

Rio Grande Sierran



NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011

Less coal, more clean in N.M.

By David Van Winkle
Chapter Energy Chair

Despite some setbacks nationally, the transition from dirty coal to clean energy made strong progress in New Mexico in 2010—and the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter led the way.

In November, it was announced that three units at the coal-fired Four Corners Power Plant in northwestern New

Big victories for clean air

- N.M. board approves carbon-reduction plans, requires Helena Chemical to retain permit: Page 3
- Three coal-fired units at Four Corners to close: Page 4
- EPA proposes pollution controls for San Juan: Page 4

Mexico would close by 2013, reducing the plant's coal output by 560 megawatts (see story, Page 4).

The number of solar rooftop systems

in PNM's territory has grown from 400 on January 26, 2009 (my system was the 400th), to 1,200 systems at the end of 2010.

In 2011, PNM will use renewable energy sources to supply 10% of the energy it provides to customers. This is a result of New Mexico legislation passed several years ago that the Sierra Club and other environmental groups pressed legislators to enact.

By the end of 2011, solar power in

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This is the alpha female of the Hawk's Nest pack of Mexican wolves in eastern Arizona. Two members of her pack were shot, including her mate. Photo courtesy Jean Ossorio.

Wolves in Danger

Congress may strip Mexican wolves of endangered protection

By Mary Katherine Ray
Chapter Wildlife Chair

Nearly a year ago, the official tally of the Mexican wolf population was just 42 animals in Arizona and New Mexico. Some had puppies this summer and a new count will take place soon to see how many survived. Our wolves could be thriving and we know nature needs them, but in the meantime, 6 of the 42 perished this year, all but one under suspicious circumstances.

Still there are 22 lobos in captivity that are eligible

for release into the wild. If not now, when?

After being asked repeatedly for more to be released to boost the population, the Fish and Wildlife Service has announced that a male will be released into the Hawk's Nest pack this winter in hopes he will form a bond with the alpha female, whose mate and one offspring were among the gunshot casualties.

The Hawk's Nest pack, in all the years it has been in

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Commission regulates N.M. dairies' waste

On Dec. 15, the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) passed New Mexico's first industry-specific regulations for the dairy industry. The new regulations will govern dairy-waste pollution in groundwater.

"Given that the water around the majority of dairies across the state is unsafe to drink, these regulations are an essential first step to protecting New Mexico's drinking water from dairy contamination," said Sam Schabacker of Food and Water Watch.

The decision marks the end of a two-year process begun by the dairy industry itself, which asked for industry-specific regulations during the 2009 New Mexico legislative session.

This is very good news for New Mexico and for the Rio Grande Chapter, which worked hard as part of the coalition that pushed for strong protections at every stage of this two-year process. Our support of the NMED Ground Water Quality Bureau's proposed regulations were key to convincing the Commission to adopt a far stronger dairy-discharge regulation than the dairy

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A 2011 message from our chair

The next decade is upon us, with much hope for our renewable-energy future. However, the results of the recent mid-term elections leave us with considerable apprehension.

Reviewing 2010, our efforts to create a sustainable-energy future were very productive. We retained two of our three House seats in Washington. Our lobbying resulted in legislation to require improved energy efficiency in New Mexico public buildings.

On the legal front, the Club filed suit against San Juan Coal Company, BHP Billiton, and PNM for pollu-



John Buchser,
Rio Grande
Chapter chair

tion caused by the dumping of 40 million tons of coal waste in unlined pits. The arsenic, lead, and mercury leach into our groundwater and blow into the air. Regulatory enforcement will continue to be critical in creation of equity in the costs of burning coal compared to the cost of renewable alternatives.

The biggest challenge in the first few months of the year will be to fight bad bills in the New Mexico Legislature. Our well-seasoned lobbying team will be following bills and identifying risks. However, individual contacts to your legislator will be essential. We will be using email to alert you to critical issues; please take a few minutes to make a call when action is needed.

Our new communications tools—a redesigned website combined with better messaging capabilities—have been tremendously successful. Visits to our website are up more than 3,000 percent. Responses to our e-mails have

been great. Two recent requests for action produced 500 member responses to critical issues. Long-term protection for Otero Mesa stands out as a priority. Giving the Mexican gray wolf a chance to survive in the Gila wilderness and surrounding areas is another.

Since the Club was created over a century ago, the protection of our wild lands and the diversity of plants and critters that depend on our wild places has been our focus. Minimizing the long-term effects of climate change may appear to be a shift to a new focus, but it all comes back to saving the land, plants and critters.

Board approves carbon cap for N.M.

By Mona Blaber

The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board voted Dec. 6 to adopt a petition by New Energy Economy that creates a program to reduce carbon pollution and create jobs for New Mexicans.

Approved by a 4-1 vote, the plan will require the state's largest polluters to reduce their carbon-dioxide emissions by 3 percent per year from 2010 levels starting in 2013. The approval culminates a two-year process for the NEE petition, signed onto by the Rio Grande Chapter.

In November, the EIB approved a plan by the state Environment Department to participate in the Western Climate Initiative's regional cap-and-trade program, which includes California, other Western states and several Canadian provinces. It would require major polluters to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 2 percent a year start-

The board also approved a plan to join other Western states and Canadian provinces in a cap-and-trade initiative. It would require major polluters to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 2 percent a year starting in 2012.

ing in 2012.

The NEE petition is a back-up to the regional initiative. If the Environment Department's regional plan moves ahead, the NEE's state-only rule will sunset. If not, the petition rules apply.

Both the NEE petition and Environment Department plan include provisions to keep emitters' costs down, including an annual limit on how much emitters will have to spend to comply and an "off ramp" if businesses can show that the rules will prove detrimental to their economic viability.

NEE Senior Policy Advisor Mariel Nanasi said in a press release that the rule is designed to make it as easy as

possible to meet the goals, but she said what's more important is what the rule means for New Mexico's economy.

"The board understands that the same technologies that can reduce carbon pollution can also make New Mexico more competitive in the clean-energy economy, which means more long-term jobs for New Mexicans."

New Mexico is second in the nation in solar-energy potential and 12th for wind-power potential.

"New Mexico has world-class solar and wind resources along with the available workforce and high-tech training programs necessary to make it happen," said Randy Sadewic, founder

and president of Positive Energy, a solar installer that has offices in four cities around the state.

But the EIB rulings are in danger of being nullified by incoming Gov. Susana Martinez and a Legislature that lost several environmental champions in the midterm elections. Lawsuits by industry and the city of Farmington challenge the emissions caps, and anti-environment legislators and Martinez may attack the EIB's work from several angles (see Legislative Update, Page 5).

Recent studies project dust-bowl conditions across the Southwest as early as the 2060s on our current emissions path. There is still time to change that path and boost our economic viability thanks to these plans in New Mexico and other states that have acted where the federal government has not. To learn how you can help protect these rules, sign up for our e-mail alerts: Go to nmsierraclub.org and click on the box in the upper right corner.

Victory: Helena Chemical must retain permit

Environmental Improvement Board rules that company must continue to meet air-quality standards

By Michael Casaus

Regional Field-Organizing Manager

In a victory for clean air and environmental justice, the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) ruled that Helena Chemical Company's facility in Mesquite must continue to operate with an air-quality permit. The EIB's 4-to-1 ruling will help ensure that Helena Chemical is a good corporate neighbor and that the quality of life for families in Mesquite is protected.

Earlier this year, Helena, one of the largest producers of agricultural chemicals and fertilizer in the United States, unilaterally decided that it no longer needed an air-quality permit for its Mesquite facility. Fortunately, the New Mexico Environment Department disagreed and rejected the proposal to

terminate the air-quality permit. Helena Chemical appealed this decision to the EIB, and public hearings began in July.

Over the past several years, Helena Chemical has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in penalties for violating necessary state regulations, including its air-quality permit, and putting the health, safety, and welfare of New Mexicans at risk.

"Cancelling the air-quality permit requirement would have ignored our community's concerns about the impact of Helena Chemical's operation on Mesquite's quality of life," said resident Arturo Uribe, Executive Director of Mesquite Community Action Committee. "We're glad that the EIB took a stand to protect our families."

Families live a few yards, and an elementary school is a couple of blocks, from Helena Chemical's facility. Residents of Mesquite report odors, dust, and a range of health risks that they believe are related to exposure to chemicals from Helena. The company's request to be made exempt from state monitoring

would have put them at even greater risk.

Disasters like the BP spill make it more evident now than ever that corporate polluters like Helena Chemical need more monitoring, not less. "Helena has been inattentive to environmental laws and disrespectful of its neighbors," Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry said in a news release. "The EIB's decision, affirming that Helena should be subject to air-quality protections through a state permit, is the right decision for the environment and the residents of Mesquite."

Sierra Club played a significant role in this victory. Close to 800 New Mexicans, mainly Sierra Club members and supporters, submitted written comments to EIB members urging them to ensure Helena Chemical continues to operate with an air-quality permit. The ruling was front-page news in the *Las Cruces Sun News* and was featured on prominent blogs like NMPolitics.net and ClearlyNewMexico.com.

Three Four Corners coal units to close

California utility plans to sell its coal-based power at Four Corners Power Plant in favor of cleaner sources, and Arizona Public Service Company (APS) will close three coal-fired units there, though APS plans to buy the California utility's units.

APS announced that the company will close units 1, 2 and 3 at Four Corners Power Plant on Navajo Nation land near Farmington. The company has also entered an agreement to buy Southern California's Edison's ownership stake in the larger Units 4 and 5 at Four Corners. With this agreement, APS would close 560 megawatts of coal generation (Units 1-3), though it will increase the coal it burns at Four Corners by acquiring the 740 megawatts of coal-fired power from Southern California Edison.

The announcement came one month after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a proposed rule on controlling air pollution from Four Corners Power Plant.

The rule addresses nitrogen oxide, which reacts with other chemicals to form ozone and small particles. The EPA proposes an 80% reduction in these pollutants from the plant.

"Burning less coal at Four Corners is a great start towards protecting both people's health and Mother Earth's health, but this won't make current sicknesses go away," said Elouise Brown, president of Dooda (No) Desert Rock. "I would feel better if we made more jobs in transitioning the other units off coal and towards a cleaner energy from renewables like wind and solar."

Andy Bessler, Sierra Club regional representative, said: "While we still need to see the details of the proposed agreement, we applaud the opportunity created by Southern California Edison to greatly reduce pollution at Four Corners. We are, however, deeply



Northern Group chair David Van Winkle's solar PV system was the 400th in PNM's territory in January 2009. There are now more than 1,200 such systems in PNM's territory.

disappointed that APS is proposing to increase the amount of coal that the company burns at the site.

"The three smallest units at Four Corners are proposed to close, but even if this deal is approved, there are still two large, dirty and old units that need to have pollution controls installed."

"Especially given the tremendous renewable-energy potential in the area

and the jobs that aggressively pursuing clean energy would bring the Navajo Nation, the Sierra Club will continue working with allies like Dooda Desert Rock, Dine' CARE, the Black Mesa Water Coalition, To Nizhoni Ani and the San Juan Citizens Alliance to bring about a just transition away from dirty and harmful coal-fired power as soon as is reasonably possible."

