

# Rio Grande Sierran



NEWS OF THE RIO GRANDE CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

MAY/JUNE 2008

## An Outrage on the Border

One chilly, wet afternoon last November found me at an indoor book sale. It was late and for \$2.00 you could buy as many books as you could fit into a brown paper grocery bag. That was when a slim volume entitled *Walls: Defenses Throughout History* by James Cross Giblin slid into my hand. Published in 1984, in just over 100 pages this little volume powerfully describes walls of the past, beginning with one made of mastodon bones over 25,000 years ago. Some of these walls, such as the one around the ancient city of

by Jane Grider

Jericho, fell in a well-known biblical story at God's command. Others crumbled more ignominiously. Some are still standing, at least in part. The Great Wall of China was so powerfully built that it is the only manmade structure on earth that can be seen from space. Yet, despite its massive strength, it did not succeed in its defensive purpose. It took not only great amounts of money and human labor to build the wall, but the manpower and expense required for its upkeep eventually proved too much for Chinese rulers and it began to fall into disrepair. Finally, the Mongol leader Genghis Khan broke through a weakened section and conquered much of China.

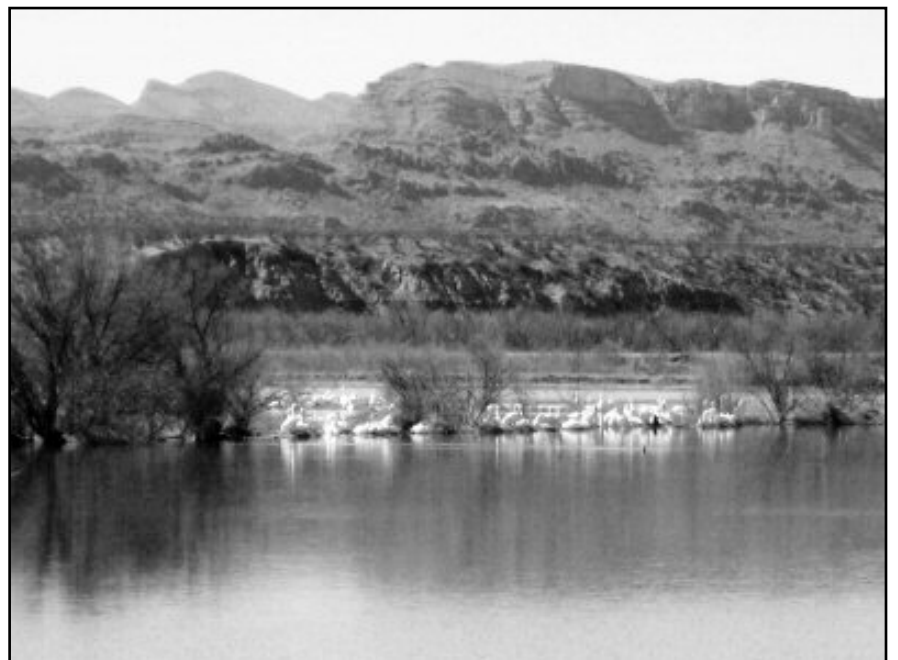
Despite the repeated failures of walls throughout history to keep the enemy out or to control citizens within by preventing them from leaving, walls have continued to be built. At the time of the publication of the above book, a very expensive "wall in space" consisting of a ring of satellites was being put in place. The small book eloquently points out how easily this "wall" could be breached. Almost a quarter of a century later, despite the great expense involved in its creation, the idea of a space wall seems almost quaint. Perhaps we collectively realized the folly of the concept, or our interests have turned elsewhere.

Today, our military leaders are once again insisting on yet another wall being built – this time along the United States-Mexico border. In

spite of continued protest, the plan is being pushed forth. The reasons seem unclear. We are told that it is necessary for national defense. Yet, no facts that would indicate that significant numbers of Middle Eastern terrorists who cannot be deterred by the border security measures already in place from slipping illegally across our southern border are being presented.

We are told that this fence is necessary to control border crime and to prevent illegal drugs from entering the country. Yet, those of us who live along the border know that the majority of illegal drugs daily entering our country is driven across by car and truck. And, we also know that a good deal of border crime is driven by rival gangs and cartels involved in the illegal drug trade. No one has described how a border fence would stop this.

