



3 Be part of the resistance — Public lands are at risk, more so than ever before



5-7 2026 Midterm Elections Guide — Chapter endorsements, voting tips to guarantee your voice is heard, early voting and mail-in ballot guidelines, how to help and more



11 GWE students create life-size animal puppets using The Herd for inspiration

The Sierran



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

Data Centers

Poll points to broad concerns on AI data centers

Majority of NM residents say ban data centers, put up guardrails or issue a moratorium against them

Melissa Bernardin

Climate Organizer | Rio Grande Chapter
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A recent poll tested support among New Mexicans for three policy approaches to address data centers: ban, moratorium and guardrails. The poll found majority support for all three, with the strongest support for guardrails, followed by moratorium and, lastly, ban. Members of the public are surely left wondering what each approach entails and how they interrelate.

At a statewide virtual meeting in August hosted by the Rio Grande Chapter and allied advocacy and grassroots groups called “NM Data Centers: Big Tech Unchecked?” Alexa Reynaud of Food and Water Watch explained that a ban disallows data centers without an end date, whereas a moratorium would be more like pressing pause.

State Sen. Carrie Hamblen, D-Las Cruces, and state Reps. Michaela Lara Cadena, D-Mesilla, Angelica Rubio, D-Las Cruces, and Eleanor Chavez, D-Albuquerque, are introducing a moratorium bill for a broad and statewide pause on all new and existing data center developments. Various impacts from these facilities would be assessed and a regulatory framework set up, according to Reynaud.

Rach Arrey of Conservation Voters NM shared an overview of “guardrails” policy ideas and recommendations that could be incorporated into state legislation. These recommendations include: water impact assessments, reporting and conservation technologies; requiring compliance with NM’s Energy Transition Act to meet our climate goals through clean energy sources; revisiting air pollution permitting regulations; land and wildlife impact

— Continued on page 2



Celebrated photographer Jan Bartelstone’s new book *An Ecstatic Gathering of Writers*. The book combines grand-scale nature photography with essays by his friends. Members may purchase copies for \$30 through the chapter office in Albuquerque. All proceeds benefit the chapter.

Club Fundraiser

Bartelstone book sales to benefit Chapter

Jan Bartelstone, one of New Mexico’s most celebrated photographers, moved to the Southwest in his twenties, shortly after finishing college. He created elegant fine art posters and soon launched a second career — in the media — creating hour-long docudramas that reached thousands of viewers, through programs that first aired on New Mexico NBC affiliate stations before running on PBS to audiences across the nation.

Bartelstone’s passion, however, has always been photography. His original works, many spanning six to eight feet across, are on permanent display in Santa Fe at the New Mexico State Capitol.

His most recent project, *An Ecstatic Gathering of Writers*, continues down the spiritual journey he began in India decades ago. Drawing on themes of oneness, the sacred in nature and the quiet intelligence that lies beneath the surface, he combines essays written by his friends with grand-scale nature photography that illuminate spiritual connection, and his talent for identifying, patiently waiting for and then capturing the perfect shot.

Bartelstone has very generously arranged for members of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club members to purchase copies of his book, with all proceeds benefitting the Rio Grande Chapter.

— For more about Bartelstone, visit riograndesierraclub.org

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Visit riograndesierranclub.org
for a list of volunteers & committees



Special Event!
Shade — A local & global perspective

Inspired by author Sam Bloch’s book “Shade,” combined with per-spiration induced by this year’s record heat, presenter Ken Hughes promotes shade as an inexpensive yet effective antidote to the rising temperatures. Drawing from examples of shade in Santa Fe as well as places around the globe, Hughes explores the deeper meaning of shade and how it offers instances of lifesaving ways to thwart heat stroke as well as striking images of shade and its cousin, shadows.

Free wine and beer from New Mexico’s smallest brewery, served between 4:30-5 p.m., courtesy of the Sierra Club Northern Group.

DATE: Saturday, October 3
TIME: Free wine & beer, 4:30 - 5 p.m.
Presentation begins at 5 p.m.
PLACE: Travel Bug
839 Paseo de Peralta
Santa Fe

Northern New Mexico Group

Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Northern Group

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Data Centers

Ban, Guard or Pause

Continued from page 1

analysis and harm mitigation; soundproofing and noise pollution reduction efforts; ratepayer protections; and requiring transparency and public engagement, including prohibiting non-disclosure agreements and requiring disclosure of ownership structure.

In a presentation over the summer to an interim committee of the Legislature, a representative of the National Association of Counties recommended that counties “(take) community input and feedback before a project comes to a county (in order to) craft a policy or agreement that accurately reflects the community needs.”

It is in that spirit, when it comes to proposed data center developments, New Mexicans are demanding transparency, accountability and effective guardrails in state policy.

In other data center news, the NM Supreme Court denied two requests from environmental groups to stay Project Jupiter, pending decisions on its air quality permit and groundwater pumping.

The underlying proceedings on this matter will continue. Stay tuned for more information.

Special Event with Joaquin Karcher
Rethinking Passive Solar Energy

From Passive Solar to Passive House:
Building for a Fossil-Fuel-Free Future

Joaquin Karcher’s work over the last 35 years has been driven by a commitment to sustainable design, from earth architecture to passive solar/adobe construction to Passive House standards and beyond. He designed the first certified passive house in New Mexico, co-authored the New Mexico Earthen Materials Building code which was adopted internationally and has designed homes in Germany, New Mexico, Arizona and the Navajo Nation. The focus of his firm, Zeroedesign, is on affordable, zero-carbon, ultra-efficient residences powered entirely by solar energy. The firm has offices in both Santa Fe and Taos.

This talk explores practical, cost-effective ways to decarbonized housing, focusing on fossil-fuel-free construction and a building-science-based approach that can achieve deep reductions in the energy needed for heating and cooling. It will briefly look in the rear-view mirror at how we arrived at today’s building practices, outline the current state of the art in high-efficiency construction, and explain how these systems work in practice. From there, Karcher will explore how Passive House principles, all-electric systems, and renewable energy can work together to dramatically reduce energy demand and eliminate the need for fossil fuels—while creating homes that are more comfortable, healthy, and resilient. The goal is a practical path toward climate-aligned housing that remains attainable and cost-effective for everyday communities.

For space reasons, attendance must be capped at 80 guests. RSVP today to reserve your seats.

Date: Wed, Oct 7, 2026
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Where: Santa Fe Community College
Lecture Hall / Auditorium Room 216
6401 Richards Ave, Santa Fe, NM 87508

RSVP: riograndesierraclub.org/calendar

Host: Craig Hammond, 317-224-5307; 9029hamm@gmail.com
Other: zeroedesign.com

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 inkind donation such as office equipment, or including a contribution the Chapter or the Sierra Club in your estate planning.

riograndesierraclub.org

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



View from Turkey Spur at Grandview Peak in West Virginia’s New River Gorge — the newest national park. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service / Dave Bieri, photographer.

Chapter Chair’s Column

Join the resistance —Our public lands are at risk

Interior secretary sees public lands as items to be sold off or leased—make your voice heard now

Diane Reese
Chapter Chair | Rio Grande Chapter
DianeAbqNM@gmail.com

I had a fantastic June — I went to Alaska! I had never been before and it exceeded my expectations with its vastness and beauty. After a week’s Inner Passage cruise with all the family, my husband and I rented a camper and headed out to bag some national parks.

One of the highlights for me was meeting a young park ranger at Denali National Park.

When we checked in, we were excited to see there was a ranger talk that night on wolves. Being from NM, we were interested as we have closely followed the wolf reintroduction progress in our own state.

He gave a terrific talk, and we offered to help him carry his gear to his car. Also, I wanted to tell him I appreciated him noting that the wolves are struggling because of the impact of climate change on their habitat.

