

Rio Grande Sierran



NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

MAY/JUNE 2007

Fire Mirrors: Is Industrial-Level Solar Power on Its Way to NM?

In 212 B.C. the Romans attacked Syracuse from the sea. The story has it that the great scientist Archimedes was ready for them. Arranging the soldiers of Syracuse in a curved formation around the harbor, he had them catch the light of the sun in their specially formed, shiny shields. As each soldier redirected a sunbeam onto the sails of the enemy ship, the rigging burst into flames. Concentrating solar power was born.

by Ben Luce and
Eva Thaddeus

Here in New Mexico, with our great solar resource, we are the natural location for an electrical generating plant of the kind known as concentrating solar power, or CSP. Why a new coal plant? What about a large source of clean, renewable electricity in the Four Corners area instead? The Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club has made it a priority to get a concentrating solar plant underway in New Mexico by the year 2010.

We are not alone. Craig O'Hare, Special Assistant on Renewable Energy for the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, recently said, "All a coal plant or a nuclear plant does

is boil water, make steam, and spin a turbine. And what a convoluted way to do it when you can put giant magnifying glasses in the desert instead. We now have the most aggressive CSP-promoting policies in the country, and companies are knocking at our door offering to build a plant. I think we can make it happen in this state and become a hub for it."

Here are a few CSP facts: The Western Governors' Association, with technical assistance from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, recently estimated that New Mexico has 1,940 gigawatts (a gigawatt is the output of a large coal plant!) of developable CSP potential. It takes about 5 acres to produce a (continuous) megawatt of CSP (enough power for about 1,000 homes). From this one can calculate that a CSP plant about 3 by 5 miles in size would power the whole state.

Just what is CSP? There are actually several different versions of CSP technology under development today. The most widely deployed form uses long



This CSP plant near Barstow, CA has been providing enough clean power for several hundred thousand homes since the 1980s. (Photo by Department of Energy)

cylindrical parabolic mirrors (called solar troughs) to concentrate light onto a receiver tube to heat oil, which is then used to generate steam to run a turbine. A 354-megawatt trough plant has been operating successfully in the desert near Barstow, CA since the mid-1980s, and the first new trough plant in the

(continued on page 4)

Inside

Note from the Chair	3
Readership Survey Results	3
NM Legislative Summary	4
National Climate Change Legislation Overview	5
Mexican Wolf Update	6
Endangered Species Day "Our Climate, Our Future" Contest Winners	7
Valles Caldera Monitoring	7
Lincoln National Forest ORV Meetings	9
EAT Healthy America Act	15
Step It Up! Events	
Wrap-up	16
Selected Outings	16

Group & Branch News

Pajarito Group	8
Northern Group	10-11
Taos Branch	9
Four Corners Branch	9
Central Group	12
Southern Group	13
El Paso Group	14

Desert Rock Subsidy Bill Dies in Legislature

With the help of a lot of allies and activists we have defeated the Desert Rock \$85 million tax subsidy in the New Mexico legislature. I want to thank everyone who helped and made this work possible over the last two months, and I want to thank one amazing activist in particular: Elouise Brown, a wonderful, talented, dedicated powerhouse who came down from the part of the Navajo Nation where they want to build Desert Rock.

Elouise came down for the whole last 11 days of the legislature, and over the last days Dan Lorimier and I had the pleasure of basking in the glory as senators and representatives and their staff filed past and thanked Elouise (and the rest of us just because we were lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time). They were thanking her for coming, for alerting them to the

mixed feelings and the opposition within the community, for speaking for her community, and for giving them good concrete reasons for taking the anti-Desert Rock stand that they have taken.

We were told many times that if it were not for her hard work and the support from the rest of us, this bill would have sailed through early on in the session. Her family and her supporters have been here alongside her, and have been taking care of the protest site camp on the location of the proposed plant.

A few nights before the session ended, Elouise presented a beautiful painting that a Navajo activist, Alfred Bennet, brought to give to Senator John Pinto and Representative Ray Begaye, who both represent the area and have stood in opposition to this project.

(continued on page 5)



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



Rio Grande Chapter
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 25342
Albuquerque, NM 87125-5342

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RIO GRANDE CHAPTER DIRECTORY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Susan Martin, Chair & Council Delegate smartin31@comcast.net	988-5206
Norma McCallan, Vice-Chair nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005
Laurence Gibson, Secretary lgibson@utep.edu	915/594-7342
Tom Robey, Treasurer trobey@cybermesa.com	955-9578
Bill Addington, El Paso Group Rep. aguavida@valornet.com	915/369-2541
Ilse Bleck, Pajarito Group Rep. ibleck@yahoo.com	662-2368
John Buchser jbuchser@comcast.net	820-0201
Dexter Coolidge, Northern Group Rep. dextercoolidge@yahoo.com	988-1197
Jane L. Grider jane4u2@email2me.net	526-5620
Cliff Larsen clarsen1@ix.netcom.com	466-2128
Michal Mudd mudd_pi@mac.com	884-3315
Eva Thaddeus, Central Group Rep. evathad@nmia.com	266-9646
David Ther, Central Group Rep. grelbik@worldnet.att.net	260-1553
John Waugh, Southern Group Rep. cactoblast@hotmail.com	526-7116
Margot Wilson margotwilson40@hotmail.com	744-5860

CHAPTER OFFICE

Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club 143 Truman NE, Albuquerque, NM 87108 243-7767 • fax 243-7771 http://riogrande.sierraclub.org	
Dan Lorimier, Chapter Conservation Coordinator daniel.lorimier@sierraclub.org	243-7767 or 740-2927
Building Environmental Communities	
Carol Oldham, Regional Representative carol.oldham@sierraclub.org	243-7767
Building Bridges to the Outdoors	
Michael Casaus michael.casaus@sierrclub.org	243-7767

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
 915/594-7342
Northern Group 802 Early Street, Santa Fe, NM 87505
 983-2703
Pajarito Group P.O. Box 945, Los Alamos, NM 87544
Southern Group P.O. Box 735, Mesilla, NM 88046
Southwest Regional Office 202 E. McDowell Road #277,
 Phoenix, AZ 85004 • 602/254-9330 •
 fax 602/258-6533
Sierra Club National 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor,
 San Francisco, CA 94105 • 415/977-5500

Address Changes

To update your mailing address with the Sierra Club, please send an email to address.changes@sierraclub.org or call Membership Services at 415/977-5649.

CONSERVATION ISSUE CHAIRS

Conservation Chair	Ken Hughes	474-0550	b1family@comcast.net
Agriculture/CAFO	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@comcast.net
Air Quality	Doug Fraser	474-7615	fraser@thuntek.net
Energy – Biomass	Margot Wilson	744-5860	margotwilson40@hotmail.com
Energy – Efficiency	Gail Ryba	955-9578	gnryba@cybermesa.com
Energy – Wind & Solar	OPEN		
Forests	Margot Wilson	744-5860	margotwilson40@hotmail.com
Genetic Engineering	Jim Hannan	988-5760	jhannan505@aol.com
Global Warming	Eva Thaddeus	266-9646	evathad@nmia.com
Mining, Sand & Gravel	Cliff Larsen	466-2128	clarsen1@ix.netcom.com
Rangelands	OPEN		
State Lands	OPEN		
Trade	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Transportation	Ken Hughes	474-0550	b1family@comcast.net
Valles Caldera	Ilse Bleck	662-2368	ibleck@yahoo.com
Water	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@comcast.net
Wilderness	Mary Katherine Ray	772-5655	mkrscrim@kitcarson.net
Wildlife	Liz Walsh	915/747-5421	ewalsh@utep.edu
	Mary Katherine Ray	772-5655	mkrscrim@kitcarson.net

ACTIVISM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Elections	Jim Hannan	988-5760	jhannan505@aol.com
Environmental Justice	Juan Garza	915/565-2690	juan.garza@sierraclub.org
Finance Committee	Tom Robey	955-9578	trobey@cybermesa.com
Fundraising	Susan Martin	988-5206	smartin31@comcast.net
	Dexter Coolidge	988-1197	dextercoolidge@yahoo.com
	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Legal	Tom Robey	955-9578	trobey@cybermesa.com
Listserves	Dexter Coolidge	988-1197	dextercoolidge@yahoo.com
Membership	OPEN		
Nominating	Ken Hughes	474-0550	b1family@comcast.net
Personnel	Tom Robey	955-9578	trobey@cybermesa.com
Political Committee	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@comcast.net
Legislative	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Political Compliance Officer	OPEN		
Sierra Student Coalition	Richard Barish	232-3013	rdbarish@aol.com
Standing Rules	Geoffrey Brown	983-7349	PricelessPubs@comcast.net
Webmaster			

OUTINGS CHAIRS

Outings	Ilse Bleck	662-2368	ibleck@yahoo.com
	Norma McCallan	471-0005	nmccallan@mindspring.com
Inner City Outings	Ted Mertig	915/852-3011	tmertig@earthlink.net

COALITIONS/WORKING GROUPS IN WHICH THE CHAPTER PARTICIPATES

Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy	Jim Hannan	988-5760	jhannan505@aol.com
	Dexter Coolidge (Alt.)	988-1197	dextercoolidge@yahoo.com
New Mexico Wilderness Coalition	OPEN		
Otero Mesa Coalition	Margot Wilson	744-5860	margotwilson40@hotmail.com
River Otter Working Group	Roger Peterson	983-7559	rogpete@aol.com
Rio Puerco Management Committee	Barbara Johnson	466-4935	lunah3@comcast.net
Sustainable Energy Coalition	Gail Ryba	955-9578	gnryba@cybermesa.com
Valles Caldera Coalition	Ilse Bleck	662-2368	ibleck@yahoo.com
Valle Vidal Coalition	Dexter Coolidge	988-1197	dextercoolidge@yahoo.com
	Norma McCallan (Alt.)	471-0005	nmccallan@mindspring.com

NATIONAL & REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Southwest Rivers	John Buchser	820-0201	jbuchser@comcast.net
Council of Club Leaders Delegate	Susan Martin	988-5206	smartin31@comcast.net
	Norma McCallan (Alt.)	471-0005	nmccallan@mindspring.com

SIERRAN (SEE ALSO PAGE 15)

Editorial Board Chair	Norma McCallan	471-0005	nmccallan@mindspring.com
Managing Editor	Marty Peale	983-0841	mpeale@newmexico.com
Editor	Ellen Cavalli	579-0016	ellen@fireballindustries.com

All numbers are area code 505 unless otherwise specified.

Political Contact Information

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

Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne
1849 C Street
Washington, DC 20240
202/208-3100 • fax 202/452-5124
dirk_kempthorne@ios.doi.gov

New Mexico

U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman
703 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510
202/224-5521 • fax 202/224-2852
senator_bingaman@bingaman.senate.gov

119 East Marcy, Suite 101
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505/988-6647

U.S. Senator Pete Domenici
328 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510
202/224-6621 • fax 202/224-6621
senator_domenici@domenici.senate.gov

1205 South Federal Place, Suite 104
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505/988-6511

U.S. Representative Tom Udall
1414 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-6190 • fax 202/226-1331
www.house.gov/tomodall/

811 St. Michaels Drive, Suite 104
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505/984-8950 • fax 505/986-5047

U.S. Representative Heather Wilson
318 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-6316 • fax 202/225-4975
www.house.gov/wilson/

20 First Plaza NW, Suite 603
Albuquerque, NM 87102
505/346-6781 • fax 505/346-6723

U.S. Representative Steve Pearce
1408 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-2365 • fax 202/225-9599

400 North Telshore, Suite E
Las Cruces, NM 88011
505/522-2219 • fax 505/522-3099

New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson
State Capitol, Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505/827-3000
www.governor.state.nm.us/contact.php

New Mexico State Legislature
Legislative Council Service • 505/986-4600

New Mexico State Senators
Senate Chief Clerk's Office • 505/986-4714

New Mexico State Representatives
House Chief Clerk's Office • 505/986-4751

Texas – El Paso

U.S. Representative Silvestre Reyes
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202/225-4831 • fax 202/225-2016
www.house.gov/reyes/

A Note from the Chair

Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet. That's the reason for the Sierra Club and its efforts. Sometimes Club activists get so wrapped up in their issue campaigns that they don't get a chance to explore *or* enjoy the environment that inspired them to join the Club. As the weather become more hospitable, this is a perfect time to get out into the Land of Enchantment and the El Paso area.



Explore

My introduction to the Sierra Club in New Mexico was through day hikes in Northern New Mexico and a backpack trip to the Grand Canyon. Exploring the Tesuque River or Santa Fe Baldy was a great way to meet new people and see local areas I might not attempt to visit on my own. Our five regional Groups are sponsoring many wonderful outings in May and June for all skill levels and ages – there's something for everybody. For instance, the El Paso Group is conducting a Memorial Day weekend backpack in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness of Gila National Forest. The Central Group will explore the Zuni-Acoma Trail in the El Malpais National Monument. The Northern Group will take hikers along Red Dot Trail to White Rock Canyon. The Pajarito Group is sponsoring a Summer Solstice hike and potluck dinner. And the Southern Group is hosting a Creatures of the Night car camp. Our great bunch of volunteer leaders makes these outings fun, educational, and memorable – many thanks to all of you! (See the Group pages, page 16, and the Chapter's website, <http://riogrande.sierraclub.org>, for a list of all outings.)

Enjoy

At this time of the year, farmers' markets are brimming with local produce. Think globally but shop locally. Enjoy the bounty of our neighborhood farms – from organic salad greens and home-grown garlic to our famous chiles – while meeting

new people, reducing fossil-fuel consumption, and supporting local sustainable agriculture. (Visit www.farmersmarketsnm.org or call 983-4400 for information on farmers' markets near you.)