COAL TO CLEAN,
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PNM's system will have grown to 40 megawatts, up from 2 megawatts at the end of 2008. The Sierra Club, as part of the Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, played a major role in negotiating this plan with PNM in late 2009.

Rio Grande Chapter leaders are taking personal action. Northern New Mexico Group Executive Committee members now operate eight solar systems for their residences: Dexter Coolidge and Tom Gorman have solar PV, solar water heating and solar house heating; I have solar PV and solar water heating. Ken Hughes, Chapter Conservation Chair, has solar PV and rides his bike to work.

In addition to transitioning from dirty coal, major steps have been taken in energy efficiency. Albuquerque, Santa Fe and the state of New Mexico have implemented building codes that reduce energy consumption for new residential construction by at least 20 percent. The Sierra Club and Southwest Energy Efficiency Project were instrumental in securing passage of these rules.

New public-building construction will be 40 percent more efficient because of a law that the Sierra Club fought for in the 2010 Legislature.

In early 2011, the two coal-fired power plants in northwestern New Mexico (Four Corners and San Juan Generating Station) will have Best Available Retrofit Technology reviews to address pollutants such as nitrous oxides and sulfur dioxide. Public hearings and comments will be part of this process. Look for details on the hearings and comment periods via our e-mail alerts.

EPA proposes San Juan pollution controls

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Dec. 21 released a proposed rule to control dangerous air pollution from the coal-fired San Juan Generating Station in New Mexico.

The rule addresses pollutants that form ozone and small particles, both of which are harmful to the public's health as well as visibility throughout the region.

The proposed rule not only seeks to limit the dangerous nitrogen-oxide and sulfur-dioxide emissions from the San Juan plant but will also limit the amount of airborne sulfuric acid and ammonia released by the plant.

Tribal and conservation organizations, including Dooda (No) Desert Rock and the Sierra Club, applauded the EPA effort to protect people from the pollution created by the Generating Station.

"Just like people throughout the Southwest, the Navajo people suffer the effects of this harmful pollution," said Elouise Brown, President of Dooda (No) Desert Rock. "EPA is stepping up to protect people throughout the Southwest and we are very grateful that someone is listening to us and is working to protect us from the dangerous pollution."

The proposal addresses pollution that threatens not

Submit comment to support EPA pollution controls:

Identify by Docket No. EPA-R06-OAR-2010-0846 and comment using one of the following methods:

- Follow online instructions at Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: www.regulations.gov.
- EPA Region 6 "Contact Us" Web site: epa.gov/region6/r6comment.htm. Click on "6PD (Multimedia)" and select "Air"
- E-mail: Guy Donaldson at donaldson.guy@epa.gov.

just the health of people living in the immediate vicinity of the dirty plant, but people living downwind and throughout the region as well. The Clean Air Act's "good neighbor" rule recognizes that dangerous air pollution does not observe state boundaries and requires states to avoid exporting harmful pollution.

Children, the elderly, people with lung diseases and those who work or exercise outside are at particular risk for adverse effects from ozone and particulate matter.

"We are talking about some seriously toxic pollutants," said Juan Reynosa, regional representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign. "This pollution not only literally makes it difficult to see some of the beautiful scenery throughout the Southwest United States, but the same pollution that mars our views poisons our lungs."

The Sierra Club filed a lawsuit earlier this year to stop the disposal of millions of tons of toxic coal-combustion waste each year in unlined pits at the San Juan Coal Mine and to compel the cleanup of previously disposed waste that continues to leach toxic pollutants into the surrounding ground and surface water.

Since 1973, the San Juan Coal Company has dumped more than 40 million tons of coal-combustion waste containing such pollutants as arsenic, lead and mercury, into unlined pits at the San Juan Mine, about 10 miles west of Farmington. Without adequate safety precautions, toxins from the waste have leached into nearby waterways and wells.

EPA will accept public comments on the proposed rule and hold a public hearing in Farmington.

For more information, contact: Juan Reynosa at juan.reynosa@sierraclub.org.

Protecting air, water: We need your help

By **Dan Lorimier**

Chapter Conservation Chair and Lobbyist

The 50th New Mexico Legislature holds its first session from Jan. 18 through March 19. The November elections resulted in a very different House of Representatives, a new lieutenant governor (who becomes president of the Senate) and a new governor.

Legislative Update

Budget deficits and cutting state spending will be the main themes of this Session. Also, legislators will attempt to stimulate the state economy, possibly at the expense of our land, air and water.

With regulating agencies like the Environment Department and the Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department facing sharp budget cuts, New Mexico's environment may need to depend on citizens' right to file suit against polluters. The Rio Grande Chapter lobbying team will be working to pass legislation that gives New Mexicans that ability and we will need you to help us convince your legislators how important this "private right of action" is.

After our success in the 2010 session passing

legislation ensuring energy efficiency in public buildings (SB200), we will again fight for energy-efficient buildings, this time by pushing legislation that requires an energy audit for commercial buildings when they are sold.

There will be many bills purporting to relieve the state's economic pressures by weakening regulation and enforcement of permitted industry activities, by "streamlining" important agencies and by giving the Legislature final say on all new or updated regulations.

We will see proposals to reverse the Environmental Improvement Board's recent carbon-cap and cap-and-trade rulings and the stronger dairy-waste regulations adopted by the Water Quality Control Commission, as well as attempts to give the Legislature authority to overrule agency rulemaking. We will also see bills asking to eliminate the EIB and the WQCC entirely and even asking for a Constitutional amendment to abandon the Public Regulation Commission.

These and other attempts to increase legislative power and weaken environmental protections to create a "business-friendly" atmosphere represent the

misguided notion that the environment must be sacrificed to promote an active economy. That paradigm has proven false, and the green economy offers the very best hope for a successful economic future. But after the November elections, convincing the Legislature to commit to a green agenda will be a very big job. Our job will be to prevent the environment from being sacrificed to unfettered industry practices for short-term gains.

If we hope to pass any proactive legislation and block the many bad bills we expect, we need your help! Please contact me if you want to lobby your legislators during the session—I will connect you with your legislators and help organize the points and questions to talk about with them:
daniel.lorimier@sierraclub.org, (575) 740-2927.

As in previous sessions, I will contact you weekly with background and messages for legislators on key bills as they move through the legislative process.

In this pivotal session, your calls and e-mails can make the difference between the success and failure of legislation that determines the quality of our air, our water and our children's future.

75% of Sierra Club Endorsees Won in 2010 Election

Sierra Club New Mexico volunteers spent thousands of hours in candidate-support activities such as door-to-door canvassing and phonebanking during the 2010 election campaign. The Club sent e-mails to 24,000 recipients to get out the vote and to promote our endorsements.

In the Heinrich campaign, we filled 141 volunteer shifts. In the Lujan campaign, we filled 113 volunteer shifts. Rio Grande Chapter endorsements are shown below, with winners highlighted in bold.

U.S. House of Representatives

District 1: Martin Heinrich

District 2: Harry Teague

District 3: Ben Ray Lujan

New Mexico:

Governor Diane Denish

Lt. Governor: Brian Colón

Attorney General: Gary King

State Land Commissioner: Ray Powell

State Auditor: Hector Balderas

PRC, District 5: Bill McCamley

Rep. Joseph Cervantes (District 52, Doña Ana)

Rep. Gail Chasey (District 18, Bernalillo)

Rep. Eleanor Chavez (District 13, Bernalillo)

Representative Nate Cote (District 53, Doña Ana/Otero)

Rep. Brian Egolf (District 47, Santa Fe)

Rep. Miguel Garcia (District 14, Bernalillo)

Rep. Karen Giannini (District 30, Bernalillo)

Rep. Bobby Gonzales (District 42, Taos)

Rep. Joni Gutierrez (District 33, Doña Ana)

Rep. Antonio Lujan (District 35, Doña Ana)

Rep. Ben Lujan (District 46, Santa Fe)

Rep. Moe Maestas (District 16, Bernalillo)

Rep. Ken Martinez (District 69, Cibola/McKinley/San Juan)

Rep. Rick Miera (District 11, Bernalillo)

Rep. Bill O'Neill (District 15, Bernalillo)

Rep. Al Park (District 26, Bernalillo)

Rep. Danice Picraux (District 25, Bernalillo)

Rep. Ben Rodefer (District 23, Bernalillo/Sandoval)

Rep. Ed Sandoval (District 17, Bernalillo)

Rep. Jeff Steinborn (District 37, Doña Ana)

Rep. Mimi Stewart (District 21, Bernalillo)

Rep. Jack Thomas (District 60, Sandoval)

Rep. Lucky Varela (District 48, Santa Fe)

AMAFA: Bruce Thomson

Contact Information for Elected Officials

Letters mailed to D.C. offices take up to six weeks due to screening procedures, so consider sending letters to state offices to expedite delivery.

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President Barack Obama

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500
202/456-1111 • fax 202/456-2461
president@whitehouse.gov
www.whitehouse.gov

Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar

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Washington, DC 20240
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New Mexico

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Washington, DC 20510
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625 Silver Avenue SW, Suite 130
Albuquerque, NM 87102 • 505/346-6601
106 B West Main
Farmington, NM 87401 • 505/325-5030
148 Loretto Towne Centre, 505 South Main
Las Cruces, NM 88001 • 575/523-6561
200 East Fourth Street, Suite 300
Roswell, NM 88201 • 575/622-7113
119 East Marcy, Suite 101
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senator_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov
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U.S. Senator Tom Udall

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Loretto Towne Centre, 505 South Main, Suite 118
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120 South Federal Place, Suite 302
Santa Fe, NM 87501 • 505/988-6511
Senator_Tom_Udall@tomudall.senate.gov
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U.S. Representative Martin Heinrich (Dist. 1)

1505 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-6316 • fax 202/225-4975
20 First Plaza NW, Suite 603
Albuquerque, NM 87102 • 505/346-6781
http://heinrich.house.gov/

U.S. Representative Steve Pearce (Dist. 2)

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Washington, DC 20515
202/225-2365
Phone numbers and addresses of local offices
not available as of press time
http://pearce.house.gov/

U.S. Representative Ben R. Luján (Dist. 3)

502 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-6190 • fax 202/226-1528

811 St. Michael's Drive, Suite 104
Santa Fe, NM 87505 • 505/984-8950,
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Rio Rancho, NM 87144 • 505/994-0499
800 Municipal Drive
Farmington, NM 87401 • 505/324-1005
http://lujan.house.gov/

New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez

State Capitol, 490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501 • 505-986-4300 (Capitol switchboard)
www.governor.state.nm.us

New Mexico State Legislature

Legislative Council Service • 505/986-4600

New Mexico State Senators

Senate Chief Clerk's Office • 505/986-4714

New Mexico State Representatives

House Chief Clerk's Office • 505/986-4751

Texas – El Paso

U.S. Representative Silvestre Reyes
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Washington, DC 20515
202/225-4831 • fax 202/225-2016
310 N. Mesa, Suite 400
El Paso, TX 79901 • 915/534-4400
www.house.gov/reyes/



More cougar, bear kills allowed

Game Commission also votes to review trapping and furbearer rules

By Mary Katherine Ray
Chapter Wildlife Chair

Despite opposition from many quarters at meetings, by written comment and in the media, the New Mexico Game Commission at the urging of the Department of Game and Fish voted 4 to 3 in October to drastically increase the number of cougars and bears that can be killed by hunters.