Next, we went on to Kenai Fjords and witnessed the dramatic melting of glaciers.

The irony of visiting national parks while the Trump administration was announcing another brazen attack on our public lands was saddening.

This time it is the repeal of the Roadless Rule, which would open wilderness areas to extraction industries – oil and gas, mining, timber.

By falsely claiming these roads into the wilderness are needed to fight wildfires, they add insult to injury by having our taxpayer dollars fund the roads that will be used by these companies.

Studies show that building roads into roadless areas is likely to produce more fires, and the best approach to wildfires is allowing them to play their natural role wherever possible.

When Interior Secretary Doug Burgum referred to public lands as America’s “balance sheet” that could be sold off or leased, he showed how little he understands the real value of public lands and the love we Americans have for them. He quickly heard back as millions fought against the land sale aspects of their big tax cut bill. It is time for us to push back — again!

As I write this, I am again out in a camper exploring our wild places. This time it is the newest national park – the New River Gorge in West Virginia. The park not only protects 53 miles of that stunning river landscape, it strives to tell the story of the surrounding region.

Acknowledging the history of extraction in the Appalachians, the park tells the story of how the

coal and timber industries thrived until completely depleting the resources, leaving behind poverty and pollution.

I was again pleasantly surprised to see how climate change was highlighted in their presentations.

The park ranger, the public pushback against the sale of public lands and the displays at the New River Gorge reminded me there is resistance to the deniers and destroyers.

We must be visible and vocal! The joint Sierra Club-NM Wild Rally on Sept. 9 was an exceptional start, but we’ve got miles to go on this. Let’s do this together – join us! Be part of the resistance.

Decisions are being made. Be visible and vocal in your opposition.

The Sierran

The Rio Grande Sierran Publication Info

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The opinions expressed in signed articles in The Sierran are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club. Products and services advertised in the Sierran are not necessarily endorsed by the Sierra Club.

Contributions to the Sierran are welcome. Send them to riogrande.chapter@sierraclub.org

Submissions by Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence. All articles chosen for publication, whether from club members or guest writers, are subject to editing.

Letters to the editor may be up to 400 words. All letters are subject to editing and are printed at the discretion of the editorial board.

Read the pdf edition online at riograndesierraclub.org/the-sierran

Vote for chapter and group executive committee leaders

Three candidates are running for three open spots on the Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee. Only Sierra Club members may vote. Please mail this ballot along with a copy of the member information on Page 1 of this issue or vote online. Online voting will be available in November; ballots will be emailed to members. To vote on paper, mail your ballot to: Sierra Club Election Committee, 2501 Yale Blvd. SE, Suite 104, Albuquerque, NM 87106.

Please vote for candidates for the group executive committee where you live.

Two-member households can each vote, using both boxes.

El Paso Group ballots and candidate statements will be mailed separately, but El Paso members may vote for chapter executive committee members using this ballot.

All ballots must be received by Dec. 15.

Rio Grande Chapter Executive Committee (vote for 3)
There are three candidates running for three open positions

☐ ☐ Jody Benson ☐ ☐ Berit Robnett ☐ ☐ Jerry Kurtyka

Central Group Executive Committee (4 open seats)

☐ ☐ Fred A. Helms
☐ ☐ Sherry Noone
☐ ☐ Laurie Zunner
☐ ☐ Heidi Topp Brooks

Northern NM Group Executive Committee (5 open seats)

☐ ☐ Ken Hughes
☐ ☐ Chris Calvert
☐ ☐ Craig Hammond
☐ ☐ Bette Korber
☐ ☐ Norman Norvelle

Southern NM Group Executive Committee (4 open seats)

☐ ☐ Luis Guerrero
☐ ☐ David Baake
☐ ☐ Mary Katherine Ray
☐ ☐ Karen Boehler

Donate your vehicle today!

Support our efforts to protect and preserve water, wildlife, lands and climate in New Mexico and West Texas by contributing to our vehicle donation program. It's easy, pick up is free and your donation could be tax deductible.

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Land Use

Chapter opposes repeal of Roadless Act

Santa Fe National Forest has 241,000 miles of roadless areas—just leave it as it is, Mr. President

Teresa Seamster

Northern Group
ctc.seamster@gmail.com

During his presidency, Theodore Roosevelt established the US Forest Service, created 23 national parks and monuments and 150 national forests for public use.

“Leave it as it is. You cannot improve on it. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it. What you can do is to keep it for your children, your children’s children and for all who come after you,” he said.

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule was adopted in January 2001.

The purpose of the rule was important to the future of the US and simply stated:

In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.

In March 2025, President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14225 (Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production), mandating a 25 percent increase in timber extraction in federal lands. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins followed with an “emergency declaration” covering 112.6 million acres of national forest land that fast-tracked 44.7 million acres of protected, roadless areas for logging.

The administration’s rescission of the Roadless Rule, released on Aug. 18, declares that building roads in these areas is important for preventing and fighting wildfires, allowing more timber extraction and increasing “local control.”



The untouched slopes of Santa Fe National Forest are shown at peak autumn color in 2025. Photo by Teresa Seamster.

Wildfire experts and forest communities have pointed out during the 30-day comment period the stated objectives are highly unlikely to be achieved:

- Wildfire data show that roads increase the risk of fires igniting due to human presence and sparks from motorized vehicles and logging equipment.
- Timber extraction is allowed in national forests and follows stringent individual forest-level planning that would now be handed to local officials without any guarantee of expertise in timber harvesting or resource extraction safeguards.
- Forest communities next to roadless areas are usually heavily dependent upon outdoor recreation and hunting

and fishing enterprises which would be impacted by industrial road building, logging or other resource extraction. Putting those communities in control would likely show how opposed most people would be to commercial logging.

The outlook for rescinding the Roadless Rule is being described by attorneys as certain to provoke lawsuits, could involve many states with overlapping land management plans and will be time-consuming and legally complex.

The Rio Grande Chapter encourages all members to comment on this issue through Oct 6. All members are encouraged to sign our action alert at sc.org/roadlessrule.

Support your chapter

Beat the holiday rush, send in your gift today

Since 1963, the Rio Grande Chapter has been working in New Mexico and West Texas to be a resource and enable people to be Green as part of a team. Our success depends on your support. Your generosity improves the environment and the lives of people throughout New Mexico.

And while the professionalism of our staff and the energy of our members makes us uniquely capable of enacting change even when times are tough, it’s your financial support that makes everything possible.

It’s so easy to contribute. Scan the QR code shown here to donate online, or, if you prefer, mail a check to the office — our address 2501 Yale Blvd. Suite 104, Albuquerque NM 87106-4356.

Contributions of all sizes are welcome, but please give generously. You can make a single donation

or pledge a larger amount and pay it off in monthly installments.

Thank you!

For more info, contact Nina Freer at nina.freer@sierraclub.org or Robert Grant at robertgrant1115@gmail.com.



Legacy giving to the Chapter

Would you like to make an everlasting impact on the environmental health of New Mexico?

Consider adding the Chapter to your estate plan, either as a beneficiary of a trust, retirement plan, IRA, donor-advised fund or life insurance plan.

For a free estate planning tool, visit riograndesierraclub.org/donate.

Donor Advised Funds — Match Day, Oct. 8

The Sierra Club Foundation will match a given gift made on this Day of Giving.

The match amount will go toward 501(c)(3) work. You can request to designate your gift to our chapter.

A donor-advised fund gives flexibility for giving to the Sierra Club and other charities.

You can designate dollars into the account without predetermining where you wish to donate. It is a streamlined way of accounting for all of your charitable giving.

You can transfer assets to a community foundation, brokerage house or other such sponsoring organization.

You then direct how much and how often to donate to selected nonprofits.

