

Rio Grande Sierran



NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009

In This Transformative Time, What Can We Do to “Green” NM?

Brack Obama takes over with a promise to invest \$150 billion over 10 years to “green” the country’s use of energy. At this transformative moment, what are we called upon to do?

Let’s tour New Mexico for some inspiration on what is in the offing and what can happen if we put our minds, policies, and monies to the task at hand.

We’re off to a good start. Utilities must generate 15% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2015 and 20% by 2020. The country’s first renewable

by Ken Hughes

energy transmission authority aims to deliver New Mexico’s wind and solar energy to consumers. The Rail Runner links Albuquerque and Santa Fe, forever changing commuting and tourist travel habits. Tax credits attract world-class renewable energy businesses. The Western Climate Initiative will soon roll out a market-based cap-and-trade program to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And the clean cars program will reduce vehicle emissions significantly.

Yet much remains to be done. Homes leak heated air in the winter and conditioned air in the summer. Businesses vent heat that could produce electricity, and utilities generate electricity without capturing the heat businesses could use. Cars are bought and used with little thought of their operating costs, much less the level of CO₂ spewed out their tailpipes. Cities sprawl out courtesy of taxpayer-subsidized infrastructure.

A package of interrelated clean energy, land use, and transportation policies can cut greenhouse gas emissions in time to stave off the worst changes in the climate.



The Rail Runner, which began serving Santa Fe in December, marks a new era of cleaner transportation in New Mexico. But we can – and must – take more dramatic action to mitigate climate change. With enough political will and public support, our state can become a leader in carbon neutrality. (Photo by Ken Hughes)

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Chapter’s Endorsed Candidates Win Big

November 4, 2008 was a big day for our endorsed candidates. Barack Obama and Joe Biden were elected President and Vice President. Tom Udall beat out Steve Pearce for U.S. Senate. And Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan won seats in the U.S. Congress.

In the NM House races, all endorsed candidates won: Elias Barela (District 8), Miguel Garcia (District 14), Mimi Stewart (District 21), Al Park (District 26), Antonio Lujan (District 35), Jeff Steinborn (District 37), and Nate Cote (District 53). Tim Eichenberg (District 15) and

Steve Fischmann (District 37) will be heading to the NM Senate. Jason Marks was reelected to the Public Regulation Commission (PRC), District 1. And both Kathy Holian and Liz Stefanics will join the Santa Fe County Commission.

Despite their hard-fought campaigns and our endorsements, Jeff Carr lost his bid for NM Senate, District 7; and Rick Lass was defeated by Jerome Block, Jr. for PRC, District 3.

For complete, official election results, see the State of NM’s Election Results Reporting Application (<http://67.192.207.121/county0.htm>).



Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet



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SIERRA CLUB STRUCTURE

The Club has three structural levels. The National Board of Directors determines the overall direction of the Club. The National Organization is subdivided into Chapters, and each Chapter is further divided into Groups. One representative from each Chapter reports to the National Board through the Council of Club Leaders.

Central Group P.O. Box 25342, Albuquerque, NM 87125

El Paso Group P.O. Box 9191, El Paso, TX 79995
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SIERRAN (SEE ALSO PAGE 15)

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**For more information and updated outings, visit our
Chapter website: <http://riogrande.sierraclub.org>**

Political Contact Info: The Times Are Changing

At presstime (mid-December 2008), the United States was in a time of transition, as we waited for the Obama administration, Senate, and Congress to be sworn in on January 20, 2009. For that reason, the contact information below is incomplete, as new congresspeople in particular were still choosing their offices and staff. Please check www.senate.gov and www.house.gov for up-to-date info. Until Inauguration Day, visit Obama's website (www.change.gov) for the latest on transition news. Also note that Governor Richardson is expected to be approved as Obama's commerce secretary in late January or early February, in which case Lt. Governor Diane Denish will become governor.

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New Mexico State Legislature

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New Mexico State Senators

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A Message from Carl Pope

In 2008, Americans chose change. "New Energy for America" trumped "Drill, Baby, drill," marking a major change across the country.

Now that the celebrations are done, we must roll up our sleeves and get to work. Barack Obama's top priority is investment in clean energy and energy efficiency in order to jumpstart our economy, create green jobs and make us more secure – and the Sierra Club's Climate Recovery Agenda closely follows that priority. Energy is now a national priority, and it's clear that the steps we need to take to help our economy recovery will also help our climate recover.

The Sierra Club's Climate Recovery Agenda

Fixing our economy, transforming our energy future, slowing and ultimately reversing climate change and its consequences will require a clear agenda and aggressive timetable that will allow us to repower, refuel and rebuild America.

The Sierra Club's Climate Recovery Agenda will help our economy recover, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, cut carbon emissions 80% by 2050, and protect our natural heritage, communities and country from the consequences of global warming.

Putting our planet on the path to economic and climate recovery will require Congress, working with the Obama Administration, to:

1. Invest \$150 - 500 billion in clean energy to create millions of new, high quality jobs.

2. Reduce our dependence on oil by increasing vehicle fuel efficiency, increasing the use of alternative fuels, and deploying innovative transportation technology like plug in hybrids.
3. Move America to 100% renewable energy for electricity and dramatically increase the efficiency of our buildings and homes.
4. Tackle global climate change by establishing an economy-wide cap on carbon emissions. Ensure that carbon permits are auctioned.
5. Take action that acknowledges the consequences global warming is already having and the need to protect vulnerable communities, wildlife and their habitat from drought, intense flooding, wildfires and the other changes we are already experiencing.

Congress' first step working with Obama Administration should be serious investments in high performance technologies and energy productivity improvements that will create millions of immediate jobs. Public and private building energy upgrades, mass transportation improvements and grid modernization should also be part of any economic recovery package.

America can lead by example. By taking actions at home, we can provide leadership on the international stage to both work with and be competitive with other nations. This agenda will be hard work, but the good news is that these are proven ways to face our economic and environmental challenges – and the solutions help everyone.

Carl Pope is Executive Director of the Sierra Club.

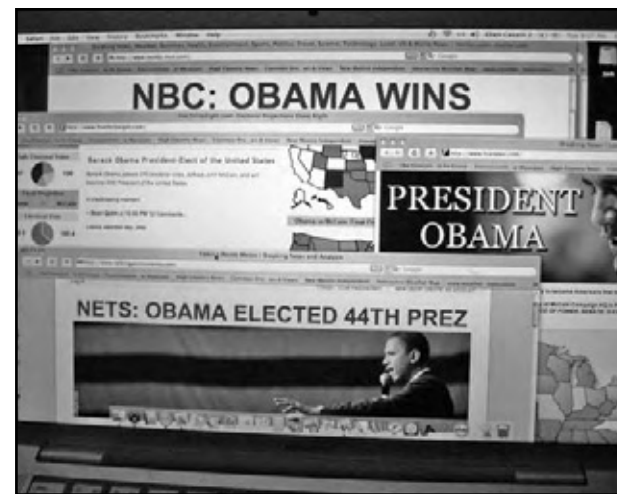
We Did It! And Now the Real Work Begins

More than a month after the elections, it's still sinking in that come January 20, we will have a dramatic shift in Washington, DC. With President Obama at the helm, the United States will be headed in the right direction for a clean energy future – much to the elation of millions of Americans and billions of people around the world.

New Mexico is also undergoing a sea change, with Tom Udall – one of the state's and the nation's foremost environmental champions – replacing Pete Domenici as U.S. Senator. And our new congressional delegation is a breath of fresh air, literally and figuratively, as they promise to fight for clean air and water, sustainable growth, and renewable energy for New Mexico and the country.

Locally, we saw several upsets in crucial NM legislative seats, and the Roundhouse will be infused with new energy and more pro-environment allies this upcoming 60-day session.

While the candidates uniformly ran excellent campaigns, it can't be overstated how much of these successes is due to volunteers like you. Sierra Club members from all walks of life were instrumental in helping to elect strong leaders to guide our state and country into the 21st century. Many of you took time off from work and your busy family schedules to canvass, phone-bank, and rally for change. Along the way, we made new friends and built new community bonds. It was amazing to watch millions of people around the country and the world spontaneously break into tears, song, and dance when Obama was announced the winner.



Starved for the most current results, I simultaneously watched TV and checked multiple websites and blogs on Election Night. When the presidential race was called for Obama, I wept for joy, and then snapped this photo of my laptop's screen – a visible reminder of the key role the Internet played in the 2008 campaigns. (Photo by Ellen Cavalli)

The amount of public participation and passion was unprecedented, and it was exciting to be a part of this shared mission. Thank you!

We face difficult times ahead. But we know we have the power to make good things happen. Let's celebrate our victories, but not yield to complacency. There still is much to be done, but as we have shown over the past year, when we work together, we can change the world.

—Ellen Cavalli

2009 NM Legislative Forecast: Gloomy Economy Might Stall Progress on Much-Needed Pro-Environment Bills

As the 60-day, 2009 NM Legislative Session approaches, some likely bills and some legislative themes are emerging. Of course, the election cycle will have shaken up the Roundhouse with changes in both Houses and possibly in the Governor's Office (Governor Richardson has been appointed Obama's commerce secretary, pending Senate approval), which will greatly influence the tone of the session.

The dominant theme seems to be that the State doesn't have enough money to go around – even at current spending levels. Good bills could pass through several committees before hitting a wall in the House Appropriations & Finance Committee or the Senate Finance Committee, or later in the Conference Committee's compromise process.

Your Rio Grande Chapter will continue to spearhead efforts to pass energy-saving statutory requirements for publicly funded buildings and renovations using "green building" guidelines. While a green public building that operates on 50% less energy may cost around 2% more to design and build than a conventional building, a recent study shows that communities would save 10 times the extra investment (or more) in energy costs over the life of the building. Public buildings include libraries, city halls, senior centers, police stations, and many other types of municipal and county buildings.

The Chapter is also exploring several legislative alternatives to help protect our dwindling water resources. Direct protections plus more and better water-use planning can help ensure a viable and fair water future for New Mexico.

