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The Sierran



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News of the Sierra Club • Rio Grande Chapter • Serving New Mexico & West Texas since 1963



This data center in Wilmer, TX, is currently under construction. Opponents of the proposed Project Jupiter Data Center in Doña Ana County, NM, gained a victory against the project recently, which had to scrap its plans to power the center using a huge methane gas plant. Despite retracting their request for an air pollution permit amounting to more than NM's three largest cities — Project Jupiter is back with a new proposal to use methane gas fuel cells. **Comments on this new proposal are due on July 6th. Visit riograndesierraclub.org to make a comment before the deadline.** Photograph courtesy of Rick Baraff.

Data Centers

Community wins a round against Project Jupiter

Environmental advocates notch a “W” in fight with proposed data center, but the battle continues

David Baake

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Southern New Mexico advocates have scored a major win for public health and the environment.

The developers behind the controversial Project Jupiter AI data center have withdrawn their application to build a massive, 2.8-gigawatt gas-fired power plant in Doña Ana County.

The developers were forced to pull their application after Sierra Club and the Center for Biological Diversity filed detailed technical comments in op-

position. The groups explained the permit was unlawful under state and federal regulations, including because it would significantly worsen smog pollution in southern New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, which already exceeds public-health limits.

In addition, the Sierra Club and an array of other groups helped organize more than 7,000 public comments in opposition to the air permit. The New Mexico Environment Department planned to hold a public hearing on the application.

Developers are now back at square one with a new plan to power their AI data center. That would rely on 2.45 GW of natural gas fuel cells instead of


single-cycle turbines, which would have been used under the original plan.

Although fuel cells use less water and contribute less to smog pollution, the new proposal would still emit massive amounts of carbon dioxide — over 9.1 metric tons per year. That would make it the second-largest pollution source in the state after the Four Corners Power Plant. It is also more than the city-wide emissions of El Paso, which totaled 7.6 million metric tons in 2019.

The Sierra Club intends to submit comments to the state environmental department challenging the new proposal before the July 6 deadline.

— Continued on page 6

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Visit riograndesierraclub.org for a list of volunteers & committees

Election Results

Wins, losses in 2026 NM primary races

Nearly all of our Chapter-endorsed candidates prevailed in June 2 election

Richard Barish

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Primary night was a good night for Chapter-endorsed candidates. Deb Haaland, with her record as an environmental champion, won the Democratic nomination for governor in a blowout. Amanda López Askin, who stood against election denialists, prevailed in the secretary of state race.

In legislative races, polluting industry PACs spent big trying to defeat environmental candidates. They failed in almost every race. Congratulations to two first-time candidates who won very competitive races for open positions: Lori Martinez, who won a Doña Ana County seat, and Yolanda Jaramillo, who prevailed in a northern New Mexico race.

Incumbent champions also comfortably beat back challenges from candidates supported by the fossil fuel and data center PACs. Yanira Gurrola and Miguel Garcia won their races for seats on Albuquerque's west side. Longtime progressive champion Patricia Roybal Caballero handled a challenge for a southwest Albuquerque seat. And in the Northeast heights of Albuquerque, Diane Torres-Velásquez will be headed back to Santa Fe for a second term.

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In the north, our ally and friend Joseph Hernandez prevailed in his race. And former Chapter executive committee member Anita Gonzales convincingly defeated the industry-backed former representative from that Las Vegas-area district. It was the fourth head-to-head matchup of those two. Paulene Abeyta will be back for a second term from her sprawling district.

Looking south, Ray Lara and Micaela Cadena were also winners on primary night.

In county races, progressive and environmental champion Eric Olivas won his race. Daisy Maldonado, a leader in the fight against the Project Jupiter data center, was a winner in Doña Ana County as was Henry Roybal in Santa Fe County.

As always, not every Chapter-endorsed candidate won. Matthew McQueen failed in his bid to be the next land commissioner. For the past 10 years, state McQueen, D-Sandoval/Santa Fe, has been one of our “go-to” champions in the legislature. We wish him the best in whatever is next for him.

The winner in that Democratic primary race was Juan Sanchez. While not as experienced as McQueen, we are hopeful Juan will be an outstanding land commissioner, should he win in November.

Nancy Wright lost in a longshot bid to unseat an incumbent in HD 40. We thank her for that effort and hope to see her return.

Primaries are only the first leg of a marathon leading up to the November general election. We did a great job helping to defeat oil-and-gas and data center money in the primary, but the industry has a seemingly endless supply of dollars that they will not spare in their efforts to defeat our candidates in November.

You can help make sure they don't succeed by contributing generously to our PAC. Please help make our work possible by making a contribution online at www.riograndesierraclub.org/donate/.

Results of our Chapter-endorsed primary candidates

Names printed in bold indicate the candidate won their primary race and that they will advance to the general election in the fall.

- **Deb Haaland, governor**
- Matthew McQueen, land commissioner
- **Amanda López Askin, secretary of state**
- **Joseph Hernandez, HD 4**
- **Patricia Roybal Cabellero, HD 13**
- **Miguel Garcia, HD 14**
- **Yanira Gurrola, HD 16**
- **E. Diane Torres-Velásquez, HD 30**
- **Micaela Lara Cadena HB33**
- **Raymundo Lara, HD 34**
- **Lori Martinez, HD 37**
- Nancy Wright, HD 40
- **Yolanda Jaramillo, HD 41 won**
- **Michelle Paulene Abeyta HD 69**
- **Anita Gonzales, District 70**
- **Eric Olivas, Bernalillo County Commission, Dist. 5**
- **Daisy Maldonado, Doña Ana County Commission, Dist. 1**
- **Henry Roybal, Santa Fe County Commission, Dist. 1**

Support your local chapter

The Sierra Club is a non-profit 501(c)(4) organization. This means that membership dues and most contributions are not tax-deductible. This status allows us to lobby for environmental issues and support political candidates. Our membership activities and lobbying costs relating to advocacy can be supported by your non-tax-deductible contributions to the organization.

Regular donations

Help protect people, animals, water and our public lands in New Mexico and West Texas. Your generous donation is an investment in the future of our environment and the protection of our most special places!

Political Action Committee

Nothing has a bigger impact on our climate, water, land and wildlife than public policy and the people who set that policy. Help us elect environmental champions!

Need a tax-deduction for your gift?

Consider earmarking your contribution to the Sierra Club Foundation or to the Global Warming Express Program. Other options include donating from your IRA or gifting your vehicle, making an in-kind donation such as office equipment, or including a contribution the Chapter or the Sierra Club in your estate planning.

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For more info, visit us online or contact Camilla Feibelman at camilla.feibelman@sierraclub.org, 505-715-8388 or 505-243-7767. Thank you!



A short vacation in Northern New Mexico was a good reminder to Chapter Director Camilla Feibelman just how beautiful that part of the state truly is. She and her dog Lucero hiked 11 miles from El Vado to Heron and explored Carson National Forest. While enjoying the site, she also noted how engaged the public is becoming to the dangers the state's open spaces face. Whether an area was threatened by mining, radiation exposure or even drought, people were rallying support and educating folks about what they can do to help stem the tide against the nation's public lands remaining solely for the public's enjoyment. Photos courtesy of Camilla Feibelman.

Director's Column

A weekend in nature provides much-needed rest

The fight is far from over but refueling is important and New Mexico is a great recharging station

Camilla Feibelman

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This column was due to our dear editor, Reed, on Sat, May 30. But I didn't have the heart to write without knowing how things would look on Tuesday, June 2, Primary Day.

Earlier this year, President Trump had rolled back practically all federal actions to curb the climate crisis the day after seven New Mexico Democrats voted against state climate legislation at the Roundhouse. So as I watched the fossil fuel and data center industries flood our primary elections with funds, I wasn't sure what to expect.