These are tax-deductible donations when given through the Sierra Club Foundation, and you may request to have funds designated to the Rio Grande Chapter.

These gifts support education, advocacy, conservation and increasing access to our great outdoors.

For Donor Advised Fund (DAF) assistance and support, contact Cory TenBrink, Donor Concierge Advancement Team with the Sierra Club at 541-227-4294 or email him at cory.tenbrink@sierraclub.org.

Direct your questions or contributions to Sierra Club Foundation at 2101 Webster St, Suite 1350, Oakland, CA 94612, call at 415-995-1780 or e-mail foundation@sierraclubfoundation.org.

Tax ID: 94-6069890 For benefit of / Attention: Rio Grande Chapter

Volunteer Opportunity

The Rio Grande Chapter is in need of an event tabling volunteer, whose primary role is to identify events, recruit and train other volunteers and staff events when possible.

Our tabling efforts help raise awareness, distribute informational materials and recruit new supporters. The geographic focus is primarily Albuquerque & Santa Fe.

For more info, contact Nina Freer, chapter coordinator at nina.freer@sierraclub.org or call—505-243-7767.

Midterm Elections 2026

Our endorsements for Nov. 3 midterm elections

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
Deb Haaland and Stephanie Garcia Richard

The Chapter is proud to endorse the team of Deb Haaland and Stephanie Garcia Richard to lead New Mexico as governor and lieutenant governor. Each holds her own record of environmental accomplishments, and those shared values have created a long-term personal relationship that led to collaborating on efforts such as the Chaco Canyon Moratorium. They will be the nation's dream team for championing both environmental issues and social justice.

Haaland pairs the deep-rooted values of her Native heritage with a clear, actionable climate agenda. As secretary of the Interior under Joe Biden, she reduced methane waste on federal and tribal lands, accelerated permitting for clean energy projects and launched large-scale orphaned well remediation — cutting emissions while creating jobs.

As the first Native American cabinet secretary, she focused heavily on Indigenous rights, public land protections and climate change. To improve managing public lands for all people, she learned the stories of those historically excluded from the benefits of public lands and reintroduced Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge to support tribal nations and Indigenous communities' stewardship of lands and waters.

As our state land commissioner, Garcia Richard amassed an unparalleled record of protection of our environment and public lands. She increased the bonding requirement for oil and gas operators to guarantee that they pay for the costs of well capping and site remediation and that the state is not stuck with the bill. She raised the maximum royalty rate



Deb Haaland
for Governor

for oil and gas lease sales on high potential lands to 25% (oil developers did not flee the state), created the Office of Renewable Energy within the Land Office to capitalize on New Mexico's solar and wind potential, established the first Cultural Properties Protection Rule to safeguard historical and cultural artifacts on state trust lands and worked with the NM Dept. of Wildlife to expand recreational opportunities on state trust lands.

The team of Haaland and Garcia Richard embodies the values the Chapter looks for in the office of governor: Respect for the land, responsibility to future generations and courage in the face of injustice. Each embodies a life and career that reflect a deep belief that our environment and the people it supports are not a commodity, but a sacred trust. Working together, their policies will reflect their commitment to an environmental stewardship that is inseparable from protecting families, water and livelihoods.



Stephanie Garcia Richard
for Lt. Governor

close Xochiti Torres Small-Yvette Herrell 2nd District congressional election that year. López Askin also has seen firsthand the fear and intimidation that some communities experience when federal law enforcement officers are present on Election Day and will do everything she can to ensure that does not occur. This experience with election denial, disruption, intimidation, personal attacks and threats in her tenure as Doña Ana county clerk has prepared her to be a steady hand to guide the state through the polarized elections we may be facing in the future.

López Askin's priorities will be protecting voting access, ensuring consistent and increased election funding for elections and strengthening election infrastructure, including raising poll worker pay and securing funding for a new warehouse.



Amanda López Askin
for Secretary of State

ATTORNEY GENERAL - Raúl Torrez

Attorney General Raúl Torrez has amassed a stellar record during his first term leading the NM Department of Justice, both in environmental litigation and in 59 lawsuits resisting the illegal actions of the



Raúl Torrez
For Attorney General

Trump regime. Torrez has emphasized that his job is first and foremost to protect vulnerable New Mexicans.

Torrez has backed emergency petitions challenging air and water permitting decisions for Oracle's Project Jupiter data center.

— Continued on page 6

Midterm Elections 2026

Word to the wise: Early voting is election protection

Members of our political committee have plenty of ideas and tips on how to handle this election

Richard Barish
Chair, Political Committee
richardbarish@gmail.com

President Trump has been signaling for months that he intends to undermine the November election. He has taken actions to try to do this, for instance, by seeking to restrict mail-in voting. We can expect he will do everything he can to keep eligible voters from casting their ballots and to prevent valid votes from being counted so his corruption can continue without oversight from Congress.

We do not know how Trump's actions will affect us here in New Mexico. We can be confident that our secretary of state and attorney general will do everything they can to protect our vote. However, as individuals we also need to take all prudent actions to ensure everyone's vote is counted. This article will address what you can and should do to protect the vote.

Check your registration often

NM has strict statutory guidelines that govern the removal of voters from the voter rolls, so it is unlikely

you will be removed. But the safest course is to check your registration. It's easy to do that at nmvote.org.

Early in-person voting is election protection

Election day is when you are most likely to encounter problems with in-person voting. But you can't be affected by problems at polling sites on Election Day — or by problems with mail ballots — if you vote early and in-person.

New Mexico has lots of sites for early in-person voting with accommodating hours. Put a date and backup date to vote early and in-person on your calendar, and bring friends and family with you. Encourage others to vote early. You can find voting times and locations at your county clerk's website, which you can find at nmvote.org.

Key dates for early voting

- Oct. 6 Early voting begins at your county clerk's office (the clerk's annex in Bernalillo County)
- Oct. 17 Early voting begins at other locations in your county
- Oct. 31 Last day of early voting

If you must vote by mail, make sure your ballot is in the mail early

On Sept. 14, the Supreme Court denied Trump's request for an emergency order that would allow him to set the rules for who gets to vote by mail. As a result, voting by mail is an option.

If you do vote by mail, and if you are not on the permanent mail ballot list, request your mail-in ballot early (TODAY, for instance). You can request a mail-in ballot at nmvote.org.

Fill your ballot out right away once you get it. Your best option is to return it yourself to a dropbox or to an early or election day polling site.

If you have to mail your ballot, get it in the mail early. You won't be affected if there are problems with the mail near Election Day if you put your ballot in the mail early. Also, be certain to fill it out correctly.

Key dates for mail-in voting

- Oct. 6 Clerks begin mailing out ballots
- Oct. 20 Applications must be received by your county clerk
- Nov. 3 County clerk must have the ballot in-hand by 7 p.m.

Midterm Elections 2026

Haaland, Garcia Richard, López Askin, Torrez

Rio Grande Chapter endorses a YES vote on three constitutional amendments

The Chapter has endorsed the following three constitutional amendments and urges you to vote “yes” on these measures.

Constitutional Amendment 1
Repeal Pocket Veto

This amendment would do away with the pocket veto and reverse the result of not signing a bill.

If this passes, a bill would become law if the governor did not take any action on the bill.

The amendment requires a “substantive explanation” of any veto.

The governor should be required to inform residents why a measure passed by the Legislature is being vetoed.

Our chapter recommends voters mark their ballots YES on the issue of Constitutional Amendment 1.

Constitutional Amendment 2
School board election dates

This amendment would repeal the NM constitutional requirement that school board elections be held at different times than partisan elections and let school board elections be held at the same time as statewide and federal elections.

Holding school board elections at the same time as statewide and federal elections would increase participation in school board elections.

Our chapter recommends voters mark their ballots YES on the issue of Constitutional Amendment 2.