Enjoy other Chapter events. One of my treasured friendships is with a woman I met at the Northern Group party during my first year in Santa Fe. "Walking the blocks" in neighborhoods to talk to voters on behalf of Sierra Club-endorsed candidates is also a fine way to meet new people and share time with

interested and committed volunteers.

... and Protect

After exploring and enjoying the natural beauty of El Paso and New Mexico, you'll feel recharged to protect it. Exchange your incandescent bulbs for compact fluorescent lights, as many people did during the Step It Up! events in Santa Fe and Albuquerque (see pages 12 and 16.) Speak out in support of renewable solar energy (see page 1), climate change legislation (see page 5), and Mexican wolves (see page 6). Everything you do makes a difference!

—Susan Martin

Rio Grande Chapter Quarterly Meetings

The Chapter's Conservation and Executive Committee meetings will be held Friday, June 8, in conjunction with the Leadership Development Project on June 8-10. Location to be determined. Contact Conservation Chair Ken Hughes or Chapter Chair Susan Martin (see masthead, page 2) for more information. Carpooling is encouraged.

Readership Survey Results

In the November/December 2006 issue of the *Sierran*, there was a questionnaire about which articles and features of the bimonthly paper our readers particularly liked. We also asked questions about frequency of publishing, use of the website, and pass-along readership. We also looked for general suggestions through a single open-ended question.

We concluded that while our overall readership is probably low (a lot of competition for your time), the range of current articles is probably okay. As you would expect, conservation projects had a high appeal. We might increase readership through a more compelling table of contents, inclusion of "what to do" and "who to contact" in articles, and adding a summary at the head of each article. We also received some good suggestions about topics that we should include in future issues.

Thanks to those who took the time to answer these questions. There were a number of very useful suggestions. As promised, we sent our highly prized Sierra Club T-shirts to five lucky participants. The winners were Guy Dahms (Albuquerque), Tom Herrera (Wagon Mound), Chet Warwick (T or C), Byrnina Jones (Elephant Butte), and Daphne Vaughn (Las Cruces).

—Cliff Larsen

Farewell to Sarah Lundstrum

We bid farewell to our New Mexico Conservation Organizer Sarah Lundstrum. Sarah has taken a position as a Campaign Coordinator with the Montana Wilderness Alliance, in Kalispell. Sarah has worked in the Club's Albuquerque office since March of 2004 on our BEC and voter education campaigns. Last year Sarah helped to guide us to success in the campaign to protect the Valle Vidal from coal-bed methane drilling. And in last fall's voter education effort, Sarah outdid herself, winning praise and recognition from veteran campaigners for her outstanding work to involve many new volunteers in our outreach to voters.

While we are sad to have to say goodbye, we know that Sarah is happy to be able to focus on saving Montana wilderness. We wish Sarah every success.

And here's hoping the Flathead Valley has an Ultimate Frisbee team. If not, I have no doubt that Sarah will be organizing one.

—Lawson Legate

Environmental Successes at 2007 NM Legislative Session

New Mexico's environment and the Rio Grande Chapter had a banner year at the 2007 legislative session. Our legislative priorities of global climate change, the Land, Wildlife & Clean Energy Act (LWCE), the Surface Owners Protection Act (SOPA), plus defensive action against bad bills, had a very high rate of success in passing or being blocked during the tortuous legislative process.

If you're a participant in the Chapter's legislative email activist network, thank you for helping make this year's legislative session so successful! Once again, your activism has made the difference with New Mexico's leaders. During this session, the activist network focused mainly on stopping an \$85 million tax break for the proposed Desert Rock "dirty" coal power plant project. With your calls and emails to legislators, we were able to stop both the House bill (HB178) and the Senate bill (SB431) before they reached either floor. You also responded to alerts supporting the Surface Owners Protection Act (HB827), and now we have the strongest surface owners' protections in the country! Finally, a last-minute alert asked you to call the Governor with a request for him to veto legislative appropriations for studies of the Gila Basin that were clearly focused on damming that unfettered river. Again, your calls made the difference. The Governor listened and vetoed that \$945,000 proposed expenditure. Clearly, your activism is a powerful force in New Mexico's legislative process.

Join the Email Activist Network

To join the Chapter's powerful email activist network, contact Dan Lorimier (740-2927, daniel.lorimier@sierraclub.org). To view the complete 2007 Legislative Report, visit <http://riogrande.sierraclub.org>.

Responses to global climate change – our highest priority – fared especially well. Our legislative lobbying team worked to support several bills that have now been signed into law by the Governor or are awaiting his expected signature. These include the following:

- SB418, Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards, sets new goals for NM of 15% renewable consumption by 2015 and 20% by 2020.
- SB994, Coal Electric Facility Gross Receipts, encourages best available technology for pollution controls on existing plants and best available technology for new coal-fired plants.
- HB188, Renewable Energy Transmission Authority Act, facilitates wind projects in eastern New Mexico.
- SB463, Renewable Energy Production Tax Credits, holds both Green Building and Renewable Energy Tax Credit language.

Additionally, these three self-explanatory bills were passed:

- HB610, Solar Collector Construction Standards
- HB611, Solar Rights Act Definitions & Installations
- SB489, Requiring Biodiesel in Motor Vehicle Diesel Fuels

Two bills the Rio Grande Chapter has worked on for several sessions are LWCE, which once again this year was stopped in the Senate Finance Committee, and SOPA, which after years of negotiation between stakeholders including the New Mexico Oil & Gas Association (NMOGA), finally resulted in law.

On the defensive front, we were successful in stopping two very negative bills:

- An \$85 million tax subsidy from the state to encourage the Desert Rock power plant project (HB178 and SB431) failed due to our efforts (Carol Oldham, Andy Bessler, Robert Tohe, and the Chapter lobbying team), plus the core group Dooda Desert Rock and Conservation Voters New Mexico (CVNM).



The Rio Grande Chapter lobbying team (left to right): Mark Jones, Dan Lorimier, and Judith Bunney.

- SJM10, Nuclear Energy & Uranium Resources, was an attempt to reintroduce the disastrous uranium mining and milling industry back into New Mexico.

The Chapter's effectiveness was greatly strengthened by the volunteer registered lobbying efforts of Judith Bunney and Mark Jones. Both spent many, many days working for our Chapter's goals at the Roundhouse and found it a rewarding experience. Another strength the Chapter brought to bear during this year's session was our legislative email activist network. Our 11 action alerts resulted in significant and successful pressure on legislators to vote for the environment throughout the 60-day session.

With this session's important environmental legislative record to build on, we can continue to forward our Chapter goals, as expressed in state policy, from a much stronger position. Political momentum is growing and our hopes for a sustainable, environmentally responsible New Mexico are closer to being realized.

For more information, contact Chapter Conservation Coordinator Dan Lorimier (740-2927, daniel.lorimier@sierraclub.org).

—Dan Lorimier

Concentrating Solar Power *(continued from page 1)*

United States, a 64-megawatt plant called Solar One, will begin operation in Nevada soon. A new variation on troughs called linear fresnel CSP breaks the curved parabolic mirror down into many long flat segments, each tilted at a different angle, to lower the cost (see www.solarheatpower.com). Another approach uses many separate mirrors to concentrate light onto a central receiver on a tower (power tower), which heats molten salt to provide heat to generate steam. Spain has constructed a new power tower (PS-10) and also some new trough plants. Still yet another approach is called "solar dishes," and uses circular parabolic mirrors to heat air to drive a stirring engine. California has contracted for two very large solar dish plants.

What about providing power at night, or when it's cloudy? A big advantage of steam-based CSP (troughs and towers) is that the solar heat can be stored very effectively for nighttime or cloudy days, for example, as hot molten salt or simply as pressurized hot water. A 1983 study found that the latter is in fact *the* cheapest way to store energy, bar none.

So what about the cost? It is commonly stated by utilities and other solar foot-draggers that CSP costs too much, but evidence exists that bringing the cost down to a competitive level is only a matter of economies of scale and technological refinement. A 2003 Department of Energy study, for example,

found that the cost of power from troughs or towers would become competitive if only a few thousand megawatts are installed (see 2003 Assessment of Parabolic Trough and Power Tower Solar Technology Cost and Performance Forecast, and the many other good surveys of CSP at www.solarpaces.org/csp_docs.htm). Even the old trough plants in California, which add up to about one smaller-size coal plant, are estimated to produce power in the 15-20 cents/kWh range. While this is about three times higher than what the cost ultimately needs to be, it isn't bad for a first-of-its-kind project, and the estimates didn't take into account the expected 50 years remaining in the lifetime of the plant!

So what's holding us back? American electric utilities are notoriously conservative. As a result, we have very cheap but very dirty power. The typical utility simply does not want to be first. The situation is changing, however. As mentioned above, both Nevada and California, as well as Spain, are finally moving forward. New Mexico, for its part, has adopted several new policies: 1) a special new production tax credit for CSP, which is almost three times larger than NM's existing wind power tax credit; 2) a doubling of the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard, now 20% by 2020; 3) a gross receipts and compensating tax exemption for solar thermal plants worth up to \$60 million; and 4) a Renewable

Energy Transmission Authority that can help build any needed power lines and help develop markets for the power.

Getting significant CSP going in New Mexico will still not be easy. While PNM has now included a 50-megawatt CSP plant in its list of possible new resources, the company is also aggressively pursuing clean coal development. New Mexico also has a relatively small rate base, so the ability of customers to easily pay for the initial development of CSP plants, and such that those plants could be developed to an economical scale, is very limited. Despite these obstacles, however, the new incentives go a long way towards closing the cost gap, and several CSP companies are working closely with NM utilities, the Public Regulation Commission, and advocacy groups to make CSP a viable alternative to coal or nuclear power plants.

Concentrating solar power is still not well known by the public. Rooftop solar-thermal and solar-electric systems are more visible and better understood. But CSP is the industrial-scale solar technology, the one that can offer a large-scale alternative to polluting power plants. Its day is coming – spread the word!

For more information, contact Ben Luce, Director of New Mexico Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy (986-1558, BenLuce@NMCCAE.org), or visit the Coalition's website (www.NMCCAE.org).

Take Our Message of Climate Action to Washington

We are at a tipping point on the issue of climate change. From the Supreme Court to the New Mexico legislature, our nation's decision-makers are confronting the climate change challenge. In Congress there is a flurry of activity but still insufficient commitment to take adequate action to halt climate change.

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court held that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are "air pollutants" and are within the Environmental Protection Agency's power to regulate as emissions from automobiles under the Clean Air Act. The ruling is a significant victory for the environment and adds new momentum for national climate change legislation.

On the state level, the 2007 New Mexico legislature passed 13 clean-energy bills and rejected an \$85 million tax subsidy for the proposed Desert Rock coal-fired power station. The clean-energy bills included a wide range of new incentives and programs for solar, wind, biomass power, biofuels, energy efficiency, and low-income energy policies. Most notably, the state's Renewable Energy Portfolios Standard, which was adopted in 2002 by the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission and codified into law in 2004 requiring investor owned utilities to provide 10% of their power from renewable sources by 2011, was increased to 15% by 2015, and 20% by 2020.

But action at the state level is not sufficient. The world must address its carbon emissions. The United States, of course, never ratified the Kyoto Convention and has been a major stumbling block to international progress. Congress needs to step up to the plate to implement a nationwide program to address climate change.

New Mexicans are in a unique position to lead the country on this issue. Senator Bingaman is the chairman and Senator Domenici is the ranking minority member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Our senators need to hear that New Mexicans are serious about addressing climate change at home, and that we want them to push for strong national legislation in Washington.

Currently six climate change bills are being discussed in Congress. Many environmental groups are calling the Sanders-Boxer Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act (S. 309) the gold standard. The bill would establish a long-term framework to gradually reduce global-warming emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Desert Rock *(continued from page 1)*

We all had a celebratory lunch together moments after the session ended, and Senator Pinto and his staff and Representative Begaye joined us.

The Sierra Club members in NM did a wonderful job of getting in touch with their legislators and expressing their opposition to this terrible tax bill. You let the folks at the Roundhouse know that there was no support for more of the status quo, and that it is time to think of the future and a better way to make money, make jobs, and make power.

Dooda Desert Rock will continue the fight for real economic development on the Navajo Nation and sustainable sources for jobs and power. "We look forward to working collaboratively with the Navajo Nation to promote renewable energy to bring clean, nonpolluting jobs to our people," said Hank Dixon, a spokesman for Dooda Desert Rock.

I hope the Sierra Club can continue to work with Elouise and her community on this issue and other issues there. I have made good friendships and forged strong bonds, and I hope to continue both the work

The Waxman Safe Climate Act (H.R. 1590) is considered the most aggressive and comprehensive legislation introduced so far in the House. It has the same emissions-reduction goal as the Sanders-Boxer bill and also requires standards for new technology, including clean car standards, a national renewable energy standard requiring at least 20% of retail electricity sold to come from renewable resources by 2020, and efficiency standards for electricity producers to help achieve end-user savings.

While the emissions-reduction target in the McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act (S. 280) is not as ambitious as the others, it does establish a model of capping emissions based on the successful acid-rain program signed into law by the first President Bush. The Act puts a cap on carbon pollution and lets the market set a price. The emissions allowed under the new cap would be divided into individual permits that represent the right to emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide. Permits that give a company the right to pollute take on financial value because the emissions cap restricts the total amount of pollution allowed. This highly flexible system allows companies working within the system to buy and sell permits. Yet, the main drawback to this bill is that it contains subsidies for nuclear power.