But as I watched Deb Haaland accept the Democratic nomination for governor at the Old Town Plaza in Albuquerque and saw that no state House rep had lost their seat to industry-funded candidates, hope felt like the cool breeze that filled the plaza. With this historic moment to defend ourselves from environmental and democratic destruction, I was finally ready to write.

In May, I had a bit of time to reflect on what I hope is my half-life and a quarter of my life at the Sierra Club. A wonderful volunteer lent me his little adobe cabin in northern New Mexico, in the district where Yolanda Jaramillo, an acequia leader, won her primary.

There was so much to learn and understand from even being there just a couple of days. The Cumbre and Toltec Railroad was closed because the coal-powered train could spark a forest fire in

the extremely dry conditions. Though El Vado is undergoing repairs, Heron is also profoundly low from the lack of winter snowpack and the ongoing drought.

It was Memorial Day weekend, and although there were a fair number of campers and RVs, it didn't seem as full with excitement of the start of summer, as I expected. A colleague reminded me that gas prices are incredibly high for a family wanting to get away for the weekend.

There were signs around the district reminding people that they're eligible for compensation for radiation exposure from the nuclear bomb development and testing. Ironically next to them were signs calling people to oppose a newly proposed uranium mine at Canjilon, not far from Chama.

In the Carson National Forest, I drove out toward the proposed mine site and met a woman who said the testing zone is just over the ridge from her home. Although she worried about the impact of the planned mine on her own life, she said she is most worried about the impacts on future generations. And then there's a question of jobs: What are the sustainable industries that let local folks thrive where they are? The Chama downtown strip was lined with banners picturing graduates and the jobs they aspire to do.

And yet for all the things to worry about, the beauty of Northern New Mexico was breathtaking. I hiked 11 miles from El Vado to Heron with my tiny dog, Lucero.

A State Parks employee welcomed visitors as we came through, invited us to the birds of prey talk and a Sunday breakfast he and his wife put on

each week. At sunset I was only barely returning to the trailhead when I met the couple on their way to check on me. The hike was magical. Cicadas applauded our progress. Wildflowers broke through the rocky soil at every turn. The water of the Chama cooled our feet and paws.

There's more to every place than a passing visitor can know or understand, but I'm grateful to all those who work to protect our natural resources, from the state park employee to the state House candidates who will advocate for the health care, education and our natural resources.

Politics can be hard, but it's where we make our society. It's where we defend our democracy. I hope you'll join us outside and continue falling in love with our special places. I also hope you'll join us in advocating for those who accept the call to public service, who make sure those places are cared for, for all of us.

The Sierran

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Read the pdf edition online at

riograndesierraclub.org/the-sierran



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Home to the Permian Basin, New Mexico's Eddy County is now the 12th most smog-polluted county in the nation, making it one of only two rural counties with a air quality rating so low that it was recently included on a list of the top 25 counties in the US with dangerous levels of air pollution. A large portion of the region's pollution stems from older, low-producing oil and gas wells releasing methane and smog-forming chemicals into the atmosphere. Many of these wells have aging infrastructure, growing maintenance needs and significant cleanup risks.

Clean Air

Hidden crisis: 2026 State of the Air Report

New federal bill seeks to exempt polluters from basic safety rules even though firms account for more than 50% of air pollution in New Mexico

Antoinette Reyes

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The American Lung Association released its 2026 "State of the Air" report, and the results are alarming. Nearly half of Americans are breathing unhealthy air. Right here in New Mexico, that includes more than half of all children.

The report tracks ground-level ozone, which most of us call smog. Think of smog as an invisible, toxic blanket over our towns. When

we breathe it in, it acts like a severe sunburn on our lungs. It triggers asthma attacks and raises the risk of heart disease. This pollution doesn't just happen on its own. It cooks in the hot sun, forming from a mix of fumes coming from car tailpipes, factory smokestacks and oil and gas sites.

In the Permian Basin, Eddy County is now the 12th most smog-polluted county in the country – making it one of only two rural counties in the nation to appear on the top 25 list. Because pollution knows no boundaries, the wind carries these harmful fumes far beyond the oilfields and into neighboring communities.

A massive amount of this local pollution comes from older, low-producing oil and gas wells. Just like thousands of leaky faucets left dripping, these aging wells release an oversized share of methane and smog-forming chemicals. Many of these wells are also aging infrastructure with growing maintenance and cleanup risks.

Cleaning up this mess is exactly why we are

For more info — webinar, documents

We dove into the State of the Air report on our regularly scheduled late April Climate Corps webinar, a statewide series dedicated to environmental education. To learn more about any of these topics or to request a recording of our April webinar, email antoinette.reyes@sierraclub.org.

fighting for state-level bonding reform, so that companies are essentially insured against the future cost of cleanup. It is also why we are pushing back against the federal Protect Domestic Oil and Gas Small Business Act.

The bill tries to exempt operators of these low-producing wells from pollution rules. This is dangerous because these wells are responsible for most of the nation's oil and gas methane emissions.

Nationally, they make up over 75 percent of all active oil and gas wells, and here in New Mexico, they represent more than half of our active wells while generating only a single-digit share of total oil and gas production.

Clean Air

NM modernizes its air quality permit fees

Environmental Improvement Board updates fees, helps complaints and rules enforcement

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New Mexico's clean air program will receive a long-needed funding update after the Environmental Improvement Board approved the state Environment Department's proposal to modernize air quality permit fees.

The updated fees will help fund the Air Quality Bureau's core work: reviewing permits, maintaining air monitoring systems, investigating

complaints, and enforcing air pollution rules across the state.

Environmental advocates support the proposal because New Mexico's air program has been operating under outdated fees while permitting workloads, oil and gas production and pollution oversight needs have grown dramatically.

Underfunding has contributed to delays in enforcement and complaint response, leaving some communities waiting far too long for action.

For families living near oil and gas development, strong air oversight is not abstract.

Communities in the Permian Basin and beyond experience flaring, odors and air pollution that can worsen asthma, respiratory illness and quality of life.

The new fees went into effect June 1 and will help ensure New Mexico has the staff, technical capacity and monitoring infrastructure needed to keep clean air protections working.

This is a major step toward a stronger, more responsive air quality program for New Mexico.

For more info on this, or other air quality news, visit us online at riograndesierraclub.org or email antoinette.reyes@sierraclub.org.

Earth Day

Family fun and solutions our planet needs

Thousands of New Mexicans attend Sierra Club's annual Earth Day Festival in Albuquerque

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Spring in Albuquerque kicked off with a family celebration of Earth Day, where more than 3,500 people learned about New Mexico's environment, visited with rescued wolves, perused electric vehicles and dined with culinary experts cooking on high efficiency induction stove tops.

The annual Earth Day Festival, produced by the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter, the city of Albuquerque, 350 NM, Sunny 505 and Gardenswartz Realty, invited families to enhance their connections to the natural world in the form of educational lectures and art. And it moved them to engage with the Earth more deeply through advocacy, skill-sharing and opportunities to enhance their day-to-day lives with environmental and efficiency improvements for their homes.

Organizers said the Earth Day Festival wasn't just for celebration, but to connect community members to resources that can reduce their environmental impact even in the face of the Trump administration's hostility toward the natural world and the people who care about it.

"I love meeting more people every year who want to make their homes, communities and our beautiful lands healthier and more resilient in spite of the federal attacks on environmental protections," said 350 NM organizer Stefi Weisburd and the electrification lead for the event.

That attitude was reflected throughout the event, but particularly in panel discussions such as "The Climate Crisis: Is It Time to Give Up?" (short answer: no), to climbing a rock wall, adopting a puppy that needs a permanent home or scoring some options on electrification improvements for their homes or automobiles.

Volunteers, or "Energy Guides," helped make these improvements achievable for guests by escorting them through assistance and grant programs, some offered through the state and federal governments.