Constitutional Amendment 4
Legislative compensation

This constitutional amendment would provide a salary for legislators starting in 2029.

The salary would be set at and adjusted to the median salary in the state, currently about \$67,800.

Making this a salaried position would allow people who otherwise could not afford to run for Legislature to do so.

We need legislators who have paid time to work on complex, technical legislation that can be key to the future of our state.

Our chapter recommends voters mark their ballots YES on the issue of Constitutional Amendment 4.

Endorsement content authorized and paid for by The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club PAC

Continued from page 5

He sued oil and gas operators for fraudulently scheming to avoid the cost of plugging depleted wells. Torrez has defended public access to natural rivers and streams like the Pecos from private landowners’ attempts to privatize access.

Torrez led a multistate coalition opposing federal regulations that would fast-track licensing for unproven nuclear microreactors without adequate environmental review. He opposed proposed federal rollbacks to radiation safety standards.

Torrez sued the US Postal Service over its unlawful attempts to interfere with mail-in voting. He obtained a \$942 million judgment against Meta as a result of mental health harm to children from social media, along with an agreement to reform its platforms to reduce further injury to children.

He sued the US Justice Department to obtain unredacted federal files concerning Jeffrey Epstein’s activities at the Zorro Ranch in NM so wrongdoers can be prosecuted.

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS
Juan de Jesus Sanchez III

Juan Sanchez supports putting into law the Land Office’s new Office of Cultural Resources in order to ensure no future land commissioner can avoid input from archeologists and tribal liaisons and to protect sacred sites when implementing office projects.



Juan de Jesus Sanchez III for Land Commissioner

Sanchez is committed to protecting Chaco Canyon, including continuing the current moratorium on oil, gas and mineral leases in the greater Chaco area, and refusing to grant easements over state lands within the buffer zone that would facilitate oil and gas projects on federal lands.

Midterm Elections 2026

Vote early if you can, mail ballot asap

Want to help out? Become a poll monitor, take a two-hour course from Common Cause and make sure your family and friends vote

Be a poll monitor on election day

Poll monitors keep an eye on polling sites from the outside, report problems and help voters with voting issues.

My guess is that interference is not very likely here in NM, but if it happens, it is important that someone be there who knows where to report the problem right away.

If you can, sign up for training and two-hour shifts organized by Common Cause NM at commoncause.org/new-mexico (the link at the top of the page on the Common Cause site).

Be ready for a sustained mobilization, if needed after the election, to enforce the results

In the interest of covering all eventualities, I want to discuss what we may need to do if Trump does send troops or ICE to polling sites or interferes with the counting of ballots anywhere in the country, or if he or his lackeys refuse to seat Democrats who were duly elected to serve in the US House of Representatives.

Sanchez emphasizes his past and his planned future work with Native, rural and land-based communities that are an important part of the fabric of our state. He also stands by his intention to ensure robust public input and collaboration on proposed Land Office actions.

He has vowed to continue, implement and defend Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard’s visionary executive orders, regulations and work, including adequate bonding for the cost of remediation of oil and gas well sites, no fresh water for fracking, set-backs of oil and gas leases from schools, higher royalties on oil and gas leases and more renewable energy leases. Sanchez wants to create a new outdoor recreation office within the Land Office to create more opportunities for outdoor recreation, including camping and trails. He describes this as his “passion project.” He wants to lease land to companies that plant native vegetation that would then yield carbon credits that could be sold by the lessee.

BERNALILLO COUNTY COUNTY COMMISSION, DIST. 5
Eric Olivas

Olivas has been a reliable environmental champion on the Bernalillo County Commission. He recently sponsored a bill that imposes renewable energy, water-use offset, and labor requirements on any data centers built in the county.

DOÑA ANA COUNTY COMMISSION, DIST. 1
Daisy Maldonado

Daisy Maldonado is a grassroots leader and community organizer who has spent more than a decade advocating for environmental justice for the people of Doña Ana County.

She has led the charge against Project Jupiter, a project that has proposed to emit more pollution than Albuquerque and Las Cruces. She also served on the Sustainable Economy Advisory Council to help envision the state’s transition away from extractive industry reliance.

If that happens, we need to be prepared to protest — and not just for two hours on a Saturday, but for days if necessary. As the organizers say, protests need to be “too big to rig.”

If demonstrations become necessary, I will post details on our Facebook page, your local Indivisible group should also be a great resource for info.

Make sure you vote!

Political strategist Anat Shenker-Osorio says “your vote is your ICE whistle.” It is also how you act to protect our public lands, keep unwanted data centers out of our communities, protect science and so much more. Be sure to vote yourself and try to make sure your family members and friends vote, too.

I am hopeful our democracy will survive. I hope I can look back in January after a new Congress is sworn in and have a good laugh at how needlessly worried I was. But if that is going to happen, we all need to do our part to zealously protect the election in November.

Midterm Elections 2026

State House of Representatives endorsements

Make your voice heard on Nov. 3. Vote in climate-focused legislators — it’s a win for NM residents and the environment, too!

Our endorsements are the result of questionnaires, interviews with candidates and a 2/3rd vote of two committees of the Chapter. Candidates without an opponent in the general election are not included in our endorsement listing here. For more information about candidates, visit us online at riograndesierraclub.org.



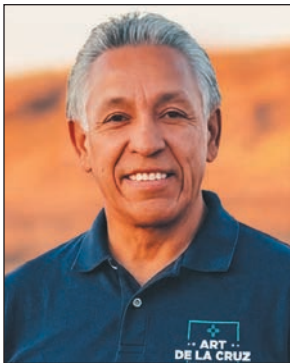
Rickie Gonzales
HD 7 - Valencia



Katherine Gauer
HD 8 - Valencia



Andres Romero
HD 10 - Bernalillo



Art De La Cruz
HD 12 - Bernalillo



Miguel Garcia
HD 14 - Bernalillo



Debbie Sariñana
HD 21 - Bernalillo



Liz Thomson
HD 24 - Bernalillo



Cristina Parajón
HD 25 - Bernalillo



Eleanor Chávez
HD 26 - Bernalillo



Abby Foster
HD 27 - Bernalillo



Pamela Herndon
HD 28 - Bernalillo



Joy Garratt
HD 29 - Bernalillo



Diane Torres-Velásquez
HD 30 - Bernalillo



Lisa Curtis
HD 31 - Bernalillo



Laura Parra, HD 32 -
Doña Ana, Hidalgo & Luna



Micaela Lara Cadena
HD 33 - Doña Ana



Angelica Rubio
HD 35 - Doña Ana



Nathan Small
HD 36 - Doña Ana



Lori Martinez
HD 37 - Doña Ana



Dave Mooney, HD 38 -
Doña Ana, Sierra & Socorro



Raul Turrieta, HD 39 -
Catron, Grant & Hidalgo



Kathleen Cates, HD 44 -
Bernalillo & Sandoval



Tara Lujan
HD 48 - Santa Fe



Sarah Boses, HD 50 -
Sandoval & Santa Fe



Grace Nagamine
HD 51 - Otero



Sarah Silva
HD 53 - Doña Ana & Otero



Chriselle Martinez
HD 57 - Sandoval



Luke Jungmann
HD 60 - Sandoval



Charlotte Little
HD 68 - Bernalillo

Your

vote

Matters

make it green • make a difference

This year, Election Day is Tuesday, November 3

Vote early if possible!

Early voting at your County Clerk's Office begins Oct. 6.

Early voting at expanded locations begins Oct. 20.

Volunteers Needed — Help Get Out the Vote

Sierra Club Members will be knocking doors for our endorsed candidates every weekend until the election as well as calling voters from home or from the Rio Grande Chapter office. For more info or to sign up, contact Melissa Bernardin at melissa.bernardin@sierraclub.org.