Senator Bingaman's proposed bill, which has not been introduced yet, started out as the least ambitious. His proposal, if it goes unchanged, will merely slow the growth of greenhouse-gas emissions, not reduce them, which is what is needed to mitigate the effects of more than a century of unchecked carbon emissions.

Bingaman's bill, as initially proposed, would establish an annual emissions cap based on targeted reductions in greenhouse-gas intensity (the ratio of greenhouse-gas emissions to economic output). The intensity reduction would be 2.6% per year beginning in 2012 through 2021, and increase to 3% per year beginning in 2022. This is the same logic that this Bush administration has used to claim progress on global warming while emissions have continued to rise. The proposal would not require any real reductions until after 2030.

The initial proposal also contains a cap-and-trade program similar to that in McCain-Lieberman's, but instead of letting the market set the price on carbon, the bill sets a maximum price on CO₂ permits at \$7/ton, increasing 5% each year with inflation.

and the friendships. We had many tireless volunteers (as well as the hard work of Dan, our chapter lobbyist) from the Sierra Club calling and lobbying and working very hard – Judith Bunney and her excellent work spring to mind immediately.

We fought the good fight against dirty power, king coal, the big guys, and global warming. And what's more, we won!

We also had a wonderful, strong coalition. Organizations that worked to stop the Desert Rock tax subsidy include Dooda Desert Rock, Sierra Club, Conservation Voters New Mexico, Dine Care, NM Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, San Juan Citizens Alliance, New Energy Economy, Environment New Mexico, New Mexico Conference of Churches, Interfaith Alliance for Environmental Stewardship, Climate Change Action Project, the League of Young Voters, and SAGE Council.

For more information, contact Carol Oldham (243-7767, carol.oldham@sierraclub.org).

—Carol Oldham

According to *New York Times* business columnist and economist David Leonhardt, the artificial cap on the price of carbon undermines the whole point of the cap-and-trade system. Put simply, industry would be able to pay to pollute. The cost to continue to pollute would have an artificially imposed ceiling, no matter the strength of the market's demand.

There is no doubt that Senator Bingaman has long been committed to controlling global warming. He has framed the proposed climate change bill so that the legislation will attract sufficient votes from senators like Pete Domenici to override a veto from President Bush. Senator Domenici has recently stated that he will not support any national legislation until India and China make similar commitments.

The danger of passing insufficiently protective legislation or, even worse, waiting for the United States to come to an international agreement with China and India, is clear. The threat of climate change is now a reality. Senator Bingaman and Senator Domenici need to sponsor and support a strong bill that will:

- Eliminate the greenhouse-gas emission intensity reduction and include a goal of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions economy-wide to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050;
- Remove the price cap on carbon;
- Exclude subsidies for old fossil-fuel technology and nuclear power; and
- Set clean car standards, energy-efficiency requirements, and a national renewable energy standard.

Finally, Senator Bingaman and Senator Domenici should be encouraged to hold public hearings about national legislation here in New Mexico. Please call, write, and email the senators (see political contact info, page 3).

—Kristin Casper and Adam Rankin
Students, UNM School of Law

Step It Up! Events *(continued from page 16)*

to celebrate her birthday with her and we had a great time!"

At the Santa Fe event, there were over 400 attendees; 1,500 bulbs were distributed to Santa Feans who came to the event, and 1,500 flyers (on recycled paper) were distributed to the crowd while people waited patiently in line. There were so many attendees waiting to try the bulbs we had that we ended up having to limit the number of bulbs per household to two after the first 700 were given out. The crowd was diverse and truly represented the community – there were rich and poor, Anglo, native, and Hispanic, healthy people and people who came on crutches, but all were thrilled to have the opportunity to come out and enjoy the beautiful day and learn more about solutions to the global-warming problem.

On the Santa Fe event we partnered with PNM (who bought one-third of the bulbs), the Interfaith Alliance for Environmental Stewardship, and the City of Santa Fe. Mayor Coss, Councilor Calvert, and others spoke, and two bands played. Jill St. Thomas was a star volunteer and organized this wonderful event practically by herself while I was distracted with the logistics of the Albuquerque event.

Both of these wonderful events could not have happened without all the fantastic volunteers who helped and who are too numerous to name – but thank you all for your hard work and efforts.

For more information, contact Carol Oldham (243-7767, carol.oldham@sierraclub.org).

—Carol Oldham

Wolves in the Crosshairs

Several years ago I put our two dogs out as I do first thing every morning. Unusually, they ran out barking like something was up. We live remotely just outside the current boundaries of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Area. Our upper fence, 150 yards from the house, is a national forest boundary.

I followed the dogs out to see what the matter was. It was then I saw what could only be two wolves just outside that fence. They were too big to be coyotes and had too much black on them. Hardly having time to register that they were wolves, I strode after the dogs calling them to get them back. The wolf pair lingered perhaps a tiny moment longer than coyotes might have, but when they saw me, they turned and fled. The dogs came back. I had just enough time to notice that the gait of a wolf differs from that of a coyote, too. They were gone so fast I wondered if I'd imagined it all. But several nights later I heard a howl that could have been nothing else. It was distant and only one howl, but I thought how wonderful to have that sound restored to these canyons where it has been absent for so long.

Today, Mexican wolf reintroduction is not going well. In February, the Catron County Commission passed an ordinance that essentially allows county personnel to kill wolves outright if federal agents fail to do the job. The wolves only have to show signs of habituation and have a high probability of causing not only physical but also psychological damage. This is against federal law and the Endangered Species Act, which the county cannot supersede. But it would seem that it is the intent in Catron County to exterminate wolves.

In March, the Grant County Commission passed a resolution that would require the government to compensate owners for wolf-killed livestock and pets. The resolution also demands compensation for the "emotional damage" some claim that living with wolves has

inflicted and lost hunting opportunity since wolves, according to some outfitters, are killing all the game.

When people live and work in a wild place, is it justified to have the mindset that there should be nothing to be wary of there? Cattle are often turned out alone into the wild to fend for themselves. A cow can die from many causes such as birthing problems, toxic weeds, bad weather, and disease, and sometimes the cause of death is never known. Wolf proponents have long argued that this disengaged form of cattle "management" results in wolves scavenging on cattle carcasses and it is this that leads them to killing cattle outright.

It is also safe to say, wolf problems get exaggerated. The dramatic story of a dog being attacked by a wolf right in front of a young girl was actually a hunting hound a fair distance away from the girl. This did not take place at their home, but at a remote cow camp where the family had been out hunting mountain lions. They knew wolves were in the area, yet the dogs had no kennels or any predator-proof place to stay and the people chose to stay there anyway. The dog survived the attack and is doing fine. An expensive horse was killed by wolves in the same area, but the owners had been absent for several days and had left it out in a corral where it could not escape, but predators could get in. Don't humans bear any responsibility?

Defenders of Wildlife has purchased dog kennels for those hunting dogs and will pay market value for any wolf-killed livestock. The owners are not required to shoulder any responsibility, yet there is much that people in wolf country can do to proactively deter wolves. Wolves don't like fladry, which are little plastic flags placed at intervals on a strand of fencing. Fladry works even better when combined with an electrically charged wire. A herder to look

after the stock, keep them together, and move them when predators are nearby makes sense. Surprisingly, guard animals like donkeys are effective, too. Switching to cattle with horns, which can better defend themselves, along with timing calving so it happens all at once also reduces predation of all kinds.

For everyone who recreates in wolf country, yelling or throwing stones is usually enough to send wolves running, but pepper spray works on wolves. It will also deter coyotes, feral dogs, bears, cougars, bison, and, I'm told even aggressive domestic bovines. (While hiking on public land, I actually have been charged by cows and placed in fear of my safety by that species.) People who live in cities take precautions every day to prevent predation of the human kind. Why should people who live in the woods be different with animal predation?

Are wolves over-running the forest? The reintroduction program had the original goal of over 100 Mexican wolves in the wild by now, with 18 breeding pairs. There are actually fewer than 60 wolves out there today, with only five breeding pairs in the whole of the recovery area in Arizona and New Mexico. Ten wolves have been shot by the government for killing cattle. The policy is three strikes and you're dead, whether or not the rancher took any proactive steps to prevent it. Twenty have died accidentally while being moved. Twenty-four have been permanently consigned to captivity. Two have amputated limbs from trap injuries. Dozens have been trapped and re-released with possible injuries and trauma, which could be part of the total that has just disappeared. Eighteen have been illegally shot and nine have been hit by cars. Humans are harder on wolves than the other way around.

It seems silly to suggest that this paltry number of wolves could be having any effect on game populations. Is it unsafe to be where wolves are? At the recent State Game Commission wolf "listening session," several people testified how much they enjoy hearing wolf howls and have no fear hiking in wolf country. Mexican wolves are the smallest subspecies and there has never been a single instance of an attack on a human.

In the northern Rockies where wolf reintroduction has been much more successful, benefits are being seen at all levels of the biotic community. Elk don't hang out so much in the lush river bottoms, so willows and aspen are coming back. Beavers find the new growth more hospitable and are returning along with songbirds that nest there. There are fewer coyotes and that has resulted in more foxes. The top predator has a cascading effect all down food chain. Wolves are not a mistake. It was their extermination that was wrong. The land needs wolves as much as it needs elk.

Because the wolves I saw were outside of the allowed boundary, they were captured and moved to the Arizona border. The canyons here have gone silent once more, but I still liked knowing those two wolves were out there somewhere and remembering that single vibrant moment when our paths crossed. In February, the male of the pair was convicted of killing his third cow and even though it wasn't where cows were supposed to be at the time, he was shot and killed by the Fish and Wildlife Service, leaving his mate of four years to go on alone. As I write, a permanent removal order has been issued for the entirety of another pack in the Gila Wilderness. By the time you read this, the number of breeding pairs will be down to four. The silence is spreading.

Please contact Governor Richardson (see contact info, page 3) and let him know that you support wolf reintroduction. Ask for the Governor to continue to support the wolf reintroduction program and to do all he can to insure that it is a success.

For more information, contact Wildlife Committee Co-Chair Mary Katherine Ray (see masthead, page 2).

—Mary Katherine Ray

Endangered Species Day: Fight Global Warming and Protect Wildlife

The second annual Endangered Species Day is scheduled for May 18. This year this special day is not only a celebration of America's commitment to protecting and recovering our nation's endangered species, but will also help highlight the devastating impacts that global warming is taking on wildlife.

If we are to protect wildlife around the world, we must take steps now to reduce our pollution by using energy more efficiently and switching to clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Our cars, power plants, homes, and offices can be made more efficient. Making our cars, sport-utility vehicles, and other light trucks go farther on a gallon of gas is the one step we can take to curb global warming. Our dietary choices also have tremendous environmental impacts. The recent UN FAO report states that a meat-based diet contributes more to global warming than all transportation modes.

Endangered Species Day provides an opportunity for schools, libraries, museums, agencies, businesses, and community groups to educate the public about the importance of protecting endangered species and highlight everyday actions that individuals and groups can take to help protect our nation's endangered species.

Here are some ways you can celebrate Endangered Species Day:

- Learn about endangered species in your area and the threats they face from global warming.
- Help educate your community about reducing personal contributions to global warming.
- Plan a field trip to a local park, zoo, aquarium, or endangered species habitat in your local area.
- Participate in an endangered species habitat protection or restoration project.

For more information, visit the Endangered Species Day website (www.stopextinction.org/endangeredspeciesday). To learn more about the impacts of global warming on wildlife and habitat, see www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/habitat. To organize a local event, contact Liz Walsh (915/584-1471, ewalsh@utep.edu).

—Liz Walsh



Mexican wolf. (Photo by USFWS)

“Our Climate, Our Future” Contest Winners Honored

On March 9, the second annual “Our Climate, Our Future” contest winners were honored at a ceremony in the Roundhouse rotunda. Students were asked to express what the climate means to them and how they would address the threat of global warming. The poster and essay contest was sponsored by Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Chapter’s Central Group, and New Energy Economy, Inc.

Students took copies of their posters and essays to their legislators before the afternoon ceremony. The posters were displayed in the rotunda, and winning writers read their essays aloud. One legislator, Lucky Varela, showed up with a certificate for his constituent, Asa Joseph Rubin, and said

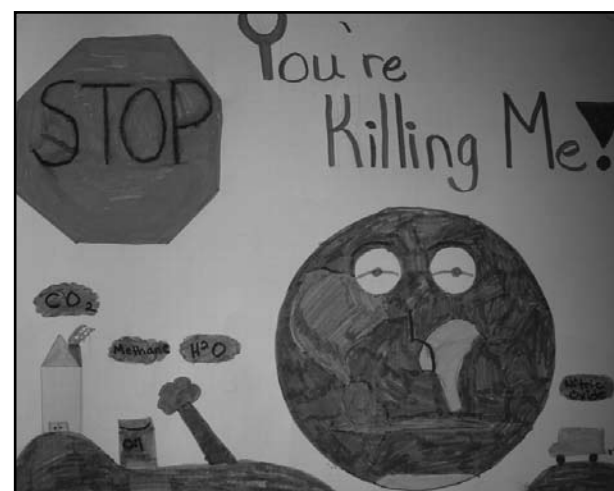
that he had been “very moved” by Asa’s essay.

There were 15 splendid winners from all over New Mexico. We only have room to reproduce some of the first-prize work here.