As active participants in the New Mexico Environmental Alliance (NMEA), an ad hoc coalition of environmental advocacy groups with a lobbying presence at the Roundhouse, the Chapter will also be lobbying for two other important bills. All NMEA members will work for the reform of Tax Increment Financing in New Mexico. This publicly funded development tool is designed to stimulate infill development in struggling neighborhoods, but has thus



Beginning January 20, legislators and lobbyists will converge on the Roundhouse in Santa Fe for the 60-day Legislative Session. The Rio Grande Chapter will be among them, pushing for green building guidelines, development financing reform, and other strong environmental protections. We expect tough opposition from the energy and mining industries and anti-environment politicians, so we need your help. Please become a Legislative Activist today! (Photo by Dan Lorimier)

far been primarily used for sprawling "green-fields" development.

Another NMEA priority is to pass the New Mexico Environmental Quality Act, a statute requiring the state's Environment Department to conduct environmental assessments and environment impact statements on projects that will have significant effects on the state's environment.

Defense of the environment will also require significant effort on the part of our lobbying team

and activists. Regulatory reform designed to wrest authority from state agencies like the Environment Department and place it in the hands of an unprepared legislature will likely reemerge in this session. We also are expecting bills that would encourage and induce the uranium industry (extraction, processing, and waste storage) back into New Mexico. The proposed Desert Rock dirty coal generating plant project may again come asking the State for tax breaks. Because of the strong climate change and air pollution increases this project poses, we will again work to block any state aid for it.

Green Living Card: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Utah is an example of a state that is coordinating support by state and local governments for a lighter carbon approach to transportation. State and local officials recently unveiled a program called Travelwise (www.travelwise.utah.gov) that encourages businesses to promote public transportation, carpooling, and telecommuting among employees, so as to reduce carbon emissions. While the proposed measures are laudable, it seems that another, further measure would be useful. Call it the "green living card," and here's how it would work. Let's say to park at work you are given an electronic card that opens the gate into the parking lot. You would still have that card, only now it's monetized. The card has a value of, say, \$100 a month, or \$1,200 a year. Continue to drive to work every day by yourself and you still have, in effect, free parking. Take the bus, train, vanpool, or other fare-related commute, and the card is swiped through a fare box or portable debit card

machine to record your passage. Take a shared bike or car while at work to run an errand or go to a meeting, use the card.

But what if you walk or bike to work or share a ride with a neighbor? The value on the card builds up, and once a month you are sent an email with your card's current balance. You are then allowed to invest that balance into some other community-level carbon reduction project. Like a community-supported agriculture system for supporting locally grown food, you could direct some of the card's balance to buying shares in a community-supported solar (CSS) project: the community, a nonprofit, or an entrepreneur sets up a CSS in which you can invest to buy green power. Those electrons flow onto the grid and, at the end of the year, you are told how many kilowatt-hours your investment bought and how much you earned that then goes back onto the balance of your green living card.

—Ken Hughes

The Chapter's efforts at the 2009 Legislative Session rely on effective and ongoing oversight by the Chapter Legislative Committee and relentless lobbying by our team of Judith Bunney, Mark Jones, and Dan Lorimier. Just as important, our Legislative Activists regularly communicate with their legislators during the session in support of Chapter legislative priorities. Weekly alerts during the session result in powerful, well-timed calls and emails to key legislators that really move our legislative agenda forward.

Please join our more than 2,000 Legislative Activists. Your participation in this hands-on side of the democratic process makes the Rio Grande Chapter a force to be reckoned with at the Roundhouse. If you don't already receive Legislative Activist Alerts, just contact me to become a Rio Grande Chapter Email Activist!

To become a Legislative Activist, or for more information about the Chapter's positions and efforts during the 2009 NM Legislative Session, contact Chapter Conservation Coordinator Dan Lorimier (575/740-2927, daniel.lorimier@sierraclub.org).

The Water Grab on the Augustin Plains

The Plains of San Augustin are in south-central New Mexico, and probably the most famous feature there is the Very Large Array telescope on the eastern side. Looking across the vast concave landscape ringed by mountains, it seems like an enormous bowl of grass and not much else, besides the occasional antelope.

The Plains are the remnant of what was once a huge lake. All the rain that falls on the surrounding mountains drains into the Plains. But for a lake to persist, the amount of rainfall has to exceed the amount of water that is lost from evaporation and percolation. Some 10,000 years ago, the climate changed and the amount of rainfall decreased. Rain still runs off the mountains into the Plains, but the rate of percolation is so high, that rainwater soaks down into the aquifer faster than it falls. It turns out the basin is a leaky one, and this water doesn't just go underground and stay there. A 1973 New Mexico Tech hydrology report concluded that the water seeping into the Plains leaks out from under them to supply the headwaters of the Gila River and probably the Alamosa River as well. (This means the Warm Springs waters that run into Monticello Box also seep from under the Plains.)

A water well application has been submitted to the New Mexico State Engineer's office by Augustin Ranch LLC, which owns land near Datil at the north end of the Plains. The plan calls for drilling 37 wells with 20-inch well casings to a depth of 3,000

feet in order to pump out 54,000 acre-feet of water a year from the Augustin Plains aquifer. That is over 17 billion gallons that would be removed annually. It would probably be sold and piped over to the Rio Grande to make up for shortfalls caused by overconsumption upstream. This amount could supply water to an entire city over twice the size of Las Cruces and could deplete the aquifer in only a few decades. Not only would neighboring landowners discover their wells running dry, surface springs will disappear and water that makes its way to the Gila and Monticello Box will wind up in the Rio Grande instead. The entire region will be placed at risk of catastrophic loss.

Sierra Club founder John Muir said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." Never was that more true than about the Augustin Plains water grab. The list of protests received by the State Engineer's office reveals how far-reaching the water grab actually is. Ranchers, concerned citizens, Indian tribes, acequias, and government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels have all submitted protests. You can still be involved even though the time for official protest has passed. If you'd like to help or to receive updates, contact Carol Pittman (pitrday@gilnet.com), who lives right next door to the proposed pumping sites.

Mary Katherine Ray is also a protestant who lives on the south side of the Plains.

—Mary Katherine Ray



The Augustin Plains are remote and beautiful. A foreign-owned company has set its sights on the water that lies beneath them, threatening the flows of the Gila and Alamosa rivers. (Photo by Mary Katherine Ray)

Looking for the Latest Info on Hikes? Check Out Our Website!

You don't have to wait for the next issue of the Sierran to find out the latest word on hikes and other Chapter outings. Be sure to visit our website for the most current information on scheduled outings as well as new events. We continuously update the site, so check back often!

<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org>

Save Trees and Money: Opt to Read the Sierran Online

If you wish to opt out of the mailed copy of this newsletter and read it online, please contact our volunteer Ishwari Sollohub in Santa Fe (505/474-3945, ishwarisollohub@yahoo.com) and tell her you want to be on the opt-out list. Be sure and put the title SIERRA CLUB on the subject line of your email, or your message will not get through. Once your name is so marked on our membership database, you will receive an email from Ishwari each time our bimonthly paper has been put up on our website, so you can read it on your computer. We can save a few trees as well money this way, as it will cost the Rio Grande Chapter less for printing and mailing.

Webmaster Wanted

The Rio Grande Chapter needs an experienced web volunteer to oversee our Chapter website and ensure that it is inviting, informative, and up-to-date. Contact Steve Markowitz (stephenmarkowitz@gmail.com).

Quarterly Meetings

The Chapter's Conservation and Executive Committee meetings will be held Saturday-Sunday, January 10-11, 2009, at Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge near Socorro. Contact Conservation Chair Ken Hughes or Chapter Chair Susan Martin (see masthead, page 2) for more information. Carpooling is encouraged.

National Club Website Undergoes Redesign

The Sierra Club's web staff has been working on a redesign of the organization's public website (www.sierraclub.org). On December 15, the team unveiled the new look on the Club's homepage and a few other pages. Most of the site will remain as-is until January, when the web staff will roll out the new look section by section. By the end of the first quarter of 2009, the vast majority of sierraclub.org will be formatted in the new look. (Some deep sections, like magazine back issues and Outings, may require additional time.) During the implementation of the redesign, the web staff is working with stakeholders across the organization to purge 10-plus years' worth of obsolete content, leaving the organization with a streamlined, updated body of content as well as a fresh, new look.

Club Works with City, Businesses, Public to Make Santa Fe “Cool”

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. To date, 902 mayors nationwide have signed the agreement. In New Mexico, seven cities are participating in the program: Alamogordo, Albuquerque, Capitan, Las Cruces, Ruidoso, Santa Fe, and Taos.

Under the agreement, participating cities commit to take the following three actions:

- Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities, through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns
- Urge their state governments and the federal government to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse-gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol – 7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012
- Urge the U.S. Congress to pass bipartisan greenhouse-gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system

Currently, the Santa Fe Cool Cities Campaign includes the following activities.

First, the City of Santa Fe will adopt a new leadership performance-based residential building code in early 2009. Brendan Miller is leading this activity, which can reduce energy consumption of new construction by 50% compared to existing homes.

Second, we are working with the City to implement clean energy alternatives and energy efficiency measures. The City has a full-time energy specialist who is leading this effort. The program includes energy audits of municipal buildings, as well as proposals for large solar photovoltaic (PV) installations on-site for the water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities totaling 10 million kilowatt-hours



New Mexico has excellent potential for solar water heating (as shown above, on the author's house) and solar PV electricity. Substantial tax credits at the federal and state level make investments in these technologies more attractive. Other large incentives are available for residential solar PV for PNM customers. (Photo by David Van Winkle)

per year (10M kWh/year). Also, the city council recently adopted a resolution to use clean renewable energy for the long-range water plan, which includes the large increase in power required to support the Buckman Direct Diversion project.

Third, the public needs education about climate change, its causes, and potential solutions. Teresa Seamster is leading our effort to communicate these issues to schools. In conjunction with Teresa's work, we have distributed 15,000 compact fluorescent lights (CFL) in 2008 and plan to offer another 20,000 CFLs in 2009 (all provided by PNM). This program will continue in and expand to the schools and other venues.

Fourth, Cool Biz, led by Mark Walztoni, is a

program that targets local businesses with the goal of educating them about and involving them in campaign objectives. This program highlights energy audits for businesses.

Fifth, the city council recently adopted the Sustainable Santa Fe Plan. This plan includes green building, development and zoning, clean alternative energy, transportation, water conservation, solid waste reduction, food systems, and education/outreach. Our campaign will provide significant leadership to the implementation of this plan.

For more information, contact Santa Fe Cool Cities Campaign leader David Van Winkle (505/820-1006, david@vw77.com).