Produced Water

Officials set stage for toxic wastewater soup

Water Quality Commission caves to industry, opening door for most permissive rules in nation

Dale Doremus

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Despite deep community opposition at its May 14 meeting, the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission accepted a rulemaking petition filed by an oil and gas industry-led organization.

The decision would begin the process of creating a rule allowing oil and gas wastewater — also known as "produced water" — to be discharged into New Mexico surface and groundwaters.

Accepting the rulemaking petition and scheduling a hearing are the first steps in a long rulemaking process.

Technical testimony and arguments on the merits of the proposed rule will be heard in a



Sarah Horowitz of Three Sisters Kitchen in Albuquerque does a live step-by-step cooking demonstration for attendees at Earth Day Festival 2026. Guests watched as Horowitz made a red chile vinaigrette that can spice up salads or work as a dip for vegetables, meats, or seafood. Recipes for all the food demonstrations are available online at EarthDayFestivalNM.org. Photo by Bill Rodgers.

If you weren't able to attend this year's event, much of what was shared that day is now available online at EarthDayFestivalNM.org.

Indeed, a wide variety of resources are posted on the site, from details on electrification programs to a collection of recipes from culinary experts who performed live demonstrations for the crowds.

Next year's Earth Day Festival has been set for Sunday, April 25, 2027 (10 a.m.-3 p.m.).

It may take place at the Rail Yards. More info will be shared as details begin to fall into place.

Anyone wishing to volunteer, table at or support the festival is encouraged to visit the website and reach out to the organizers. Inquiries are processed on the group's website. Both individuals and organizations are encouraged to get in touch. You may also contact them by mail. Their address is Earth Day Festival NM, PO Box 40403, Albuquerque, NM 87196.

Red Chile Vinaigrette

Enjoy this 5-minute, no cook recipe from Three Sisters Kitchen

½ cup rice vinegar
½ cup water
½ tablespoon black pepper
1 tablespoon salt
3 tablespoons honey or agave, or to taste
3 tablespoons red chile powder
½ cup olive oil

Add rice vinegar, water, black pepper, salt, honey, and red chile powder to a blender or a small bowl. **If you're using a blender:** turn the speed up slowly and add the olive oil in a slow steady stream until your dressing is well blended. **If using a bowl:** whisk the dressing in a small bowl, while adding the olive oil in a slow steady stream. Whisk until well blended. Taste to make sure you like the seasoning — add more chile, black pepper, or salt to taste, if needed. Toss salad greens with vinaigrette, a tablespoon at a time, until the leaves are lightly coated with dressing. 4-6 servings.

Tip: To better match the flavors tasted at Earth Day Festival demonstrations, the chefs recommend red chile powder from Agri-Cultura Network and honey from B's Honey Farm.

multi-day hearing to be scheduled at a later date.

Produced water is a toxic soup of chemicals that the commission concluded in a prior rulemaking could not be treated to levels safe to discharge into the state's waters.

The existing rule banning produced water discharge went into effect less than a year ago. As written, the new industry-proposed rule would be one of the most permissive rules on oil and gas wastewater discharge nationwide.

The Western Environmental Law Center, representing Amigos Bravos, Sierra Club and Citizens Caring for the Future, argued two motions in opposition to the petition at the commission's April meeting.

Despite almost four hours of public testimony — the vast majority in opposition — and multiple motions and arguments against the petition from

groups that have officially entered as parties in the matter, the commission voted 7-4 to move forward with the rulemaking.

Rachel Conn, deputy director at Amigos Bravos, summed up the reasons for industry's stubborn determination to reverse the commission's decision to reopen the case that banned discharging produced water.

"Liability is what's driving it," she said. "Produced water is a massive liability to the oil and gas companies. They don't have any place to put it. It's an amazing magic trick to repackage their wastewater, their polluted water, as some great opportunity for the rest of the state."

Conn underscored her point, adding, "It's not new water (they'd be dumping into our soil and water)...it's polluted water, toxic oil and gas wastewater that they should be required to clean up."



A sign along the trail within Carson National Forest speaks out in opposition to mining within the nation's woodlands. Concerns are intensifying around the proposed development of an open pit uranium mine encompassing 226 lode mining claims in Carson National Forest (Rio Arriba County) near Canjilon. Photo courtesy of Chama Basin Alliance.

Mining

Northern NM caught in “permitting crosshairs”

Four proposed uranium mines threaten rural farming, ranching and important native and cultural sites

Teresa Seamster

NM Mining Watch

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Northern New Mexico is now in the uranium mine permitting crosshairs.

The uniquely important traditional cultural properties near Tsoodzil (Mount Taylor), the highly contaminated groundwater areas of the Grants “mineral belt” and the rural farming and ranching area of the Chama Basin are all seeing looming threats from four proposed mines.

The first, La Jara Mesa Mine, lies in a mix of US Forest Service land and private land in the Mount Taylor Traditional Cultural Property boundary. This is an area of sacred importance to the Acoma, Hopi, Laguna, Zuni pueblos and the Navajo people.

Then, the Roca Hondo Mine in McKinley County is classified as a “wet mine” requiring a 2,000-foot shaft to pump 2,000 to 4,500 gallons per minute of groundwater to keep the mine dry and operable.

Next, the Grants Precision In-Situ Recovery Project in Cibola County is a proposed “recovery” uranium operation located near Mount Taylor.

Instead of removing rock, in-situ recovery involves injecting a solution of bicarbonate and oxygen into underground uranium-bearing rock formations.

This solution mobilizes the uranium, turning it into a liquid-like form. It then is pumped back

to the surface as uranium-rich water, which is processed to extract uranium oxide, commonly known as yellowcake.

The process occurs entirely underground and does not involve surface excavation, but it requires permits from the New Mexico Environment Department related to water usage and water quality.

Finally, developers of the Mesa Arc Project in Rio Arriba County are proposing to mine for uranium on 4,520 acres of Carson National Forest in the Chama Basin watershed around the community of Canjilon.

Canadian company, Gamma Resources, is a junior mining company that is deeply in debt but is looking for the “low hanging fruit” of mining leases in the Chama Basin.

Rio Arriba County commissioners and the Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District have sent resolutions calling for a mining moratorium.

To address the uranium rush, in 2025, State Sen. Angel Charley, D-Acoma Pueblo, sponsored Senate Memorial 14 along with a similar House Memorial 37, introduced by state Rep. Michelle Pauline Abeyta, D-To’hajilee. Both were passed by the Legislature.

The memorials call on federal and state agencies to deny mining permits near the mountain and reform the General Mining Act of 1872 to require greater tribal consultation and environmental protection.

The La Jara Mesa and Roca Honda projects — both long-stalled — have resumed federal and state permitting processes and are now subject to environmental reviews, tribal consultations and baseline data collection.

Northern New Mexico is now in the uranium mine permitting crosshairs. The most at-risk areas include traditional cultural properties near Tsoodzil (Mount Taylor), the highly contaminated groundwater areas of the Grants “mineral belt” and rural farming and ranching areas in the Chama Basin ... all lands of sacred importance to the Acoma, Hopi, Laguna, Zuni Pueblos and the Navajo people

David “D.J.” Ennis, program manager for the Mining Act Reclamation Program at the NM Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, told the Interim Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee in July of 2025 that while federal permitting can move independently, no uranium mine can operate in New Mexico without state approval.



Across America, hikers enjoy time exploring their state and national forests. Healthy forests have clean air and water, elements that are essential in supporting plants and wildlife, as well as human visitors. The prospect of mining (as well as other commercial interests such as logging) inside government-managed forests threatens the future of such sites and their historic ecological role. Photo courtesy of the US Forest Service website.

Project Jupiter

Continued from page 1

The club says it would cause unacceptable damage to the climate and contravene the renewable energy goals established in the Energy Transition Act.