News Briefs

Major events, breaking news of the last quarter

D. Reed Eckhardt
Editor, The Rio Grande Sierran
dreed1969@msn.com

WORK AT BIG BEND PAUSED TIL END OF SEPTEMBER

The Trump administration has begun efforts to build its border wall through at least part of the Big Bend area of Texas — despite landowners filing a lawsuit in hopes of extending a pause through the end of September put in place by a federal judge.

The judge had halted the border effort to allow time for more engagement from the public, which had been troubled by work impacting Big Bend National Park’s impact in the economy as well as landowners rights.

The work to put up the border began the week of Sept. 15. Border Patrol officials said there are no plans to construct the wall in the national park, the Big Bend Ranch State Park or Black Gap Wildlife Management Area.

TOUGHER OIL/GAS BONDING RULES NOW IN PLACE

Some of the nation’s toughest oil and gas bonding and cleanup rules are now in place in New Mexico after they were adopted by the NM Oil Conservation Commission.

“This decision comes down to the simple idea that New Mexicans agree on: If you drill it, you clean it,” said Tannis Fox, senior attorney at the Western Environmental Law Center.

“The Commission acted to protect our water, our communities and our state budget — ensuring the public isn’t left paying for the industry’s messes.”

UTILITY COMMISSION MOVES TO LIMIT PUBLIC INPUT

Environmental groups are criticizing efforts by the Public Régulation Commission that would limit participation by expert intervention in its proceedings, allow the closing of public hearings to the public “for good cause” and reductions to public comment.

Commissioners approved the changes without discussion during a meeting last month. The new rules come in the wake of protests against proposals by outside equity firms to purchase New Mexico Gas and PNM.

LAND COMMISSIONER BANS NEW URANIUM MINING ON STATE LANDS, SHIFTS FOCUS TO CLEANING UP EXISTING

The leasing of state lands for fresh uranium mining has been banned by State Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard.

Instead, the commissioner wants her office to focus on cleaning up legacy uranium mines. She also urged the federal government and the uranium industry to meaningfully address the legacy issues caused by them in the past.

New Mexico has 1,000 former uranium mining sites, and about 250 have been abandoned. This order comes as President Trump is pushing to expand uranium mining nationwide.

BUYOUT OF NM GAS CO. APPROVED

The private equity firm Bernard Capital Partners of Louisiana has acquired the New Mexico Gas Co. following a split 2-1 vote by the Public Regulation Commission. Approval for the \$1.25 billion sale had been opposed by consumer advocates and environ-



Big Bend is a hiker's paradise containing the largest expanse of roadless public lands in Texas. More than 150 miles of trails offer opportunities for day hikes or backpacking trips. Elevations range from 1,800 feet along the Rio Grande to 7,832 feet on Emory Peak in the Chisos Mountains. Elevation changes produce an exceptional variety of plants, animals, and scenic vistas. Photo / NPS.

mental groups as well as the state Department of Justice. They argued the benefits of the sale did not outweigh risks faced by customers, including rising utility prices. “This decision is not in the best interests of New Mexico Gas Co.’s customers,” said Michael Kenney with Western Resource Advocates. “... the commission has rubber-stamped a major deal that increases risks for the customer and leaves them on the hook for potentially higher costs.”

NM SUES OVER BORDER WATER WELLS

Drilling of unapproved water wells to aid border wall construction in has elicited a lawsuit from the Office of the State Engineer.

As announced by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s office, the state’s allegation focuses on unlawful drilling and pumping from the area’s stressed aquifers near the border, as well as diversion from existing wells and tampering with water meters.

The state engineer is asking for an injunction against the use of water from these wells, as well as repayment by Customs and Border Protection for previously pumped water. The contractors for the wells said they were advised by CBP that no state permits were required because the drilling was on federal land near the border.

HEAT RULE DELAYED IN HOPES OF BUILDING CONSENSUS

State regulations aimed at protecting workers from heat-related workplace illnesses and injuries continue to be delayed after facing opposition from business and industry groups. A hearing concerning the rules was delayed by officials from the Occupational Health and Safety Bureau. Among other things, the rules, if enacted, would require owners to create heat illness and injury plans, provide fluids and cooling areas and offer regular rest breaks.

BLACKSTONE RETURNS \$13 MILLION FROM STOCK DEAL

In the wake of a ruling that its purchase of stock from TXNM Energy (parent company of PNM) was illegal, private equity firm Blackstone now has returned \$13 million in profits it earned from the deal.

The NM Public Regulation Commission had declared the \$400 million stock purchase from TXNM, from whom it is trying to buy the Public Service Company of New Mexico, improper since it was done without the commission’s approval. The stock sale was unwound, and Blackstone paid \$300,000 in fines.

The sale of the company is still pending. It has faced opposition from customers and advocates who fear rising rate hikes and declining service.

RECORD NUMBER OF ORPHAN WELLS PLUGGED

There are now 114 fewer orphan wells in New Mexico, thanks to a record-setting year of well the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources plugging by the Oil Conservation Division of Department. That more than doubled previous years’ efforts. That effort was accelerated by funds from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Those funds are expected to flow over the next several years as the division seeks to cap more of the state’s 1,600 orphan wells. This year’s efforts cost \$28.4 million.

PLAN TO MINE GOLD IN “BOOTHEEL” ABANDONED

A Canadian company has abandoned its plans to develop gold mining in western Hidalgo County in the area known as “The Bootheel.” Almaden America has staked more than 130 claims inn the area and said in April it had received sample and would be doing more tests to find drilling sites. But at the end of June, the company announced that “certain factors” had caused it to abandon the effort. Conservationists in the area, such as New Mexico Wild and Dark Sky New Mexico, had pushed back against the plan for fear it would disrupt species like the night-blooming cereus cactus and the whiptail lizard. They also were concerned that mining could harm the region’s dark skies.

SF COUNTY PASSES 18-MONTH DATA CENTER PAUSE

There will be no data center development in Santa Fe County at least for 18 months after commissioners passed a temporary moratorium During the pause, county staff will create rules on energy and water use as well as on noise. Commissioners said that while there currently are no proposals for such a center, they wanted to get ahead of a developer pitching a project. Supporters said they were hoping the action would provide leadership for the rest of the state. Socorro County has passed a similar ban, one was considered for Raton but was dropped.

HUGE WIND PROJECT GOES ONLINE IN NM

The biggest wind energy project in America is now online in New Mexico. With more than 900 turbines, the SunZia Project, located in central NM, is three times larger than the next two larger wind farms in the US. It generates 3,650 megawatts of power, which will be used by more than 1 million homes. Its power will reach users in central Arizona and southern California. US Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-NM, said the project has been a priority for him since he took office in 2013. It took 18 years to complete, from planning to operation.

Clean Air

Update on PNM and federal clean air rollbacks

Antoinette Reyes
Southern NM Organizer | Clean Air
antoinette.reyes@sierraclub.org

Methane standards help protect public health, mitigate the climate crisis, create jobs in the growing methane mitigation industry, and bolster national energy security.

After the Trump administration’s delaying of the implementation and enforcement of the 2024 Methane Rule, oil and gas is getting another federal handout. As part of its wide-reaching deregulatory agenda, the administration is at it again. The newest set of rollbacks would remove requirements for oil and gas companies to monitor and detect leaks at both new and existing operations while also expanding allowances for flaring and venting.

In just the first year since the EPA stopped enforcing oil and gas methane regulations, the fossil fuel industry leaked, vented and flared \$5.3 billion worth of gas into the atmosphere.

Further weakening these critical standards will exacerbate harms to communities living closest to oil and gas production, locking in continued, unnecessary exposure to dangerous air pollution for years to come, and while New Mexico has strong regulations of its own, our communities are not protected from the Texas pollution that federal rules would have addressed.