—David Van Winkle

What Can We Do? *(continued from page 1)*

Here some of the many policy options needed to achieve that goal:

1. Direct state spending to communities adopting land use planning that incorporate best energy-efficiency practices and commit to repairing existing structures and roads
2. Enhance the mobility of the poor, the disabled, and the car-less
3. Stimulate full utility support for energy efficiency improvements, with a specific focus on the needs of the poor
4. Adopt innovative electricity rates to stimulate peak demand reduction
5. Develop a regional energy framework to decide how much energy efficiency or production to buy, which resources to buy, and how much to pay at open auctions
6. Design carbon neutrality into new neighborhood and building energy codes
7. Require aggressive energy-efficiency updates when a home is sold
8. Get industry commitment to implementing cost-effective energy efficiency projects
9. Increase energy efficiency of local government and public school buildings by 50% by 2012, thence zero net energy use by 2020
10. Assess carbon fees and offer carbon rebates to stimulate purchase of more efficient motor vehicles and homes

Examples abound of what we can do if we unleash not the marketplace (been there, done that) but the collective will of the community. Here are a few snapshots:

1. A citizen-led effort in Gallup seeks to power the entire city with solar. Gallup is surrounded by state trust and tribal trust lands where acres of solar photovoltaics (PVs) – the kind that take no water – can be sited. Can we help achieve this vision?
2. A grade school in Portales will soon be built that uses energy twice as efficiently as is typically built. Can we expect to see all schools similarly built and retrofit?
3. Carbon-neutral neighborhoods in the heart and edge of Taos are proposed by big-hearted Taoseños. Can we help hasten the day when our neighborhoods can take the steps to become carbon-neutral?
4. Dine Care's solid analysis of Desert Rock alternatives points to renewably powered homes on the Navajo reservation as one answer. Can we honor that promise?
5. Climate change education in Silver City and Las Cruces will be offered this spring. Can we turn this awareness into action?
6. Belen is parlaying a State grant and a federal loan into a solar city hall and solar electricity for all other city facilities. Can we ensure

that all New Mexico municipalities turn toward renewables for their electric needs?

7. Car- and bike-sharing programs in Albuquerque, coupled with bus and train transit, offer many Duke City residents the chance to travel without resorting their own vehicles. Can we design more car-free alternatives?
8. Solar cells to process wastewater, pump water, and electrify city-owned buildings are proposed by the City of Santa Fe. A nonprofit proposes to offer a way to sign up for renewably generated electricity. Can we see our way clear to making Santa Fe carbon-neutral on electricity?
9. Las Cruces' new city hall will join the NMSU campus in providing electricity for cars courtesy of PV arrays. Can we offer solar power to plug-in hybrids as a municipal service?
10. Over 100,000 compact fluorescent lights provided by PNM have been distributed by the Sierra Club through Albuquerque and Santa Fe schools, churches, and community groups. South Africa managed to change out all its light bulbs in four years. Can we do the same?

The answer to all these questions, of course, is yes we can.

For more information, contact Chapter Conservation Chair Ken Hughes (505/474-0550, b1family@comcast.net).

Mora County at Crossroads in Confronting Oil and Gas Threat



Mora County has been sitting fallow for many years. Now it is time to plant the fields – with seeds of solar, seeds of wind power, and the agricultural seeds that can rejuvenate the county. The incoming federal government's stance on green energy will undoubtedly help Mora County move toward our agricultural success. All it will take is some seed money and opportunity to put the land and the people back into production. We have the land, the sun, and the wind on our side.

There is the ongoing concern about jobs in Mora County. Today, more than ever, it is apparent that the county's agricultural core can remain intact with local food production and the focus on green energy production. When Mora County was the breadbasket of New Mexico, the people on the land understood how to grow their fields, produce their gardens, manage their livestock, and find their markets. Today it is just a matter of time before the land teems with crops and green energy production. This is all the more reason to understand and hold tight to the wealth we have in our land and water.

Oil and gas development threats descended a year ago, when KHL Inc. approached private landowners to lease mineral rights. KHL promises untold riches, and maintains staff in the area to grab up anyone who can be swayed. At a recent meeting to revise the County's Development Guidance System (DGS), KHL representatives heard loud opposition to their plans from the people present. Hispanic and Anglo residents alike spoke pointedly to strengthening the DGS, which is the law of Mora County.

The County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, written in conjunction with the DGS in 1993-1994, protects the unique qualities of Mora County – “the interconnectedness between our water, our land and our culture.” The crafters of these documents wrote “a long-range guide for growth, land use and development decisions in the County.” They stipulated that any revisions to the documents were intended as incremental, not substantial. A shift that would tip the County from agricultural to industrial would decry the intent of the laws of Mora County. Mora County's soul shines on every page of these documents and was intended only to be strengthened, not eroded, as we move into the heart of the 21st century.

The State of New Mexico's Taxation and Revenue Department was forcing upon Mora County its power to withdraw the grazing exemption from all landowners with 47 acres or fewer. Unless challenged in court, Mora County landowners would have found themselves losing their land due to the increased property taxes forcing them off their family homesteads. But due to some unknown powers that be, Secretary Homans and Rick Silva announced on the Frank Splendoria radio program in December that “proposed regulations are to come out next Quarter that will vest,

as is currently the case, the decision authority with the County Assessor. Angela Romero, Mora County Assessor, is currently allowing the grazing valuation on the small tracts (less than 47 acres) and will continue to do so with the blessing of Tax and Revenue!”

The County's consulting group for the DGS revision, Sites Southwest, is under the impression that the State of New Mexico has power to require Mora County to comply with the State's direction for subdivisions. Wishful thinking this might be on the part of the State, but Mora County is an island unto itself regarding its County laws. Even the State Engineer is figuratively claiming himself the top mayor of the New Mexico's acequias. But under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, the acequias, a 400-year-old irrigation system implemented by the Spanish, are free to allocate water rights exempt from government mandate. An ongoing attempt to instate a water master in Mora County by the State Engineer was met this summer by a consolidated voice opposing this action. The power to take over Mora County's water by the State will have to be exerted time and time again. But more than likely, the people of Mora County will show the State just how determined we are to assert our freedoms.

Attorney Bruce Frederick, of New Mexico Environmental Law Center, represents Drilling Mora County, a grassroots group dedicated to protecting Mora County from the adverse impacts of oil and gas exploration. In two key papers he presented to the Mora County Commissioners this summer, Frederick showed the County the real “tooth” of the DGS. (For copies of these documents, email drillingmoracounty@gmail.com.) On both private and state trust lands, Frederick confirmed Mora County government's legal authority to enforce compliance to the DGS for all mineral extraction in the County. This ultimately requires that any business in Mora County must be agricultural in nature in order to do business here. While it does not say “no” to oil and gas development, it puts the onus on industry to prove they can comply with the laws of Mora County. Oil and gas development has yet to challenge the DGS process for permitting.

State Commissioner Pat Lyons of the New Mexico State Land Office auctioned off 13,000 acres of pristine wilderness between Ocate and Wagon Mound this autumn. The land was auctioned off for pennies on the dollar for oil and gas developers; much of it went to KHL Inc. While the proceeds fund schools and other social programs, it is a moral crime to do battle between Nature and our children's education. It is time to change not only this duality, but also the absolute power the State Commissioner holds in the raping of the environment while garnering money to fund our children's education.

Fields of food? Or acres of gas wells?

If oil and gas development is permitted, Mora County's fertile land, abundant water, and clean air will be devastated. At left is the author's summer crop of millet, oat, wheat, amaranth, and field peas. At right is what such a field could look like if KHL is allowed to start drilling – a multi-acre gas well site in Paradox, Utah. At a time when New Mexico needs to become more sustainable in terms of food and clean energy production, highly speculative petroleum exploration makes no sense. (Photos by Kathleen Dudley)

In a county rich with abundant water and fertile land, residents are fighting to protect and preserve our clean drinking water, our agricultural way-of-life, and the clean air and health of our animals and families. We want the freedom to pass down the land to the next generation so they too can live in a “special place” and live by the wealth of their land. The pressure is on, however, from industry, the State of New Mexico, and all others who value monetary wealth over wealth of land and quality of life. We believe, though, as Martin Luther King, Jr. said years ago, that “the arc of history is long, but it bends towards justice.”

For more information, contact Kathleen Dudley of Drilling Mora County (drillingmoracounty@gmail.com) or visit <http://drillingmoracounty.blogspot.com>.

—Kathleen Dudley

Santa Fe County Adopts O&G Ordinance

On December 9, the Santa Fe County Commission voted to adopt a new oil and gas ordinance. The ordinance was the culmination of a nearly two-year-long battle in which thousands of local residents rallied to protect the fragile Galisteo Basin from highly speculative hydrocarbon exploration.

Under the massive new ordinance, oil and gas companies will be required to conduct a number of studies on how exploration and production would impact wildlife and water sources. In addition, they would have to pay for capital improvements before embarking on any exploration. Other restrictions as to high-sensitivity areas, setbacks, and drilling technologies are also in place.

The ordinance goes into effect February 27, 2009, when the County's drilling moratorium expires. For more information, visit www.santafecounty.org or www.drilling.santafe.org.

—Ellen Cavalli



PAJARITO GROUP NEWS

Pajarito Group Directory

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

Executive Committee

Chair: Ilse Bleck
ibleck@yahoo.com 505/662-2368

Vice-Chair, Secretary:
Jody Benson 505/662-4782

Treasurer: David Gemeinhart
ddgem@losalamos.com 505/672-6267

Amy Galbraith
pajaritosierra@gmail.com 505/662-3849

Nona Girardi
nonamg@aol.com 505/661-8576

Michael Di Rosa
mdd@stanfordalumni.org 505/663-0648

Mark Jones
jonesmm1@comcast.net 505/662-9443

Committee Chairs

Conservation: Michael Di Rosa
mdd@stanfordalumni.org 505/663-0648

Environmental Education: Pauline Wilder
xxmpxx@gmail.com 505/662-7768

Global Warming: Charles Keller
alfonso@cybermesa.com 505/662-7915

Grazing, National Forests, Wetlands,
Wilderness: David Gemeinhart
ddgem@losalamos.com 505/672-6267

Newsletter Editor, Publicity, Sprawl,
Endangered Species/Wildlife:
Jody Benson 505/662-4782

Outings, Parks/Refuges, Membership Co-Chair:
Ilse Bleck
ibleck@yahoo.com 505/662-2368

Political, Cool Cities, Membership Co-Chair:
Mark Jones
jonesmm1@comcast.net 505/662-9443

Webmeister: Amy Galbraith
pajaritosierra@gmail.com 505/662-3849

Environmental Project Grants

Listen: You have the opportunity to get funded in order to actually generate one of your great ideas about saving the environment. The Rio Grande Chapter has been bequeathed money for grants (up to \$20,000) for energizing volunteers to work on projects directed at protecting the NM environment from global climate change. The Pajarito Group stands a good chance of winning one or even two grants, especially if we put our creative, inspirational, and intellectual energies together. A project may be a cooperative effort with other local environmental organizations (i.e., PEEC, LASE), as long as our group has a leading role. (Funds may not be used for political activity, lobbying, or membership activities.)