This move was fueled by fear and dislike of predators more than biology. It appeared that the Game Department desired that more of these carnivores should die and then, in the worst kind of abuse of science, went looking for data to justify it. Commissioners were regaled again and again with the same story of the 5-year-old who was attacked by a cougar in 2008—one of only a handful of similar cases since statehood. Ranchers claimed these animals have lost all fear of people and were killing all the deer and their stock. But the evidence upon which the new quotas are based is mostly anecdotal and very weak.

We don't have actual population numbers for either bears or cougars. Bears breed slowly, and the damage that will be wrought will be long-lasting if these kill numbers are realized. Current quotas aren't even being met for cougars, so the push to raise them



To be legal, leghold traps need only be 25 yards from a road or trail. Imagine finding an animal caught in a leghold trap on public land where you'd hoped for a beautiful and peaceful day, or worse, having your dog caught. Wildlife and people on our public lands deserve better. Photo courtesy M.K. Ray

is even more perplexing.

The only redeeming factor in the Commission's decision to go along with the Department and its zeal to devastate cougar and bear populations is that it will be revisited in a year. Whether the new Game Commission of the Martinez administration can see reason remains unknown. Aldo Leopold wrote that "Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend; you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left. That is to say, you cannot love game and hate predators; ... The land is one organism."

One could only hope Game Depart-

ment officials would someday read Leopold.

In another measure involving carnivores, the Game Commission did vote in early December to open the trapping and furbearer rules for review. The rules have not been examined since 2006, a time interval that has also seen record-high pelt prices and record numbers of dead bobcats and foxes.

Since the last review, over 12,000 bobcats have been killed for their fur in New Mexico. No one knows what effect this is having on populations. Even more gray foxes have perished at

the hands of trappers especially in the Gila region, again without monitoring or considering the impact. There is much that should be done to safeguard not only wildlife but also people who recreate where traps can be.

In good news, for this winter at least, wildlife in the Gila will be safe from traps. Gov. Richardson's executive order prohibiting setting traps in the Mexican wolf's recovery area took effect Nov. 1 and will remain until April 1.

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has contracted with the Fish and Wildlife Service Cooperative Research Unit at New Mexico State University to compile data on trap types to determine if any could be used without risk to lobos.

The Gila represents only 4 percent of the land in New Mexico, but in protecting wolves from trapping this winter, bobcats and foxes will get a reprieve, as will other animals like coatis, javelina, birds, and even the family dog and the people who walk with them on public land in the region.

Given that there is a segment of the human population in the Gila that wants all wolves dead, any trap that can restrain one places it in mortal danger (see above). This factor creates the need for the ban to become permanent.

Send your email address to mkrscrim@kitcarson.net if you'd like to get updates on the trapping-rule review. And check our website for progress on the process: www.nmsierraclub.org/wildlife.

WOLVES Continued from Page 1

Interior secretary says White House would support removing federal protection

existence, has never preyed on livestock. This makes the shooting death of one of its alphas all the more tragic. The male to be released was born in the wild to the Saddle pack but was removed while a puppy along with his parents because they had been implicated in cattle killing. He was too young at the time to have preyed on anything and it is hoped he will follow in the Hawk's Nest pack tradition and keep to wild game once on the ground.

But the travails of our Mexican wolves have extended to the halls of Congress. In a nod to the governors of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, at least six bills have been introduced that would strip Mexican wolves of endangered-species protection. Some of these bills make no distinction between the wolves of the Northern Rockies and those of the Southwest. Northern gray wolves number around 1,700 across at least three states and are doing much better than their southern cousins.

The push is to allow the states to take over using the guise that they best know how to manage wolves. But when states were allowed to "manage" Northern wolves in 2009 before a court ruling put a stop to it, more than 500 were shot. There were plans

The implications of removing endangered-species protection are chilling, not just for wolves, but for any "inconvenient" species.

to kill hundreds more this year. It is clear that the states might keep a few token wolves in the wild that forever would teeter on the brink of extinction, but they are still beholden to the archaic livestock industry and will never allow enough wolves to play their essential role of top predator, which the best available science increasingly shows is crucial to biodiversity.

It gets worse. The Arizona State Game Commission has voted to support this lifting of protections from Mexican wolves, too. This is the state that on three occasions as recently as 2008 recommended removing wolves including using lethal means and had to be overruled by the Fish and Wildlife Service. And much worse, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, who oversees the Fish and Wildlife Service, has said the Obama administration would support removing all wolves from federal protections too.

This betrayal is from the Ken Salazar who also has ranching-industry ties.

For the first time since the Endangered Species Act was adopted into law for the purpose of taking the politics out of listing decisions, politicians, not biologists or scientists, are poised to decide that wolves as a species no longer merit protection.

The implications are chilling not just for wolves, but for any other "inconvenient" species. In fact, if passed, the Obama administration will have accomplished more to destroy the premier conservation law of the United States than environmental villains like James Watt, Richard Pombo or Gale Norton ever dreamed.

Please send a quick e-mail to tell President Obama that this must not come to pass: www.whitehouse.gov/contact, or fax your message to the White House at (202) 456-2461. Tell him that removing federal protection from wolves will doom them to oblivion—again. But this time the choice will be calculated, with the knowledge that our wildlands will be forever impoverished.

Check our website for updates when the new Congress begins: www.nmsierraclub.org.

First wolf-conservation stamp grant

By Roger Turner

N.M. Wilderness Alliance

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is excited to announce that it has awarded its first Conservation Wolf Stamp Grant to filmmaker and conservationist Elke Duerr for her Wild Wolf Film project.

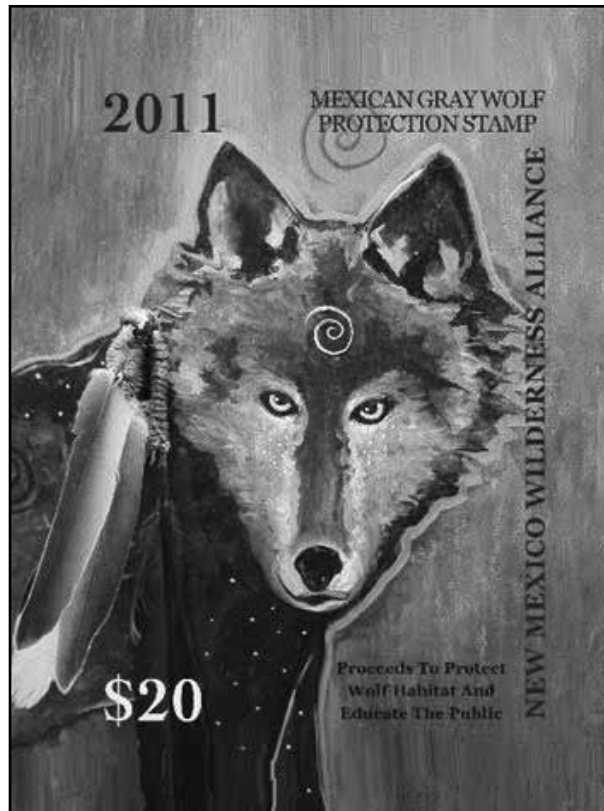
The grant of \$2,500 supports Duerr's Wild Wolf Film, a multiyear outreach effort educating the public on Mexican Gray Wolf reintroduction and "advancing the coexistence of wilderness and civilization."

"Ms. Duerr has shown the heart and passion needed by us all if we are to save this magnificent creature," said NMWA Executive Director Stephen Capra.

Upon receiving the award, Duerr commented: "Thank you to the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance for acknowledging my efforts to aid in the recovery of the Mexican Gray Wolves by awarding me a grant. It is my heart's desire to create awareness for the interconnectedness and beauty of all life on this planet and to help implement creative solutions to a healthy coexistence between wolves and humans. We all belong in the web of life."

The grant is the first to be awarded from NMWA's Conservation Wolf Stamp Fund, generated from the sale of NMWA's first-ever Conservation Wolf Stamp.

NMWA's Conservation Wolf Stamp is similar to the Duck Stamp sold by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, except no hunting is related to the sale of the Wolf Stamp. All proceeds go into the Conservation Wolf Stamp Fund, administered by NMWA and distributed directly to projects and organizations



working for Mexican Gray Wolf recovery.

NMWA will award further grants to worthy projects in the coming months, and looks forward to releasing a new Wolf Stamp for sale each year.

To learn more about the Conservation Wolf Stamp, visit the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance website at www.nmwild.org/blog/wolf-stamps-available-order-today.

Quarterly Meetings

The Chapter's Conservation and Executive Committee meetings will be held January 8-9 and March 19-20 at Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge.

Contact Conservation Chair Ken Hughes or Chapter Chair John Buchser (see directory) for more information. Carpooling is encouraged.

You can make a difference

Want to find out what you can do to help on any of the issues you've read about in *The Sierran*, or stay updated on local issues of wildlife, natural resources and climate? Go to our website, nmsierraclub.org, and subscribe to the chapter e-mail list.



It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Let your voice be heard.

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Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

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or visit our website www.sierraclub.org F94Q W 1

DAIRY RULES, continued from Page 1

industry, which originally asked for new discharge regulations, was counting on.

U.S. Department of Agriculture data reveal that there are 325,000 mature cows on dairy operations in New Mexico. The average industrial dairy in the state has 2,400 cows, higher than any other state in the nation. According to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), 63 percent of the dairies in New Mexico are operating in violation of existing regulations.

"Dairy cows in Chavez County alone produce as much waste as the human populations of Los Angeles and Philadelphia combined," noted Dan Lorimier of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club. "This amount of waste is alarming because 90 percent of New Mexico's population relies on groundwater for drinking water."

The new regulations will require a plastic liner for manure-filled wastewater impoundments, minimum setbacks from important water resources such as drinking-water wells, and that dairies provide notice to property owners within a mile radius of a proposed dairy that includes a map so the public can see where the dairy will be in relation to residences and natural resources.

"Industry needs to be held accountable for the

"Dairy cows in Chavez County alone produce as much waste as the human populations of Los Angeles and Philadelphia combined."

Dan Lorimier

Chapter Conservation Coordinator

widespread contamination it causes and the harm that is done to our waters and our communities," said Rachel Conn of Amigos Bravos.

The new regulations came after public meetings in dairy country; numerous drafts of proposed regulations by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED); stakeholder meetings involving NMED, representatives of the dairy industry and members of the Citizens' Coalition; and weeks of hearings before the WQCC.

"These regulations are way overdue," said Jerry Nivens of Caballo Concerned Citizens. "This is a victory for clean water."