Pollution from fossil fuel venting and flaring alone resulted in \$7.4 billion in annual health damages, which is equivalent to 700 premature deaths and 73,000 asthma exacerbations among children annually. If that wasn’t enough, more federal rollbacks are expected this fall, with pneumatics, leak



Members of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club are joined by members of 350 New Mexico are shown here at the New Mexico State Fair earlier this fall. Representatives from the two organizations participated in a parade while at the fair. Photo by Bill Rodgers.

detection and repair and low-producing wells all flagged as likely targets.

Sierra Club is doing all we can to keep these clean air protections. Add your name to the petition aimed at helping the air we breathe and keeping oil and gas accountable by submitting a comments at sc.org/methane.

At the state level the Governor’s Environment

Department is working hard to pass a new methane abatement rule, locking in parts of the 2024 EPA rule into state rule by the end of the year. This would ensure that third parties can report super emitter occurrences and that oil and gas uses the least leaky equipment possible. Stay tuned for opportunities to comment at the Environmental Improvement Board hearing the first week of December.

Public Lands

Should national parks, other public areas be saved?

Protecting Chaco — Indigenous groups lead the defense of ancient heritage site from industry

Bill Rodgers
Communications Associate
Rio Grande Chapter
bill.rodgers@sierraclub.org

Activists from across New Mexico convened on the Santa Fe offices of the Bureau of Land Management twice this summer.

The first visit was to protest President Trump’s plan to remove a 10-mile safety buffer zone that protects the Greater Chaco Region from oil and gas extraction and mining.

The second trip to BLM was to protest further lease sales in the area.

In July, Trump’s BLM moved to repeal the zone. This came a day after the administration moved to slash protections for the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments, to allow for expanded mining and drilling.

As with many of the administration’s attacks on public lands, they tried to minimize public input with truncated public comment periods — less than seven days when the Chaco repeal was first announced in April.

People with a stake in the land, Indigenous activists, and their allies quickly responded.

“We must keep showing up and hold BLM accountable to its federal trust responsibilities, the health of local Diné communities, our shared history

embedded in Greater Chaco and the protection of sacred sites for generations to come,” said Marissa Naranjo of Sovereign Energy, who helped organize the protests outside of BLM offices.

To activists, this repeal would represent a betrayal of required tribal consultation and a failure of community consultation on the part of the federal government.

In addition to damage that extraction industries could cause to the 1,000 year-old Chaco historic site, it could also cause harm to many more heritage sites in the area as well as pollution of the land, drinking water and air of people who live within the Greater Chaco Region.

If the hurdles the administration created were intended to stifle the public’s input; they were not successful.

Action came swiftly — and at scale. “Protecting Chaco is everyone’s fight — from government-to-government advocacy to the actions of individual community members,” Naranjo said.

“BLM’s attempt to undo these protections through an expedited, inaccessible process demonstrated the strength of our communities and Diné–Pueblo solidarity with over 300,000 comments in support of retaining the zone.”

To learn more about this issue and explore how you might get involved, contact Bill Rodgers, Communications Associate for the Rio Grande Chapter, at bill.rodgers@sierraclub.org.

Central New Mexico Group Sierra Club & Beer Oct. 2: Crash of TWA Flight 260

Terry Owen, an outdoor adventurer and outings leader, will share the story of this famous Albuquerque plane crash. On Feb. 19, 1955 at 7:03 a.m., Captain Ivan Spong, pilot of TWA Flight 260, received permission from the control tower to take off from the Albuquerque airport and vector toward Santa Fe for their next stop. At 7:12 a.m., the terrain warning system bells sounded in the cockpit, alerting the crew to impending danger. Through the clouds, a sheer granite cliff face from the Sandias appeared over the nose of the aircraft and the pilot attempted to evade it. At 7:13 a.m. TWA Flight 260 crashed into the mountain, killing all 13 passengers and three crew members. The plane wreckage remains there to this day. Terry will take us back to those early days of commercial aviation and share what has been learned in the years since.

DATE: Friday, Oct. 2
TIME: 7:15-8:30 p.m.
PLACE: St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
431 Richmond Place NE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
COST: Free
RSVP at riograndesierreclub.org/calendar

For more info, contact Susan Gorman, Central NM Group Chair, at susangorman1945@gmail.com.

Wildlife

NM lobos need more than a population count

Mary Katherine Ray
Wildlife Chair
mkrscri@gmail.com

Michelle Lute
Executive Director | Wildlife for All
wildlifeforall.us

Mexican wolves’ growing population means federal agencies are considering changes to the protections that have governed lobo recovery for decades.

And now, as a gift to ranchers, President Trump has signed an executive order that calls for the secretary of Interior to determine if all wolves, including lobos, have met criteria for downlisting to threatened status or for delisting them, depriving them entirely of federal protections.

But recent events in New Mexico raise a fundamental question: Can we really loosen protections and still see lobos thrive?

Recently, two federally endangered Mexican gray wolves from the Sawtooth Pack were caught and brutally killed in private traps in western New Mexico. So far, the perpetrators have not been prosecuted. Since 2022, at least 23 Mexican gray wolves have been caught in private traps on private land in New Mexico.

In late 2025 an equally disturbing failure came to light. A permitted depredation control officer for the Catron County Sheriff’s Office illegally set a trap on public land, violating Roxy’s Law. And an endangered Mexican gray wolf, AM2765, was caught in the trap. The trapper restrained the wolf using a sleeping bag, suffocating him to death.



Illegal killing remains a significant cause of death in Mexican wolves. The genetic diversity of the wild population remains a concern. Lobos are clearly not able to lose Endangered Species Act protections.

According to reporting by the Albuquerque Journal, the NM Department of Wildlife sought prosecution, but the NM Department of Justice inexplicably declined to bring criminal charges. Instead, the attorney general asked the trapper to download an app showing public and private land boundaries.

These cases expose the need for stronger protections against preventable wildlife deaths — and meaningful accountability when those protections fail.

New Mexico has made important progress protecting wildlife. Roxy's Law banned recreational trapping on public lands, helping save wildlife from the indiscriminate cruelty of traps. Wolves, as both federally and state listed endangered species, may not be deliberately trapped or harmed on either public or private land. But these recent cases demonstrate that either existing laws are not sufficient to protect wolves and/or existing protections are not being enforced.

Wolf recovery cannot simply mean having enough wolves on the landscape to satisfy a population target. It must mean the wolf population has adequate genetic diversity to not be hampered by inbreeding and that wolves can roam to fill suitable habitats.

It must also mean that wolves can survive and thrive across landscapes without being subjected to cruel and unlawful killing — and that the laws designed to protect them do actually do so.

That’s why a coalition of 15 conservation, environmental and animal protection organizations — including Sierra Club and Wildlife for All — has called on New Mexico leaders to strengthen, not loosen, protections for Mexican gray wolves, improve enforcement and guarantee meaningful accountability when laws are broken.

The horrible deaths of the Sawtooth wolves and AM2765 are opportunities to examine why New Mexico and federal protections failed these wolves and what must change.

We must do better for lobos and all wildlife.

Awards

Susan Martin wins National Service Award
Former chapter chair honored for aiding Rio Grande Chapter growth

Mona Blaber
Digital Organizer
ramona.blaber@sierraclub.org

Susan Martin has been awarded the Sierra Club’s National Service Award. Her leadership in many different roles transformed the Rio Grande Chapter into the successful, welcoming, well-run powerhouse that it is today.

Her kind and down-to-earth manner in her first term as chapter chair helped build the chapter executive committee into a place where people of differing backgrounds and opinions can engage, participate and share their knowledge.

After chairing the chapter, Martin moved on to helm the chapter’s Political Committee. She understands New Mexico politics and people like few others, and her insights and leadership and are among the reasons for Sierra Club’s strong relationship with so many elected environmental champions.