Do you have ideas? If so, (1) go to our website to read the solicitation (<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/pajarito/mainpaj.asp>), (2) prepare an outline of your proposal, (and if possible, a rough draft of a project solicitation), and (3) join our brainstorming session in the Upstairs Meeting Room at Mesa Public Library on January 7 at 7:00 p.m. This is exciting,

New Mexico Addresses Climate Change

Effects of global warming are of particular concern to New Mexicans. Drought will be exacerbated by global warming producing less precipitation, but even if precipitation levels remain the same, the Western snowpack that renews our surface water will diminish.

Fortunately, New Mexico is moving toward curbing global warming. In 2005, Governor Richardson signed Executive Order 05-033 (1) requiring the creation of a New Mexico greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions inventory to chart GHG reduction, (2) establishing the New Mexico Climate Change Advisory Group (CCAG), and (3) mandating studies on the potential effects of climate change on New Mexico. (See www.nmenv.state.nm.us/ for the report, "Potential Effects of Climate Change on New Mexico.")

So how does the State create an effective, publicly palatable, and economically sensible policy? The "Climate Change Action Plan" gives 69 policy recommendations, which, if implemented, would lower New Mexico GHG emissions by 35% by 2020 while creating net economic savings of over \$2 billion. An Implementation Update in August 2007 indicated that 42 of these recommendations were being implemented by both legislation and executive action.

In February 2007, New Mexico joined with Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington in the Western Climate Initiative (WCI), an agreement to reduce GHG emissions, participate in a cap-and-trade program, and establish an "emissions ledger" in

which GHG emitters report their emissions.

In addition, WCI is committed to setting a regional goal for GHG reduction and developing a market-based regional cap-and-trade program to cap the amount of emitted GHG. Over-polluters must offset emissions by purchasing credits from lesser-polluters (whose lower emissions are now a tradable commodity). The buyer is charged for polluting; the seller is rewarded for reducing emissions. The incentive, therefore, is to discover how to cheaply reduce emissions, thus achieving the necessary pollution-reduction at the lowest possible cost to society.

In September 2008, WCI released recommendations for a regional cap-and-trade program. Governor Richardson established a task force to turn these suggestions into legislation for the 2009 Session.

Despite our far-sighted governor and legislature, much remains to be done. (Ironically, because of conservation, State oil-and-gas royalties have decreased, thereby creating a budget shortfall that will impact funding this conservation legislation.) Nonetheless, many of the investments in conservation would more than pay for themselves over time; all are essential if we are to build on our progress. The State's encouragement of renewable energy, enhanced by a cap-and-trade program, will mesh with the Obama administration's stated goal of decreasing reliance on oil and coal, and should be a source of good jobs in New Mexico for many years.

We can be proud of the actions our State has taken. Let's encourage the administration and legislators to continue the good work they have started.

—Mark Jones

Meetings

Wednesday, January 7, 7:00 p.m. • Upstairs Meeting Rooms, Mesa Public Library

Brainstorming! Bring your outlines and proposals for this great opportunity to get funding for projects that energize volunteers to work on protecting the environment from global warming. You have ideas. Bring them on! We'll brainstorm to decide which to forward for funding, then work together to develop the grants. (See our webpage for the solicitation.)

Wednesday, February 4, 7:00 p.m. • Upstairs Meeting Rooms, Mesa Public Library

Bob Brister, Interregional Outreach Coordinator for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
"Wild Utah: America's Redrock Wilderness" is a multimedia slideshow documenting citizen efforts to designate public lands in southern Utah's spectacular canyon country as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. This 15-minute journey through redrock splendor invigorates and motivates viewers to participate in the movement to protect these unique lands. This inspirational and informational event is a must-see for people wishing to become personally involved to make the difference in this tremendous American public lands conservation effort.

New ExCom Member

Nona Girardi, inspired by her success in working on a political campaign, transferred that energy into becoming one of the planners and decision makers for our Group. With her background in humanitarian efforts and with her contacts in various areas of New Mexico, she brings a unique perspective and intelligence to the ExCom.

Outings

Sunday, February 1 • SFNF Trail 137 hike or snowshoe – Along the east fork of the Jemez River from Jemez Falls to McCauley warm springs (or to Battleship Rock with shuttle). This is an easy hike or moderate snowshoe (depending on conditions). Mark Jones (505/662-9443, jonesmm1@comcast.net).

Saturday, February 7 • Strenuous snowshoe to Cerro Grande and beyond – Michael Di Rosa (505/667-0095 work, 505/663-0648 home).

Saturday, March 21 • Strenuous hike in Caja del Rio – About 10 miles RT, 1000' gain. Some rugged off-trail sections. Michael Di Rosa (505/667-0095 work, 505/663-0648 home).

New Webmeister

Amy Galbraith is our new webmeister. She brings energy and expertise to our webpage at the same time that the Sierra Club redesigns its national website. Amy also solicits photos of local Sierra outings and stories of your experiences.

This is *our* website for shared experience and inspiration. You can contact her at pajaritosierra@gmail.com. In the meantime, go to our page (<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/pajarito/mainpaj.asp>) to see not only volunteer opportunities and activities, but also the new Seven-Bump-Mesa masthead.

We also welcome Amy as a new member of our ExCom.

Club Mobilizes to Stop Toxic Coal Waste Dumping

Due to the failure of government agencies to enforce environmental laws throughout the life cycle of coal (from mining to burning to disposal of the voluminous wastes produced from burning), coal has enjoyed major advantages over other sources of power generation. Fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, and scrubber sludge (collectively known as coal combustion wastes or CCW), generated when coal is burned and resulting emissions are controlled, constitutes the largest industrial waste stream in the United States. CCW is less regulated than household trash. Its disposal in unlined pits, lagoons, quarries, and wetlands has polluted ecosystems and drinking water supplies throughout America with toxic salts, heavy metals, radioactivity, and other contaminants.

Increasingly over the past three decades, power plants have backhauled their CCW to coal mines to be dumped “out of site – out of mind.” One of the oldest and largest “minefilling” operations in America is in northwestern New Mexico, where 40-50 million tons of CCW from Public Service Company of New Mexico’s (PNM) San Juan Power Plant have been dumped in more than 20 unlined pits in the nearby San Juan Mine since the late 1970s. This has polluted groundwaters in the shallow alluvial aquifer feeding the Shumway Arroyo with levels of sulfate exceeding 45,000 mg/L, total dissolved solids exceeding 80,000 mg/L, and heavy metals and other trace elements such as lead, boron, selenium, cadmium, and arsenic exceeding drinking water standards often many times over. A previously healthy ranching community has been badly hurt by this pollution, resulting in lawsuits

and many families selling out to PNM due to ruined water. One family, the Hunts, lost their sheep herd but refuse to leave the Shumway valley.

The Sierra Club and Environmental Integrity Project believe that the pollution of the Shumway Arroyo and downstream waters of the San Juan River must stop. Federal laws such as the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA), Clean Water Act (CWA), and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) do not allow coal-mining operations to have unregulated toxic discharges from discreet point sources (under CWA), cause “material damage to the offsite hydrologic balance” (under SMCRA), or cause “imminent and substantial endangerment to health and the environment” (under RCRA).

If you would like to learn more about the mine dumping and how to get involved in our efforts to stop it, please contact Richard Barish (505/232-3013), Norma McCallan (505/471-0005), or one of our local contacts (see Steering Committee contact information).

—Jeff Stant

Above: Coal combustion waste from the San Juan Power Plant. (Photo by Dan Lorimier)



Shumway Arroyo used to be a normally dry arroyo. The heavy vegetation indicates it has become a perennial stream fed by seepage of toxic water from the coal combustion waste. (Photo by Dan Lorimier)

Steering Committee

Art Jaquez, Co-Chair

505/360-0176 • artjaquez2@yahoo.com

Nick Cullander, Co-Chair

505/334-0935 • ncullander@hotmail.com

Gordon Glass, Air Quality, Outings

505/564-4460 • agglass@earthlink.net

TAOS BRANCH NEWS

Volunteers Wanted

The Taos presence continues to develop and is in need of members to step forward to be part our leadership core. We are looking to fill positions on the board as well as committee chairs. We anticipate the amount of time required will be minimal, and as our membership base solidifies in the Taos region, these leadership positions will play key roles in the future of the group and our community. Please contact Scott Estep (575/770-7969, wetmtn@rmi.net) for more information.

Contact List

Eric Patterson, Taos contact and Director of Rios de Taos Water Sentinels • 575/776-2833, eepatt@gmail.com

Anna Walters, email alert list • annaainsworth@kitcarson.net

William Brown, The Climate Project • 575/758-8008, nmglobalwarming@yahoo.com, www.nmglobalwarming.org

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



NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

GROUP CHAIR

John Buchser

I would like to thank the volunteers of the Northern Group for all their activism during the last year. Many of us helped with electing Obama and other endorsed candidates. New Mexico is now in a position of having a full house of environmentally aware folks in DC, an event that is truly wonderful.

The 60-day legislative session begins at noon on January 20. The Sierra Club is pursuing three environmentally friendly bills. The first is to protect our surface water through designation of a protected area near our streams and lakes. The next bill is a request for a 'report card.' A few years back, the state passed a bill to protect farmers from loss of water rights when they employ water-conserving measures. The bill did not ask the state to report on the effect of this bill, and we think they should. The third of our trio of bills is a 'green building' initiative. The legislature funds many buildings that do not directly fall under the controls of the executive branch, which has already placed requirements on making many buildings green. We think that all construction funded by the state should be taking advantage of energy saving measures.