- First-prize poster for elementary school: Reyes Gallegos, Roswell
- First-prize poster for middle school: Paige Kempfski, Corrales
- First-prize essay for elementary school: Julia Wallis, Roswell
- First-prize essay for middle school: Caroline Carlson-Soloway, Santa Fe
- First-prize essay for secondary school: Justin Vigil, Albuquerque

—Eva Thaddeus

First-Prize Poster for Middle School: Paige Kempfski, Corrales



First-Prize Essay for Secondary School: Justin Vigil, Albuquerque

“Global Warming: How Can We Create a New Energy Future?”

One of the world’s biggest issues today isn’t about overpopulation, diminishing resources, or some rogue nation with powerful weapons; it’s an issue that involves us all and that we’re all contributing to. It is an issue that can destroy everything we know in unimaginable events sometime in the future if we don’t stop it now. That issue is global warming. And one of the ways we can stop it is by developing a new, clean energy future.

The first step to this new, clean future is to start getting everything possible that we can out of everything we use. Recycling is a good example of this. If everyone would recycle everything that they use, it could reduce as much as fifty percent of every household’s daily waste! Recycling can also reduce how many materials we have to take out of the environment and how many new products we have to make every year.

We all need to start making better choices energy-wise, and start conserving anything and everything we can. Just by wearing a sweater instead of lighting a fire or turning up the heater can reduce the gases that cause global warming and save you money at the same time!

The second step is to now develop new, clean technologies that further help to reduce harmful substances put into the atmosphere, and need very little power or fuel to work. And we already have some of these technologies, like solar panels, hydroelectricity, nuclear power, wind power, and various other technologies that use elements that are clean. But, we choose to keep on using technologies like fossil fuels that are a major cause of global warming. All we need to do now is to just make that change over to these new technologies, and we can reduce as much as 25% - 50% of all the substances that we put into the atmosphere!

And the last step, I believe, is to change how we use our technologies and materials to live. We can do this by changing what we use in our day-to-day lives. One way is by using materials that are easy to make into products with very little energy and that

can be reused, like the new shape-memory bioplastics starting to be developed by a few manufacturing companies worldwide. These plastics can reform into their original shape by being heated with a hairdryer, saving the process of recycling!

Another new clean technology we should all use is the new hybrid cars. This type of car is a car that uses both electricity and gas to power the car! This allows the car to get better gas mileage and has very little gases expelled. And the even better thing is that most car companies are starting to make them!

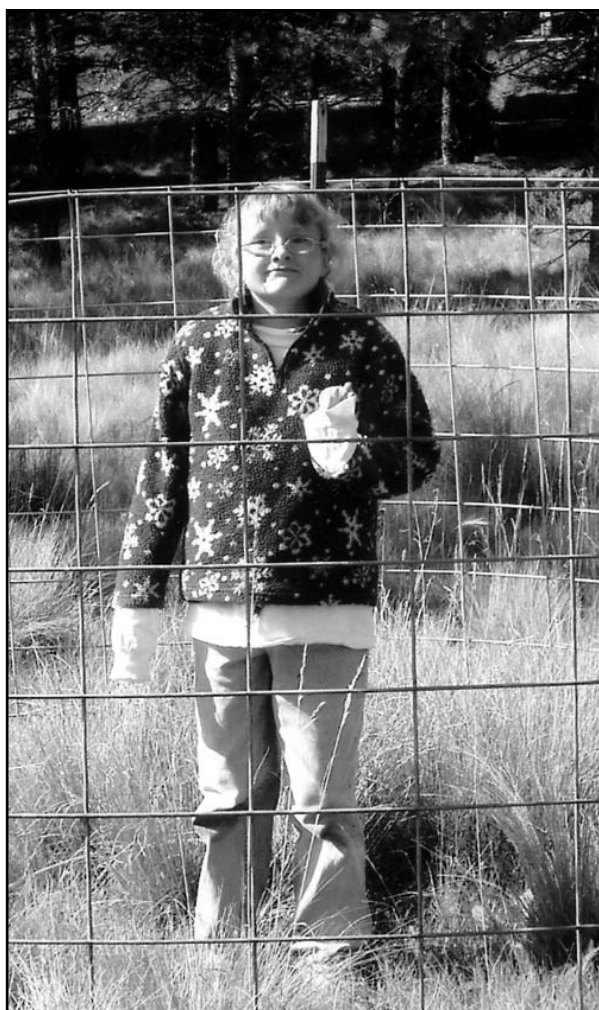
All together, global warming is a serious threat that everyone on this earth shares, and we all need to do something about it. Everyone is contributing to it with their economies, no matter how big or small they are. And to counter this growing threat, everyone needs to band together worldwide. We need to forget differences that for so long have kept us from working together and start to think about the future. We need to start protecting our ways of life from ourselves and our dirty technologies. And we need to start now! The longer we wait, the harder it will be. And if we wait too long, then we could lose our earth and everything we know, forever.

Volunteers of All Ages Can Help with Valles Caldera Monitoring

I spent two days in Valles Caldera National Preserve in northern New Mexico. It’s a very beautiful place that used to be a volcano. I was part of a team that was cutting grass as part of a biological study.

The Valles Caldera is one million-years old. It looks like a big bowl with grass in the middle surrounded by mountains covered by trees. It used to be a volcano but when it erupted, it made a big bowl. After many, many years, it became a ranch. In 2000, the owners of the ranch sold it to the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government decided to make it into a national preserve. It is managed by a group of people appointed by the President of the United States. The preserve is an experiment to see if cattle ranching can continue without harming wildlife.

Scientists are doing a study to see if cattle and elk grazing are hurting the plants of the Caldera. My mom works for Audubon and was going to help and she said I could come too. The study was comparing places where cattle and elk could graze with places where they were not allowed to eat the grass. The team of scientists and volunteers drove to big open fields that had big cages. The cages were circular and five feet tall and wide. Inside the cage was grass that had not been eaten. Then we threw four hula-hoop sized rings in the cage. Then we each got a ring and cut all the plants out of that section and put the plants in a bag. Next we did four rings outside the



cage and cut the grass in each of them. The scientists will compare what was cut from different rings by measuring their weight. I was there two days and we went to eight different sites. At the same time, there were other teams going to different sites. Each team had a hand-held device that communicated with a satellite in space that told us exactly where we were standing.

The work was fun, and on the drives to the cages, we got to see a lot of wildlife like elk, turkeys, prairie dogs, and lots of birds. We also saw cattle and horses. The work was easy, and the drives were fun because we got to see cool wildlife.

—Mattie Daub

Mattie Daub was one of a dozen participants in the Fall 2006 grassland monitoring program. She wrote this report to make up for the two days of school that she missed. (Photos by Betsy Daub)





PAJARITO GROUP NEWS

Meetings

Wednesday, June 6, 7:00 p.m. • Upstairs Meeting Room, Mesa Public Library

Sandy Hurlocker: The Santa Fe National Forest

Sandy Hurlocker, the Forest Service Representative for Los Alamos County, will speak on land use and recreation plans in the Santa Fe National Forest. Hurlocker is on the USFS team working within New Mexico to create a new roads-and-trails plan that will designate which trails will be hiking only, and which will be open to vehicles. Come take advantage of this opportunity to learn about planning and to voice your opinions.

There will be no general meeting in July or August. Enjoy the summer!

Outings

Thursday, May 17 • Do the Two-Mile Cleanup –

We will meet at 4:30 p.m. at Ponderosa Campground (the junction of West Jemez Rd. and State Rd. 4) and head to the Group's adopted two-mile cleanup at the edge of the Valles Caldera. Spend an hour in the beautiful evening light picking up trash along the fence. Bring gloves and a truck if you have one. Dave Gemeinhart (672-6267).

Saturday, June 16 • Easy hike on the Upper Frijoles Trail –

Four miles, 250-foot altitude gain

through mixed conifer forest in the Jemez Mountains near FR 289. Mark Jones (662-9443).

Thursday, June 21 • Summer Solstice hike and potluck at the Top of Pajarito –

Meet at the Pajarito Mountain Ski Area Lodge at 5:00 p.m. Bring food and drink to share, your own utensils/plates, warm clothes, and a flashlight. We will hike 45-60 minutes to the deck between the Aspen and Mother lifts. Head down at 8:00 p.m. to get back to the lodge before 9:00 p.m. All welcome. Jean Dewart (662-9592).

Pajarito Group Directory

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

Executive Committee

Chair: Ilse Bleck	
ibleck@yahoo.com	662-2368
Vice-Chair: Jody Benson	662-4782
Secretary: Deirdre Witherell	
witherell@lanl.gov	661-8249
Treasurer: David Gemeinhart	
ddgem@losalamos.com	672-6267
Mat Johansen	
matjohansen@cybercrossings.com	662-9763
Michael DiRosa	
mdd@stanfordalumni.org	663-0648
Mark Jones	
jonesnm1@comcast.net	662-9443

Committee Chairs

Conservation: Michael DiRosa	
mdd@stanfordalumni.org	663-0648
Energy, Transportation: Deirdre Witherell	
witherell@lanl.gov	661-8249
Grazing, National Forests, Wetlands, Wilderness: David Gemeinhart	
ddgem@losalamos.com	672-6267
Outings, Parks/Refuges: Ilse Bleck	
ibleck@yahoo.com	662-2368
Newsletter Editor, Publicity, Sprawl, Endangered Species/Wildlife: Jody Benson	
	662-4782
Environmental Education: Pauline Wilder	
xxmpxx@gmail.com	662-7768
Political: Mark Jones	
jonesnm1@comcast.net	662-9443
Membership: Gita Carey	
gitacarey@yahoo.com	661-9604
Membership Co-Chair: Diane Madrid	
roregma@roregma.cnc.net	672-1597
Programs, Genetic Engineering, Water, Marine: Mat Johansen	
matjohansen@cybercrossings.com	662-9763
Global Warming: Charles Keller	
alfonso@cybermesa.com	662-7915
Webmeister: Jennifer Macke	
jpmacke@comcast.net	695-9275

The Alchemy of Activism: Activist Training Camp Inspires Leadership

Remember the story of the frog in the pot where you drop a frog in a pot of tepid water, then gradually raise the water temperature along with the frog's tolerance for heat, and only too late does the frog realize he's soup?

The frog in the pot is the sociologists' model for developing tolerance for discomfort that, had it not been a gradual habituation to "well, it's not that bad yet," would have resulted in outrage. It's also the model of our current policy makers. Wilderness and clear skies disappear, along with potable water and honeybees. But hey, it's not so bad. Not yet.

Meanwhile, the frog in the pot gets cooked.

At this point in history, however, the Sierra Club sees two pots coming to boil. One is death for the frog, but the other is the fire of alchemy in which base matter becomes gold. One is the end of Nature, the other is the transformation of culture. Alchemy happens when you throw a bunch of Sierra Club local leaders into the Leadership Development Project (LDP), put the pressure on, and see what you come up with. Soup? Or something so valuable that it can change the world.

The Sierra Club's National Leadership organized the LDP in reaction to the fact that although the 750,000 Sierra Club members love the living planet Earth, few participate in any effective action to save it. Oh sure we pay our dues, but few groups mobilize to use their large numbers to lobby any level of government for change. We individual groups don't use our clout to change public policy.

To build the best possible advocacy, National enlisted trainers in organizational effectiveness, including Marshall Ganz from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Ganz says that individual members in the Sierra Club share common values. Together we can decide on our goals. The more significant the goals, the more necessary the organization. If the goal is critical, our volunteerism is as valuable as any salaried job. To be effective, we volunteers must consider our efforts essential to accomplishing the group's goals, and even though we are volunteers, the action we volunteered to take is critical to our goal.

The goal of developing leadership is "...to find ways to revitalize democratic organizations, develop their leadership, and engage their members." As Ganz says, "Disorganization is a group divided, confused, passive, reactive, drifting, and inert. Organization is a community with mutual understanding, participation, action, initiative, and purpose."

The power in the Sierra Club is that we as a group with common goals can accomplish what a bunch of

individuals, no matter how strenuous, can't. "Participation," Ganz says, "isn't just a million individuals making individual choices: it's a social activity in which some people take responsibility to mobilize others." The leaders being trained are the "some people."

Mobilizing people requires buy-in to a collective story. A story – about us – connects us, not only to our own cellular memory, but to the rest of our "family" and to our place in history. There's: "I'm a Sierran because I believe in conservation." Then there's: "It had only been a week since I'd been to the trailhead, so when I saw the piles of rocks and bulldozed trees inside a fence warning 'Jemez Estates, No Trespassing,' I felt I'd lost not only my way, but my soul." Emotions can transform into action. Your story can convert inertia to urgency, fear to hope, apathy to anger, isolation to solidarity, and self-doubt to We-Can-Make-a-Difference. You – that's you – can make the difference.

Are you intrigued? Do you want to try the last session in June? If you do, here's what you can expect:

The alchemy is the in the process. It feels like being thrust into a pressure cooker where the intensity of the interaction is so high you can't hold onto your preconceived notions, and just as you think you'll implode, voila! – out comes an amazing new element called Action that could have never happened had you all not been forced to work together.

The alchemist is the facilitator who helps the team establish rules of behavior, then uses a stopwatch and a flipcharted outline to force you through the agenda. When time's up on one bullet, you move on to the next. You think the strict outline is absurd? Too bad, you have to follow it. You have your own agenda to promote? Too bad, you have to listen to those of the other team members. You think you're not ready as the last minute ticks down? Too bad. Come to an answer. The come-to-an-answer-under-extreme-pressure is what creates the new synthesis that not one of you thought of before.