We are assured that this fence will prevent illegal immigration, especially from Mexico. We who deal



*The presence of a border fence and its attendant bright spotlights will seriously disrupt annual wildlife migrations by preventing navigation by the stars. It will also not allow birds – such as these great white pelicans below Sierra Blanca, on Rio Grande Wetland – to rest and find sufficient food. If the fence is built as proposed, some bird and butterfly populations, already dwindling, are in danger of almost entirely disappearing. Likewise, Sonoran pronghorn, jaguar, and bison populations may be drastically reduced, or even become extinct, should the border fence be completed. (Photo by Greg Harman, San Antonio Current)*

daily with border issues are only too aware that determined people will find some way to go over, under, around, or even through a fence, just as our ancestors have for well over 250 centuries.

At this time, all relevant environmental laws have been circumvented in order to build this fence along at least 670 miles of our southern U.S. border. Ample evidence that the fence will cause extensive environmental damage has consistently fallen on deaf ears. The resistance of border elected officials, such as Mayor John Cook of El Paso who is quoted as being puzzled about the ways a border fence will be of benefit to local citizens, has also been repeatedly ignored. So egregious does the flaunting of the law seem to some that the Sierra Club, under the leadership of Carl Pope, has recently firmly opposed the building of the border fence both through public announcement and suite. The questionable efficacy

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## Creating Resilient Habitats

*At its March quarterly meeting, the Chapter's Executive Committee was privileged to meet with Bruce Hamilton, the Sierra Club's Deputy Executive Director. He introduced us to the Club's heightened response to the effects of climate change, entitled "Creating Resilient Habitats." The following are excerpts of this enthralling presentation.*

Human-caused global warming not only threatens our civilization, but is also predicted to lead to the loss and alteration of natural habitats, which will lead to the mass extinction of fish, wildlife, and plants. IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) predicts that approximately 20%-30% of plant and animal species assessed so far are likely to be at heightened risk of extinction if increases in global average temperature exceed 1.5°-2.5° C, which is almost certain to happen even if we drastically reduce our global warming emissions. Some scientists suggest we could lose as many as one million species worldwide if we don't act quickly. Even a fraction of such a loss stands to have severe economic, social, and spiritual impacts for humanity.

There are predictions that Glacier National Park will have no glaciers by 2050; moose and sugar maples will disappear from New York and New England; most of the Florida Everglades will be lost to sea rise; Yellowstone National Park will not be able to support grizzly bears; an ice-free North Pole will be unable to sustain healthy numbers of polar bear and walrus; 97% of trout streams in the Southern Appalachians will be gone, along with most coral reefs and their associated marine life worldwide.

We have an opportunity and an obligation to act to mitigate this predicted extinction crisis that extends beyond merely documenting the anticipated losses. And we have solutions. Like a modern-day Noah, we can provide an ark to the future for imperiled species. It is called "Creating Resilient Habitats."

Success depends first and foremost on a drastic and permanent cut in emissions of greenhouse gases.

Second, and simultaneously, we must take positive steps to help save as many habitats and species as possible. Ecosystem by ecosystem, we need analyses to predict how global warming will impact fish, wildlife, plants, their habitats, and the human communities that depend on them. Then we need to implement the Sierra Club's Creating Resilient Habitats campaign to protect our natural heritage.

The Sierra Club's solution is based on the best science available. It calls for the establishment of a continental network of climate adaptation reserves. The climate adaptation reserves will start with the existing network of parks and protected areas, and then expand them by designating new preserves, buffer areas, and connecting corridors to allow species to move and survive as the climate changes. We will also need to reduce the non-climate stresses within the reserves. For example, if we can eliminate pollution in a stream, then the trout will have a better chance of surviving the water temperature increases expected by global warming. In addition, where needed, we will work with scientists to determine where management strategies such as prescribed burning or eliminating competing non-native species will help increase the chance of survival.

The Sierra Club has great expertise and experience in shaping, adopting, and ensuring full enforcement of public policy to protect the environment. We will need to enlist and engage all who care about the Earth and its diversity of life – people of faith, labor, farmers, health care workers, hunters, anglers, teachers, scientists, outdoor recreation groups, etc. No organization is better equipped to deliver successful lobbying, organizing, litigating, and educating the public to call for action.