Sierra Club argues that developers should be required to rely on renewable solutions rather than fossil fuels. There is simply no reason to use fossil fuels in Doña Ana County, which has some of the best solar resources in the country. Furthermore, our technical experts explain the fuel cells being proposed can readily be configured to capture their carbon emissions. Even if

some of these fuel cells are used, the developer should be required to capture and bury their emissions in order to prevent further harm to the climate.

While the fight is not over, our advocacy has already forced developers to take the worst-case scenario off the table and go back to square one. We are grateful to all of the advocates around the state who filed comments opposing the original proposal. Please submit your comments by July 6 when the commission once again takes up this matter. Let’s build on our victory and keep up the fight for clean air, clean water and a safe climate.

Project Jupiter is back with a new proposal to use methane gas fuel cells. Visit riograndesierraclub.org to voice your opinion. Comments due July 6.



Global Warming Express students enjoy their time in the woods. At left, three girls from Raton Middle School stop for a moment at Sugarite Canyon. Right, this Albuquerque student portrayed the Tree Character during Montessori on the Rio Grande School's end of the year outing. Photos by Patricia Walsh and Priscilla Remkey.

Global Warming Express

Graduation, field trips & project updates

NM's GWE young climate activists wrap up school year with surprises and more insight into issues

Genie Stevens

Climate Education Director
genie.stevens@sierraclub.org

All across the Land of Enchantment, students who participated in Global Warming Express programs completed their school years with fun, field trips and even a surprise for our young climate activists.

At Montessori of the Rio Grande School in Albuquerque, mentors led the children in an ambitious undertaking – creating a 35-foot paper scroll depicting in words and pictures the progression of their environmental education and experiences throughout the year.

The students also built a mounded-earth labyrinth on what had been the bottom of a pond on the school's property. Their goal was to honor the water that had been there and, by walking the labyrinth, holding the space for the water to come. The kids scattered “ephemeral

seeds” that will yield wildflowers when the conditions for growth (water, of course) arrive.

In Raton, the children went on a field trip to Sugarite Canyon State Park, where the dryness of the forest prompted some spontaneous fire training. They also took a walking trip to the local Honey Store, which hosts a live bee colony under glass, and, best of all, offered honey sticks they could enjoy while walking back to school.

Acequia Madre Elementary GWE girls went on two field trips. A walking trip brought them to the Santa Fe River, and a driving trip took them to the Audubon Center and Reservoir.

Down in Las Cruces, the students did an online meeting with GWE founder Marina Weber-Stevens. She was their age when she dreamed up the idea of the Global Warming Express book and after-school program. The kids asked her advice about the play they were writing, which featured some of the characters from her book and some from their imaginations. Their

graduation program was to write, produce and perform their play to great applause and adulation.

The theme that emerged over the course of the year was, unsurprisingly, water and the lack of it. When the third-grade children walked to the Santa Fe River and found it completely dry, their shock and surprise registered in the same questions spoken by each of them: “Where did the water go?” and “Is it coming back?”

In all of the GWE programs, the drought conditions spurred consternation, conversation, contemplation and action. The Global Warming Expressers have had their curriculum reflected in their environments, an experience that may shape young lives.

We hope you will join us next semester as one of our mentors. For details, please contact me at genie.stevens@sierraclub.org.

Breathe. Learn. Dream. Do. Inspire.
Kids Change their Worlds!

Events

Membership Appreciation Picnic, July 25

Join us at the Capulin Spring Picnic Site in Cibola National Forest ... bring your friends and family



Susan Gorman

Central New Mexico Group Chair
susangorman1945@gmail.com

Every day the weather feels more and more like summer, so it's time to head into the Sandias for the Annual Sierra Club Picnic. This is a chance to learn more about the Sierra Club while enjoying the cool weather of the higher climes.

Sierra Club members and friends are invited to join us for a potluck of yummy offerings plus panoramic views, bird watching, fresh air and sunshine.

This picnic site is surrounded by heavily wooded land that affords shade to escape the heat of the day. The water at Capulin Spring runs year-round, so it is a much-visited spot by birders, especially in the dry season because thirsty birds flock to this area for a cool drink of water.

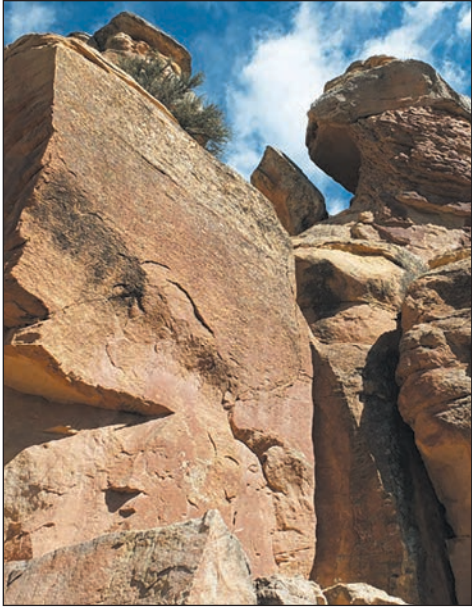
Sierra Club Annual Membership Picnic

DATE: Sat. July 25
TIME: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
PLACE: Capulin Spring Picnic Site | Cibola National Forest
Bring your family, a friend or neighbor and introduce them to your fellow chapter members! We'd love to meet some of the other important people in your life. Let us know you're planning to attend on riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.

At the picnic, we'll have a speaker, and plenty of time for you to meet like-minded folks and the Central Group leaders.

Bring a potluck offering to share. If your last name starts with A-H, bring a main entree; last name I-S, appetizers and salads; last name T-Z, dessert. Drinks, chips, plates, utensils and napkins will be provided by the Central Group.

For park details, visit rec.gov. Register to attend at www.riograndesierraclub.org/calendar.



Wes Reinig will discuss Petroglyph National Monument on Aug. 7 at Sierra Club and Beer. On Oct. 2, Duke Piggott will share what it was like climbing Mt. Everest, Mt. Kilimanjaro and other famous peaks.

Central New Mexico Group

Great speakers, beer on tap at St. Mark's

Sierra Club & Beer Speaker Series brings petroglyphs expert, mountain climber to Albuquerque

Susan Gorman

Central New Mexico Group Chair
susangorman1945@gmail.com

Sierra Club and Beer is continuing its series of great speakers. A glass of wine, a cold beer, a cool drink, and our next topic awaits you.

On June 5 we discovered what it's like to hike New Mexico's newest long-distance trail.

Pam Neely, the trail's developer, encouraged others to create their own memories along this new trail which starts at the Historic Santa Fe Plaza and terminates at the Taos Plaza. The trail is beautiful and has ample water and as she reports, you'll meet wildlife, hug old-growth trees and trek across lovely green meadows located throughout the state.

Explore culture, climate & geology of the Petroglyphs with Wes Reinig at our Aug. 7 event

On Aug. 7, we invite you to learn about "Traveling through the Ages of Culture, Climate and Geology" at Petroglyph National Monument.

The monument, encompassing Albuquerque's

West Mesa, encapsulates the human and environmental experiences from upward of 20 million years ago to today. With more than 24,000 petroglyphs, primarily inscribed by the ancestors of modern Puebloan peoples, it preserves one of largest concentrations of petroglyphs in the world as well as the desolate New Mexican high desert's beauty.

Petroglyph National Monument's community volunteer ambassador, Wes Reinig, will highlight the incredible geology, environment, Ancestral Puebloan and Spanish cultures and lifestyles that have dramatically changed over the course of the Albuquerque area's rich and lengthy history.

Operated by the National Park Service and City of Albuquerque, the monument is an ode to the land's historic usage and appearance in contrast with the rapid development of Albuquerque.

Mountaineer Duke Piggott to share tales of climbing Everest, Kilimanjaro and other peaks on Oct. 2

Climber Duke Piggott summited Mt. Everest and completed his quest to climb the Seven Summits — the highest peaks on every continent.