What got cooked up in October was our very successful First Annual Environmental Powwow. The March training came up with our working with the County to ensure the new Boyer development on the Trinity Site will be "Green." Do you like it? Will you call councilors, go to County meetings, or write letters?

Do you want to attend the final training, June 8 through 10, in Albuquerque? Call one of the ExCom members to volunteer, and watch our emails for The Plan.

The Pajarito Group awaits your story.



TAOS BRANCH NEWS

Cool Cities Efforts Get Underway

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, Taos is now a Cool City. Voitek Byszewski, our Santa Fe Cool Cities organizer, Richard Kristin, and I met with some of our Taos members and Matt Foster, the Town Planner, on March 14. While there was general agreement that any local efforts to curb global warming are important, we are looking for some volunteers to help Matt Foster in actually implementing the many steps involved in gathering data and finding ways for Taos and its citizens to lower their carbon footprint. Happily, Bill Brown, retired geologist and Taos activist extraordinaire, is taking a lead in moving Taos forwards. As a recent graduate of Al Gore's intensive training on presenting global-warming information, he is doing a public program in Taos on April 25 on Opportunities and Solutions to Global Warming, and hopes to start working on Taos initiatives by early May. Please get in touch with him for further information, or if you can help, and let Eric or me know of your interest.

—Norma McCallan

Rios de Taos Water Sentinels Update

Sentinels-Rios de Taos had our first training last November. Tim Guilfoile from Kentucky gave us a good background for water-quality monitoring and taught us the subtleties of colorimetric pH and dissolved oxygen analysis. Our group consisted of eight Sierra Club volunteers and two staff members from one of our coalition partners, Rivers and Birds. Tim returned again on April 24 to finish our training with instruction on stream assessment and benthic organisms. We will then begin working with students through Rivers and Birds to do stream cleanup and water assessment.

While waiting for the last phase of our training, we have been working on a weekly basis with Mr. Sam Garcia, a high school senior volunteer, to monitor the pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and conductivity of the water in the Rio Hondo. In addition, Sierra Club volunteer Annouk Ellis and Amigos Bravos field director Rachel Conn collected water samples from five different places in the Rio Hondo for biological oxygen demand, nitrates, total dissolved solids, fecal coliform, and *E. coli* analysis.

So far, it looks like the Taos Ski Valley is doing a decent job of treating its wastewater at the peak of Ski Valley activity. The Sentinels plan to continue monitoring the Rio Hondo throughout the year, and should begin monitoring the Rio Pueblo and Rio Fernando later this spring.

—Eric Patterson

Steering Committee

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

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

Norma McCallan, Northern Group contact • 471-0005, nmccallan@mindspring.com

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

FOUR CORNERS BRANCH NEWS

Subsidy Bill Dead, but Fight Continues Against Desert Rock Plant

Everyone was delighted that the \$85 million Sithe Global wanted in tax credits for the proposed Desert Rock power plant died in the legislature – thanks to the hard work of Dooda Desert Rock and Dine Care (the two Navajo activist groups); Mike Eisenfeld at the San Juan Citizens Alliance; Dan Lorimier, our Sierra Club lobbyist; Carol Oldham, Regional Representative; Robb Thomson of the Interfaith Alliance; concerned citizens and organizations from around the state; and our Sierra Club members in the Four Corners. Sithe and the Dine Power Authority may have stumbled, but the power plant is far from dead. Mike convened a Four Corners Summit on Desert Rock on April 12, to which he invited a number of concerned organizations from around the country, like Earth Justice, Natural Resources Defense Council, Western Clean Energy Campaign, and the Clean Air Task Force. Gordon Glass, Art Jaquez, and Sug McNall attended among others, as did Carol, Dan, Robb, and me. The most surprising information presented was the massive scope of coal-combustion waste issues. The Four Corners is the largest site of coal ash in the United States; some 100 million tons has been dumped by the two power plants since 1960, blowing around in the wind and leaching toxic minerals into the groundwater. The next step in attacking Desert Rock will be commenting on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, due to come out in late April, for the EPA permit, and trying to defeat Sithe's request for industrial bonds from San Juan County.

Meanwhile, the Club had a table at San Juan College's Earth Day Sustainability Fair and Expo on April 18, which was manned by Art, Gordon, and Joan Earnshaw. Joan reported that they passed out a lot of our literature, the kids loved the Sierra Club hiker tattoos, and there were some good

conversations with passers-by about Desert Rock. The best way to stay tuned for upcoming events and alerts is to join the Four Corners listserv (sjcsierraclub@yahoo.groups.com), or contact one of our steering committee members.

—Norma McCallan

Protect the Lincoln National Forest from ORVs

This month the Lincoln National Forest will begin hosting a series of public meetings to discuss and accept public input for the Forest Service's new "travel management" plan for the Lincoln National Forest. This plan, when complete, will decide the routes, trails, and areas that will be open to motorized use and off-road vehicles (ORVs).

Our public lands are at great risk from off-road vehicle excess, and we need your help to ensure long-term protection from abuse. We are encouraging our members to participate by sending written comments to help advocate for the protection of our public land.

The Forest Service has received a great deal of input from the off-road vehicle community, and we need to make sure that voices for conservation and quiet recreation are also heard! Together, we can protect those special areas by requesting that they be set aside for quiet enjoyment and long-term habitat protection.

If you have ever hiked, birded, fished, backpacked, or cross-country skied in the Lincoln, now is the time to make your voice heard. You can comment generally on the degradation caused by inappropriate ORV use, or better yet,

make your comments specific to particular areas that you know and cherish.

Schedule of Meetings

- Thursday, May 3, 6:00-8:30 p.m., at the Carlsbad Public Library Annex
- Monday, May 7, 5:30-8:00 p.m., at the Ruidoso Convention Center
- Wednesday, May 9, 6:00-8:00 p.m., at the Red Brick Schoolhouse (also known as the Nivison Library) in Cloudcroft
- Thursday, May 10, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at the Alamogordo Civic Center on 1st Street

If you have any questions or want more information on the negative impacts of ORVs, contact Kevin Bixby, Southwest Environmental Center (swec@zianet.com), Karen Dremann, Forest Guardians (934-8116, KarenDremann@aol.com), or Chris Kassar, Center for Biological Diversity (520/623-5252 ext. 317, ckassar@biologicaldiversity.org). To send comments or confirm meeting dates, contact Peg Crim or Connie Zipperer at the Lincoln National Forest (434-7200, LNFtravel@fs.fed.us), or visit the Forest Service's website (www.fs.fed.us/r3/lincoln/projects/TMR/index.shtml).

Steering Committee

Art Jaquez, Co-Chair

326-5229, 360-0176 • artjaquez2@yahoo.com

Nick Cullander, Co-Chair

334-0935 • ncullander@hotmail.com

Gordon Glass, Air Quality, Outings

564-4460 • agglass@earthlink.net



NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

Tuesday, May 15, 2007, 7 PM
THOREAU AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

"In wildness is the preservation of the world" are Thoreau's famous words and the motto of the Sierra Club. Why did John Muir keep a picture of Thoreau on his mantle? Why are Thoreau's ideas still influential? And how do media present false stereotypes of Thoreau and environmentalism? **Tom Potter, photographer and president of the Thoreau Society based in Concord, Massachusetts,** will answer these questions.

IN MEMORIAM

William Chudd 9/23/10 - 8/18/06

Bill Chudd was a strong figure in the outings program of the Santa Fe Group in the '70s and '80s. He led and participated in many hikes for the Club and was an enthusiastic member of the Santa Fe Chili and Marching Society, hiking regularly until well into his 80s. We are indebted to him as one of the primary editors and writers for the first several editions of our book *Day Hikes in the Santa Fe Area*.

Bill was born in New York State to Samuel and Masha Chudnowski, who came to America from Russia. He met his Janet, his wife of 70 years, when she was 13 and he was 16. After traveling to over 20 countries, they retired in '71 and moved to Santa Fe. Janet continues to reside at the Rosemont Assisted Living Community on Galisteo Street.

As a tribute to his passion for hiking and his enthusiasm in sharing that love with our members, we have dedicated the new 6th edition of *Day Hikes in the Santa Fe Area* in his memory and that of three other giants of our hiking community we have lost in recent years, Ken Adam and Arnold & Carolyn Keskulla.

Sunday, July 29, 2007, 5-9 PM
SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC

The Commons, 2300 West Alameda
(corner of Camino Carlos Real)

Mark your calendars for our annual social. Details will be included in the July-August newsletter.

*Group Program meetings are held at the
Unitarian Church*

107 W. Barcelona Street (between Galisteo and Don Gaspar).

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

GROUP COMMITTEE MEETINGS
Sierra Club Office, 802 Early Street

Group Executive Committee: Tuesday, June 5, 7 PM
Tuesday, July 3, 7 PM Tuesday, August 7, 7 PM

Group Conservation Committee: May 22, 7 PM

Forest Subcommittee: Tuesday, June 12, 7 PM

See elsewhere in this newsletter for information on our Taos and Four Corners branches.

Northern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club
802 Early Street, Santa Fe, NM 87505

505 · 983 · 2703 <http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/>

GROUP CHAIR

John Buchser

Viva El Rio!

The Santa Fe River may receive CPR in the next few months. Mayor David Coss this spring appointed a seven river commissioners, headed by long-time legislative friend Max Coll. After several years of sustaining a river clean-up effort along the Santa Fe River, I have passed that hat to Paige Grant and Anne Stauffer, and I am fortunate to hold one of the seats on the River Commission. The participation of the entire community is needed to make a flowing river real. Both wet water and water rights will be needed, but the support of the community and council will be critical.

How can a river be a river without water? American Rivers agrees that a river without water is most serious indeed and has named the Santa Fe River the most endangered river in the United States. Lieutenant Governor Denish joined David and Max at the river just before Earth Day and proclaimed their support to restore our river. Every City of Santa Fe water bill, beginning in June, will include the opportunity to "give to the river." This program will be started at the River Festival sponsored by the City on June 2. We'd love to have your help.

The River Commission meets monthly, every second Tuesday at 5 PM. The City's website www.santafenm.gov should have lots of information on the river, and you can also keep an eye on the Club's website at riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe

CONSERVATION CHAIR

Dexter Coolidge

The Northern Group Conservation Committee has continued to expand its role and its impact over the last two months.

Our Water Committee, chaired by Paul Paryski and Sig Silber, has developed strong policy papers and plans to address both likely water shortages in Santa Fe and possibility of reforming agricultural water policy in the North and rest of the state to ensure water flow in streams and rivers.

The Forest Committee, chaired by Norma McCallan, is off to a good start. Our first meeting of the Forest Committee, earlier in the year, was attended by ten people. Eric Peterson and Marke Talley have assumed the lead in our efforts with the Carson Forest. In particular, over the last two months, they have done an exceptional job of mobilizing our members to help limit ORVs in the Carson.

The Cool Cities Program has been working actively with the Mayor and the City Council to adopt a Climate Protection Budget that will move us closer to achieving the Cool Cities goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels.

Our fourth conservation goal this year is to promote clean generation of electricity. We now have an outstanding lead for that effort, Robb Thomson, who started the campaign to stop the tax subsidy for Desert Rock. We are very fortunate to have him working with us.

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

Chair – John Buchser * ‡	jbuchser@comcast.net	820-0201
Vice-Chair – Norma McCallan * ‡	nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005
Secretary – Retta Prophet *	h20baby2@yahoo.com	505-681-8557
Treasurer – Anne Stauffer	arsinnm@comcast.net	986-1412
Chapter Rep – Dexter Coolidge *	dextercoolidge@yahoo.com	988-1197
Membership – Alice Cox	auntiealice@cybermesa.com	757-2145
Newsletter – Kay Carlson	kcarlsonwp@earthlink.net	982-3926
Outings – Norbert Sperlich	bsperlich@cybermesa.com	474-4354
Tobin Oruch	oruch@lanl.gov	820-2844
Political Committee – Susan Martin	smartin31@comcast.net	988-5206
Tom Robey	trobey@cybermesa.com	955-9578
Phone Answerer – Bebs Taylor		983-9129
Publicity – Richard Kristin *	rkristin@csf.edu	982-1671
Social Cohesion – Jean Watts	jeanwatts@comcast.net	989-5010
Las Vegas Branch – Betty Quick	betty@mathllc.com	505-454-9123
Taos Branch – Eric Patterson	eeppatt@gmail.com	776-2883
Farmington Branch – Art Jaquez	artjaquez@yahoo.com	505-326-5229
Nick Cullander	ncullander@hotmail.com	505-334-0935
Web Master – Monika Bittman		505-581-0130
Dan Rusthoi	rusthoi@lanl.gov	474-3965
Mark Walztoni *	markgai197@msn.com	466-1918
Carol Raymond *	Carol@SFSR.com	989-8600, ext 27 (w)

Conservation – Chair Dexter Coolidge *	dextercoolidge@yahoo.com	988-1197
Activist Outings – Norma McCallan * ‡	nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005
Air Quality – Doug Fraser	fraser@thuntek.net	474-7615
Santa Fe Nat'l Forest – Ami Diallo	a.diallo@zianet.com	471-2414
John Green	jegzuni@aol.com	995-8749
Carson Nat'l Forest – Eric Peterson	emozart@cybermesa.com	
Marke Talley		505-747-2422
Genetically Engineered Food – Jim Hannan	jhannan505@aol.com	988-5760
Mining – Cliff Larsen	clarsen1@ix.netcom.com	466-2128
Cool Cities Campaign		
Lead Organizer – Voitek Byszewski * ‡	swinia@comcast.net	466-6211
Eco Footprints – Brian Skeelee	brianvida@nm.net	984-1739
Resources – Ken Hughes ‡	b1family@comcast.net	474-0550
Valle Vidal – Dexter Coolidge *	dextercoolidge@yahoo.com	988-1197
Norma McCallan *	nmccallan@mindspring.com	471-0005
Water – Sig Silber ‡	ssilber1@juno.com	473-7006
Paul Paryski ‡	pparyski@aol.com	992-1984
Wildlife/Nat'l Parks/Rangelands – Roger Peterson ‡	rogpete@aol.com	983-7559