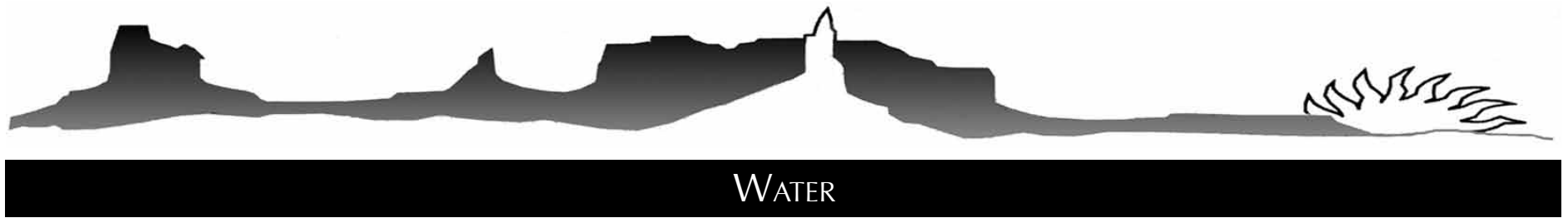


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Water wells in Mora County tested

By Kathleen Dudley

Co-founder, Drilling Mora County

This past December, Drilling Mora County completed a baseline water-well sampling and testing protocol on a number of private and community drinking-water wells that traverse the Las Vegas Basin area east to west and north to south on land that has been leased for natural-gas drilling or is near leased land.

Through a grant from the McCune Foundation, Drilling Mora County put into place this first-time protocol thanks to the help of many individuals and groups across the Southwest, Northeast and Canada, all of whom have been impacted by federal and state government's fiscal hunger fed by an industry whose race to drill the last "great places" in the United States and Canada gains daily momentum.

The protocol follows strict guidelines for collecting and testing water samples that assure accurate results for the landowner's water quality. The sampling and testing was for known hydraulic-fracturing chemicals, including surfactants, methane gas, heavy metals and radioactive substances, to establish their presence or absence in each well. Tracers that are found in industry's hydraulic-fracturing fluids will be evidence of contamination, thanks to the in-depth work of Dr. Theo Colborn, Endocrine Disruption Exchange (www.endocrinedisruption.com/chemicals.fracturing.php).

Certified water-sampling professional Walter Drew of Indepth Water Testing, Santa Fe, and the New Mexico State certified drinking-water lab, Hall Environmental Analytical Laboratory, Albuquerque, ran the procedures on the water wells, which ranged from 40 to 300 feet deep.

According to retired Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Engineer Weston Wilson, "Mora County will be the first county in the United States to put baseline water testing in place on private land prior to natural gas development in their county." Wilson is known for his whistleblower status when he presented to Congress that the EPA 2004 Hydraulic Fracturing study was a cover-up for industry to continue "business as usual" in spite of the EPA's report outlining the health impacts the toxic chemicals would have on the drinking water when pumped into the ground.

EPA Environmental Justice Region 6 coordinator Shirley Augurson told Drilling Mora County the EPA has no statutes that authorize it to help fund baseline water sampling for private wells in Mora County, even though the threat by industry to drill for natural gas is just a matter of time. Once the



Drilling Mora County conducted testing of water samples from Mora County wells for chemicals that result from hydraulic fracturing. The test results will be used as a baseline comparison if developers drill in the area. The waterwell below is on land that has been leased for minerals by Shell Western.



water is contaminated, then they could help: "Your request is not related to existing contamination, but rather to establishing baseline water-quality conditions. This is a task Congress has not included in our mission," said Augurson. That after-the-fact offer of "help" is not what Drilling Mora County had in mind.

The New Mexico Oil Conservation Division (OCD) sells drilling permits to oil and gas corporations in the state and charges severance taxes to these corporations yet has no authority over the chemicals the industry injects into the ground. A "don't ask, don't tell" exchange between industry and the state government gives industry the entire playing field.

Cuts at the state level over the past few years have reduced OCD by 11 positions and a mere 14 inspectors for over 80,000 wells. With no state or federal support for water testing and

no stipulations over toxic chemicals injected into the earth, it is clear that there is no government protection for the citizens when it comes to protecting their water from industry's natural gas drilling—activities endorsed by state governments—encouraged and even supported despite voiced citizen concerns regarding health, safety and welfare.

Industry has a polished and successful edge on discounting citizen health and water contamination and, without baseline testing in place prior to the drilling, has the leverage to claim that contaminants present in the water wells are "naturally occurring" and not a result of drilling practices. In the case of Mora County, however, industry will now have to account for full Quality Assurance and Sampling Analysis Reports and laboratory testing data should companies decide to drill in this county.

But according to incoming Mora County Commissioner John Olivas, "There will be no gas drilling in Mora County under my watch."

Incoming commissioner Paula Garcia appears to be an equally strong advocate for protecting Mora County's water and the health and safety of the citizens. Commissioner Laudente Quintana fought to protect the water in Wagon Mound, Mora County, when mayor.

The oil industry has kept mum about its hydraulic-fracturing chemicals until recently, when Halliburton was forced via a subpoena before Congress to expose the toxic ingredients. Still playing a game, industry continues to equate what it pumps into the ground as no more toxic than ingredients in lipstick, cleaning products and hair shampoo. But for those who know that these consumer products are also unregulated by government and harbor many health-damaging chemicals, these claims do not dispel the urgency to stop all hydraulic fracturing in order to keep intact the health of the people, animals and ecosystems.

Hydraulic-fracturing chemicals used during natural gas development and highly toxic chemicals used during the initial drilling process have been implicated in water-well contamination throughout the United States, and most recently by the EPA in Texas against Range Resources Corp. These fluids, according to industry, "have never been documented by state regulators to contaminate groundwater," although towns and citizens living near natural gas fields have had wells shut down and bottled water brought in by local authorities due to high levels of benzene and methane found in their water wells after hydraulic fracturing and well drilling began.

In Alberta, Canada, Encana has done baseline testing *after* drilling natural gas wells near homes, but refuses to release the data to concerned citizens who request it. The company's refusal sends a suspicious note into the winds. Today in Mora County, baseline water-well testing results provide citizens with critical personal water data. Given the slough of water-well contamination across the country and Canada, this information could give industry some serious thought before it risks contaminating proven clean aquifers in Mora County.

Mas vale prevenir que curar —

It is better to prevent than to cure
drillingmoracounty@gmail.com
www.drillingmoracounty.blogspot.com



A Look Back at the Decade

By Jody Benson

As we enter the second decade of the second millennium, we celebrate our 12th year as the Pajarito Group. Our group was initiated as an organization distinct from Santa Fe's Northern Group, not only because it was a hassle to get to meetings in Santa Fe, but because of our enormous local passion for a public-lands option for "the Baca Ranch Acquisition."

Hundreds of individuals on the falda of the Jemez joined to ensure that, rather than becoming a second Angel Fire Golf Course Resort, the Baca Ranch would be the Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP). Many of those hundreds joined to become the Pajarito Group.

So what else has our Group accomplished in this first decade?

Our main focus is still the Calderas. We continue to support efforts to ensure the sustainability of VCNP and to open it up for more public access while still protecting all its magnificent nonhuman assets. It looks like our work (in collaboration with other environmental groups) is moving VCNP from being managed by the failed for-profit trust into a National Park Preserve, managed by NPS. (<http://vallescaldera.com/archives/1870>)

But we've taken action in many other areas:

We worked to first shut down (2002), then reclaim (2008) the 76-acre Copar pumice mine in the Jemez. The ultimatum, led by David Torney, forced Copar to clean up or face a \$5,000-a-day fine for failing to re-contour, grade, and reclaim the site. We participated in crafting the Open Space section of the Los Alamos Comprehensive Plan, and have represented our values to (a.k.a., lobbied) all the County Councils in every aspect of open space as the County moves ahead with its (sometimes relentless) development plans.

We have attended many scoping sessions and helped advance: Robert Gibson's Energy-Independent Los Alamos; walkable Los Alamos and protection of open space to limit sprawl; and Green Standards for all new development in Los Alamos.

We were there to stop the redesign of the West Jemez Road Bypass.

We have submitted formal Pajarito Group written comments (for or against) on numerous NEPA, Environmental Impact Statements, and Environmental Impact Assessments to the appropriate agencies on multiple issues including:

Valle Vidal, the pickup of all outstanding sealed-source nuclear material, (believe it or not) the creation of a biolab 3 at LANL, the use of piscicides (Fintrol) to poison non-native trout for the purpose of reintroducing cutthroat trout in the Jemez, oil-and-gas-pit lining for protecting groundwater from oil-and-gas waste, the US Forest Service roads-and-trails Management Plan, grazing issues, pit production at LANL, protection of endangered species and other wildlife issues (cougar management, cattle in Bandelier, bighorns in White Rock Canyon), cap and trade, climate change, and sprawl.

It hasn't all been work—we have also hiked, biked, skied, and snowshoed through the wilderness that we love, and, in other celebrations, held a couple Environmental Powwows with multiple other businesses and environmental groups here in Los Alamos.

We've boothed at Earth Day, judged science fairs, done joint projects with other New Mexico Sierra Club groups, potlucked and picnicked, and have had monthly meetings with talks on topics ranging from "Spirituality and the Environment" to "Zero Freshwater Power Production," and from "My Friends the Slimemolds" to "Radionuclides and the Cerro Grande Fire."

As we move into the second decade of the second millennium, the Pajarito Group will continue to contribute to our community and to celebrate our successes. Like the proverbial butterfly's wingbeat in Michigan causing a hurricane in Mississippi, every individual's efforts make a difference.

Thank you for your work and your passion for the Earth.

PAJARITO GROUP DIRECTORY

<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/pajarito/mainpaj.asp>

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Water Issues: Barbara Calef

505/662-3825 bfcalf@yahoo.com

Meetings and Outings

Meetings

Wednesday, January 5 • 1007

Big Rock Loop, Annual Organizing Potluck

There will be no speaker in January. Instead we will have our Annual Organizing Potluck to volunteer for tasks and committees, and to review the National Sierra "Blue Sheets" that assess our group's capabilities. Each of you is invited. We know you have

passions; that's why you maintain your membership. If you would like to pass on your idea for anything—a project for a grant or a picnic at Urban Park or an outing to someplace spectacular—come bring a dish and join the group. If you haven't yet participated in this event that is gourmet in both food and conversation, this is your opportunity to become an active volunteer or a member of the ExCom. Please con-

tact Ilse Bleck at ibleck@yahoo.com, 505/662-2368.

7 p.m. Wednesday, February 2,

Upstairs Meeting Rooms, Mesa Public Library

To Be Announced:

7 p.m. Wednesday, March 2,

Upstairs Meeting Rooms, Mesa Public Library

Tentatively Scheduled: Jeanne Fair and Mark Jankowski: Protecting

Wildlife Protects Humans: Avian Flu Research

Future Programs

Do you have an idea for a program? Please contact Mark Jones at jonesmm1@comcast.net or 662-9443 to present your idea. Also, please watch your email and the *Monitor* for the announcement of our programs.