Sierra Club & Beer "Speaker Series"

DATE: Aug. 7 — Wes Reinig
Community Volunteer Ambassador
Petroglyphs National Monument
Oct. 2 — Duke Piggott
Mountain climber to share stories of his adventures on Everest, Kilimanjaro, Denali and other great peaks
TIME: 7:15-8:30 p.m.
PLACE: St. Mark's Episcopal Church
431 Richmond Pl NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106
RSVP at riograndesierreaclub.org/calendar

His journey began in 2008 and took him to the tops of Mt. Kilimanjaro (Africa), Mt. Elbrus (Europe), Mt. Aconcagua (South America), Denali (North America), Mt. Vinson (Antarctica) and Carstensz Pyramid (Oceania/Australia).

Join us Oct. 2 to hear Piggott share his stories of mountain climbing around the world.

Both talks will be held in the activities building at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 431 Richmond Place NE, Albuquerque. This event is free and open to the public. Beer, soft drinks and light snacks will be available at each event.

Wildlife

Backyard hospitality is a must — feed the birds



A Western tanager enjoys eating an apple half on his northward migratory journey from Mexico to as far north as Canada. Some will stay in New Mexico to breed. Photo by Mary Katherine Ray.

Melons, fruit, seeds and suet are just a few of the foods birds enjoy, but don't forget they need water as well

Mary Katherine Ray

Wildlife Chair

It's that time of year when North America is flooded with migrating birds, some from Mexico, some from as far away as South America and others from locales in between where they've spent the winter.

Migration is a perilous undertaking and some birds will not survive the journey. You can help by having bird-friendly yards and putting up feeders. Especially in this very dry year, it can mean the difference between survival or not ... or even successful nesting.

Some 57 million Americans are said to feed birds. Altogether, we spend \$4 billion a year on birdseed. It is the largest network of wildlife feeding stations on Earth and an extraordinary support system. And offering this bounty doesn't involve any government entity.

Given that so many species of birds are currently in decline, the benefits of our joint, collaborative efforts can be significant.

In addition to seeds, some birds, like woodpeckers and nuthatches, relish suet and peanut butter seed cakes. These foods offer high-calorie fats that support their high metabolism and their high energy needs.

Some birds also like fruit. Orioles are famous for eating jelly or oranges, but they also will eat apples as will tanagers, grosbeaks and jays.

In New Mexico, it's generally quite easy to attract hummingbirds to your backyard with just sugar water.

Need a recipe? Just boil four parts water and one part granulated sugar — stir, let it cool and then serve. There's no need for red dye, so please forgo that particular item.

And as a reminder, all birds and other wildlife, including insects, can benefit from offering just plain water so be sure to include a saucer, bowl or even a bird fountain in your backyard.

Whatever you put out, be sure to keep all of your containers clean and refreshed regularly.

Enjoy your wild visitors. During migration, you never know who will turn up.

Volunteers

Idaho bound, Gorman left his mark on NM

Former US Air Force pilot and Vietnam vet turned to the wild to become a “warrior for good works”

Diane Reese
Chapter Chair

Tom Gorman wasn't doing great in college. It was 1960 and the Vietnam War was on, so when a friend suggested they both go take the test for pilot training, Tom agreed.

The test showed Tom had real potential and, as he says, “the rest is history.”

After serving 23 years as an Air Force pilot, Tom and his wife, Silvia, moved on to civilian life. The Gormans moved to New Mexico 34 years ago, when he was hired by the state to do emergency management planning.

One of the first folks Tom met in the Land of Enchantment was John Buchser, our current Northern Group chair. Tom joined the Sierra Club and was a member of the Rio Grande Chapter. He served on the Northern Group Executive Committee, on and off, for many years.

“I found the Sierra Club to be a second family,” Tom said. “I loved that we were all reading from the same page, doing what was needed to want to protect our state.”

Tom loved tabling – finding outreach to the community for the Sierra Club was a lot of fun and valuable work, he said.

“I would highly recommend folks try tabling for the chapter. You meet a lot of people, you have a chance to hook them into the club and it is interesting!”

Tom stressed how fortunate we are to be in New Mexico, “where the political environment allows us to have some environmental wins.”



Tom Gorman joins Eleanor Eisenmenger and Susan Martin at the Los Alamos Bear Festival in 2025. Photo courtesy of Tom Gorman.

After the passing of Silvia, Tom took a few years off advocacy work.

Returning in 2023, Tom found political action suited the needs of the day and his interests.

Knocking on doors for strong environmental candidates, Tom was often accompanied by another environmental champion – the late

Eleanor Eisenmenger. In their 80s and 90s, respectively, the two showed more than a few of us that there is no excuse for failing to take action.

Tom moved in June to Boise, Idaho to be closer to family. He will be sorely missed.

Thank you, Tom Gorman! You sure left a mark on New Mexico and on our hearts.

Volunteer of the quarter

Berit Robnett pushes youth engagement

Rio Grande Chapter salutes hardworking intern for her contributions to the environment, chapter

What is your volunteer role with the chapter?

My role at the Sierra Club started as a spring intern in my final year of undergrad at UNM. Since interning, I have stepped into roles with the Sierra Student Coalition and joined the Chapter Executive Committee. These positions have given me opportunities to connect with communities in New Mexico as well as youth from across the nation.

My role in the Sierra Club is to amplify young voices, to do outreach and provide resources to gain traction for the next generation of youth activists to join the fight to protect our environment.

How did you get involved with the Sierra Club?

I first heard of the Sierra Club at the University of Wyoming from an ecofeminism course I was taking. From that moment on, I knew I had to join! Moving back home to Albuquerque, I was looking for a community and a way to involve myself with environmental protection. It wasn't until my final semester that I decided to make the jump. As part of a course requirement, I had to do an internship related to feminism. This was the push I needed. I began interning in the spring of 2025, working alongside Caroline Funk, Melissa Bernardin, Miya King-Flaherty and Camilla Feibelman to advance the Chapter's goals for the legislative session.

What is your personal/professional background that helps in your Sierra Club work?

My initial background in academia was taking part in the Earth and Planetary Science program at the University of New Mexico. Since graduating, I've continued professionally in conservation, working with the NM Forest and Watershed Institute as an AmeriCorps VISTA. These opportunities helped me in understand the complex systems involved in our work at the Sierra Club.

Working closely with both hard and social scientists has been important in understanding the process of how we can work together on behalf of environmental needs.

Environmental protection is a professional goal of mine, but a personal one as well (I'm sure most of us can relate). I see ourselves in nature. We are the bees, grass, soil, trees and sky.

My approach to environmentalism is through an intersectional, feminist lens. The way we treat one another is parallel to how we treat our planet. We are inextricably linked to nature, so we must work together to create a space that is safe and flourishing for all of Earth's creatures for years to come.

What would you tell someone who wants to get involved with the Club but does not know how?

Getting involved with the Sierra Club is easy. It's



Berit Robnett's focus is getting more young adults into the Chapter.

a very welcoming environment to be in. The group of individuals I've had the pleasure of meeting so far has shown me how important community is.

Being part of the Sierra Club has changed my life. It has shown me there is possibility for change, possibility for my voice to be heard.

My advice for those who want to get involved is to simply just reach out. Call 505-243-7767 or find us online at riograndesierraclub.org.

It's never been more important to foster a community and work together to protect our home.



New Mexico stands at the intersection of faith, landscape and border policy. Mount Cristo Rey, a site sacred to both Catholics and Native Americans, straddles both sides of the US border with Mexico. Located just outside Sunland Park, NM, the federal government plans to expand barriers along this stretch of the border much to the chagrin of Native Americans, environmentalists, civil libertarians and America's religious community. The Catholic Diocese of New Mexico has filed suit to halt any further destruction on the site. Photo provided courtesy of Howie Dash, photographer.