Check out page two for contact information for Judith Bunney, our legislative coordinator, if you would like to help.

At present, the January and February 2009 membership meetings are yet to be determined. If you would like to receive an email alert once the meetings are set, please email [John Buchser \(jbuchser@comcast.net\)](mailto:jbuchser@comcast.net) and he will put you on his list.

You can also go to the website: riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe

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

Group Executive Committee: Tuesday, January 6, 7 PM
Group Conservation Committee: Tuesday, February 3, 7 PM
Tuesday, January 27, 7 PM

Northern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club
1807 Second Street, Unit #45, Santa Fe, NM 87505
505 · 983 · 2703 ♦ website <http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/>

NORTHERN NEW MEXICO GROUP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- WEBMASTER for Rio Grande Chapter** – Experienced web person to oversee chapter website and ensure it is attractive and informative. **Norma McCallan** (nmccallan@mindspring.com) / **Steve Markowitz** (stephenmarkowitz@gmail.com)
- Sierra Club Publicity** – Getting out information about events and speakers and writing short ads for KSFR and local newspapers (a team of 2 to 3 people) **Kia Mudge** (474-6697, kiamudge@hotmail.com)
- Cool Cities/Cool Biz** – Work with Santa Fe City officials and Santa Fe businesses, neighborhoods and schools to promote clean and affordable energy. **David Van Winkle** (820-1006, david@vw77.com) <http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/>
- Santa Fe River Clean-Up** – Assist in monthly cleanups of our section of the river. Also need coordinators and leaders of the monthly cleanups. **Kathleen Davis** (438-0357, kdav40@aol.com)
- Membership Data Entry** – on the HELEN database updating membership and volunteer entries. Can be done at home. **Donna Michalski** (473-3734, dmichalski@comcast.net)
- Survey of Members** – Help our Communications team implement a survey to determine if we are adequately communicating with members and how to do it more effectively. **Brendan Miller** (490-2680, bmiller59@comcast.net)
- Forest & Public Lands Issues** – Work on various issues affecting public lands, including the ongoing Forest Travel Management Plan that will designate roads that are open to motorized traffic, upcoming Forest Management Plan, BLM's new Management Plan in process and designation of Sabinosa WSA as Wilderness. **Tom Gorman** (438-3032) or **Norma McCallan** (471-0005)
- Tabling** – Man a table at an event for 2-4 hours, handing out literature, membership applications and sometimes selling Sierra Club merchandise. Will be paired with an experienced volunteer. **Norma McCallan**
- Outings** – New hike leaders (simple training provided), assistance in exploring possible non-Sierra Club site internet posting of future hikes, and compilation of data from previous sign-up sheets for email notification of upcoming hikes. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844, oruch@lanl.gov) or **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354, bsperlich@cybermesa.com)
- Sierra Club Office** – Man Santa Fe office, 1807 Second Avenue, Suite 45, 2 to 4 hours per week (answer phones, sort mail, other minor routine office tasks). Training provided. **Jo Ann Lucas** (466-6691, joannlucas@comcast.net)

CONSERVATION CHAIR

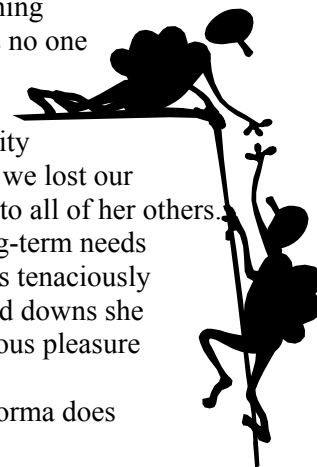
Dexter Coolidge

With the New Year, it is time for us all to stop and recognize the unsung hero of the Northern Group. Without Norma McCallan we would be a pale shadow of the organization we are. I am struck by that, at this moment, because twice in the last few weeks we needed to be better informed about issues that arose, one related to water for the Navajo Reservation, the other to the Continental Divide Trail. Norma provided us with a wealth of background, connections to other organizations, and a broad perspective, reminding us of our most basic goals.

But Norma is far more than that. She, more than anyone, has been the guiding spirit behind the Outings Program. For years she led it directly, and, more recently, she has been the ExCom liaison to it. It is always Norma who steps into the breach when something important might not get done. When there was no one to get the last edition of the Hiking Book started, it was Norma who got it going. This provided a service for the entire community and saved our major source of revenue. When we lost our Forest Chair, Norma added this responsibility to all of her others.

Even more, Norma keeps an eye on our long-term needs and opportunities as an organization and works tenaciously to address them. And through all of the ups and downs she is extraordinarily good-natured and a tremendous pleasure to work with.

I, for one, am enormously grateful for all Norma does for us.



All meetings, outings, and activities are FREE and open to the public unless otherwise indicated.

♦ ♦ NORTHERN NEW MEXICO GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS ♦ ♦

Chair – John Buchser * ‡
Vice-Chair – Norma McCallan * ‡
Secretary – Jean Watts *
Treasurer – Anne Stauffer
Office – Joann Lucas
Book Distributors – Keith Grover
Joe Lewis
Book Mailer – Gail Bryant
Chapter Rep – Dexter Coolidge *
Membership – Alice Cox
Newsletter – Kay Carlson
Sierra Distribution – Marcia Rodda
Outings – Norbert Sperlich
Tobin Oruch
Political Committee – Susan Martin
Phone Answerer – Bebs Taylor
Publicity – Kia Mudge 474-6697 and Mary Thomson 982-5486
Social Cohesion – Jean Watts *
Las Vegas contact – Betty Quick
Taos Branch – Scott Estep

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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 – Leader, David Van Winkle ‡ david@vw77.com 820-1006
Cool Biz – Mark Walztoni * mark@leadershipchanges.com 603-5810
Eco Footprints – Brian Skeele brianvida@nm.net 984-1739
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 ‡ rogpette@aol.com 983-7559
Brendan Miller * bmiller59@comcast.net 490-2680
Carol Raymond * Carol@SFSR.com 989-8600, ext 27 (w)
* Northern Group Executive Committee ‡ Core Conservation Committee



NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

NORTHERN GROUP OUTINGS

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Sat Sun January


- 3 **Moderate X-Country Ski** (Sandias hike if poor snow, dogs okay). **Page Press** (946-0169)
- 4 **Moderate Hike** to Buckman Mesa, 5 miles, 1100' gain. Dogs okay, but dry hike, so bring water. **John Varner** (795-5948)
- 10 **Moderate/Strenuous Snowshoe** Calaveras and Cebolla Canyon areas of Jemez, 8 miles, 100' gain. **Michael Di Rosa** (667-0095/663-0648)
- 11 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike or Snowshoe**, call to vote/see, dogs okay. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844 before 8 PM)
- Thursday, January 15 – **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Dogs okay. Call for details. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 17 **Moderate Hike, Snowshoe or X-Country Ski**, depending on snow conditions. Frijoles Cyn Overlook, 2-3 mi. **John Varner** (795-5948)
- 17 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** locally, bring binocs. **Ron Duffy** (466-6398)
- 17 **Santa Fe River Cleanup** **Kathleen Davis** (438-0357, kdav40@aol.com) *See inset article for details.*
- 18 **Tour** of SF County Thornton Ranch Open Space, in rolling terrain of Galisteo Basin w/local historian Bill Baxter. Visit site of Kennedy RR station, where AT&SF tracks intersected the NM Central line and take a peek at Petroglyph Hill. Meet at office or meet Bill at the church in Galisteo. Dogs okay, 4-5 miles. **Norma McCallan** (471-0005)
- 18 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike or Snowshoe**, call to vote/see, dogs okay. **Royal Drews** (699-8713)
- Thursday, January 22 – **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Dogs okay. Call for details. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 24 **Beginner's Snowshoe Clinic** near Santa Fe ski basin. Rent shoes and poles, come out and play in the snow for a couple of hours! Gear and technique tips will be shared. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- 24 **Moderate X-Country Ski** Brazos area (?). **Alan Shapiro** (424-9242)
- 25 **Moderate Hike** La Bajada area, ±8 miles RT, 600' gain. Mostly off trail, rough sections, dogs okay. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- Thursday, January 29 – **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Dogs okay. Call for details. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 31 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** to Red Mesa west of Bernalillo, 6-7 miles, 1300' gain, off trail, dogs okay. **Bogdan Mihaila** (661-4184)



Sat Sun March

- 1 **Moderate Hike** along Petaca Point segment of the West Rim Trail, overlooking the Grande Gorge. Marvelous views, minimal elevation gain, 7.5 miles RT. Dogs okay. **Norma McCallan** (471-0005)
- 1 **Strenuous Snowshoe** Call for details. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- Thursday, March 5 **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Call for details. Dogs okay. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 7 **Easy/Moderate Hike** in Tsankawi area (Bandelier). No dogs. **Page Press** (946-0169)
- 8 **Strenuous Hike** to Stone Lions (Bandelier). 13 miles RT, 3100' gain. **Cynthia Good** (699-2717)
- Thursday, March 12 **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Call for details. Dogs okay. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 14 **Moderate Loop Hike** to Picacho and Atalaya. ±9 miles RT, 1800' gain. Dogs okay. **Bogdan Mihaila** (661-4184)
- 15 **Moderate Snowshoe** Dogs okay. **Royal Drews** (699-8713)
- 15 **Strenuous Hike** in Caja del Rio. Call for details. Dogs okay. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- Thursday, March 19 **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Call for details. Dogs okay. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 21 **Easy Birdwatch Walk**, locally. Bring binocs. **Ron Duffy** (466-6398)
- 21 **Santa Fe River Cleanup** 9-11 AM. **Paige Grant** (982-5180, paigeanna@comcast.net). *See inset article for details.*
- 21 **Strenuous Hike** in Caja del Rio. ±10 miles RT, 1000' gain. Rugged offtrail sections. **Michael Di Rosa** (667-0095 work, 663-0648 home)
- 22 **Easy/Moderate Hike** on Falls Trail (Bandelier). 5 miles RT, 700' gain. **Victor Atyas** (438-9434)
- Thursday, March 26 **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Call for details. Dogs okay. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 28 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** through Abiquiú red rocks and white slickrock of Ghost Ranch's Kitchen Mesa. Awesome views. 8 miles RT, 1500' gain. All offtrail with minor scrambling. Dogs okay. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844, call before 8 PM)
- 29 **Easy/Moderate Hike** in Villanueva State Park. 2.5 mile loop, 400' gain. Dogs okay. Spectacular views of Pecos Valley and surrounding mountains. On way back, stop at great restaurant – La Risa Café. **John Varner** (795-5948)
- 29 **Strenuous Snowshoe** Call for details. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)