Outings

Please check the Outings listings on Page 16 for adventures in our area.

Los Alamos Middle School uses solar grant to install PV array

By Jody Benson

The solar array that you saw pop up at Los Alamos Middle School is the result of Los Alamos Public Schools being one of fifteen New Mexico schools to win a Gov. Bill Richardson \$300,000 Solar Grant.

The project is another joint County/Schools partnership, with the County helping to fund small incidentals that the grant didn't cover.

The deal is that the array, constructed by Sacred

Power (a Native American-owned New Mexico corporation), would be completed and operational by December 31.

The system is primarily fixed-mount (with a few tracking pole-mount systems for public demonstration and student education).

Although tracking-mount panels are more efficient, the fixed-mount was selected for ease of maintenance.

The good news? The system will offer about 50 kilowatts of power. The bad news? Until Los Alamos Public Schools changes from its old fluorescent-lighting system, this array will only give enough power to keep the lights on.

More good news? This array offers students, teachers and the public a lesson in conservation, as well as being one more community effort toward creating a carbon-free Los Alamos.



Photo by Chris Case

America's Red Rock Wilderness Act identifies 9.4 million acres of BLM lands deserving of wilderness protection in Utah. Without action, this landscape will be diminished.

Utah's Redrock Wildlands Need New Mexicans' Support

By Terri Martin

Southern Utah
Wilderness Alliance

There is no landscape on earth like redrock canyon country of southern Utah. Almost anyone who has seen or walked it is awestruck for life.

Ask many New Mexicans "what does the redrock mean to you?" and they will answer: It is a place of pilgrimage. To follow a winding wash down a serpentine canyon, to hear the cascading call of a canyon wren pierce the timeless silence, to lie with your back on stone and stare at soaring cliffs, is to restore a sense of sanity and rekindle hope.

But like too many places we love, the precious landscapes of southern Utah remain at risk. Bush-era resource-management plans leave these lands vulnerable to exploding off-road vehicle use, oil and gas development, and the endless proliferation of roads.

The pressure is relentless, and without action this extraordinary landscape will be diminished. And now, scientists tell us there is yet another reason for action. Creating an interconnected network of national parks and wilderness areas in the Colorado Plateau ecosystem is critical to creating resilient habitats that can mitigate the damaging effects of climate change.

As a member of the Utah Wilderness Coalition, the Sierra Club has been an ardent advocate for America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA). Based on one of the most comprehensive wildland inventories



Photo by Ray Bloxham

Bush-era resource-management plans leave Utah's redrock canyon country vulnerable to exploding off-road vehicle use, oil and gas development and the proliferation of roads.

in the West (now largely validated by the BLM), the Red Rock Act identifies 9.4 million acres of BLM lands deserving of wilderness protection in Utah.

Utah's redrock needs New Mexicans to speak up for its protection. Former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall laid the foundation stones when he initiated a study in 1960 of a million-acre area for potential park designation. The study led to the creation of Canyonlands National Park—now an international attraction and boon to the local economy. But only a third of the million-acre area received protection.

We need to complete the task. Protecting the wild region around

Canyonlands and the rest of the wildlands within America's Red Rock Wilderness Act is one of the great pieces of land conservation that remains unfinished in the West.

Now is the time to call on our elected leaders and the Obama administration to create conservation history and take action.

How you can help:

- Write the New Mexico delegation. Ask them to co-sponsor America's Red Rock Wilderness Act in the new Congress.

- Attend the inspirational multimedia show "Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness" at REIs in Santa Fe (6 p.m. Jan. 25) and Albuquerque (6:30 p.m. Jan. 26).

Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

By Kristina Ortez de Jones

Building Bridges to the Outdoors

Do you remember running along the acequia when you were a kid, or playing in the park in the summers until the streetlights came on?

These activities, which many of us took for granted as children, are not modern-day realities for most of New Mexico's young people. With the rise of technology and more "seat time" in schools, fewer and fewer children are getting outside and connecting with nature.

The Getting Kids Outside forum, held last August in Albuquerque, brought experts from all over the state to discuss ways in which the state, teachers, public-health practitioners and parents could do a better job getting children active and moving. A key policy outcome from that conference was the concept of a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights.

For the last few months, members of the Leave No New Mexico Child Inside Coalition have met regularly to draft a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights—New Mexico's first. Only a handful of states have a Bill of Rights devoted to connecting children with the outdoors (these include California, Colorado, North Carolina, Maryland and a few others). We hope our legislative allies will introduce the Bill of Rights as a Memorial in the 2011 Legislative Session.

While it doesn't have appropriations funding attached to it, the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights will help set the stage for more programs within the Department of Education, Natural Resources and other agencies at the state level. This will also help us draw necessary attention to the campaign to connect children with nature, and find novel ways to get our kids outside and moving.

What makes the New Mexico Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights different is that it was drafted by children from all around the state. They are the experts, and they've let us know what they have a right to do!

If you are interested in participating in this campaign, please contact me at Kristina.ortez@sierraclub.org.

Children's Bill of Rights

1. Play outside and freely explore
2. Watch wildlife in the quiet outdoors
3. Wade in a clean river, creek, lake or pond
4. Catch a fish and hunt for food
5. Camp out under the stars
6. Plant a seed and visit farms and ranches
7. Travel a trail
8. Explore New Mexico parks, nature centers and wildlife sanctuaries
9. Actively care for land, water and wildlife
10. Dig in the dirt and learn about the world from the ground up

Welcome our new Beyond Coal organizer



Juan Reynosa

In November, Juan Reynosa joined the Sierra Club team. Juan will be working on the Beyond Coal/Clean Energy Solutions and New Mexico Climate Protection Campaigns, based in Albuquerque.

Juan was born and raised in southern New Mexico, a place the oil and gas industry calls home. It was growing up here that made Juan realize the negative environmental impacts of this industry, and he was motivated to contribute to a new and cleaner mode of energy production in his state.

Juan went on to receive his bachelor's degree in environmental science, has worked extensively on green-jobs creation in New Mexico, and has organized youth around green issues. Juan contin-

ues to work with youth to develop their leadership skills, as well as working on policy initiatives to help lift up his community.

In his off time, Juan enjoys blogging, being involved with the local arts and music scene, and helping to spread organizing work to smaller communities in New Mexico. He is committed and passionate about making New Mexico a better place to live.

Please join me in welcoming Juan to the West Region field organizing team!

Contact information: Juan Reynosa, 505-243-7767 (office), 505-907-3788 (cell), juan.reynosa@sierraclub.org

— Michael Casaus

Lance Christie, environmental visionary

My friend Lance passed away this November from pancreatic cancer. Although not many of us here in the Rio Grande Chapter knew Lance, he has left behind a legacy to help us pursue a sustainable-energy future.

His biggest vision is expressed in his book *The Renewable Deal for the United States*, available free at www.earthrestoration.net. In this book, Lance presents a comprehensive plan for conversion of the U.S. infrastructure and economy to achieve full sustainability for food, water and carbon-free, nuclear-free energy using existing, proven technology and established best practice, within one human lifetime.

Lance and his wife LaRue "retired" to Moab, Utah, from Santa Fe in 1985. Lance immediately became involved in local politics. To me, his biggest success was forcing relocation of the Atlas uranium mill tailings pile that had been sitting right

next to the Colorado River. But his involvement in environmental protection went far beyond that. He was the first chair of the Moab Group of the Sierra Club. He was an incorporator of the Earth First! Foundation, and a founding member of the Natural Resources Defense Council. Lance also spent much time doing field work for H.R. 1500, America's Redrock Wilderness Act.

Services for Lance and his wife LaRue (who passed of Alzheimer's prior to Lance) were held in Moab's City Park. One of the speakers made a point that brought Lance's brilliance home to me. Edward Abbey's services had been held in that same park. Ed Abbey was extraordinarily eloquent, but he was a pessimist. Lance was just as brilliant, but he was an optimist.

I fervently hope we can bring Lance's vision of a renewable deal to reality in my lifetime.

—John Buchser, chapter chair



Mother and cub being released.

Upper Rio Grande full of river otters

By Melissa Savage

The mother otter slipped into the quiet, bubbling waters of the Rio Pueblo de Taos, her cub not far behind her. They were the 32nd and 33rd otters to be released into the Upper Rio Grande watershed over the past three years as part of a project to restore otters to New Mexico.

Otters were extirpated from New Mexican rivers by the middle of last century, until a partnership of conservation groups, including the Sierra Club, collaborated with N.M. Department of Game and Fish, USDA Wildlife Services and Taos Pueblo to bring otters back.

With the release of 10 otters from Washington State this fall, the restoration project has completed its initial releases into the Rio Grande area. The otters will now be left in peace to reproduce and fill the available niches. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently reviewing the plan to release otters into the Gila River, and hopefully, otters will be released there in the fall of 2011.

How fortunate we are to have these wonderful native animals rewilding our rivers.

Bill Huey, champion for Valles Caldera

Bill Huey, 85, passed away in August in Tesuque. Bill was a director of New Mexico's Game and Fish Department and one of the state's Natural Resources Department directors. In 1975 Bill stated, "The single biggest problem facing wildlife is the loss of habitat altogether, or the loss of its availability."

I got to know Mr. Huey while lobbying to acquire the Valles Caldera during the late '90s. A team of environmental activists would meet frequently at the Audubon center in Santa Fe. I remember Bill's calm demeanor and the fact that his personal friend Sen. Domenici was willing to help, but only under a very restrictive set of conditions—financial self-sustainability. Most of the folks involved did not like

this approach, but we were all very concerned that the property faced the alternative of being turned into a development of second homes. Bill was able to keep the focus on public acquisition rather than arguing about management strategies.

Prior to these discussions, I had only spent a small amount of time on the Valles property. My primary impression of this small supervolcano was of the view along the highway between Jemez Springs and Los Alamos. The huge herd of elk was impressive even from a distance, but the true scale of the property was not evident to me until more recently. It was with Bill's determined help that we preserved this land for wildlife and for enjoyment by us all.

—John Buchser, chapter chair

Southern Group

Featured Outings

Complete list of Southern Group outings on Page 16. Be sure to contact outing leaders in case of any changes in plans due to weather or other events

February 5 Forest Trail north of Hillsboro; hike to find an elusive cave and plenty of birds. Easy/moderate, pleasant drive for any vehicle. Meet at the Black Range Ranger Station in TorC at 8 a.m.
February 5. Kass Akers (575) 430-1834.

February 19 Percha Creek Box; glorious. Meet at the Black Range Ranger Station in TorC at 8 a.m. Moderate with some rock scrambling. You will not want to miss this. Kass Akers (575) 430-1834

March 5 Goat Mountain in the San Mateos with some basalt cliff scrambling. Meet at Black Range Ranger Station in TorC at 8 a.m.; 6-7 miles in lower elevations. Moderate. Kass Akers (575) 430-1834.

Sarah's Green Tip of the Week by Sarah, age 8

Today's green tip is Water is Life. Without water

we could not survive. The plants that make clean air would all die, and the animals that eat the plants would die too. We must save as much water as we can.