Martin’s legal background, her knack for spotting people who care and her strategic sense for what it takes to run a successful campaign in New Mexico has helped the Rio Grande Chapter develop a sterling record of victory and endorse elected leaders who have some of the best environmental bona fides in the nation.

While Martin is no longer political chair, she continues to share her savvy input on the chapter and group political teams.

Clean Water

State-led Surface Water Permitting Hearing concludes

Tricia Snyder
Water Team
pjsnyder@gmail.com

With the 2025 passage of SB 21, the Legislature provided the framework for a state-led surface water quality permitting program.

This program would take over permitting for those waters that are federally protected under the Clean Water Act as well as provide protection for waters of the state that have lost federal protection and are no longer covered under the Clean Water Act. These protections have been eroded for years, with the most impactful decision for states like New Mexico being the US Supreme Court decision Sackett v. EPA, by which over 95% of the waterways and 88% of wetlands lost protections.

The next step in getting this critical state program up and running occurred in June when the Water Quality Control Commission convened a hearing on the rules that make up fine-grained details on the day-to-day operations of the program, including a structure of fees on permits that will help support the cost of the program.

The Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter is working with its partners on this important effort and have focused on a handful of key issues:

- Protecting the full breadth of New Mexico’s surface waters.
- Protecting tribal waters to the greatest extent possible.
- Guaranteeing meaningful public participation.

The final step in the process will be deliberations in November, when the commission is expected to adopt final rules. Stay tuned for more details on what the final rules will include.

New Group for readers! Check out The “Green” Book Club

The Rio Grande Chapter has started a Green Book Club. The club meets one Thursday evening each month from 6-7:30 p.m. at the 2501 Yale Boulevard, Albuquerque office address. Books are chosen by the club members. These can be fiction, non-fiction, poetry, essays: anything that addresses any aspect of being green. Bring your own coffee; the Chapter provides treats. Sign up at riograndesierraclub.org/calendar. Info — Robert Grant at robertgrant1115@gmail.com or text 919-593-2710.

Oct. 8 — Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants. Robin Wall Kimmerer trained as a botanist. Kimmerer blends in her indigenous Potawatomi heritage in a series of lyrical essays that illustrate the functioning of complex ecological systems. Her poetic and meditative prose leads to a call to action by establishing a reciprocal relationship with Earth.

Nov. 12 — A Sand County Almanac. Aldo Leopold introduces the need to develop a "land ethic." This concept broadens the definition of community to include not just humans but also the soil, water, plants and animals – collectively known as “the land.” Based on life at his Wisconsin farm, the lyrical, poetic descriptions bring complicated ecological concepts to life.

Dec. 10 — Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life. Barbara Kingsolver moved to a farm in southern Appalachia and details her family’s shift to locally produced food (locavore) outside of the industrial food pipeline. Engaging storytelling blends humor, science, recipes and organic farming advice.



Life-sized animal puppets from The Herds, seen here in Paris, inspired Global Warming Express instructors to create a similar project for local GWE students. Partnering with Jo Redline Christian, Wise Fool Circus and artist Bobbe Besold, youngsters used recycled and reused materials to “become wolves” and form wolf packs — experiences that enhanced their research on how wolves actually live. Photo / The Herd.

Global Warming Express

Celebrating 15 years of climate programming

GWE Wolf & Species Project takes inspiration from The Herd, students build life-size animal puppets

Genie Stevens
Climate Education Director
genie.stevens@sierraclub.org

Concerned about the ever-growing climate migration of animals from South America to the Antarctic, The Herds created life-sized animal puppets. This idea inspired the Global Warming Express to approach international puppeteer and puppet building instructor Jo Redline Christian, who in 1988 founded Wise Fool Circus, to discuss how to mentor fourth, fifth and sixth graders in the creation and manipulation of a life-size wolf puppet. It will take an entire semester to build and four children to “walk” the creation.

GWE also tapped longtime artist-in-residence Bobbe Besold, to create a hands-on art-making curriculum. GWEers throughout the state will use recycled and reused materials to “become wolves” and form wolf packs.

Integrating kid-led education and research on wolves —how they move, eat and sleep, their hab-

itats, their social structures, their needs and their challenges— with field trips into the wilderness (where wolves could be living) over the course of the semester, the GWE kids will become fluent in wolves ways of being.

GWE has a new curriculum, based on the original book that inspired the program. Students will learn about the lives and challenges faced by each of the animals who “jump aboard” the Global Warming Express train. The topics include science (how does the Earth “work”), climate science (how the Earth is affected by human-made pollution), habitat degradation, food scarcity and migration. Students will discuss, draw, write about and experiment in both indoor and outdoor classrooms.

The curriculum is founded on the “bubbles and butterflies” principle. In the GWE book, the fuel for the magic train is bubbles and monarch butterflies, which are created when the train passengers become positive in their thinking and optimistic in their intentions.

Through a year-long series of engaging aware-

Want a great family project?

Unleash the beast — Create your own animal puppet

GWE leaders spent a full semester mentoring students in creating and then manipulating their own life-size animal puppets. The puppets they created require four students to “walk” their creations. If you'd like to try your hand at building something similar, here are the websites GWE instructors found especially helpful.

theherds.org	joredline.com
wisefoolnewmexico.org	bobbebesold.com/trees

ness training exercises, the GWEers will learn how to change their own “internal” climates, which in turn will allow them to encounter, with equanimity, the stories of how the external climate affects their friends-of-other-species and to help them to make clear choices of what they can do to support and create change.

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!

Awards

McQueen wins Sierra Club’s public service prize

State representative presented with the Ed Wayburn Award for his commitment to the environment

Camilla Feibelman
Chapter Director
camilla.feibelman.sierraclub.org

State Rep. Matthew McQueen, D-Santa Fe, has been awarded the Sierra Club’s prestigious Ed Wayburn Public Service Award.

McQueen served for 12 years in the State House of Representatives, 10 of those as chair of the House Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Committee. During his time in the Legislature, McQueen successfully shepherded many of key environmental bills into law.

McQueen ran for state land commissioner

in the most recent primary but did not prevail. He would have been one of the most experienced candidates ever to hold the office.

Among his many accomplishments, McQueen has held oil and gas companies accountable by restoring the state’s ability to levy fines and penalties on bad actors and by raising the royalty rate in the Permian Basin. He has fought to protect our natural resources, such as the Gila River, and he led efforts to prevent the storage of high-level nuclear waste in our state.

Last year he worked with a broad coalition of stakeholders to successfully reform our Department of Game Fish into a modern Department of Wild-

life, and he was instrumental in enacting a ban on cruel trapping on state public lands. He worked to block Holtec’s proposed temporary nuclear waste storage facility; engaged in wildfire prevention strategies and recognized the urgency of proactive land management in a changing climate. In his professional career as an attorney, he specialized in land conservation. *Congratulations!*



Matthew McQueen
NM State Representative

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.