News Briefs

Major event coverage and breaking news

Land grabs across NM indicate industry profits, federal projects far more “valuable” than all else

D. Reed Eckhardt

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PNM-BLACKSTONE STOCK SALE RULED “UNLAWFUL”

The sale last year of stock from PNM to the private equity firm Blackstone was inappropriate, examiners for the state’s electric utility regulators have decided. Examiners advised the NM Public Regulation Commission to kill the stock sale, and that, in turn, places the proposed purchase of PNM by Blackstone in jeopardy. Examiners further recommended not only that the commission unwind the stock sale and enforce multiple state penalties of \$100,000 for each involved party, they also required Blackstone to redo its petition to account for the new decision. The sale was improper, the examiners said, because the parties failed to get state approval before consummating it. The next step is for the commission to accept the recommendation and enforce the parties to act. While the examiners said it would be “premature” to void the proposed sale over their decision, it should amount to a “significant consideration” in the final outcome.

RIO GRANDE WATER SETTLEMENT OK'D BY HIGH COURT

A long-running dispute over water use in the Rio Grande has been settled by the US Supreme Court. The court has accepted the recommendation of a special master that approved an agreement reached last year by the states of New Mexico, Texas and Colorado. Among other things it will diminish groundwater pumping along the river and end irrigated farmlands’ water rights in southern New Mexico. To water their crops, pecan and chile farmers have been turning to groundwater due to reduced water flows from the river. That provoked a suit from Texas, which said pumping was reducing its water deliveries.

SALE OF NM GAS SUPPORTED BY COMMISSION STAFF

A hearing examiner has recommended that the Public Service Commission approve the sale of New Mexico Gas to a private equity firm from Louisiana.

The \$1.25 billion sale to Bernard Capital Partners was supported due to the company’s promised rate credits for customers as well as financial and “ring-fencing” requirements. The latter demands that Bernard Capital set apart some of its assets. The credits would total \$22.4 million as well as a \$5 million payment to the gas company’s low-income aid program and \$10 million for economic development programs.

Numerous public advocates have opposed the sale, saying it would not meet the standard of providing a “net public benefit” as required by law. Additionally, federal agencies have said the benefits from Bernard Capital were “undeniably inadequate” to counter the risk of letting a “gas company startup” take over the public utility.

The commission will make a final decision after receiving feedback from the parties.

DELEGATION PROPOSES CAJA DEL RIO PROTECTIONS

Protections for the Caja del Rio west of Santa Fe are the focus of new legislation proposed in the U.S. Congress by all five members of New Mexico’s delegation.

The Caja del Rio Protection Act would shield the plateau, which is both culturally and ecological significant. The area is mostly untouched landscape of canyons, mesas and woodlands. It includes hundreds of petroglyphs and sacred sites and also serves as a migration corridor.

The bill would set up a Special Management Area and National Conservation District to safeguard the land from private use while maintaining traditional uses like hunting and grazing. It bans

mining and new roads in the area. The measure, which now moves to Congress, has drawn support from the Santa Fe county commissioners and the All Pueblo Council of Governors.

DIocese FIGHTS PLAN TO SCAR MOUNT CRISTO REY

The Catholic Diocese of New Mexico has filed suit against the federal government’s efforts to seize property in Sunland Park in southern NM to build its border wall.

The wall would pass along the southern edge of Mount Cristo Rey. The church considers this a holy site; some 40,000 pilgrims climb it annually to the place a 29-foot-tall statue of Jesus Christ rests. Thus, the church argues, the seizure is violating its First Amendment right to freedom of religion. It adds the federal effort would harm the local environment and cause a rise in immigrant deaths. Dona Ana County has had a massive increase in immigrant deaths since 2018 and this area is directly adjacent to the private border wall Fisher Industries built in 2019, the half-mile segment has acquired a massive amount of erosion and land degradation to that side of the mountain.

The US government initially offered the church \$180,000 for the land parcel, but after the church declined, the feds filed notice in court hoping to seize 14 acres to build roads, fences and other infrastructure to “help secure” the border. Seth Wayne, a lawyer from Georgetown, called the effort “an affront to religious liberty.”

SENATE CONFIRMS STEVE PEARCE TO HEAD BLM

Former US Rep. Steve Pearce, R-NM, has been confirmed to head the Bureau of Land Management by the U.S. Senate. This happened despite the objections of New Mexico advocates, including the state’s congressional delegation.

— Continued on page 11

News Briefs

Continued from page 10

Aaron Weiss with the Center for Western Priorities, called the confirmation “a blatant attack on America’s public lands.” He added, Congress has put “a man who disdains federal land managers in charge of the BLM.”

While in Congress, Pearce supported opening the national forests to industry. He also sought to undermine the Antiquities Act, which gives the president the power to set aside national monuments. Before serving in Congress, he founded an oil and gas operation in southern New Mexico.

GARCIA RICHARD OPPOSES LAND GRAB

State Commissioner of Public Lands Stephanie Garcia Richard has objected to the seizure of public property by the federal government for use for its border wall along the state’s southern border with Mexico. The seven acres of state trust land near Santa Teresa were awarded to the state in 1898 by the federal government to create revenue for the schools. But the feds have taken action to take the land back after their offer of \$800,000 was rejected by Garcia Richard, who called it “an historic overreach.”

“Doing business with these thugs was simply not an option,” she said. “(Now President Trump) is going to forcibly take our state land and deny our school kids the revenue that comes from it.”

The federal government has alerted the state that it intends to file the paperwork to have the acreage condemned for acquisition. The lands commissioner said, in response, that she is seeking recourse to prevent that.

FEDS CANCEL UPPER PECOS PROTECTIONS

The federal government has canceled protections against mining in the Upper Pecos watershed, opening up some 165,000 acres to mineral extraction. The area was safe from mining under the Biden administration, but Trump moved to roll back protections when he assumed office in 2025.

The US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have now formalized that reversal. “The administration is once again choosing profit over our shared heritage,” the state’s congressional delegation said in a joint statement. The decision is a direct threat to New Mexico’s waters, cultural identity and way of life.”

The area is where the Terrero Mining disaster occurred in 1991, killing tens of thousands of fish. The cleanup from that accident is still ongoing.

DELEGATION OPPOSES ROADLESS RULE ROLLBACK

New Mexico’s contingent to Congress is speaking out against the Trump administration’s plan to roll back the 2001 “Roadless Rule.” That measure provides protection for federal forest land from timber harvesters and road building.

“Repealing the ‘Roadless Rule’ would be a massive giveaway to special interests at the expense of the American people,” said US Rep. Gabe Vasquez, D-NM, whose southern district includes the Gila Wilderness.

The administration announced in June that it intends to end the policy. It argues — despite evidence to the contrary — that the repeal would help to prevent wildfires.

US Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said it would put “more logs on trucks” as the White House seeks to boost the nation’s logging industry.

SANTA FE COUNTY EYES DATA CENTER MORATORIUM

Though no data centers are currently planned for Santa Fe County, local officials are considering an ordinance that would delay for one year any such approvals.

Bernalillo also recently passed strict rules for data centers.

Members of the county commission say they want to take the 12 months to study possible land use regulations and environmental standards.

“I think it is very important for us to do this moratorium, given that some data centers are good, and some are bad,” Commissioner Hank Hughes recently said.

“We have a very good example of how bad they can be with the (Project Jupiter development) in Doña Ana County, and so we want to take a year to decide what guardrails we can put around that.”

Santa Fe County joins other counties in the state that have considered similar ordinances. That includes Socorro County, where residents have expressed concern about a proposed 10,000-acre center there.

NM Tech recently reversed offering college land for the data center. Socorro County has approved a one-year moratorium; Bernalillo County has approved guardrails on data centers.

SANTA FE COUNTY APPROVES MASSIVE SOLAR ARRAY

What will be among the largest solar and battery storage facilities in the Land of Enchantment has been approved by the Santa Fe County Planning Commission.

