lamy. Dogs allowed. Leave PERA Lot 8:30am.
- SUN. MAR 10 PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT (ALB)
Hike the Rinconda Canyon area in the proposed Petroglyph National Monument. Bring camera, water, binoculars, kids ok, no dogs. Ike Eastvold 255-7679 Meet at Ducan Donuts, corner of Coors & Sequia 1pm.
- SUN. MAR 18 LAS CRUCES AREA
Hike to Aden Crater/Aden Lava Flow. Storm Sermay/Perry Plummer 521-3348.
- SUN. MAR 31 PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT (ALB)
Hike the Indian Petroglyph State Park vicinity in the proposed Petroglyph National Monument. Bring camera, water, binoculars, kids ok, no dogs. Ike Eastvold 255-7679 Meet at Ducan Donuts, corner of Coors & Sequia 1pm.

WANTED: Leader for a Trail Maintenance Trip in the Gila Wilderness. The Forest Service wants Sierra Club assistance. Could be run as a National Service Trip, or as a Rio Grande Chapter Trip, with volunteers. Call Linda or John Buchser 281-2015 (Albq.) for more information.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

MARCH 3RD



Mexican Spotted Owl

by Sam Hitt

The Mexican Spotted Owl, *Strix occidentalis lucida*, is a habitat specialist that ekes out an increasingly precarious existence in the last remnant stands of old growth or ancient forests in the southwestern mountains.

Our owl is closely related to the better known and intensively studied Northern Spotted Owl of the Pacific Northwest. The Northern Spotted Owl is currently in the process of being listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act due to the widely publicized destruction of the ancient Douglas Fir forests in Washington, Oregon, and Northern California.

The Mexican Spotted Owl is found primarily in the mixed conifer forests of the southwestern mountains of New Mexico and Arizona, extending into small portions of Southern Utah and Colorado, Western Texas and into the mountains of Sinaloa in Western Mexico. At one time the Mexican Spotted Owl was also found in the lower elevation riparian habitats but due to the systematic loss of these habitats the owl is rarely seen in the low desert.

There are thought to be only between 350 and 600 breeding pairs compared to over twice that number of Northern Spotted Owls. This alarmingly small and patchily distributed population has lead many wildlife authorities to call for immediate listing of the Mexican Spotted Owl as endangered.

The Mexican Spotted Owl favors extensive blocks of uneven-aged, multi-storied ancient forests and abundant standing dead trees and large down logs that provide habitat for the wood rats and other small mammals that compose most of the owl's diet. This dense ancient forest canopy protects the owl from the temperature extremes which characterize the

predators. Pairs breed on the average only every other year. This low reproductive rate is characteristic of species associated with stable environments and, when coupled with a high rate of juvenile mortality, makes it difficult for the owl to recover from the disruption caused by loss and fragmentation of habitat.

The ancient forest habitat of the owl has long been favored by loggers and as a result only between 3% and 15% remains in the southwest. The only significant stands of ancient forest today occur on steep slopes, at the head of inaccessible box canyons and at the high elevations. The introduction of steep slope logging technology from the northwest now opens up even these last strongholds of uncut forest to exploitation.

The only study that explored the conflict between the owl's habitat and logging was done in Northern Arizona. In that study, nearly 90% of owl habitat was found to be available to logging and over half of this habitat was scheduled to be logged in the next five years!

However, long before the ancient forest habitat of the owl is actually destroyed, the remnants of this critical ecosystem will become so fragmented that it will no longer serve as viable habitat for the owl or many of the other 20% of forest species dependent or associated with ancient forests.

Unlike the situation in the Northwest in which clear-cutting fragments formerly continuous owl habitat, the habitat of the Mexican Spotted Owl is already naturally fragmented by the arid environment. The current round of Forest Service plans, which call for an increase in logging of nearly 50% in the next ten years and 75% over the next fifty years, will most likely further fragment the habitat of the owl.

The Forest Service has responded to the Spotted Owl crisis by instituting a set of guidelines that, instead of using the best available information and adopting a conservative approach to management, allows extensive cutting in both occupied and potential habitat. The guidelines set aside a 450 acre "core



Mexican Spotted Owl Photo Pete Hungemann

area" that cannot be logged but can be roaded even though the best available research shows the owl needs an undisturbed core area over twice this size. When the timber industry complained, this core area was lowered to 300 acres on the Lincoln National Forest. In addition, the guidelines allow logging in up to half the remaining 1550 acres of Spotted owl habitat outside the core area.

An indication of what the Forest Service feels is necessary habitat for the owl comes from a former Supervisor on the Lincoln National Forest. He was quoted in the *El Paso Times* as saying that Spotted Owls can tolerate logging "as long as we don't cut the trees they're living in". The Audubon Society has recently appealed a timber sale on the Lincoln to counter such cavalier attitudes and most likely many more will have to be appealed before the Forest Service will be convinced to obey the law and maintain viable populations.

The owl will only be protected if it is listed under the Endangered Species Act. However, now it languishes (along with thousands of other species) as a "candidate" for listing. Arizona lists the owl as threatened meaning that its population has significantly declined and could be in jeopardy of becoming extinct in the near future. The Forest Service considers the owl only to be "sensitive" and the Mexican Spotted Owl does not receive special protection under New Mexico law.

Dr. Robin Silver of Phoenix recently petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Mexican Spotted Owl as endangered. The Fish and Wildlife Service has until mid-March to respond to this petition. Most likely they will try to side-step this issue because- it is a political hot potato.

Forest Guardians in Santa Fe is now assembling experts from the new and exciting science of conservation biology to support Dr. Silver's petition and prevent the Fish and Wildlife Service from avoiding its responsibilities to fully protect the owl.

The Rio Grande Chapter voted at its last ExCom meeting to support the petitioning drive. Individual Sierra Club Groups and other environmental organizations are welcome and strongly encouraged to become petitioners.

Write or call Sam Hitt at Forest Guardians (616 Don Gaspar, Santa Fe, NM 87501 or (505) 988-9126 if you want to have your Group or organization join the effort to help the spotted owl.