Sat Sun February

- 1 **Moderate Snowshoe**. Call for details. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- Thursday, February 5 **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Dogs okay. Call for details. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 7 **Moderate X-Country Ski** in Amole Canyon (near Penasco). 6-7 miles RT. Dogs okay. **Page Press** (946-0169)
- 7 **Strenuous Snowshoe** to Cerro Grande and beyond. **Michael Di Rosa** (667-0095 work, 663-0648 home)
- 8 **Moderate Hike** into Dome Wilderness (Sanchez Falls and Picacho Canyon overlook). Some steep offtrail sections. Dogs okay. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- Thursday, February 12 **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Dogs okay. Call for details. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 
- 14 **Singles Snowshoe** – Single on Valentine's Day? Bring another single friend and enjoy meeting new friends on an easy snowshoe in the Santa Fe Mountains. Call hike leader for information on rentals, etc. Possible after-hike get-together. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- 14 **Strenuous Snowshoe** probably up Raven's Ridge or Big Tesuque. 2000' gain, dogs okay. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844, call before 8 PM)
- 15 **Moderate Bandelier Hike** to rim of Alamo Canyon. ±7 miles RT, 900' gain. **Royal Drews** (699-8713)
- Thursday, February 19 **Easy/Moderate Hike**
Dogs okay. Call for details. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 21 **Easy Birdwatch Walk**, locally. Bring binocs. **Ron Duffy** (466-6398)
- 21 **Santa Fe River Cleanup** 9-11 AM. **Kathleen Davis** (438-0357, kdav40@aol.com) *See inset article for details.*
- 21 **Easy Loop Hike** in Cerrillos Hills Historic Park, viewing old mines and enjoying far vistas. 4.5 miles RT, 363' gain. Dogs okay on leash. Meet in CHHP parking lot, or carpool from Santa Fe. **Norma McCallan** (471-0005).
- 21 **Moderate X-Country Ski** Hopewell Lake area. **Alan Shapiro** (424-9242)
- 22 **Moderate Hike** in La Bajada area. ±7 miles RT, 800' gain. Mostly offtrail, some steep, rough sections. Dogs okay. **Bogdan Mihaila** (661-4184)
- 28 **Moderate Loop Hike** in Apache Canyon. 6.5 miles RT, 800' gain. Dogs okay. **John Varner** (795-5948)



SANTA FE RIVER CLEANUP AND VEGETATION MAINTENANCE

Saturdays – 9 to 11 AM – January 17 • February 21 • March 21

Help keep our river looking great! Park at Lower Alto Street north end of Closson. Bring work boots, gloves and drinking water. Be sure to connect with appropriate contact prior to cleanup date. **Kathleen Davis** (438-0357, kdav40@aol.com)

PLEASE ALWAYS CALL THE OUTINGS LEADER PRIOR TO A HIKE FOR CONFIRMATION AND DETAILS.

All outings are open to the public and free unless otherwise noted.

For changes and updates in the hike schedule, check our website:
<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/>

Outings Notes – Unless otherwise noted, outings leave from Sierra office, 1807 Second Street, Unit #45. Turn into the driveway at the entrance of Cloud Cliff Bakery, go past the bakery to the next building on the left. It has trees, benches and sculptures in the front yard. Parking is beyond the building on the left. Meet near the benches. Although the signs in back say that parking is restricted, that doesn't apply at night and on weekends. Carpooling is encouraged. It is routine that each rider pays the driver 10 cents/mile, rounded down to nearest dollar (7.5 cents/mile when 100+ miles and 3+ riders). Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking boots or shoes and clothing suitable for the weather. Leader reserves the right to turn away anyone whose equipment or experience appears unsuitable. Leader may alter destination of hike or cancel trip due to weather, other unfavorable conditions, or insufficient number of participants. Unaccompanied minors need written permission from parents or guardians to participate—ask leader for form. Dogs permitted only if so noted in write up. To participate you will need to sign a liability waiver at meeting site.



City Council Passes Climate Resolution

At its October 20th meeting, the Albuquerque City Council passed a Resolution supporting the Mayor's Climate Action Task Force, launched last June to formulate recommendations for reducing Albuquerque's carbon footprint. The Resolution, introduced by Councilors Rey Garduño and Isaac Benton, recognized that New Mexico has thus far experienced an average of 30% more warming than the United States as a whole, and is projected to experience a 6 to 12 degree increase in average temperatures over the next 50 to 100 years, more extreme heat waves, more flooding and water shortages, according to the New Mexico Environment Department's report, "Potential Effects of Climate Change on New Mexico" (available at http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/cc/Potential_Effects_Climate_Change_NM.pdf). It also noted predictions by Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph E. Stiglitz that climate change will most adversely affect low-income communities that are least able to cope with such impacts.

Sierra Club City Government Team leader Gary McFarland and Conservation Organizer Shrayas Jatkar spoke at the meeting in support of the Resolution, in which the Council formally recognized the urgency of stabilizing the climate and the role that the City of Albuquerque can play in this endeavor. Central Group leaders spearheaded a phone calling and emailing effort to several Councilors, leading to a 7-0 vote in support of the Resolution encouraging the Mayor's Climate Action Task Force to review and comment on the baseline City-wide carbon inventory that is expected to be completed in 2009 and to set aggressive targets for greenhouse gas reductions. In addition, the Resolution urged the Task Force to consider the impact of its recommendations on low-income communities in order to ensure that they do not increase the economic burden on those communities.

Central Group Directory

Executive Committee

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David Ther, *Treasurer, Outings Chair*

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The Executive Committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., at the Sierra Club office, 142 Truman NE in Albuquerque

Outings

Sunday, January 18, 2009: Continental Divide Trail

Taking advantage of cool winter days, we'll walk part of the Continental Divide trail in this out-and-back hike. Be prepared for great vistas and some diversions off trail. Walking at a moderate pace we'll cover 7 to 9 miles with a few hundred feet of elevation gain. Driving distance is 145 miles round-trip. Bring lunch, liquid and layers and meet at 8:30 AM in Smith's parking lot (Carlisle and Menaul) for carpooling. For more info, contact Carol Chamberland at (505) 341-1027.

Saturday, February 28, 2009: Ojito Wilderness

Ojito Wilderness is a fun place to explore and this should be a good time of year to check it out. We'll go off-trail on Bernallito Mesa, 6 miles or so, moderate pace, some elevation gain, great views guaranteed. Bring lunch, liquids and layers and meet at Smith's parking lot, Carlisle and Menaul, 9:00 for carpooling. Driving distance 100 miles round trip. For more information call Carol Chamberland at 505 341-1027.

Desert Exploratory Hikes January 25, February 1, 15 and 22 (all on Sunday):

Come and explore some of New Mexico's beautiful desert landscapes in the cooler, drier seasons of

Fall, Winter, and early Spring. These hikes are not difficult, and are at a slow pace, but will require a sense of adventure on the part of participants. There will rarely be a trail and the route can be rocky and uneven at times. Some road tracks and game trails will be used, if available, and we will always try for the least difficult route that is evident. We may occasionally encounter dense growth and downed logs in canyon bottoms, though I will try my best to avoid this. Sometimes we scramble (easy climbing) over rock surfaces and walk narrow ledges, if this can be done safely. Typical hike length is between 6 and 10 miles and we may gain 500 to 1500ft. of elevation. Leader determines outing details and meeting time by previous Wednesday, if possible.

=====

Please contact leader for specifics no later than Thursday preceding scheduled hike date.

You may also request to be included on an E-mail list for receiving the same info., so you won't have to call. Meeting time will vary from 8:00 AM to 9:30AM. Meeting place will always be Smith's, Carlisle and Menaul. Both Sierra Club and Outdoor Adventures For Singles are invited for these outings

Leader: Tom Petencin, tompeten@msn.com, 271-9928

New Desert Rock Permit Review after Utah EAB Decision?

In November, the EPA's Environmental Appeals Board vacated a Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) Permit that had been granted by the EPA for a new 110 megawatt coal-fired generating unit at the existing Bonanza Power Plant in Utah. When it granted the permit, the EPA had concluded that carbon dioxide was not a pollutant "subject to regulation" under the Clean Air Act, and so it granted the power company, Deseret Power, a PSD permit containing no limits on CO₂ emissions. This was despite the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 2007 decision in *Massachusetts v. EPA* holding that CO₂ is an air pollutant within the meaning of the Clean Air Act. Using familiar Bush Administration reasoning, the EPA argued that it had always interpreted the term "subject to regulation" to mean that the pollutant was included in regulatory provisions requiring "actual control of emissions of that pollutant," which have not yet been promulgated, so that CO₂ was not covered by permitting requirements. The Sierra Club challenged the Permit, arguing that because the Clean Air Act requires monitoring and reporting of CO₂ emissions, CO₂ is a pollutant "subject to regulation" under the CAA and the EPA was therefore required to apply Best Available Control Technology (BACT) restrictions to Bonanza's CO₂ emissions.

The EAB did not completely adopt the Sierra Club's position, but it did send the Permit back to

Region 8 to reconsider whether or not to impose a CO₂ BACT limit in light of the EPA's discretion to interpret what constitutes a "pollutant subject to regulation" under the Clean Air Act. In addition, the EAB noted that whether PSD permits should include BACT limits on CO₂ emissions is "an issue of national scope," and accordingly it recommended that EPA reconsider its position as a matter of national policy, rather than just in the context of a single permitting proceeding.

The complete decision of the EAB can be found at http://yosemite.epa.gov/oa/EAB_Web_Docket.nsf/Closed+Dockets?OpenView.