If we act now, we can still pass on a world to our grandchildren where polar bears, giant sequoias, wild salmon, sea turtles, rainforests, and emperor penguins survive in a climate-changed world. If we fail to act, the next generation will inherit a world that is biologically impoverished, with fewer opportunities to explore and enjoy the planet.

## A Fond Farewell to Carol Oldham, and a Hearty Welcome to Michael Casaus

In mid-March Carol Oldham moved from New Mexico to Boston where she has assumed a new role with the Sierra Club's Northeast Region. Carol now manages field staff in some of the New England states.

Carol's Rio Grande Chapter friends are sad to see her leave our part of the Sierra Club. We will miss her tireless dedication, her political insights, and her initiative, along with her many other qualities. In concert with the hard-working leaders of the Rio Grande Chapter and her staff colleagues, Carol did much to make the Club's campaigns successful. In the past year she was a leader in organizing a 250-person rally at the State Capitol in opposition to the Desert Rock power plant. Carol then organized two Step-It-Up events in two cities on the same day – one a neighborhood walk and media event with the Mayor of Albuquerque, the other a bulb exchange in Santa Fe with Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry – and managed to be present at both. Carol worked closely with volunteer leaders on the bold initiative to arrange with New Mexico's Public Regulation Commission to distribute 40,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs to rate-payers in the state. And work-

ing with Conservation Organizer Shrayas Jatkari and many volunteers and national staff, Carol planned and implemented an ambitious campaign to hold Sen. Pete Domenici accountable for his bad voting behavior on energy legislation.

Of course, Carol couldn't leave without taking something with her from New Mexico, and that would be a freezer-full of green chile. We all wish Carol the best of luck in her new job, and we're really glad that she's still working for the Sierra Club.

As we say goodbye to Carol, we welcome Michael Casaus in his new role as Regional Representative and manager of our New Mexico Field Office.

Michael was born and raised in southern New Mexico. He came to the Club with a diverse background, having worked for the Center for Economic Justice where he coordinated the World Bank Bonds Boycott. Michael has also been a leader and organizer in Latino and minority organizations while a grad student at Cornell University. His political experience includes serving as Hispanic Outreach and Community Outreach Coordinator for the Kerry-Edwards Campaign in 2004. Michael's academic research in plant biology

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## Celebrate Endangered Species Day on May 16

Not only are birds migrating and prairies, forests, deserts, marshes, pastures, and parks greening across America, but many environmentalists remain concerned about last year's behind-the-scenes shenanigans in Washington D.C. and their impact on the plight of endangered animals, plants, birds, insects, and reptiles.

Last year, national media seized on news from the Inspector General's office that Bush administration appointee to the Department of the Interior (DOI), Julie MacDonald, routinely altered scientific research and leaked sensitive information to industry groups. Ms. MacDonald, thankfully, is no longer employed by the department and the Bush administration was forced to order a review of the threatened and endangered listing decisions of seven species including the Canadian lynx, the California red-legged frog, and the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

Last March, another leak from the Interior Department revealed that the agency had been busy behind closed doors drafting regulations that would seriously undermine key provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections.

The Sierra Club and other environmental groups are concerned about other actions from the Bush administration, including the repeal of logging restrictions in Pacific Northwest old-growth forests that are the habitat of the endangered spotted owl; future protection for gray wolves, grizzly bears, and American bison in Yellowstone National Park; and with development issues in the Everglades that may adversely affect the imperiled Florida panther.

While many Washington legislators have expressed a strong desire to further protect threatened and endangered wildlife, especially polar bears, funding

is chronically short for federal listing and species protection programs. Congress needs to get with the program and provide adequate funding annually for the Department of the Interior's ESA support work. More than 250 U.S. plants, animals, insects, invertebrates, and fish have been flagged as strong candidates for endangered or threatened status, but DOI staff pleads a perpetual lack of funds for their lack of action in reviewing and listing these species.

But one concrete action by the U.S. Senate is its designation of May 16 as Endangered Species Day.

Dedicating a specific day to public outreach about Endangered Species is a wonderful way to help everyone from school-children to politicians to Joe Q. Public about the importance of maintaining strong protections for wildlife around the world that is threatened by habitat destruction, neglect, excessive exploitation, and global climate change.

Make every day ESA Day by supporting recovery of our local threatened species and endangered species – Mexican wolf, Rio Grande silvery minnow, and many, many more – however you can!