The 2,000-acre Globemallow Project, to be located in the southeastern part of the county near Stanley, is expected to produce 350 megawatts of power. That’s enough electricity to power 93,000 homes annually. It will have 250 to 300 containers as part of its battery storage and host nearly 762,000 solar panels.

The solar farm was approved with virtually no opposition in Santa Fe County compared to the Rancho Viejo Solar Project near Eldorado, which remains under litigation nearly a year after approval, despite clear evidence for the safety of the project.

The largest solar array in the state is in Rio Rancho; it generates 365 megawatts of energy.

OIL COMPANIES ACCUSED OF ACCOUNTING FRAUD

A lawsuit by two New Mexico individuals could reduce the number of orphan wells in the state in the long run has been filed in New Mexico District Court.

The court action alleges ExxonMobil, Empire Petroleum and their subsidiaries used accounting fraud in an effort to dump unplugged and unremediated wells — commonly known as orphan wells — on the state and leaving it with the costs of cleaning them up.

The suit also says the companies undervalued the costs of the wells when they were sold from Exxon subsidiary XTO Energy to Empire without valuing the costs of cleanup.

When it assumed the wells, Empire could not afford to clean them and dumped them on the state by going bankrupt.

The lawsuit is said to be the first of its kind and could set a precedent on how states could prosecute questionable well transfers in the future.

PLANNED GOLD MINE DRAWS IRE IN BOOTHEEL AREA

Efforts by a Canadian company to mine gold in the Bootheel of New Mexico are drawing fire from a number of conservation groups who worry it could brighten the region’s dark skies and harm rare species. Almaden Minerals has filed some 132 claims from gold and silver in its “Big Sky Project.” A release indicates the firm is planning to “drill targets” later this year after getting positive results from initial assays.

The area of activity is Antelope Pass, previously set aside by the Bureau of Land Management as a Research Natural Area, which bans mineral and oil extraction. Groups fear the Trump administration’s efforts to boost mining could put that in danger. Among the species threatened are the night-blooming cereus cactus and the Dixon’s whiptail lizard.

“It’s an existential issue for the area in terms of preserving its ecological value,” said Dirk Sigler, head of the Chiricahua Regional Council. “A full-on mining development . . . the disturbance of the area would be catastrophic.”

Outdoors

Attention, hikers

Check out the latest Sierra Club events online! We’ve got even more things happening than fit in our newsletter plus many events “pop up” after an edition is published, so be sure to check for the latest and most complete list of events on our own website — riograndesierraclub.org — as well as across social media platforms like Facebook, MeetUp.

You can sign up for any event on our website, too. Just go to riograndesierraclub.org/calendar and follow the prompts for your event.

Or use the QR code on page 12 to access the chapter events calendar. Social links are also on page 12.

Intro to Backpacking

We’re gauging interest in holding a second “Introduction to Backpacking” class this year. Is this something you might be interested in? Let us know!

New Mexico has thousands of miles of trails waiting for you. Whether you want to get away for a weekend of solitude with your family or solo thru-hike from Mexico to Canada, adventure is, literally, right in our backyard. Perhaps you’re merely curious and not quite sure how to begin backpacking or even if it’s for you?

This one-day class is always at capacity, so we are considering holding a second session this year. This clinic is designed for those who have never shouldered a backpack as well as those who just want to learn how to safely hike in the backcountry.

For details, email at Terry Owen teowen@comcast.net.

Wilderness First Aid Course rescheduled to Oct. 17-18

Register now, limited seating

The Rio Grande Chapter of Sierra Club is sponsoring a Wilderness First Aid course, specially geared toward our members. This course is in high demand and typically fills up months in advance. Our instructor has many years experience teaching this class.

Why attend? People get hurt, sick, or lost. The temperature drops, the wind picks up and it starts to rain. Would you know what to do? If you’re ever more than an hour away from a hospital or one mile from any road, you need this class. Many backcountry emergencies are preventable, and even when bad things happen, sometimes the wrong care can make things worse. By learning a few basic skills, you can make the difference between a good outcome and a bad one — and maybe even save a life.

The SOLO Wilderness First Aid Course is a two-day first aid course that provides training for anyone who spends time hiking, skiing, engaged in other outdoor pursuits or just wants to know what to do when things go south. The course is a blend of lectures, demonstrations and scenarios. Students will have ample opportunity to practice skills in life-like situations, both as patients and caregivers. At the successful completion of the two-day course, you will be certified or re-certified in Wilderness First Aid. Attendees must participate in all portions and hours of the course and demonstrate understanding to obtain certification.

Classes held 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day in Albuquerque; \$200 per person, \$75 deposit holds your seat.

Applications taken in the order received. Payment balance due by Oct. 1. For more info, contact Debbie Bryant at bryade@gmail.com.

Outings

Check out events, excursions across NM

Debbie Bryant

Chapter Outings Chair
bryade@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you outside! We have quite varied offerings. More outings will be added, so please check these links periodically. We rely on participant self-screening to ensure an outing that is safe and appropriate for all. We do our best to detail the descriptions so you can decide if your fitness level and experience are appropriate.

Sun, June 28 — Hiking a Hidden Part of the Faulty Trail, 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Let's hike Faulty #195, a different part of the Faulty Trail than most people experience. We will enjoy the trees and the beautiful views and we should be able to find three medalion trees on this trail. It's a lovely trail with plenty of shady spots and is not as well known as the southern part of Faulty. We won't do the entire trail, only about half, although it would be a stretch goal to get to the meadow by Palomas Peak. Participants should be in excellent shape, able to hike 8 miles with about 1,800 feet of elevation gain at a pace of 1.75-2 mph. No dogs. Children 12 and up are welcome if a parent accompanies them. Participants should bring 1.5-2 liters of water per person, snacks, lunch, hiking poles and clothing/hat/hiking boots appropriate for the weather and conditions.

Level Moderate/Strenuous
Location Sandia Mountains, East of Albuquerque
Leader Debbie Bryant, bryade@gmail.com

Fri, July 10 — Santa Fe (Northern Group) Nambe Lake Hike, 8:15 a.m.-3 p.m.

Keep your eyes on the Santa Fe Sierra Club Meetup group as they do some beautiful hikes and this is just one example. The trail is 6.5 miles roundtrip with 2,000 ft elevation gain. The majority of the trail runs up along the creek, making this a very pleasant experience. When you get to the alpine lake, you will be stunned how beautiful it is. Well worth the hike up! The group will accommodate a range of hiking paces. There will be an option to eat and rest at leisure or take some of that break to hike around the lake before hiking back. Details and sign-up on our Santa Fe Sierra Club Meetup site, shown at the top of the Outings list.

Level Moderate/Strenuous
Location Windsor Trailhead, Santa Fe
Leader Alan Shapiro, nm5s@yahoo.com
Glenn Wohl, gwelwjw@gmail.com

Wed., July 15 — Green Book Club, 6-7:30 p.m.

Join the Green Book Club to read and discuss a wide range of books that address different facets of green advocacy. This month's choice is Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring." Originally published in 1962, "Silent Spring" is an exploration of the dangers of DDT as it accumulated upwards in the environmental hierarchy, especially in birds. It was landmark advocacy that led to revolutionary changes in the laws and regulatory procedures affecting our land, air and water. The questions Carson raised are with us today in every discussion of how much of substance X can be released into the environment, who it will impact and who pays the costs (think in NM of "processed water"). Please bring your coffee and your book.

Level Easy
Location 2501 Yale Blvd SE Suite 104, Albuquerque, NM 87106
Leader Robert Grant, robertgrant1115@gmail.com

Sat, Aug. 1 — Cienega Nature Trail QiGong Walk, 10 a.m.-noon.