* Member of the Northern Group Executive Committee

‡ Member of the Core Conservation Committee



NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

NORTHERN GROUP OUTINGS

Sat Sun May

- 5 **Moderate Hike** in a suitable location, maybe Alamo Canyon in Bandelier (otherwise dogs okay). **Les Drapela** (438-3306)
- 6 **Easy/Moderate Hike** to Tent Rocks, 3-4 miles, some scrambling, dogs okay on leash. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 6 **Strenuous Hike** to Shaggy Peak and Deer Creek. Mostly off trail, some stream crossings. About 13 miles RT loop, 2000' gain. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- Sat., May 12, to Sun., May 20 – **Redrock Country Loop, Southern Utah Car Camping and Moderate Day Hikes (some exploratory)**, via Highway 95, Henry Mountains, Boulder Mountain, Escalante & the Cockscomb, dogs okay, high clearance vehicles useful. Call for reservations/details. **Norma McCallan** (471-0005)
- 12 **Strenuous Hike** probably Holiday Mesa in Jemez, off-trail, stream crossing, dogs okay. **Stephen Markowitz** (983-2779) before 8 PM.
- 13 **Easy/Moderate Hike** on Frey Trail in Bandelier, 6 miles, 600' gain, 9 AM start, call to confirm. **Victor Atyas** (438-9434)
- 13 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** to Pedernal, famous mesa by Abiquiú, 9 AM, 1900' gain, opt'l. scramble to top. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- 19 **Santa Fe Rvr Clnup Paige Grant** 982-5180/paigeanna@comcast.net
- 19 **Moderate Hike** in Abiquiú area, 5-7 miles, about 1000' gain, dogs okay. **Page Press** (946-0169)
- 19 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** jointly with Audubon Society, bring binoculars. **Ron Duffy** (982-2890)
- 20 **Moderate Hike** on Sandia Peak, Tramway trail to La Luz trail (not to top), about 8-10 miles, dogs okay. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 26 **Moderate Hike** Kitchen Mesa, Ghost Ranch. **Dan Rusthoi** (690-8967)
- 27 **Strenuous Hike** maybe Stewart Lake loop in the Pecos, 11 miles, 2300', dogs okay. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844) before 8 PM.

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

Sat Sun July

- 1 **Easy Hike** to Tent Rocks. Dogs on leash okay. Leave 9 AM. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 7 **Strenuous Hike** but Moderate pace, to the Rio Nambe via upper Rio en Medio (from Ski Basin) and Borrego Trail. Abundant wildflowers. Dogs okay. 10.5 miles RT, 2600' gain. **Norma McCallan** (471-0005)
- 7 **Strenuous Hike** to Wheeler Peak. 15 miles RT, 4300' gain. Early start. **Patrick O'Keefe** (820-2359)
- 8 **Moderate Hike** to Hamilton Mesa. About 7 miles RT. **Michael Goldey** (820-7302)
- 14 **Strenuous Hike** to Santa Fe Baldy. 14 miles RT, 3600' gain. Dogs okay. **Dan Rusthoi** (690-8967)
- 15 **Moderate Hike** to Cerro Grande (Bandelier) and on Valle Grande Trail (Valles Caldera). Wonderful views. 6 miles RT, 1600' gain. **David Van Winkle** (820-1006)
- 15 **Strenuous Hike** in High Country. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- 21 **Santa Fe River Cleanup Anne Stauffer** (986-1412 or scsftreasurer@comcast.net)
- 21 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** jointly with Audubon Society. Bring binoculars. **Ron Duffy** (982-2890)
- 21 **Strenuous Loop Hike** Leonardo Lakes, Sheepshead (12,696'), Trampas Lakes. About 12 miles RT, 3700' gain. Some steep off trail sections. **Michael DiRosa** (663-0648)
- 22 **Easy/Moderate Hike** near Pajarito Ski Area. Dogs okay. Leave 9 AM. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 28 **Moderate Hike** along East Fork of Jemez. Some hiking in water, some off trail, some scrambling. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- 29 **Strenuous Hike** to Pecos Baldy Lake and Pecos Baldy. 17 miles RT, 3800' gain. Dogs okay. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844) before 8 PM



Outings Notes – Unless otherwise noted, outings leave from the Sierra office, 802 Early Street, one block east of St. Francis running between Marquez Place and Cerrillos Road. 802 is easily reached by turning south onto Early Street from Cerrillos Road. Office is the first building on the right. 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.

Sat Sun June

- Saturday and Sunday, June 2 & 3 – Car Camp and Moderate (-8 mile) Hike** each day on Continental Divide Trail at Cumbres Pass. Good trail, steep sections, great vistas. Drive up late Friday, stay at Trujillo Meadows C.G. Dogs okay. **Norma McCallan** (471-0005)
- 2 **Moderate Hike** Rio En Medio waterfalls and beyond. ±8 miles RT, 1800' gain. Dogs okay. **Stephen Markowitz** (983-2779) before 8 PM
- 3 **Easy/Moderate Hike** to Bishop's Peak (Eldorado). Dogs okay. Leave 9 AM. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 9 **Strenuous Hike** to Stewart Lake. 11 miles RT, 2300' gain. Dogs okay. **Dan Rusthoi** (690-8967)
- 10 **Moderate Hike** in High Country. Leave 8 AM. **Art Judd** (982-3212)
- 16 **Santa Fe River Cleanup. Anne Stauffer** (986-1412 or scsftreasurer@comcast.net)
- 16 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** jointly with Audubon Society. Bring binoculars. **Ron Duffy** (982-2890)
- 16 **Strenuous Loop Hike** (Deception, Lake, Penitente Peak, Puerto Nambe) 11 miles RT, 3100' gain. **Patrick O'Keefe** (820-2359)
- 17 **Moderate Hike** on Red Dot Trail (White Rock Canyon). Short but steep. Dogs okay. Leave 9 AM. **Eliza Schmid** (474-5846)
- 23 **Moderate High Country Hike Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- 24 **Strenuous Hike** to Lake Katherine 14.5 miles RT, 3300' gain. Dogs okay. **David Van Winkle** (820-1006)
- 30 **Strenuous Hike** to Trampas Lakes and Hidden Lake. 13.5 miles RT, 2700' gain. Dogs okay. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844) before 8 PM
- Saturday, June 30, to Sunday, July 1, Car Camp and Strenuous Loop Hike** Latir Mesa. Leave Saturday afternoon. **Michael DiRosa** (663-0648)

All outings are open to the public and free unless otherwise noted. For additional outings in Northern New Mexico, please check the Pajarito Group page in this newsletter.



SANTA FE RIVER CLEANUP AND VEGETATION MAINTENANCE

Saturday – 10 AM to 12:00 PM – May 19, June 16, July 21

Help keep our river looking great! Park at Lower Alto Street north end of Closson. Bring work boots, gloves and drinking water. **Call listed outing leader on each date.**

GLOBAL WARMING, OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

Bill Brown, of The Climate Project, plans to present this program with Tom Udall in Santa Fe sometime in May. Bill, a retired geologist from Taos who was one of the primary players in the Valle Vidal Coalition, recently attended an intensive training with Al Gore and his expert team. Check the website for a date and place.

Day Hikes in the Santa Fe Area, 6th Edition

... is due out in early May. We will celebrate with a book launch at Travel Bug, 839 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87501. The book launch date is TBA, so please check the website or phone Norma McCallan (471 0005)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer Coordinator – Dexter Coolidge (988-1197)

Recruit members to be more involved

Publicity – Richard Kristin (982-1671)

Help get out announcements of our meetings and other events

Forest issues – Norma McCallan (471-0005) Need someone to be part of a team overseeing issues in the Santa Fe National Forest. Also need help in providing comments for the Travel Management Plan that is designating which roads and trails will be open to motorized use.

Social & environmental events – Jean Watts (989-5010)

Help organize and set up for events

Cool Cities Campaign – Voitek Byszewski (983-2703)

Help with this campaign that seeks to lessen our carbon footprint.

Especially needed is a coordinator for educational outreach.

WEBSITE ADDRESS !!

<http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/santafe/>

Now you can join the Sierra Club through this site.

Also, you can view the entire Rio Grande Sierran at this site.

Central Group Directory

P.O. Box 25342
Albuquerque, NM 87125-0342

Executive Committee

Michal Mudd, Chair mudd_pi@mac.com	884-3315
David Ther, Treasurer grelbik@worldnet.att.net	260-1553
(Open), Secretary	
Marilynn Cooper marilyncooper@qwest.net	842-0185
Howard Karnes einstructionhk@aol.com	379-1294
Marilyn Lohr (no email)	247-1722
Patrick Redmond redmonpa@law.unm.edu	298-1298
Eva Thaddeus evathad@nmia.com	266-9646

Committee Chairs

Richard Barish, River Issues rdbarish@aol.com	232-3013
Michal Mudd, Chapter Representative, Membership/Publicity mudd_pi@mac.com	884-3315
Patrick Redmond, Political redmonpa@law.unm.edu	298-1298
Eva Thaddeus, Chapter Representative evathad@nmia.com	266-9646
David Ther, Outings, Chapter Representative grelbik@worldnet.att.net	260-1553

Want to Get Involved?

The Executive Committee normally meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month 7:00-8:00 p.m. Please contact the Chair for the meeting location. We also encourage you to contact us if you have issues you would like to discuss. Meetings are free and open to all members.



Outings

Sunday, May 20 • Zuni-Acoma Trail hike, El Malpais – Join us for a moderately difficult hike on the ancient Zuni-Acoma Trail in El Malpais National Monument. The trail crosses five different volcanic flows in seven miles of ups and downs but little elevation change. Car shuttle will enable us to do the trail one-way. Bring lunch, liquids, layers, sun protection, and boots to Smith's parking lot (Carlisle and Menaul) at 8:00 a.m. for carpooling to the trailhead 80 miles west of Albuquerque. Carol Chamberland (341-1027).

Sunday, June 17 • Manzano Mountains hike, Red Canyon – This moderately paced hike climbs gently through wooded forests up Spruce Spring trail to the crest trail and its great vistas. Peaking at Gallo Peak, 10,003 feet, we'll then descend, steeply at times, via Red Canyon trail back to our trailhead. Elevation gain 2000 feet, hike distance 7-8 miles, driving distance about 60 miles one way. Bring lunch, liquids, layers to Smith's parking lot (Carlisle and Menaul) at 8:30 a.m. for carpooling to the trailhead 60 miles southeast of Albuquerque. Carol Chamberland (341-1027).

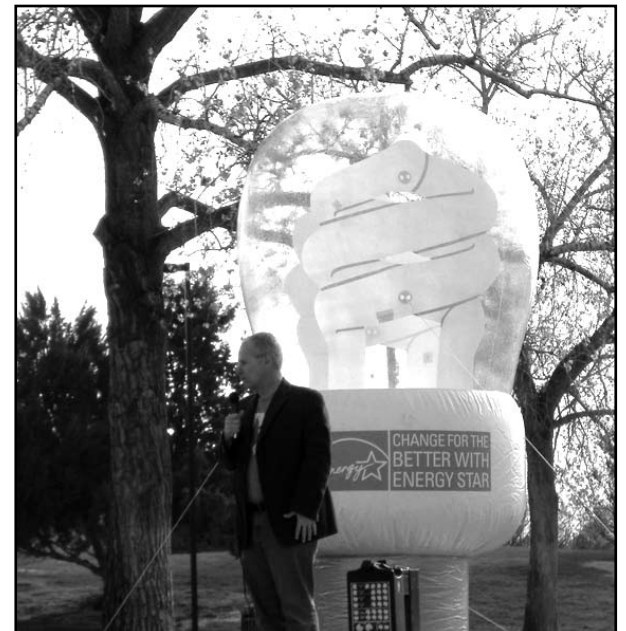
Step It Up! in Albuquerque: National Day of Climate Action

On a chilly Saturday morning in Tiguex Park, the call went out to Congress to step it up – get serious about climate change. This was Albuquerque's part on April 14, National Day of Climate Action, a day observed across the country at thousands of locations, all with a common message to our elected officials: "Protecting the climate can't wait! Reduce carbon emissions 80% by the year 2050."

Sierra Club members gathered along with members of NM Interfaith Power and Light and representatives of the City of Albuquerque, for a brief rally at which Mayor Chávez, Councilors Heinrich and Benton, and PRC Commissioner Jason Marks spoke to the volunteers. Then, over 60 volunteers went out into five neighborhoods carrying boxes of compact fluorescent bulbs, a donation from the City to the cause of energy efficiency. This was our own local action to show that each and every one of us can take steps locally to save energy and do our part to protect the climate for our children.

Walkers went door-to-door offering citizens the chance to swap out up to five of their old incandescents for the new CFLs, which use one-fourth of the electricity to produce the same amount of light. The new bulbs brighten up quickly and give a warm light. Since they contain small amounts of mercury, they do need to be disposed of properly, like many household products today. The good news is that they have an expected lifetime of 10 years, which gives us time to work with the city to develop a strong and meaningful recycling program.