One way to save water is whenever you wash your hands, first put only one squirt of soap on your hand. Then rub your hands together for 20 seconds.

Then turn the water on half way, and rinse. As soon as you're done turn off the water.

If we all do this every time we wash our hands we can save more water.

Thank you and remember, Water is Life! Spread the word!

SOUTHERN NM GROUP DIRECTORY

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Margot Wilson Vice Chair, Outings, Conservation Chair, Parks/Refuges 575/744-5860 sierratrekker70@live.com	Earle Pittman Global Warming 575/541-6281 espittman@zianet.com
Cheryll Blevins Treasurer, Editor Southern NM Group Page	David Farrell Political Chair 575/895-3352 dafarrelli@hotmail.com
	Robert Gray



NORTHERN GROUP

SIERRA CLUB N' WINE

7 PM, Tuesday, February 15

The Commons, 2300 West Alameda

Join us for our first Sierra Club n' Wine event in Santa Fe. We will have some legislators attend the event to discuss environmental issues in the current legislative session and also provide an update on the current situation with Four Corners coal-fired power plants.

Please RSVP and let us know that you will attend. You can sign-up on our website at: <http://northern.nmsierraclub.org/sierra-club-n-wine-215>

This is a member event, but nonmembers are most welcome to join us by becoming a member at the door or joining online via our website. The annual fee for new members is only \$15, which includes a Sierra Club rucksack.



NORTHERN GROUP COMMITTEE MEETINGS Sierra Club Office, 1807 Second Street, Unit #45

Group Executive Committee: First Tuesday of every month at @ 7 PM
January 4, February 1, March 1, April 5

Group Conservation Committee: Fourth Tuesday of every odd month
January 25 and March 22 – at 7 PM

All meetings, outings, and activities are FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC unless otherwise indicated.

Northern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club
1807 Second Street, Unit #45, Santa Fe, NM 87505
505 • 983 • 2703 ◇ WEBSITE: <http://northern.nmsierraclub.org>

CITY OF SANTA FE NEARS COMPLETION OF 1-MEGAWATT SOLAR FACILITY

The City of Santa Fe will start up its new 1-Megawatt solar electricity facility on January 1, 2011, and will realize immediate cost savings with no upfront investment.

The Sierra Club's Cool Cities program worked closely with Nick Schiavo and city leaders in 2008 to initiate this project. Nick, the City's project leader and energy czar, led a tour of the facility for Sierra Club leaders Teresa Seamster, Bob Taylor, and David Van Winkle on Friday, November 19.

Nick has been the leader of this project since its inception about two years ago. He said that it was easy to convince city leaders like Mayor David Coss and Councilor Chris Calvert that this was a very cost effective project that would save money for the city from day one. Using a third party to finance the project, the City paid nothing upfront. It just pays for electricity as it is produced, and the cost will be less than paying for the electricity directly from PNM. This facility will provide about 40% of the electricity used by the City's wastewater treatment facility, which is directly across the street on Airport Road. The facility occupies about eight acres of land that is being rented from the nearby airport.

The Buckman Direct Diversion is also planning to start up a 1-Megawatt solar facility. ~David Van Winkle



◆ ◆ NORTHERN NEW MEXICO GROUP LEADERS ◆ ◆

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Vice-Chair – Norma McCallan * ‡ nmccallan@mindspring.com 471-0005
Secretary – Jean Watts * jeanwatts@comcast.net 989-5010
Treasurer – Bill Jones billjones4@aol.com 989-9204
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Web Master – Monika Bittman 466-0130
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Conservation – Chair – Dexter Coolidge * dextercoolidge@yahoo.com 988-1197
Activist Outings–Norma McCallan * ‡ nmccallan@mindspring.com 471-0005
4 Corners' Power Plants – Robb Thomson * robbm@toast.net 988-8958
Santa Fe Nat'l Forest – Tom Gorman * ‡ 438-3932
Mining – Cliff Larsen clarsen1@ix.netcom.com 466-2128
Cool Cities Campaign – OPEN – HELP WANTED
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Eco Footprints – Brian Skeelee brianvida@nm.net 984-1739
Green Building – Bob Taylor * bobtaylor@greenroadsrealty.com 690-5012
Resources – Ken Hughes ‡ b1family@comcast.net 474-0550
Educational Outreach – Teresa Seamster * tseam@qwest.net 466-8964
Water – Sig Silber ‡ ssliber1@juno.com 473-7006
Wildlife/Nat'l Parks/Rangelands - Roger Peterson ‡ rogpete@aol.com 983-7559

* Northern Group Executive Committee
 ‡ Core Conservation Committee



NORTHERN GROUP

CONSERVATION CHAIR REPORT Dexter Coolidge

Much of the energy of the Club in Northern New Mexico in the last few months has gone into pushing for a transition from coal to clean energy in the Four Corners area power plants, as reported elsewhere in this issue by David Van Winkle, and into the extensive efforts to expand protected lands in critical areas, as also reported by Norma McCallan. In addition, we are focusing on two programs in the Santa Fe area.

Members Sig Silber and Teresa Seamster have worked closely with Santa Fe County in developing a Sustainable Growth Management Plan (SGMP), which is now complete and successfully addresses many of the issues we are most concerned about. They both deserve a lot of credit for the final result. Over the coming months, the next step will require turning the plan into law. Sig and Teresa will continue to work with the County on this, but they will need help. If you can join them in this effort, please give one of them a call. Their contact information is on the facing page.

We are now kicking off a program to make Santa Fe the Solar Capital. We would like to build on the laws we helped pass that give financial incentives for solar electricity and solar thermal to encourage the residents of Santa Fe County to switch to solar energy. We will track and publicize the number of installations with solar thermal for space heat, solar thermal for hot water, and solar photovoltaic, each counting as a separate installation. Our goal is to get the entire community behind a successful transition to renewable energy.



NORTHERN GROUP HOLIDAY PARTY A Great Success

On December 5, 2010, we held our annual holiday party at the Santa Fe Women's Club with 75 attendees. The program for the evening was about outings. **Gene Goldberg** showed slides of international outings that he leads to Bhutan and the Dolomites in Italy. **Bogdan Mihaila**, an outings leader for the NNM Group, gave a multimedia presentation about local outings. Everyone had a good time with excellent food provided by the members in the form of a potluck. We have decided that this venue really worked well and plan to have our 2011 holiday party there also on December 4, 2011. We hope to see you there.

OUTINGS EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Tobin Oruch, Outings Co-Chair for our Group, has created an excellent weekly email on outings that provides information on near term outings plus useful outdoor information, like trail conditions. He also includes photos from recent hikes to the beautiful locations that our outing leaders have recently visited. We now have 150 people signed up for the email, come join the fun. To subscribe, email from desired email account to Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org with any subject and a message body that says SUBSCRIBE RIO-NORTH-OUTINGS.

WEEKLY RADIO PROGRAM

Tune in to our program on FM 101.5 every Friday at 9:15 AM to hear the latest environmental hot topics and outings with John Buchser, Chapter Chair, and other Sierra representatives.

Project 101.5 is also a great rock and roll channel!

OUR WEBSITE IS <http://northern.nmsierraclub.org>.

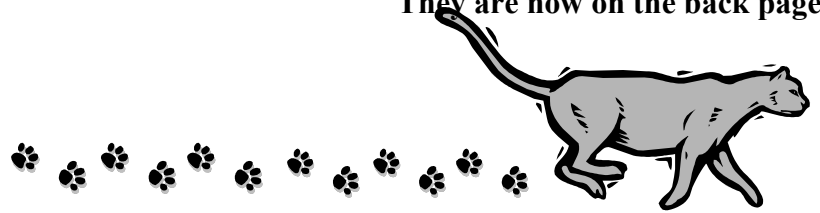
Webpage views are up 100x compared to the old website.

FACEBOOK/TWITTER

Join the other 500 fans for our page and get your latest environmental news by becoming a fan of the Rio Grande Chapter page on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sierra-Club-Rio-Grande-Chapter/122558948433>.

Also, check out our twitter page at: twitter.com/nmsierraclub

WHERE ARE THE NORTHERN GROUP OUTINGS? They are now on the back page



VOLUNTEERS ♥ VOLUNTEERS ♥ VOLUNTEERS

Cool Cities Team Leader – coordinate local Sierra Club activities with both Santa Fe City and the County, who have committed to support the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, which calls for municipalities to meet the Kyoto Agreement goal to address Climate Change. – David Van Winkle (820-1006, david@vw77.com)

Public Lands Activists - Work with other experienced conservationists to protect our public lands and wildlife. Projects include off-road vehicle issues in Carson & Santa Fe National Forests and protection of unique geological features in San Juan Basin Badlands – Tom Gorman (438-3932) or Norma McCallan (471-0005, nmccallan@mindspring.com)

PR Help - Need 1-2 people to help get out announcements of our public events. This is a key task for our environmental work & our current volunteer leaves shortly! Contact Kia Mudge (474-6697) or Norma McCallan 471-0005.

Phone Bank - Need several people to add to our cadre of people who would contact members by phone about various important issues. If you are interested, e-mail northern.group.nm@sierraclub.org

Wildlife Monitoring – assist with wildlife monitoring in the County of Santa Fe – Teresa Seamster (466-8964, tcseam@qwest.net)

Volunteer Coordination - Work with the Volunteer Coordinator to match volunteer interests to volunteer opportunities. Contact Pat Carlton (988-1596, carlton505@comcast.net)

SANTA FE RIVER CLEANUP AND VEGETATION MAINTENANCE Look for our Spring Schedule in the next issue

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William Brown, *The Climate Project* •

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www.nmglobalwarming.org

Scott Estep • 575/770-7969, wetmtn@rmi.com



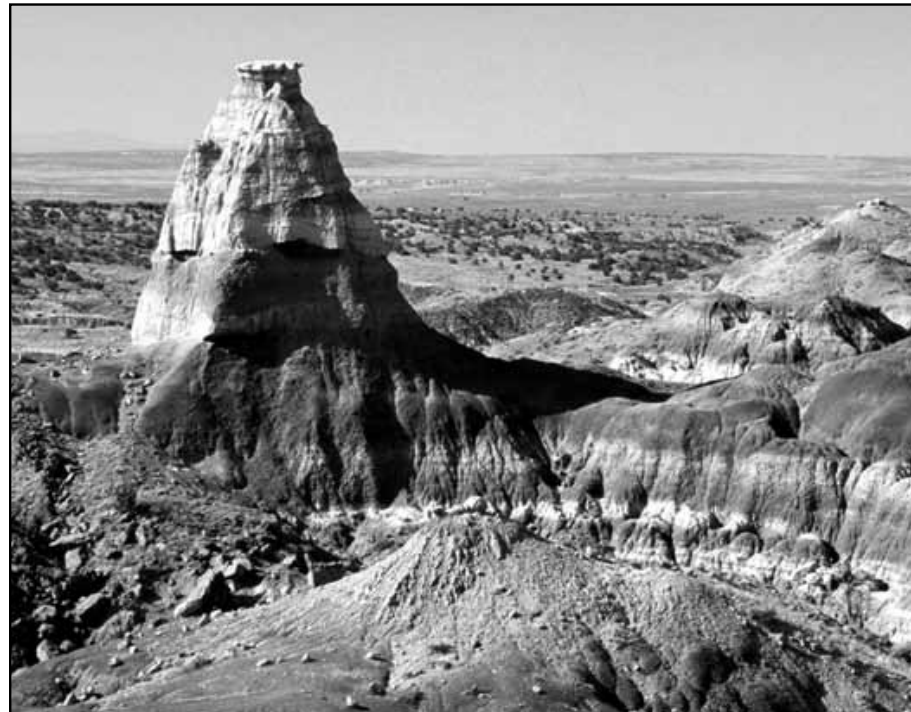
Update on San Juan Basin Badlands

By Norma McCallan
Chapter Vice Chair

Our intrepid Badlands explorer, Mike Richie, made a major effort in October and November to introduce these spectacular badlands to more individuals through a series of independent Saturday and Sunday hikes every weekend, drawing many newcomers as well as those already hooked by these other-worldly landscapes.