This decision has raised the question whether the PSD Permit issued to the Desert Rock Energy Facility last July, which similarly contained no CO₂ restrictions, should be subject to the same review. The Central Group has written a letter to President-Elect Barack Obama, signed by dozens of Rio Grande Chapter volunteers, in which we have urged him to direct his new EPA Administrator (Lisa Jackson, head of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, as of press time) to reopen the Desert Rock PSD permit proceeding. New Mexico Attorney General Gary King has also suggested that the proceeding be reopened based on new ozone readings that suggest that the Bush EPA's determination that Desert Rock would not cause ozone level violations was wrong. In our letter, we urged that permits "for all proposed coal-fired plants that the Bush administration may have approved with inadequate attention to greenhouse gas impacts" should be considered equally invalid.

Outings

Be sure to call the outings leader and confirm in case there are any changes.

Thursday, January 1 • Turtleback Mountain outing led by Rick Anderson – Celebrate the New Year and the passing of the Old by climbing Turtleback in Truth or Consequences. Meet at the Forest Service Office for a 9:00 a.m. departure. This is a steep trail with small rocks and a great view, but a moderate hike. Bring your camera, snacks, water. Call Rick Anderson (612/518-5632) or Margot Wilson (575/744-5860) for more information.

Saturday, January 17 • Red House Mountain on the southern end of the Caballo Mountains, home of desert bighorn sheep – This moderate hike will also include a visit to petroglyphs. Meet at the Forest Service Office in Truth or Consequences for an 8:00 a.m. departure. Bring lunch, snacks, and your camera. Call Margot Wilson (575/744-5860) for more information.

Sunday, February 1 • Exploratory hike on BLM land in the Cuchillos north of Winston in the rolling hills around Riley Peak to Edwards Draw – Expect an easy to moderate hike but not much

trail as we navigate up arroyos and down ridges among the pinyons, junipers, and oaks. Round trip about 6 miles. Bring lunch and sturdy shoes and meet at the Black Range Forest Service office parking lot in T or C at 9:00 a.m. Call Mary Katherine Ray (575/772-5655).

Saturday, February 14 • Palomas Gap – Hike the 1880 road down into a giant's playground. Bring your four-wheel drives to ford the Rio Grande at Palomas and drive up toward the Gap. Bring lunch, your camera, stout boots, and snacks. We will leave and carpool from the Forest Service Office in Truth or Consequences at 8:00 a.m. sharp. Call Margot Wilson (575/744-5860).

Sunday, March 15 • Fra Cristobal Mountains – Don't miss this opportunity to hike in the Fra Cristobal Mountains on the Armendaris Ranch. This outing is a fund-raiser for the Southern Group of the Rio Grande Chapter. We will meet at the Ranch headquarters at 8:30 a.m. There will be numerous opportunities to view wildlife, so bring your camera and lunch. Call Margot Wilson (575/744-5860) for details.

Southern Group in Action!



The Southern Group has been busy in the great outdoors. Here are scenes from recent hikes.

Left: This group of hikers is still smiling after ascending 2,300 feet to Sid's Prong Saddle high above Railroad Canyon in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness, Gila National Forest. (Photo by Art Morganti)

Below: Two dozen hikers enjoyed the outing to Monticello Box and the Alamosa canyon on a pretty November day. The water is not only threatened by a proposed Beryllium mine nearby, but also by groundwater pumping from the San Augustin Plains (see related article on page 5). (Photo by Mary Katherine Ray)



Southern NM Group Directory

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Sierra Club Has New Office Down South!

The Rio Grande Chapter celebrated the opening of our new office in Las Cruces with an open house on December 16. Chapter leaders and the Southern Group ExCom welcomed members, city officials, and other environmental advocacy groups located nearby. Despite the busy time of year, the office was full of well-wishers enjoying snacks and good conversation. Please drop by the office at 300 N. Downtown Mall. It is at the corner of Las Cruces Ave. and the Downtown Mall on the 2nd floor.

—Dan Lorimier



View of the courtyard at the new office. (Photo by Dan Lorimier)



Excom Activists in the Spotlight

One of the El Paso Regional Group's biggest issues of 2008 has turned out to be the Bush administration's Border Wall. While we wait for the Supreme Court to rule on El Paso's challenge to Michael Chertoff's power to ignore dozens of environmental laws, **Bill Addington** has been busier than most fighting the "wall of hatred." His multi-day march along the border from McNary to El Paso got great media coverage and an invitation to several high-level strategy sessions concerning the wall. First was a Dec 2-3 meeting at El Paso's Camino Real Hotel hosted by the No Border Wall Coalition and attended by a half-dozen SC staffers including Southwest Regional Director Rob Smith. Following that conference, Bill and El Paso Environmental Justice Site staffer Mariana Chew joined national SC activists at the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge south of Tucson for strategic planning on the wall fight. Congratulations, Bill! Meanwhile, wall construction has reached downtown El Paso. Many local Sierrans view the wall as one last multi-billion-dollar-boondoggle of a gift from George Bush. We are sure that it will be torn down eventually. The question is when, and how much will that cost?

Turning El Paso into a green city takes more than lip service from the mayor and city council. Following his Al Gore training experience, Group Vice-chair **Gil Pinon** successfully guided a cool-cities ordinance through City Council. Realizing that good intentions are not enough, Gil is now testing the waters with the mayor and council for possible reformation of the mayoral environmental advisory board that disappeared during previous Mayor Joe Wardy's less-than-pristine administration. The old committee could not accomplish much with its business orientation and members like ASARCO's Lairy Johnson there to protect industry.

Funding the Sierra Club is becoming a very serious challenge at all levels: group, chapter, and national. We have already seen national's approach with much-criticized corporate partnerships like with Clorox. Structurally too, the club is shrinking to only four regions: North, South, East, and West. At the group level, most volunteers seem to have little time for issues, let alone fundraising. Busy biologist researcher **Liz Walsh**, who chairs the Wildlife and Endangered Species Committee of the national club, has just completed the paperwork for the El Paso Regional Group to join Albertson's Community Partners rebate program. This is an arrangement whereby non-profits can receive a small rebate from members' purchases. With a average monthly grocery bill of perhaps \$1000 for 441 households, even that small percentage has great potential for the group treasury!

Last spring a team from El Paso's Western Refinery gave an informative General Meeting program for the membership. Western had been recently formed when El Paso millionaire-philanthropist Paul Foster purchased the antiquated Chevron Refinery in south-central El Paso. In the post-program question and answer session several Sierrans questioned the veracity of a Western Refinery television commercial claiming that the only thing coming out of their smokestack was water vapor. The team admitted that claim was false and promised in front of everybody at the meeting to "pull" the ad. Over the summer several Sierrans began to report they had seen the ad on El Paso's public tv station, KCOS. Last month Excom member **Bob Geyer** began an investigation. After sources at Western denied that the spot was still being aired, Bob called the station, where the corporate advertising manager was very cooperative, admitting that they were still playing the offending commercial, and voluntarily taking it off the air. Bob wanted to know who was lying to whom. Another call to our contact at the refinery got more action: an employee went to the station and retrieved the offending tape. Sources at KCOS reportedly said that the station had decided to give the refinery some free air time and was playing the tape *gratis*. Western Refinery owner Foster is presently perhaps El Paso's most generous philanthropist, having given \$50 million last year for the creation of Texas Tech University's new medical school in south central El Paso. The University of Texas at El Paso has also been a recipient of generous gifts from Foster. Great work, Bob!

Congratulations to all El Paso Regional Group volunteers on your many accomplishments in 2008. Let's make 2009 even better!

Laurence Gibson

Selected Group Outings

Jan 15-19: Tanque Verde Ridge 4 day Backpack, Rincon Mountain

Place: Saguaro National Park, Rincon Mountains near Tucson, AZ

Class: Strenuous Elevation gain: 4900 feet

Leader: Rollin Wickenden rwickgila@aol.com

We will depart El Paso Thursday night and drive to a campsite near our trailhead. After checking in at the ranger station we will start our climb of the Tanque Verde Ridge, spending our first night at Juniper Basin backcountry campsite. On day 2, we will continue our climb of the ridge, passing Tanque Verde Peak and Cow Head Saddle, and continuing on to beautiful Manning Camp, where we will spend our second night on the trail. After a possible side trip to Mica Mountain, the high point of the range, we will start our long descent down the ridge back to the Juniper Basin campsite for our third night out. On day 4 we will continue down the ridge back to our vehicles and drive back to El Paso. Participants may have to carry water to the first campsite. This is a chance to hike a trail that our group has not hiked before in one of the nation's most recently designated National Parks.

Mar 16-21: Grand View/Tonto/Bright Angel Trail Loop Backpack

Place: Grand Canyon National Park

Class: Strenuous Length: 35 miles Elevation gain: 5240 feet

Leader: Rollin Wickenden rwickgila@aol.com

We will depart El Paso March 14 and drive via Silver City to Alpine Divide Campsite near Alpine to carcamp. After breakfast in Springerville, we will drive via Flagstaff to the South Rim. After checking trail conditions and having dinner at the Yavapai, we will carcamp at Mather. Monday we will set up a shuttle and begin our 6 day, 5 night backpack from Grand View Point. First we will hike down the steep Grand View Trail to Cottonwood Canyon, the site of our first campsite. Over the next few days we will circumnavigate immense Grapevine Canyon, spend a night at Lone Tree Canyon, a night at Bright Angel Campground, and our last night at Indian Gardens before making that last grind of 4.6 miles back to the South Rim. Per person cost of the Backcountry Permit and the campsite for one night is \$31. Participants should be experienced backpackers in good condition, ready to cover long miles with some exposure in a very dry environment on poorly maintained trails.

El Paso Group Directory

<http://texas.sierraclub.org/el Paso>

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Action Required: Protect Utah's Wilderness

"This is the most beautiful place on earth...The canyonlands. The slickrock desert. The red dust and the burnt cliffs and the lonely sky."

This is how Edward Abbey described the redrock wilderness areas of southern Utah in his book *Desert Solitaire*. However, the Bush administration sees these areas differently – as good places to “drill, baby, drill.” Even now as I’m writing this, in its last days, the Bush administration is working tirelessly to appease the oil and gas industry (no matter the cost to our national heritage of wild and untamed places), and plans to put in a last-minute push to open 92 parcels of wildlands – 100,000 acres around Desolation and Labyrinth Canyons – to unrestricted drilling.

By the time this *Sierran* goes to press, we will know whether the tracts were sold at auction on December 19, the last lease sale before President Bush leaves office in January.

But even if certain tracts were withdrawn, the fight to protect the redrock wilderness, as well as

other Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands around the nation, is likely to be an ongoing battle.