People in the North Valley, Midtown, Sawmill, Barelás and South Valley neighborhoods we targeted



were all pleased to get a free bulb, and there was also a steady trickle of people showing up at Tiguex Park all morning with bulbs to exchange. Somehow, the word got around! By the end of the morning, we had put 1,600 energy-saving bulbs in the hands of Albuquerque citizens.

The project continued with energy assemblies and bulb exchanges at three local elementary schools during the course of the week that followed.

Thank you to everyone who participated to make the event a great success, and to the City of Albuquerque for providing the light bulbs! What a brilliant event.

—Eva Thaddeus



Above: Mayor Chávez speaks at Step It Up! day in Albuquerque. Far left: A young walker. Left: The rally. (Photos by Marilyn O'Boyle)

Have You Driven a Hybrid Lately?

The Southwest Energy Alliance (SWEA), a new group dedicated to promoting clean energy sources, will host a Renewable Energy Fair on Saturday, May 12, 2007, at the Southwest Environmental Center, 275 North Downtown Mall in Las Cruces.

In conjunction with the Saturday event, speakers will give presentations on Thursday, May 10, and Friday, May 11, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Friday's program will feature Dr. Ben Luce of the New Mexico Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, who will speak on "New Mexico's Clean Energy Policies and How to Take Advantage of the New Incentives," a program that all consumers, professionals, and politicians should not miss.

Saturday's lineup of speakers begins at 10:00 a.m. with Kim Kiel of First Affirmative Financial Network speaking on socially responsible investing (SRI). At 11:00 a.m., Jerry Payne of the U.S. Forest Service will talk about the advances in the growing field of biomass energy production.

At noon, don't miss live acoustic music by the Deming Fusiliers, followed by the announcement of the winners of the solar cookie contest at 2:00 p.m. – be there for free cookies. Jim Wichter will speak at 2:30 p.m. on geothermal energy in the Las Cruces area. Take advantage of this opportunity to hear leaders in the clean energy movement.

On Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., over 40 renewable energy organizations, companies, and

individuals will highlight their products and services on the downtown mall between Las Cruces Avenue and Griggs Avenue.

Representatives from Saturn Automobiles, Tesla Cars, the El Paso Solar Energy Association, and the Waste Education and Research Consortium (WERC) at New Mexico State University are just some of the organizations that will attend. The New Mexico Solar Energy Association will be demonstrating alternative-energy applications with their Sun-Chaser vehicle.

Consumers can test drive hybrid cars, talk with vendors of high-efficiency appliances, and meet professionals in the Green Building Movement. Highly insulative building blocks made from recycled paper called papercrete, produced by the McCain Block Company of Columbus, NM, will be on display. Mountain View Market will sell natural food snacks, lunch, and beverages. Everyone in the community is invited to attend and learn more about the practical aspects of renewable energy. Take advantage of the regular farmers' market, which takes place every Saturday on the next block.

The Southern Group will co-sponsor the event and will have a booth showing videos such as "Land Out of Time," a film of local interest about preserving the wild lands of our area.

Anyone interested in volunteering at the Sierra Club booth is encouraged. Please contact Lou McCall for further information (lou@pixelcircus.org, 312-3174, 743-0330). Visit SWEA's website (www.southwestenergyalliance.org) for an updated schedule and a complete list of sponsors.

Sierra Club Outings Enrich Our Experience of New Mexico

Valles Canyon lays in the Sierra de Las Uvas south of Hatch, New Mexico. Ten miles of dirt road, some of that requiring four-wheel drive vehicles, brought almost 40 hikers to this isolated and beautiful canyon in March. Stunning rock formations define this usually dry canyon and provide habitat for a range of high-desert plants and animals.

The Southern Group organized this well-attended event by posting newspaper and radio notices and building upon its record of successful outings into some of Southern New Mexico's most special hidden and little-known areas. Using petroglyph-rich areas as a theme, the Group's Chair, Margot Wilson, has led outings to Valles Canyon, the Doña Ana Mountains, the San Diego Uplift, and the Rincon Hills.



As the following email excerpt illustrates, Sierra Club outings are rewarding on many levels:

"I just wanted to thank you again for the nice outing yesterday. My wife and I both enjoyed our time, and meeting new people, as well. Since my retirement a couple of years ago, we have not gotten out as much as we like. We love getting out in the 'bush,' and it is always more fun with others! We will be spending the summer in Colorado, but we already look forward to another trip with this new group of friends! With luck, we can make the April outing before we have to be in Cripple Creek!"

A remote mountain arroyo in Southern New Mexico, Valles Canyon in the Sierra de Las Uvas captivates hikers with its striking geology, wide range of Chihuahuan Desert flora, ancient pictographs, and ranch buildings dating from the 1800s.

Outings

Please call your outing leader to confirm the bikes or outings – changes might be possible to due various reasons.

Saturday, May 5 • Straight Gulch hike – An outing at Straight Gulch off the Beaverhead Road in the Black Range. This is a fairly easy hike in a beautiful canyon at 8,500 ft. Leave the Forest Service Office parking lot in Truth or Consequences at 8:30 a.m. Bring lunch, good walking shoes for a pleasant outing. Margot Wilson (744-6860) or Mary Katherine Ray (772-5655).

Saturday, May 12 • Fillmore Canyon hike, Organ Mountains – Moderate 5-mile hike. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the north Pan Am Center parking lot on the NMSU campus. Fee area; bring water and a snack. John Waugh (526-7116).

Saturday, May 19 • Holden Prong hike – A strenuous hike to Holden Prong in the Black Range. The destination is a waterfall I've always wanted to see. Meet at the General Store in Hillsboro at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast. Come prepared with good boots,

snacks, and lunch. Margot Wilson (744-5860).

Saturday, June 9 • Indian Hollow hike, Organ Mountains – Strenuous 7-mile hike. Meet at K-Mart parking lot on I-70 at 8:00 am. Fee area; bring food, water, sunblock. John Waugh (526-7116).

Saturday-Sunday, June 23-24 • Come learn about bats, owls, and other creatures of the night – With Forest Service biologist and bat specialist Marikay Ramsey, along with outing leader Margot Wilson. We'll have a fun-filled evening of nighttime creatures, with bird watching in the morning. We will be camping near Turkey Creek in the Black Range. Be sure to bring headlamps, flashlights, and binoculars along with other camping gear. We will leave the Forest Service office in Truth or Consequences at 12:00 noon. Marikay Ramsey (894-6677) or Margot Wilson (744-6860).

Sunday, July 15 • Pine Tree Trail, Organ Mountains – Moderate/off-trail 7-mile hike. Meet at K-Mart parking lot on I-70 at 8:00 am. Fee area; bring food, water, sunblock. John Waugh (526-7116).

Southern NM Group Directory

Executive Committee

P.O. Box 735, Mesilla, NM 88046

Margot Wilson

Chair, Conservation Chair, Parks/Refuges
margotwilson40@hotmail.com 744-5860

Glenn Landers

Vice Chair, Pollution, Grasslands Issues
glenn.landerson@gmail.com 525-0491

Cheryll Blevins

Treasurer, Editor Southern NM
Group Page
spotblev@earthlink.net 524-4861

Robert Gray

Secretary, Transportation 894-6774

Mary Katherine Ray

Wildlife, Membership, Alternate Chapter
Delegate
mkscriam@kitcarson.net 772-5655

Jane L. Grider

Political
jane4u2@email2me.net 526-5620

Lou McCall

lou@pixelcircus.org 312-3174

John Waugh

Outings, Endangered Species/
Wildlife, Chapter Delegate
cactoblast@hotmail.com 526-7116

Earle Pittman

Global Warming
espittman@zianet.com 541-6281



Leon Metz' Mountain Musings

At one time or another, I've climbed all over the Franklin Mountains, and yet there are two distinct chains of mountains I've never touched. One is the Juárez Mountains directly south across the Rio Grande, the other the Organ Mountains near Las Cruces and Mesilla, in many respects these being the highest, most majestic and most complicated of any range of mountains in this region.

Both are remarkable landmarks, but the Organs in particular have always fascinated me. These giants date back about 260 million years, when the land was low and seas covered the region, creating the sedimentary rocks such as limestone, the deposits reaching thousands of feet thick.

A large part of these mountains, bounded by irregular, cross-cutting fault planes, is believed to have originally crystallized at a considerable depth beneath the Earth's surface.

Then about 60 million years ago, the geological forces commenced reacting. The land rose under tremendous pressures, forcing massive blocks of rock up and over other massive blocks of rock, thus forming our first, original mountain ranges, the land between forming into basins as well as deep valleys.

The old valleys and mountains subsequently disappeared or became part of the new. And even the new eventually became the old, as the land flattened and the upheavals commenced again.

So in effect, what we see now are the "new" Organ Mountains, these being 32 million years old, plus or minus a few millennium.

Way back then, a molten body of rock lying at great depths heaved up against the top layers, ejecting great quantities of rock, lava and ash covering an area of 100 square miles and extending downward thousands of feet. The evidence can still be viewed today, the dark red rocks still creating and forming the uplifted southern portion of the range.

The Organ pinnacles we see today are the remnants of this magma, all of which took a few centuries to cool. The sedimentary material, weathered from rocks, eventually washed into old Mexico, Southern New Mexico, Texas, and even the Gulf of Mexico. We mow our lawns today on some of this material.

About 12 million years ago, after the hot rock had cooled, a meandering, faulting Rio Grande uplifted the eastern part of the Organ Mountains chain, tilting the region down toward the west. The ice ages contributed to further rainfall, as well as additional weathering. And across the ages subsequent erosion created the familiar jagged skyline.

Otherwise, much of what is called "fault block" still remains buried under sand and gravel. Nor is the faulting ended. The region east of the Organs is so recent that the uplifted gravel banks are still intact. Therefore, the faulting along the Rio Grande rift is apparently still active. I've read and heard it said that occasionally small earthquakes "rather quietly" rock Las Cruces even today.

So when we pause to gaze at our regional mountains today, as I often do, one of the interesting as well as one of the odd characteristics is that they are all so different and yet all so similar. Each has its own history, occasionally making me wonder if the mountain-building period is finally over, or if the gods are merely taking a much-needed break.

--Leon Metz

El Paso author and historian Leon Metz lectures and writes about the El Paso Southwest.
cmetz4888@aol.com

ASARCO Timeline

May 1, 2007: New air modeling study report due at Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Sept, 2007: TCEQ commissioners meet in Austin to issue a final decision on the air permit renewal.

In the meantime the bankrupt company has begun to advertise employment opportunities (jobs) in the El Paso Times, explaining that this is to fill vacancies at other ASARCO facilities and counteract what a spokesperson call misinformation.

Selected Outings for May

May 4-6: White Rocks Backpack
Place: North Mesa, Gila Wilderness,
Class: Moderate +
Length: About 14 miles round trip
Elevation gain: about 1000 feet
Leader: Rollin Wickenden 855-6705 rwickgila@aol.com
We will depart El Paso on Friday night and drive to our campsite at Forks Campground. On Saturday morning we will drive to the trailhead at the corral behind the Visitor Center. Following a social trail to its junction with trail 27, we will climb up a steep trail to the top of North Mesa to the junction with trail 804. We will turn north and follow trail 27 to White Rocks, a geological anomaly of volcanic tuff where we will camp Saturday night. On Sunday, we will retrace our steps back to the trailhead. Potable water is a problem on the top of North Mesa. Participants can carry potable water or obtain water that will need to be treated from a nearby stock tank.
Come enjoy an interesting hike with great views to the top of North Mesa and a visit to one of the Gila's most unusual volcanic sites.

May 25-28: Memorial Weekend Backpack
Place: Aldo Leopold Wilderness
Class: Moderate +
Length: 24.1 miles
Elevation gain: about 1800 feet
Leader: Rollin Wickenden, 855-6705 rwickgila@aol.com
Departing El Paso Friday night for the Black Range, we will car-camp at Iron Creek Campground, along NM route 152. On Saturday morning, we will start our loop backpack by hiking up trail 129 through Gallinas Canyon to Sid's Saddle. Descending trail 121 through beautiful Sid's Prong, we will make Saturday night's camp near an old corral. On Sunday, we will continue our loop following trail 121 through Pretty Canyon and infamous Flower Canyon to its junction with trail 114 where we turn right and follow Holden Prong to Sunday night's campsite. On Monday morning, we will ascend to Holden Saddle and descend Railroad Canyon back to the cars. These trails are for the most part not maintained and sections of them will require some bush whacking. Long sleeve shirts and long pants are recommended.

El Paso Group Directory

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

Executive Committee

Chair: Laurence Gibson	lgibson@utep.edu	915/309-5419
Vice-Chair: Gil Pinon	bifflehead@yahoo.com	915/307-3398
Secretary: Ann Falknor	afalknor@sbcglobal.net	915/833-9162
Treasurer: Kathy Sunday	sundayt@zianet.com	915/584-9301
Bill Addington	aguavida@valornet.com	915/369-2541
Bob Geyer		915/834-8242
Juan Garza	juan.garza@sierraclub.org	915/565-2690
Liz Walsh	ewalsh@utep.edu	915/584-1471

Committee Chairs

Chapter Delegate		
Bill Addington	aguavida@valornet.com	915/369-2541
Chapter Delegate (Alt.)		
Juan Garza	juan.garza@sierraclub.org	915/565-2690
Editor, Outings		
Laurence Gibson	lgibson@utep.edu	915/594-7342
Inner City Outings, Membership		
Ted Mertig	tmertig@earthlink.net	915/852-3011
Outings		
Rollin Wickenden	rwickgila@aol.com	915/855-6697
Webmaster		
Terry Sunday	sundayt@zianet.com	915/584-9301

The EAT Healthy America Act Restores Balance to Farm Policy

If you read the last issue of the *Rio Grande Sierran* ("Protecting the Stewards of Our Land," March/April 2007), you know that the Farm Bill establishes the policy and funding that shapes the world of agriculture around us. But the current Farm Bill and those of the past are full of inequities. Much of the funding is used to provide subsidies to growers of just a few crops (wheat, corn, cotton, rice, soybeans). And the richest 10% get two-thirds of the subsidies...corporate agri-business is cashing in.