The weather gets a bit too iffy in January, but come February we will resume our Sierra Club Badlands outings. Tom Petencin, Central Group leader, has kindly agreed to show us the northern section of La Lena Wilderness Study Area Badlands on Saturday, Feb. 5, and take us on an exploratory hike on Mesa Chihuilla Badlands on Sunday, March 6. See Page 16 for details.

The BLM's Rio Puerco Field Office



In February we will resume our Sierra Club Badlands outings.

is hoping to send its new draft Resource Management Plan to D.C. for approval by the end of December and

anticipates a publication date in early spring. We hope to see some language protective of the Badlands. Stay tuned

for alerts once the plan is out—your comments will be invaluable.

Meanwhile, the Rio Grande Chapter has reactivated its “seat at the table” for the Rio Puerco Management Committee, which for 10 years has worked with local tribes and pueblos, federal and state agencies, nonprofit organizations and private landowners to help restore the health of the badly eroded riparian areas along the muddy Rio Puerco, which wends its way through the Badlands.

I have agreed to be the interim representative but would welcome anyone interested in this volunteer position on a very diverse and very active, community-oriented committee.

Look for an April date for willow planting along the Rio Puerco near the Ojo Encino Navajo Chapter, which the Chapter has participated in the prior two years.

Thanks to you, S.F. County passes growth plan

The Board of Santa Fe County Commissioners voted 5-0 in favor of adopting the Sustainable Growth Management Plan, and we are certain that the outcome would have been different if our members had not taken action.

I would like to thank you for voicing support of the plan to the Santa Fe County Commissioners. Your time spent on this issue made a difference! This plan

faced stiff opposition, but we sent more than 100 e-mails to the County Commissioners in support.

The Sustainable Growth Management Plan is aimed at meeting the needs of current residents while preserving the county's land, culture and natural resources for future generations. The plan is designed to direct future growth to areas with adequate public facilities such as roads, water and sewer systems.

Sierra Club leaders Teresa Seamster and Sig Silber contributed to the development of the plan. We thank them for their hard work. Please help them and the county take the next step—converting this plan into ordinances that will implement its objectives.

Please contact Teresa, tcseam@qwest.net, or Sig at ssilber1@juno.com if you would like to get involved.

— David Van Winkle, Northern Group chair

EL PASO GROUP

Transmountain Road expansion would destroy city asset

Laurence Gibson
Group Chair

The battle lines have been drawn: El Paso's Public Service Board (PSB), which controls thousands of acres of open space around El Paso (ostensibly to protect the watershed), supported by the City Planning Commission, Mayor Cook and the *El Paso Times*, versus the city's Open Space Advisory Board, the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition, your Sierra Club Executive Committee, City Councilor Susie Byrd and El Paso's environmental community. At issue is rezoning of about 800 acres of foothills north of Transmountain Road below Franklin Mountains State Park.

The issue, dormant since 2003, resurfaced when Texas Department of Transportation (TxDot) announced plans to spend \$80 million on Transmountain Road with several elevated interchanges leading nowhere. Then City Council discovered that land adjoining the proposed expansion was already zoned for commercial use. Suddenly the picture

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texas.sierraclub.org/elpaso		
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Vice-Chair: Gil Pinon	915/471-5336	gpinon@episd.org
Secretary: Ann Falknor	915/833-9162	afalknor@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer: Kathy Sunday	915/584-9301	sundayt@zianet.com
Bill Addington	915/539-4158	aguavida@valornet.com
Bob Geyer	915/834-8242	
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Liz Walsh	915/584-1471	ewalsh@utep.edu
Committee Chairs		
Chapter Delegate:		
Bill Addington	915/539-4158	aguavida@valornet.com
Inner-City Outings, Membership		
Ted Mertig	915/852-3011	tmertig@earthlink.net
Outings: Rollin Wickenden	915/855-6697	rwickgila@aol.com

came into focus: El Paso's developers, working with TxDot and like-minded PSB, have big plans to turn our open space into hundreds of homes with big-box shopping along Transmountain Road as it sweeps up toward Franklin Mountains State Park. This is the only “green” corridor left around El Paso.

Some members of City Council, led by Byrd, looked for ways to salvage the situation and hit on the idea of zoning those foothills Natural Open Space.

The proposal went to the City's Open Space Advisory Board, where it was supported. But the City Planning Commission, or more accurately the

development commission, ramrodded through a recommendation against NOS zoning.

We pointed out that the city should not sell this natural asset for any amount of money. \$80 million now would be a temporary boost. But 10 years down the road it would only mean the greenway would be gone.

So we now see two possible paths to victory: First, mobilize the environmental community. The Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition has several online petitions for citizens to sign. And we must fill City Council Chambers for the deciding votes.

The second path is the regulatory process. TxDot has produced an Environment Assessment but has not divulged its contents. Sierran Bill Addington filed a Freedom of Information Act Request weeks ago and has received no information. We are looking for funding to force TxDot to go through the more rigorous Environmental Impact Statement process. For information on how to help, e-mail lgibson@utep.edu.



Around the Region

Sierra Club seeks to protect borderlands

By Sean Sullivan

Co-Chair, Sierra Club Borderlands Team

There is nothing about the U.S. border with Mexico that is uncomplicated, nor are there any easy answers to policy issues.

What we do know is what doesn't work—walls that block wildlife movements, cause flooding, and have forced thousands of migrants to their deaths; and measures such as REAL ID that allow one appointed individual to waive a plethora of environmental-protection laws to facilitate the construction of walls.

Border-enforcement activities have resulted in severe damage to fragile borderlands. Rare and unique species such as the Sonoran pronghorn, jaguar and ocelot are threatened by these actions. Border walls have resulted in significant flooding on public lands and in communities, threatening people and wildlife alike. Laws critical to protecting air, land, water, plants and animals are being waived with little or no thought of the implications.

Gone are protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act or any other law standing in the way of more walls. To address these environmentally harmful activities and policies, the Sierra Club is engaged in a Borderlands Protection Campaign. We are seeking to restore and protect areas that have been damaged by the wall, advocating repeal of Section 102 of the Real ID Act, and speaking out against the



Photo by Jeff Foot

The Sierra Club is seeking to restore and protect areas that have been damaged by the border wall, shown here along the Arizona border.

needless deaths occurring along the border.

While the Sierra Club has a position of neutrality on immigration, we have never been neutral on environmental destruction or environmental justice. Border walls harm people, the land, and wildlife.

The Sierra Club Borderlands Team would like to expand our grassroots efforts into New Mexico. Please contact sean.sullivan663@gmail.com, (520) 250-9040, to learn how you can help. For more information go to www.sierraclub.org/borderlands.

CENTRAL GROUP

Albuquerque's Coolbiz gets its own website

By Jeff Potter
and Amber Harris

The Sierra Club's Cool Cities Campaign works with cities that have joined the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to accelerate their implementation of effective programs.

The program—led by volunteers nationwide—is a collaboration between community members, local leaders, businesses and organizations to implement clean-energy solutions that save money, create jobs, and help curb global warming. It helps businesses learn how to increase energy efficiency, reduce cost, and reduce waste through online resources and through networking with

Central Group Contacts

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The Executive Committee meets
on the first Tuesday of each month
at 7 p.m. Call for location.

other business owners. The resulting improvements will reduce carbon emissions and increase profitability.

In New Mexico, seven cities are participating in the program: Alamogor-

do, Albuquerque, Capitan, Las Cruces, Ruidoso, Santa Fe and Taos. Santa Fe's campaign leads the way in New Mexico. Founded in 2008, CoolBiz is the business outreach component of the Northern New Mexico Group's Cool Cities campaign. Both campaigns emphasize energy efficiency, reducing waste and minimizing cost for businesses and nonprofit organizations.

In April 2009, a team of talented individuals from Albuquerque Net Impact Professionals and the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club volunteered to start a local CoolBiz program. CoolBiz Albuquerque is a free program, providing recognition for businesses that demonstrate progress in becoming more

energy-efficient, using natural resources more wisely and reducing waste.

The program involves hard work, ingenuity, and insight from its leadership team and recently had a successful website launch.

To visit the website, go to www.coolbizabq.org. The team is working toward the next stage of membership growth and program implementation.

CoolBiz currently has 14 business members enrolled, six of which qualify for the top two tiers. CoolBiz hopes to more than double in size in both volunteers and participant businesses in 2011. For more information, please contact the project coordinator, Amber Harris, at ambersky12@gmail.com.

To Contribute to the *Rio Grande Sierran*

The *Rio Grande Sierran* is published four times a year – January, April, July, and October – by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club as a benefit for members living in New Mexico and West Texas.

The opinions expressed in signed articles in the *Sierran* are the opinions of the writers, and not necessarily those of the Sierra Club.

Articles may be freely reprinted for

nonprofit purposes, provided that credit is given to the author and the *Sierran*. (Please let us know if you reprint.)

Products and services advertised in the *Rio Grande Sierran* are not necessarily endorsed by the Sierra Club.

Contributions – articles, photos, artwork, poems, letters to the editor, paid advertisements – are welcome. Send to the editor (see directory,

page 2).

Submissions by Rio Grande Chapter members will take precedence over others. Articles are subject to abridgement.

Letters to the editor may be up to 500 words. The contributor's name and email address will be printed, unless the contributor specifies otherwise.

Submissions must be received

by the 10th of the month prior to publication.

Nonmember subscriptions are \$10 per year. Notify Norma McCallan (nmccallan@mindspring.com) of your interest and mailing address; send check to our Treasurer, Barbara Scheer, 28 Cedar Drive, Roswell, NM 88203.

Please allow eight weeks for processing.

Pajarito Group

JANUARY

15 Snowshoe or Hike to Cerro Grande (Valle Grande area) and beyond, with car shuttle. Strenuous. Michael Di Rosa (H 505-667-0095 or W 505-663-0648).