Scott Groene, Executive Director of Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), believes that the incoming Obama administration and the new Congress may provide “perhaps the best opportunity for wilderness protection in the past quarter century.” In order to protect southern Utah’s beautiful and unique wilderness areas, SUWA encourages the new Secretary of the Interior (expected to be Colorado Senator Ken Salazar) and staff at the BLM to review last-minute Bush administration decisions for legal violations; to reform the BLM (which manages more spectacular western public lands than any other federal agency but has been gutted by Bush appointees under pressure from anti-wilderness interests); and to reinstate the process that gives Wilderness Study Area protection to lands identified by the BLM as having wilderness character.

To find out more, and to get involved, please come to a presentation by Bob Brister, SUWA’s Inter-regional Outreach Coordinator. It is sponsored by the Pajarito Group and will be held at 7:00 p.m.,

February 4, at the Upstairs Meeting Rooms, Mesa Public Library, Los Alamos (see page 8 for more information). Meanwhile, check out the websites www.suwa.org and www.sierraclub.org, and the Pajarito Group’s webpage (<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/pajarito/mainpaj.asp>). Or, drive on up (carpool or drive a hybrid!) and see for yourself. This is our own backyard.

—Nona Girardi



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



A Will is a Way

Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering Sierra Club in your will. Your support will help others preserve the intricate balance of nature.

Contact
 Gift Planning Program
 (800) 932-4270
planned.giving@sierraclub.org

To Contribute to the *Rio Grande Sierran*

The *Rio Grande Sierran* is published six times a year – early January, March, May, July, September, and November – 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 *Rio Grande 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 *Rio Grande 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 masthead 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 as a source of more information, unless the contributor specifies otherwise.

Submissions must be received by the 10th of the month prior to publication. Editorial practices as developed and adopted by the Rio Grande Chapter will be used in production of the *Rio Grande Sierran*. Contents of the Group pages are the responsibility of the editor for that Group and any policies that are in place from that Group.

Nonmember subscriptions are \$10 per year. Send checks to Norma McCallan, 627 Camino don Emilio, Santa Fe, NM 87507. Please allow eight weeks for processing.

Extra copies are often available. Please contact the editor (see masthead, page 2) or the Group Chair in your area (see Group pages).



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OUTINGS

Selected Sierra Club Outings for January and February 2009

Thursday, January 1 • Turtleback Mountain hike, Truth or Consequences – Celebrate the New Year and passing of the Old. Moderate. Steep, rocky trail; great views. Rick Anderson (612/518-5632) or Margot Wilson (575/744-5860 – Southern Group).

Thursday, January 1 • Annual hangover hike, Franklin Mountains State Park – Easy. Liz Walsh (915/747-5421 – El Paso Group).

Thursday, January 1 • New Year's Day strenuous snowshoe trek, Santa Fe Ski Basin – Royal Drews (505/699-8713 – Northern Group).

Saturday, January 3 • Cross-country ski tour, Sandias – Hike if snow poor. Moderate. Dogs okay. Page Press (505/946-0169 – Northern Group).

Sunday, January 4 • Buckman Mesa hike – 5 miles, 1100' gain. Dogs okay. John Varner (505/795-5948 – Northern Group).

Saturday, January 10 • Calaveras & Cebolla Canyon areas of Jemez snowshoe trek – 8 miles, 100' gain. Moderate/strenuous. Michael Di Rosa (505/667-0095, 505/663-0648 – Pajarito Group).

Thursday-Monday, January 15-19 • Tanque Verde Ridge backpack, Rincon Mountains, Arizona – Strenuous 4-day backpack in one of the most recently designated National Parks, near Tucson. 4900' gain. Rollin Wickenden (rwickgila@aol.com – El Paso Group).

Saturday, January 17 • Red House Mountain hike, southern end of the Caballo Mountains – Moderate. Home of bighorn sheep. Visit to petroglyphs. Margot Wilson (575/744-5860 – Southern Group).

Saturday, January 17 • Frijoles Canyon Overlook outing – Moderate hike, snowshoe, or cross-country ski, depending on conditions. John Varner (505/795-5948 – Northern Group).

Sunday, January 18 • Santa Fe County Thornton Ranch Open Space tour with Bill Baxter, local historian – 4-5 miles. Easy. Explore the rolling terrain of Galisteo Basin, near Galisteo; take a peek at Petroglyph Hill. Dogs okay. Norma McCallan (505/471-0005 – Northern Group).

Sunday, January 18 • Continental Divide Trail hike – 7-9 miles, Moderate. 145-mile RT drive. Carol Chamberland (505/341-1027 – Central Group).

Saturday, January 24 • Beginners' Snowshoe Clinic, near Santa Fe Ski Basin – Rent shoes and poles, come out and play in the snow for a couple of hours. Gear and technique tips shared. Marcia Skillman (505/699-3008 – Northern Group).

Saturday, January 24 • Brazos area cross-country ski tour – Moderate. Alan Shapiro (505/424-9242 – Northern Group).

Sunday, January 25 • Desert exploratory hike – 6-10 miles. Moderate pace. Off-trail, sometimes rocky, on remote, little-visited public lands with unusual rock formations and scenic landscapes. Tom Petencin (505/271-9928 – Central Group).

Sunday, January 25 • La Bajada area hike – About 8 miles, 600' gain. Moderate. Mostly off-trail. Norbert Sperlich (505/474-4354 – Northern Group).

Saturday, January 31 • Red Mesa hike, east of Bernalillo, near San Ysidro – 6-7 miles, 1300' gain. Moderate/strenuous. Off-trail. Bogdan Mihaila (505/661-4484 – Northern Group).

Sunday, February 1 • Desert exploratory hike – See description of January 25 hike. Tom Petencin (505/271-9928 – Central Group).

Sunday, February 1 • Exploratory hike on BLM land in the Cuchillos, north of Winston – 5 miles. Easy/moderate. Some off-trail. In the grassland savannah, around Riley Peak to Edwards Draw. Mary Katherine Ray (575/772-5655 – Southern Group).

Sunday, February 1 • Forest Trail 137, Jemez Falls to McCauley warm springs (or to Battleship Rock, with shuttle) snowshoe tour – Easy hike or moderate snowshoe. Mark Jones (505/662-9443 – Pajarito Group).

Saturday, February 7 • Snowshoe to Cerro Grande and beyond – Strenuous. Michael Di Rosa (505/667-0095, 505/663-0648 – Pajarito Group).

Saturday, February 7 • Amole Canyon cross-country ski tour, near Peñasco – 6-7 miles. Moderate. Dogs okay. Page Press (505/946-0169 – Northern Group).

Sunday, February 8 • Dome Wilderness hike, to Sanchez Falls and Picacho Canyon overlook – Moderate. Some steep off-trail. Norbert Sperlich (505/474-4354 – Northern Group).

Saturday, February 14 • Palomas Gap 1880 road hike down to a giants' playground – Margot Wilson (575/744-2860 – Southern Group).

Saturday, February 14 • Santa Fe mountains singles snowshoe – Easy. Bring a friend, enjoy meeting new friends. Marcia Skillman (505/699-3008 – Northern Group).

Saturday, February 14 • Snowshoe up Ravens Ridge or Big Tesuque – 2000' gain. Strenuous. Dogs okay. Tobin Oruch (505/820-2844 – Northern Group).

Sunday, February 15 • Bandelier hike to rim of Alamo Canyon – 7 miles, 900' gain. Royal Drews (505/699-8713 – Northern Group).

Sunday, February 15 • Desert exploratory hike – See description of January 25 hike. Tom Petencin (505/271-9928 – Central Group).

Saturday, February 21 • Cerrillos Hills State Park loop hike – 4.5 miles, 363' gain. Easy. View old mines and far vistas. Dogs okay on leash. Norma McCallan (505/471-0005 – Northern Group).

Saturday, February 21 • Hopewell Lake area cross-country ski tour – Moderate. Alan Shapiro (505/424-9242 – Northern Group).

Sunday, February 22 • La Bajada area hike – 7 miles, 800' gain. Moderate. Mostly off-trail. Dogs okay. Bogdan Mihaila (505/661-4184 – Northern Group).

Sunday, February 22 • Desert exploratory hike – See description of January 25 hike. Tom Petencin (505/271-9928 – Central Group).

Saturday, February 28 • Apache Canyon loop hike – 6.5 miles, 800' gain. Moderate. John Varner (505/795-5948 – Northern Group).

Saturday, February 28 • Bernallito Mesa hike, Ojito Wilderness – 6 miles. Moderate. Off-trail, great views. Carol Chamberland (505/341-1027 – Central Group).

Sunday, March 1 • Hike on Petaca Point section of West Rim Trail – 7.5 miles, minimal elevation gain. Moderate. Overlooking Rio Grande Gorge, marvelous views. Norma McCallan (505/471-0005 – Northern Group).

Upcoming:

Sunday, March 15 • Fra Cristobal's Armendaris Ranch hike fundraiser for Southern Group – Margot Wilson (575/744-5860 – Southern Group).

Monday-Saturday, March 16-21 • Grand View Trail, Tonto Trail, Bright Angel Trail loop backpack, Grand Canyon National Park – 35 miles, 5240' gain. Moderate/strenuous. Experienced backpackers only. Rollin Wickenden (rwickgila@aol.com – El Paso Group).

Please check the appropriate Group page for additional information on these abridged outings, as well as for additional activities.

And please check the Chapter website (<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org>) for the latest information on all our outings. All mileages are round trips. Participants must sign a liability waiver.

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Support the Rio Grande Chapter and enrich your home's ambiance by ordering this or another of the seven striking prints offered only by the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club. These stunning 17-by-22-inch representations of some of our high desert's endangered raptors are numbered and signed by the artist, Richard Sloan, the world-renowned master wildlife painter. To see full-screen color pictures of the seven Sloan prints (Burrowing Owl, **Aplomado Falcon** shown here, American Kestrel, Spotted Owl, Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, and Golden Eagle) reserved as a thank-you for contributors to the Rio Grande Chapter, visit the Chapter's website (<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org>). A contribution of \$140 will be recognized with the delivery of your choice of a signed and numbered Sloan print, shipped flat and ready for framing. Contact Dan Lorimier (575/740-2927, daniel.lorimier@sierraclub.org) to make your donation and get a Richard Sloan print.

—Dan Lorimier

Aplomado Falcon