Fri., Oct. 2 — The Story of the Crash of TWA Flight 260, 70 Years Ago, 7:15-8:30 p.m. We'll hear the story of the Crash of TWA Flight 260. Terry Owen, an outdoor adventurer and outings leader, will share the story of the crash that occurred on Feb. 19, 1955 in the Sandia Mountains and the memorial hike to the crash site. Enjoy a beverage and snacks as well as a evening with friends.
Leader: Terry Owen
Level: Strenuous
Location: St. Mark's Episcopal, 431 Richmond Place NE, Albuquerque

Fri., Oct. 9 — Zero Waste Tour of Solutions Compost, Soil and Mulch, 10- 11:30 a.m. Learn how this soil business has evolved in just two years and watch the "Denali" separate food from packaging.
Leader: Laurie Zunner, lmzunne@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: 9008 Bates Rd SE, Albuquerque

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 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 history, local archaeology and the Land of Enchantment. This outing affords photo opportunities with time to walk about, maybe finding inspiration for a quick poem or a quick sketch. Wear comfortable attire and sturdy shoes. Bring clothing layers, hats, sunscreen,water and a picnic lunch. Total combined walking distance is one mile, at about 6,000 feet elevation, 50 feet 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 welcome with accompanying responsible adult. Those who wish to carpool are responsible for making their own arrangements and any reimbursement to the driver with whom they travel. Register no later than Oct. 3.
Leader: June Parsons, comicsilver@gmail.com
Level: Easy and accessible
Location: Mountainair. Meet up at Lowe's, 2001 12th St., Albuquerque

Sat.-Sun., Oct. 17-18, Wilderness First Aid Course, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Rio Grande Chapter is sponsoring a Wilderness First Aid course. This course is in high demand and typically fills up months in advance. The SOLO Wilderness First Aid Course is a two-day training for anyone who spends time hiking, skiing, engaging in other outdoor pursuits or just wants to know what to do when things go wrong. The course is a blend of lecture, 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 course, you will be certified or re-certified in Wilderness First Aid. Attendees must participate in all portions and all hours of the course and demonstrate understanding to obtain certification. Why should you 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 to know what to do. Many backcountry emergencies are preventable, and even when bad things happen, sometimes the wrong care can make things worse. By learning

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/
- 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

some basic skills, you can make the difference between a good outcome and a bad one — and maybe even save a life. For more info, visit www.soloschools.com. Cancellation policy: Activity is held rain or shine, but may be altered due to weather.

Info: Debbie Bryant, 832-692-1881, bryade@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: Tijeras Village Hall
Cost: Tuition is \$200
Other: All students must be age 14 or older

Sat., Oct. 24 — Santa Fe Meetup: Hike to the top of Cerro Grande, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. This beautiful out-and-back hike leads through an open forest of ponderosa, aspen and conifers to the top of Cerro Grande (the highest point in Banderlier). You will hike on the rim of the Valles Caldera and enjoy sweeping views into Valle Grande and beyond. Weather permitting, we'll have at least a half hour on the top to rest, refuel and enjoy those views. If we're lucky, we'll hear bugling elks and see the herds down in the valley. Bring binoculars, if interested. The trailhead is a one hour drive from Santa Fe. Hiking time is 3 or more hours. The hike is moderate with some short, steep parts. The elevation gain is 1,300 feet in about 2.2 miles (round trip 4.5 miles); the summit is at 10,199 feet. The altitude can make it feel more challenging. Carpoolers leave Santa Fe at 830 a.m. If you meet us at the trailhead, arrive by 9:30 a.m. Water and rain gear required. Bring a snack for the top if you want one. Changes or cancellations will be posted via Santa Fe Meetup. Dogs are not permitted in Banderlier.
Leaders: Lisa and Craig Hammond
Level: Moderate
Location: Meet behind the Market Street Supermarket, Guadalupe and Paseo de Peralta, in Santa Fe, to carpool up

Fri., Oct. 30 — Acoma Sky City Pueblo Walking Tour, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tucked away in the middle of New Mexico you'll find Acoma Sky City Pueblo. It is a fantastic place to visit, wholly unique and you will experience years of history. Upon arrival we will begin with a walk through the visitor center, gift shop and museum. Then we will travel by Acoma Pueblo bus to the top of the inhabited mesa

for a guided tour of the "city," offering a glimpse into a millennia of unique human migration from Mesa Verde to Chaco to Acoma. Along the walking tour local artisans and residents explain and sell their unique handmade goods and traditional baked items. This Acoma site dates back more than 1,000 years; it's the oldest continuously human-inhabited site in New Mexico. History will be shared by our guide throughout the walk. Acoma offers a quiet place in the sky with views many miles in the distance in every direction and an opportunity to reflect on its history and local archeology. This outing provides abundant photo opportunities outside of the mission church and graveyard. The walk takes about two hours. We will then visit and enjoy our packed lunches that we brought (although you can chance the visitor center cafe being open). Walking sticks suggested. Bring layers, hats, sunscreen, water and lunch. Ground will be uneven.

Leader: June Parsons, comicsilver@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: Meet at Lowes, 2001 12th St., Albuquerque and caravan to the Acoma Visitor Center
Cost: There is a \$25 contribution (\$20 seniors) to the Pueblo purchased at the visitor center and museum.
Other: No dogs except service animals. Kids 10 and older welcome if with a responsible adult. Register no later than Oct. 26.

Sat., Nov. 7 — Valley of Fires-Malpais, 9:30 a.m.-noon. Join us for a leisurely morning hike enjoying the cool fall weather at the BLM Valley of Fires Recreation Area west of Carrizozo. We'll explore one of the youngest lava flows in the continental United States, a site observed by indigenous people inhabiting the Tularosa Basin more than 5,000 years ago. We'll hike the Kipuka and Nature Trails as well as make a quick scamper up to the overlook. There is minimal elevation gain and a little less than 3 miles of hiking. Please dress for cool weather with good supportive footwear. We'll discuss the history and geology of the lava flow. The wildlife is notably melanistic, contrasting sharply with their pale-colored kin in the White Sand dunes to the south. Please note there is a \$5 entrance fee per vehicle; any federal interagency pass is valid. No dogs and hike is appropriate for participants 18 years and older. Registration is limited to 10 people. RSVP by Nov. 5.
Leader: John Pijawka, jastro@windstream.net 575-937-7422
Level: Easy
Location: Valley of Fires Recreation Area west of Carrizozo
Other: If carpooling from Albuquerque/Santa Fe is desired, the leader can assist in connecting participants.

Tues., Nov. 17 — Zero Waste Tour of the Surface Water Treatment Plant, 10-11:30 a.m. Learn how water from the Rio Grande is taken in and treated to become your drinking water. In an introduction, you will see the 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.
Leader: Laurie Zunner, lmzunne@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: 6000 Alexander Blvd., Albuquerque

Thu., Dec. 10 — Zero Waste Tour of BARCO Recycling Facility, 9-10:30 a.m. Learn how our blue-bin recycling is sorted, how much is actually recycled and get answers to all your recycling questions. Must be able to climb stairs and not be bothered by a very noisy environment. Limit is 10 people — register early.
Leader: Laurie Zunner, lmzunne@gmail.com
Level: Easy
Location: 5021 Edith Blvd. NE, Albuquerque



The 2026 Membership Appreciation Potluck is set for Fri., Dec. 4.

Membership Appreciation

Potluck set for Fri., Dec. 4

Save the date and bring a "date," too! Introduce friends to the Sierra Club

Save the date! It's time for the Sierra Club's annual holiday party. This year's theme is "What a Year!" We hope you'll join us for our favorite event of the year — our Annual membership / volunteer appreciation gathering. We'll do a potluck, catch up with each other and celebrate our successes in 2026. Once again, Hurricane's enchiladas will be served. This has been a tough year but thanks to all for all you are doing. Let's eat, drink and get energized for the year to come! You do not have to be a member to attend. If you are a member, however, bring a dish — and a friend you'd like to introduce to the Sierra Club.

Annual Member & Volunteer Appreciation Party
Sierra Club & Beer Potluck

DATE: Friday, Dec. 4
TIME: 6-8 p.m.
PLACE: St. Mark's Episcopal Church
431 Richmond Pl NE, Albuquerque, 87106

Members—please bring a dish that corresponds to the first letter of your last name.

Last Name	A-L	Appetizers, desserts
	M-Z	Sides & mains

Beer, soft drinks and light snacks will be available at this event. For more info, or to RSVP, to to riograndesierraclub.org/calendar