Have you noticed there are fewer wildflowers? Want to learn more about this? Join us in the lower Sandias to observe and discuss. We'll learn a simple walking practice that allows us to slow down and deeply absorb nature's messages and calm. QiGong is related to Tai Chi and after practice on paved trails, we'll observe what is in bloom in this lush green meadow and see what insect pollinators are out. Along with nature illustrator and QiGong practitioner Laurie Lange, we will note how the drought has decreased our wildflowers and the severity of the loss. Not suitable for those with balance issues; long pants and closed toe shoes required. This will be less than a one-mile walk. Young adults encouraged; youth with parent or legal guardian.

Level Easy
Location Cienega Picnic Area, Sandia Mountains near ABQ Cienega Nature Trailhead
Leader Diane Reese, dianeabqnm@gmail.com

Sun, Aug. 2 — Valles Caldera South Mountain Hike, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

The South Mountain Trail in Valles Caldera is lovely and very peaceful. We will walk from the second (inner) visitors center through a forested section and up to a mountain meadow. This trail is eight miles with 1,200 ft elevation gain, ending up about 10,000 feet up. If you are wanting to enjoy life and increase your fitness at the same time, this hike might be for you. Please note that there is not much cell service on the way there/back; we can convoy. Also you will need to pay for parking or have a national park pass. Completing a medical form is required as this is considered a backcountry hike. You will need to show it to the hike leader, then put it in your pack for future use.

Level Moderate/strenuous
Location Valles Caldera (meet in Bernallio at the Home Depot on US Hwy. 550 at 7 a.m.)
Leader Debbie Bryant, bryade@gmail.com

Join us for one of our upcoming outings

Check our website and social media pages for more listings or to sign up for outings ... or use the QR code on this page!

- riograndesierraclub.org/calendar
- [Santa Fe Sierra Club Outings at meetup.com/santa-fe-sierra-club-outings/](https://www.meetup.com/santa-fe-sierra-club-outings/)
- [facebook.com/NMSierraClub/events](https://www.facebook.com/NMSierraClub/events) for Southern group events



QR code outings sign ups!

Scan this code and your smartphone will take you to our outings webpage. Use "click here" buttons for event info, or to sign up for specific events.

Do you like to hike? Would you like to lead hikes?

If so, please consider becoming a Sierra Club outings leader. Contact Debbie Bryant (bryade@gmail.com) for details.

Gauging Interest in "Introduction to Backpacking" Should we add a second class?

See the story on page 11 for details. If you're interested, email Terry Owen (teowen@comcast.net) to sign up.

Southern NM outings

Email for details about outings near Las Cruces or Ruidoso. 4 participants minimum.

John Pijawka — jastro@windstream.net

Thur, Aug. 13 — Zero Waste Tour of ABQ Computer and Electronics Recycling, 10-11:30 a.m.

Almost anything with a cord or cable can be recycled at this business as well as phones. Larger items do require a fee. See how all data is wiped from devices. They also refurbish computers, laptops, etc. and sell them at reasonable rates.

Level Easy
Location 3726 Hawkins St. NE, Abq.
Leader Laurie Zunner, 505-440-5337

Sat, Aug. 15 — South Fork Trail #19 and Placer Gold Sifting in the Lincoln National Forest 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

We'll be hiking Trail #19 that follows the South Fork of the Rio Bonito above the closed South Fork Campground. We'll discuss the devastating 2012 Little Bear Fire, the historic original and present Bonito Pipeline and history of the Nogal Mining District and discovery of gold and other mineral resources starting back in 1865. Be prepared for weather and stream crossings with an approximate 250 ft elevation gain and 3-4 miles of hiking. We'll also spend some time placer gold sifting, so bring your kit. They are available locally at Big 5 Sporting Goods and on Amazon with lots of info on YouTube. Bring sandals, sunscreen and lots of enthusiasm. This is a six-hour event, so bring lunch/snacks and sturdy hiking boots/poles etc. No dogs please; appropriate for participants 18 years and older. RSVP no later than Aug. 13, 2026

Level Moderate
Location Near Ruidoso
Leader John Pijawka, jastro@windstream.net

Thur, Aug. 20 — Green Book Club, 6-7:30 p.m.

Join the Green Book Club to read and discuss a wide range of books that address different facets of being green. This month's choice is Dan Nott's non-fiction graphic book "Hidden Systems: Water, Electricity, the Internet and the Secrets Behind the Systems We Use Every Day." Published in 2023, the book details the historical development, decision-making processes, costs and benefits of the Internet, electric grid and water systems. The book won several awards for its STEM-based explanations and teaching value. The analysis is environmentally based. For NM-based people, the water systems section will be particularly interesting. Please bring your coffee and your book. We will have some snacks.

Level Easy
Location 2501 Yale Blvd SE Suite 104, Albuquerque, NM 87106
Leader Robert Grant, robertgrant1115@gmail.com

Sat, Aug 22 — Migrating Birds Along the Animas River: 9-11:30 a.m.

The Farmington Riverside Trail has been said to be the best thing in Farmington. Let's look for more migrating birds along the Animas Riverwalk. This is a pleasant stroll, and at least one birdwatcher was heard to brag they have seen up to 34 species at this location. Dress for the weather. 18 year olds or above only. No pets please. Bring water and snacks in order to chat after the hike.

Level Easy
Location Farmington Riverside Nature Center
Leader Mike Foster, mike4ffoster@gmail.com

Sat, Sept 5 — Fall Birds Along the Animas, 9-11:30 a.m.

The Farmington Riverside Trail has been said to be the best thing in Farmington. Let's look for more migrating birds along the Animas Riverwalk. This is a pleasant stroll, and one birdwatcher was heard to brag they have seen up to 34 species at this location. Dress for the weather. 18 year olds or above only. No pets please. Bring water and snacks in order to chat after the hike.

Level Easy
Location Farmington Riverside Nature Center
Leader Mike Foster, mike4ffoster@gmail.com



A hiker enjoys the view from above the TWA plane crash site in Big Canyon in the Sandias. Photo by Debbie Bryant.

Tuesday, Sept. 22 — Zero Waste Tour of the Surface Water Treatment Plant, 10 a.m.-Noon.

Learn how water from the Rio Grande is taken in and treated to become your drinking water. In an introduction, you will see the entire journey from the San Juan and Chama Rivers to the Rio Grande and the treatment plant on a large floor model in the lobby. Then we will do a lot of walking, going in and out of buildings and climbing stairs, seeing different parts of the plant. Long pants and closed-toed shoes required. Bring a hat, water bottle and your questions. Limit 16 people. Register by Sept. 20. This tour is dependent on a good monsoon season to bring the water level in the Rio Grande high enough for the plant to operate. Please keep an eye on the events calendar for updates.

Level Easy
Location 6000 Alexander Blvd. NE, Albuquerque
Leader Laurie Zunner, 505-440-5337

Sat, Oct. 10 — Salinas Pueblo National Monument Tour, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Tucked away in the middle of New Mexico you'll find the Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument. We will visit two of the three distinct sites, Quarai and Abo, offering a glimpse into a unique time in history. These sites offer a quiet place to reflect on this history, local archeology and the Land of Enchantment. This outing affords abundant photo opportunities with time to walk about, maybe finding inspiration for a quick poem or a quick sketch. We'll meet at the Lowe's parking lot, 12th Street, Albuquerque, then proceed by our vehicles' caravan on I-40 East to Tijeras, then head south on NM-337. Wear comfortable attire and sturdy shoes. Bring clothing layers, hats, sunscreen, water and a picnic lunch. Total combined walking distance about one mile at about 6,000 feet elevation with about 50 ft of elevation change. Please consider the health of others if you are experiencing any symptoms of being ill. No dogs, except service animals on leash. Youth 10 and older are welcome with an accompanying responsible adult. Those who wish to carpool are responsible for making their own such arrangements, and any reimbursement to the driver with whom they travel. Register no later than Oct. 3.

Level Easy
Location Mountainair
Leader June Parsons, comicsilver@gmail.com