Right now, Congress is in the midst of reauthorizing the Farm Bill. And so far, one piece of legislation stands out above the rest: the Equitable Agriculture Today (EAT) for a Healthy America Act. Introduced by Representative Dennis Cardoza (D-CA), this bill restores balance to America's farm policy.

The EAT Healthy America Act gives growers of fruits, vegetables, and nuts, or "specialty crops," a seat at the table. "Specialty crops are an important part of local economies in all 50 states, and it is imperative that we recognize their vital contributions by ensuring that specialty crop growers have an important role in the future of American agriculture," Cardoza said in a press release.

EAT Healthy also increases funding for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Program, as well as other nutrition programs. And it increases funding and makes critical changes to conservation programs, which seek to recover imperiled species, protect habitat, conserve

natural resources, and protect farmland threatened with urban encroachment.

Three specific provisions in the bill will greatly benefit farmers, ranchers, and wildlife in New Mexico. One provision prioritizes conservation and protection of our most important and most threatened wildlife and habitat first. It would tie several of the conservation programs directly to an existing long-term plan for wildlife conservation recently completed in every state.

Second, EAT Healthy expands the Wetlands Reserve Program to allow land along streams and rivers to be enrolled in the program. Currently, riparian areas can only be protected if they connect two already protected wetlands, which is not much help for the arid Southwest. Making all riparian lands eligible for protection is extremely important for New Mexico as much of our farmland and critical wildlife habitat are along waterways. And healthy riparian areas help improve water quality and the health of river ecosystems.

Finally, the bill incorporates practices that prevent livestock conflicts with endangered predators into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This change would help ranchers in Mexican wolf country to minimize wolf-livestock interactions (see related article, page 6). These practices could include livestock carcass removal, use of guard dogs, fencing, and use of herders.

For far too long the Farm Bill has propped up agri-business and commodity crops in just a few,

select states. It is high time for Congress to promote sustainable agriculture and ecosystem protection, provide healthy food choices for all Americans, and recognize the value and importance of family farms and take action to protect rural communities. The EAT Healthy America Act will help us get there.

Please call or write to Representatives Wilson, Pearce, and Udall, and ask them to cosponsor this important legislation (see contact info, page 3).

For more information, contact Lisa Hummon, NM Outreach Representative, Defenders of Wildlife (248-0018 ext. 5, lhummon@defenders.org).

—Lisa Hummon

High Desert Reports

Laura Paskus, an Albuquerque-based environmental reporter, has launched a blog covering environmental issues and events in New Mexico. Visit the High Desert Reports blog at <http://laurapaskus.blogspot.com>.

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 Thomas Robey, 145 W. Zia Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505. 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).

Preserve the Future

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering the Sierra Club in your will.

There are many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, please contact:

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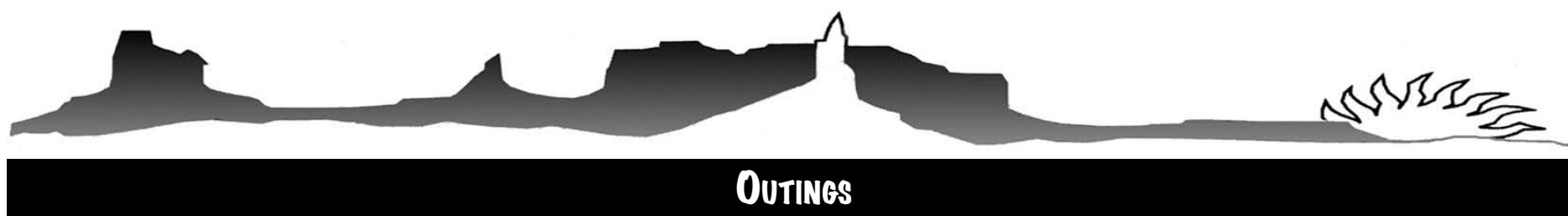
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Contributions, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletter.



OUTINGS

Selected Sierra Club Outings for May, June, and July 2007

Friday-Sunday, May 4-6 • White Rocks backpack, North Mesa, Gila Wilderness – 14 miles, 1000' gain. Moderate-plus. Rollin Wickenden (915/855-6705, rwickgila@aol.com – El Paso Group).

Sunday, May 6 • Tent Rocks National Monument hike – 3-4 miles. Easy/moderate. Some scrambling, dogs OK on leash. Eliza Schmid (474-5846 – Northern Group).

Sunday, May 6 • Shaggy Peak and Deer Creek hike – 13 miles, 2000' gain. Strenuous. Off-trail, stream crossing. Norbert Sperlich (474-4354 – Northern Group).

Sunday, May 6 • Straight Gulch hike, off Beaverhead Road, Black Range – Easy hike in a beautiful canyon. Margot Wilson (744-5860 – Southern Group) or Mary Katherine Ray (772-5655 – Southern Group).

Saturday, May 12 • Holiday Mesa hike, Jemez Mountains – Strenuous. Off-trail, stream crossing, dogs OK. Stephen Markowitz (983-2779 – Northern Group).

Saturday-Sunday, May 12-20 • Redrock country loop hikes, southern Utah – Car camping, moderate hikes, some exploratory. Via Hwy. 95, Henry Mountains, Boulder Mountain, Escalante, and the Cockscomb. Norma McCallan (471-0005 – Northern Group).

Saturday, May 12 • Fillmore Canyon hike, Organ Mountains – 5 miles. Moderate. John Waugh (526-7116 – Southern Group).

Sunday, May 13 • Pedernal hike – 9 miles, 1900' gain. Moderate/strenuous hike to this prominent landmark by Abiquiu, optional scramble to top. Marcia Skillman (699-3008 – Northern Group).

Thursday, May 17 • Highway cleanup, Jemez Mountains – Spend an hour in the beautiful evening light at the Pajarito Group's adopted two-mile cleanup at the edge of the Valles Caldera. Dave Gemeinhart (672-6267 – Pajarito Group).

Saturday, May 19 • Holden Prong hike, Black Range – Strenuous hike to a waterfall. Margot Wilson (744-5860 – Southern Group).

Sunday, May 20 • Zuni-Acoma Trail hike, El Malpais National Monument – Moderately difficult hike on this ancient trail, crossing five different volcanic flows in 7 miles of ups and down, little elevation change. Car shuttle. Carol Chamberland (341-1027 – Central Group).

Sunday, May 20 • Tramway/La Luz trails, Sandia Mountains – 8-10 miles, 1000' gain. Moderate. Eliza Schmid (474-5846 – Northern Group).

Friday-Monday, May 25-28 • Memorial Day weekend backpack, Aldo Leopold Wilderness, Gila National Forest – 24.1 miles, 1800' gain. Moderate-plus. Gallinas Canyon-Sid's Prong-Pretty Canyon-Flower Canyon-Holden Prong-Railroad Canyon. Moderate loop, two crossings of Black Range Crest. Rollin Wickenden (915/855-6705, rwickgila@aol.com – El Paso Group).

Saturday, May 26 • Kitchen Mesa hike, Ghost Ranch – Moderate hike in the red rocks. Dan Rusthoi (690-8967 – Northern Group).

Saturday, June 2 • Rio en Medio hike – 8 miles, 1800' gain. Moderate hike to waterfalls and beyond, dogs OK. Stephen Markowitz (983-2779 – Northern Group).

Saturday-Sunday, June 2-3 • Continental Divide Trail hike, at Cumbres Pass – Moderate day hikes on two sections, about 8 miles each. Good trail, at 11,000'-plus. Great vistas, dogs OK. Car camp at Trujillo Meadows Campground. Norma McCallan (471-0005 – Northern Group).

Saturday, June 9 • Indian Hollow hike, Organ Mountains – 7 miles. Strenuous. John Waugh (526-7116 – Southern Group).

Saturday, June 9 • Stewart Lake hike, Pecos Wilderness – 11 miles, 2300' gain. Strenuous loop hike. Dogs OK. Dan Rusthoi (690-8967 – Northern Group).

Saturday, June 16 • Pecos Wilderness hike – 11 miles, 3100' gain. Strenuous. Deception-Lake-Penitente Peaks-Puerto Nambe loop hike. Patrick O'Keefe (820-2359 – Northern Group).

Saturday, June 16 • Upper Frijoles Trail hike, Jemez Mountains – 4 miles, 250' gain. Easy hike through mixed conifer forest near FR 289. Mark Jones (662-9443 – Pajarito Group).

Sunday, June 17 • Red Dot Trail hike, to White Rock Canyon – Moderate. Short but steep. Dogs OK. Eliza Schmid (474-5846 – Northern Group).

Sunday, June 17 • Manzano Mountains hike – 7-8 miles, 2000' gain. Moderate hike up Spruce Spring Trail to Crest Trail, peaking at Gallo Peak, 10,003'. Back by Red Canyon Trail. Carol Chamberland (341-1027 – Central Group).

Thursday, June 21 • Summer Solstice hike and potluck dinner – Hike from Pajarito Mountain Ski Lodge to the deck between Aspen and Mother chair lifts at the top of the mountain. Takes 45-60 minutes. Jean Dewart (662-9592 – Pajarito Group).

Saturday-Sunday, June 23-24 • Creatures of the Night car camp, near Turkey Creek in the Black Range – Learn about bats, owls, and other night critters with Forest Service biologist and bat specialist Marikay Ramsey. Bird watching the next morning. Marikay Ramsey (894-6677) or Margot Wilson (744-5860 – Southern Group).

Sunday, June 24 • Lake Katherine hike, Pecos Wilderness – 14.5 miles, 3300' gain. Strenuous. Dogs OK. David Van Winkle (820-1006 – Northern Group).

Saturday-Sunday, June 30-July 1 • Latir Mesa car camp – Strenuous loop hike on this 12,000' mesa near Colorado border, leave Saturday afternoon. Michael DiRosa (663-0648 – Northern/Pajarito Groups).

Saturday, June 30 • Trampas Lakes and Hidden Lake hike, Pecos Wilderness – 13.5 miles, 2700' gain. Strenuous. Dogs OK. Tobin Oruch (820-2844 – Northern Group).

Sunday, July 1 • Tent Rocks hike – Easy. Dogs on leash OK. Eliza Schmid (474-5846 – Northern Group).

Saturday, July 7 • Rio Nambe hike, Pecos Wilderness – 10.5 miles, 2600' gain. Strenuous. Moderate pace via upper Rio en Medio and Borrego Trail. Dogs OK. Norma McCallan (471-0005 – Northern Group).

Saturday, July 7 • Wheeler Peak hike – 15 miles, 4300' gain. Strenuous hike to the highest peak in NM. Patrick O'Keefe (820-2359 – Northern Group).

Sunday, July 8 • Hamilton Mesa hike, Pecos Wilderness – 7 miles. Moderate. Great vistas and wildflowers. Michael Goldey (820-7302 – Northern Group).

Please check the five Groups' pages for more information on these trips and additional activities. Area code is 505, except as noted. All mileages are round trips. Participants must sign a liability waiver.

Step It Up! Events an Unprecedented Success

April 14 was Step It Up!'s Climate Change Action Day, and the Sierra Club worked with a wonderful set of partners to make two incredibly successful events happen. In one day we exchanged more than 3,200 incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescents, saving as much as 2 million pounds of coal from being burned to make electricity every year, and keeping 175 tons of greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere.

We had a festival and bulb trade-in in Santa Fe and five neighborhood walks doing door-to-door bulb trades in Albuquerque. It is easy to focus on the Santa Fe event because Senator John Kerry was our closing speaker (the turnout proves that Santa Fe still loves Kerry!), but in many ways, the Albuquerque event was even more successful, and the event would

not have been the kind of success it was without the participation of the City of Albuquerque.

Mayor Chávez spoke to the walkers, as did Councilors Benton and Heinrich, and Jason Marks from the Public Regulation Commission wrapped up the event and sent the walkers on their way. Over 60 people took bulbs and walked in a diverse set of neighborhoods; more than 1,600 bulbs were distributed to Albuquerque households, and 3,000 doorhangers (on recycled paper) were distributed to the households where people were not home. The city of Albuquerque bought the compact fluorescents, and we partnered with several groups including Interfaith Power and Light to get the community out to the event. A puppy brought by the City was even adopted at the rally before the walks left! Eva Thaddeus, our Cool

Cities leader in Albuquerque, put the whole thing together and did an amazing job of getting everything organized, keeping everything moving, and helping everyone complete their necessary tasks.

The response in the neighborhoods was wonderful. To quote one of our volunteers, Margaret Kemp, who walked in a neighborhood, "I had a fabulous time this morning going from door to door, telling people about the benefit of compact fluorescent light bulbs and swapping out their old bulbs for new energy-efficient bulbs! I was nervous about it as I've never done door-to-door canvassing (except maybe Girl Scout cookies as a kid), but I had a great partner (who I hadn't met previously), who was celebrating her birthday by doing this walk! I felt totally honored

(continued on page 5)