FEBRUARY

5 Hike or snowshoe in Bandelier down Frijoles Canyon from Apache Spr TH to HQ with car shuttle. Moderate/strenuous, 10 miles, mostly downhill. Michael Di Rosa (H 505-667-0095 or W 505-663-0648).

MARCH

26 Snowshoe up Mount Taylor from Gooseberry Sprs TH west of ABQ, 7 miles, 2000-foot gain, 11,500 elev., strenuous. El Malpais hike if Gooseberry isn't plowed. Michael Di Rosa (H 505-667-0095 or W 505-663-0648).

Northern Group

The Northern Group has a weekly Outings Email with updates and news. To subscribe, e-mail Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org with any subject and a message body that says SUBSCRIBE

JANUARY

1 Snowshoe near Azmataz. West-most ski run, very steep, strenuous. Marcia Skillman (505-699-3008, marciaskillman@hotmail.com).

2 Hike on La Luz to the Overlook Rock in the Sandias. 9.5 miles, 2,400-foot gain, strenuous. Daisy Levine (505-466-8338).

8 Beginner's snowshoe clinic. Rent shoes and poles, play in the snow for a couple of hours. Gear and technique tips shared. Marcia Skillman (505-699-3008, marciaskillman@hotmail.com).

8 Moderate Snowshoe in Valles Caldera (their monthly free day). Royal Drews (505-699-8713).

9 Loop Hike to Peak 6660' (Espanola badlands). 8+ miles, 800-foot gain, mostly off-trail, a few steep sections, moderate/strenuous. Lots of sand. Limit 12 hikers, 2 dogs. Norbert Sperlich (505-474-4354).

15 Snowshoe or Hike to Cerro Grande (Valle Grande area) and beyond, with car shuttle. Strenuous. Michael Di Rosa (H 505-667-0095 or W 505-663-0648).

15 Hike to Tetilla Peak, SW of Santa Fe. 4 miles, 1000' gain, easy/moderate. Great views, all off trail. If dirt road impassable, will do comparable La Bajada loop. Norma McCallan (505-471-005).

16 Strenuous Snowshoe or Hike, check website or weekly email for update the week prior, dogs ok. Tobin Oruch (505-820-2844).

22 Moderate snowshoe, or hike if snow isn't good, dogs OK, Les Drapela (505-438-3306).

23 Ojo Caliente meander, about 10 miles, 1200' gain, moderate/strenuous, some off-trail. Bring hot soup to share, or bread if no Thermos. Bogdan Mihaila (505-795-3316).

23 XC Ski outing, dependent on snow, on the Winsor/Puerto Nambre/Nambre River trail loop, 6 miles, intermediate XC skiing skills needed, strenuous. Dogs that can plow through powder this far welcome. Page Press (505-946-0169).

29 Snow shoe to Deception Peak, 6-mile loop 2000-foot-plus gain, strenuous. Limit of 10 people. Miguel DeLuca (505-820-0042).

30 Moderate/Strenuous Snowshoe or hike, dogs OK. Robert Reifel (505-984-1253).

FEBRUARY

5 Hike or snowshoe in Bandelier down Frijoles Canyon from Apache Spr TH to HQ with car shuttle. Moderate/strenuous, 10 miles, mostly

downhill. Michael Di Rosa (H 505-667-0095 or W 505-663-0648).

5 One-way hike in the La Lena WSA Badlands, near Cabezon Peak, led by Tom Petencin, Central Group leader. Exposed shale & sandstone caprock, hoodoos, concretions, and sculpted rocks plus great views of the Rio Puerco Valley. 5-7 miles, off-trail, 500-foot gain, easy/moderate. Carpooling to Bernalillo to meet ABQ folks; high-clearance vehicles useful. Norma McCallan (505-471-0005).

6 Hike in Ojito Wilderness west of Bernalillo, about 6 miles, 600-foot gain, off-trail, moderate/strenuous. Bogdan Mihaila (505-795-3316).

12 Snowshoe to East Fork in the Jemez - flat terrain, 5 miles, easy. Marcia Skillman, (505-699-3008, marciaskillman@hotmail.com).

12 Loop Hike from Diablo Canyon to Sage Brush Flats. 8+ miles, 700-foot gain, mostly off-trail, some steep, rocky sections, moderate/strenuous. Limit 12 hikers, 2 dogs. Norbert Sperlich (505-474-4354).

13 Strenuous snowshoe, Santa Fe area or maybe Taos depending on snow, road conditions etc. Dogs ok. Robert Reifel (505-984-1253).

19 Snowshoe up to Raven's Ridge lookout, 3-4 miles, 1,000-foot gain, strenuous. Marcia Skillman (505-699-3008, marciaskillman@hotmail.com).

20 Hike though two areas of Petroglyph National monument, plus climb the volcanoes west of Albuquerque. 6-7 miles, 600-foot gain, moderate. Limit 10 people. Miguel DeLuca (505-820-0042).

26 Moderate Hike, maybe the Red Dot trail in White Rock (6 miles, 700-foot gain). Les Drapela (505-438-3306).

27 Hike to Tor and Blowhole in Caja del Rio SW of town. 7.5 miles, 400-foot gain, off-trail, moderate. Daisy Levine (505-466-8338).

MARCH

5 Hike near Pilar and Rio Grande, 5-6 miles, 1,000-foot gain, partially off-trail, moderate. Dogs OK. Page Press (505-946-0169).

6 Exploratory loop hike around rim of Mesa Chihuilla Badlands near Cuba, led by Tom Petencin. Interesting colored banding in the exposed shale, petrified wood, sculpted trees along the cliffs. 5-7 miles, 500-foot gain, easy/moderate. Carpooling to Bernalillo to meet ABQ folks; high-clearance vehicles useful. Norma McCallan (505-471-0005).

6 Hike to Escobas Mesa, 12 miles, off-trail, strenuous. Bogdan Mihaila (505-795-3316).

12 Hike to Ojo Caliente overlook rocks with a possible soak in the pools after. 7 miles, 700-foot gain, moderate. Cynthia Good (505-699-2717).

12 Snowshoe near Azmataz west-most ski trail. Very steep, strenuous. Marcia Skillman, (505-699-3008, marciaskillman@hotmail.com).

13 Strenuous Snowshoe or hike, check website or weekly email for update the week prior, dogs OK. Tobin Oruch (505-820-2844).

19 Loop Hike to Chino Mesa and Rio Grande Overlooks (Caja del Rio). 8 miles, 600-foot gain, mostly off-trail, some steep, rocky sections, moderate/strenuous. Some high-clearance vehicles needed. Limit of 12 hikers, 2 dogs. Norbert Sperlich (505-474-4354).

20 Hike to Kitchen Mesa with Box Canyon option at Ghost Ranch. 5-7 miles, 700-foot gain, one rock chimney scramble, moderate. Royal Drews (505-699-8713).

26 Snowshoe up Mount Taylor from Gooseberry Sprs TH west of ABQ, 7 miles, 2000' gain, 11,500 elev., strenuous. El Malpais hike if Gooseberry isn't plowed. Michael Di Rosa (H 505-667-0095 or W 505-663-0648).

27 Loop hike along a mesa and by the Rio Grande in Bandelier, 15 miles, 900-foot gain,

strenuous. Miguel DeLuca (505-820-0042).

Central Group

JANUARY

22 Desert Exploratory Hike. Explore the desert canyons, mesas, arroyos, and badlands that are found on New Mexico's public lands. Many are a 1.5 to 2.5 hour drive from Albuquerque, but well worth the travel. Enjoy colorful, rocky, and sparsely vegetated landscapes. Mostly off-trail, so expect difficult terrain and wear sturdy boots. Capable children are welcome. No pets. Please RSVP by 3:00 PM the day before the hike. Get hike specifics by requesting to be added to my email list. I usually send the hike plan out by three days preceding the date scheduled. Tom Petencin, (505-271-9928, tompeten@msn.com).

FEBRUARY

5 One-way hike in La Lena WSA Badlands near Cabezon Peak. Exposed shale and sandstone caprock, weird hoodoos, concretions and sculpted forms, great views of Rio Puerco Valley. 5-7 miles off-trail, 500' gain, easy/moderate. Central hikers will carpool from ABQ to Bernalillo to meet Northern Group contingent. Some high-clearance vehicles needed. Tom Petencin (505-271-9928, tompeten@msn.com).

20 Desert Exploratory Hike, see above. Tom Petencin, (505-271-9928, tompeten@msn.com).

MARCH

6 Exploratory loop hike around the rim of Mesa Chihuilla Badlands near Cuba. Colorful banding in the exposed shale, gnarled juniper & ponderosa along the cliffs, petrified wood. 5-7 miles, 500' gain, easy/moderate. Central hikers carpool from Albq to Bernalillo to meet the Northern contingent. Will need high clearance vehicles. Tom Petencin (505-271-9928, tompeten@msn.com).

19 Desert Exploratory Hike, see above. Tom Petencin, (505-271-9928, tompeten@msn.com).

Southern Group

More Southern Group outings on Page 11

JANUARY

8 Leaving Black Range Ranger Station in T or C at 8 a.m. to head to Mudd Mountain for 4- to 5-mile, moderate to strenuous hike. Miles of Sierra Counties beautiful land and lakes, great fossils at the top. I hope you will join me. Kass Akers (575)430-1834.

22 Meet at Black Range Ranger Station in T or C 8 a.m. Head across Rio Grande to Red Canyon for 6-mile hike; requires scrambling over a few rock faces but well worth the trip. Easy/moderate; requires 4-wheel-drive to access. Kass Akers (575)430-4839

29 Explore the Three Rivers archeological site with over 21,000 petroglyphs, also some of the Tularosa Basin. Leave from FS office in TorC at 7:30. All day event. Margot Wilson (675-744-5860).

FEBRUARY

12 Exploratory hike in Cuchillo Mountains. We'll walk around juniper grassland foothills of Reilly Peak on BLM land north of Winston. There is no trail; be prepared for brush, rocks and moderate hill climbing. Bring lunch, hiking poles, camera and hat. Approximately 6 miles roundtrip. Meet across from the Winston store. Mary Katherine Ray 575-772-5655.

26 Hike in the Nutt Grasslands and into the southern Black Range. Excellent birding area. Leave from FS office in TorC at 8 a.m. Bring binoculars, supplies for day outing. Margot Wilson (575-744-5860).

MARCH

26 Saturday. Hike along Indian Creek in the San Mateo Mountains. Enjoy beautiful basalt columns. Leave from FS office in TorC at 8 a.m. Margot Wilson (575-744-5860).

OUTINGS NOTE: Check all Groups' websites for updated or new outings information. All mileages are round trip. Participants must sign a liability waiver. Bring water, lunch, sturdy hiking boots or shoes, and clothing suitable for the weather. Leader reserves right to turn away anyone whose experience or equipment appears unsuitable. Leader may

alter destination or cancel trip due to weather, other unfavorable conditions, or insufficient number of participants. Unaccompanied minors need written permission from a parent or guardian to participate - ask leader for form. Dogs permitted only if so noted in write-up. Always call leader ahead to confirm participation and details.