To learn more about the Endangered Species Act and the Sierra Club's efforts to protect wildlife, see [www.sierraclub.org/esa](http://www.sierraclub.org/esa) or email Liz Walsh ([liz.walsh.rotifer@gmail.com](mailto:liz.walsh.rotifer@gmail.com))

To learn more about the impacts of global warming on wildlife and habitat see [www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/habitat](http://www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/habitat). For more information about Endangered Species Day, see [www.stopextinction.org/endangeredspeciesday](http://www.stopextinction.org/endangeredspeciesday).

—Christine Williamson,

Chicago Group Conservation Chair, member of Sierra Club's Wildlife & Endangered Species Committee



The endangered Mexican wolf. (Photo by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

### Gila River

A crescent moon shines its light through  
the cottonwoods

The trees' shadows on the still water.  
Pale moonlight reflecting  
From the occasional river ripple.

From over the ridges  
Floats the howl of a wild wolf  
A howl from a distant place  
A howl from a distant millennium.

From around the bend of the Gila  
Floats a call from a domestic cow  
A call from a nearby place  
A call from a modern decade.

How will the silence of the night be  
broken in 2208

For New Mexico's distant generations  
Only by domestic sounds of human  
activity?

Will wild sounds still float over the Gila  
river ripples?

—David Munich

David Munich is an Albuquerque resident and  
member of the Central Group.

## Better Public Access, Management Needed at Valles Caldera National Preserve

As heavy winter snows melt from the wide meadows of the Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP) in the Jemez Mountains, cross-country skies will soon give way to hiking boots on the still-limited trails of our Preserve. Halting progress is being made for more public access to the VCNP, yet the summer of 2008 will still see few new opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, or other appropriate recreation on our Preserve.

The VCNP staff and trustees continue to struggle with the demands placed on them by the federal legislation that set up the Preserve in 2000. The legislation requires that the Preserve be "financially self sufficient" by 2015, yet to date the VCNP is only earning about \$850,000 of the roughly \$3 million needed to run the Preserve each year. Most of that money comes from hunting and fishing permits with smaller amounts from fees for hiking and skiing. New trustees appointed by President Bush have placed overdue attention to funding problems at the Preserve and a study detailing financial options will be completed in August by a contractor. We will be intently interested in the results of that study which could suggest inappropriate development or partial privatization of the Preserve.

The VCNP management opened the way toward limited camping on the Preserve with an "Interim Camping" proposal, which would allow overnight stays on the Preserve associated with existing scientific, grazing, or other management activities. The proposal still has no public component, and public

backpacking is not yet in the offing. Free hiking is still limited to two short trails near Highway 4, horseback riding is by reservation only, and mountain biking is limited to organized events. We have a long way to go until satisfactory public access to our publicly owned Preserve is available.

Meanwhile 2,000 cattle will spend the summer on the VCNP grazing the three Valles over a four-month period. This is the largest number of cows yet placed on the Preserve since the public acquisition. Water quality, which continues to violate state standards, could be further impaired by cattle though the VCNP has assured the public that cows will be kept out of streams and wetlands.

The VCNP cattle programs have been money losers every year, yet the VCNP trustees feel obligated to graze cattle though the enabling legislation does not require grazing in unequivocal terms. Caldera Action is deeply concerned that Valles streams continue to improve both for wildlife and for the fishing public and that cattle not damage this most valuable VCNP resource.

Caldera Action is intensifying our efforts to increase public access to the VCNP and to advocate for long-term stable funding and public-oriented management of the Preserve. We expect increasing challenges over the next two years and encourage everyone who loves the VCNP to get involved with our efforts. For more information, visit Caldera Action's website ([www.Caldera-Action.org](http://www.Caldera-Action.org)) or call 505/982 4464.

—Tom Ribe

## Mora County Fights to Protect Its Way of Life from Oil and Gas

Mired in the middle of oil and gas development, Mora County residents must now face difficult decisions on how to protect their cherished agricultural way of life. Oil and gas development does not respect the land, water, air, nor health of human or beast, and in today's frantic race – funded by our federal government – more delicate and remote landscapes are being targeted for drilling. It is a shame to destroy these last vestiges of wilderness and traditional cultures that have preserved a way of life, unique and beautiful – and rich with values.

In October 2007, KHL landman Knute Lee, a small Albuquerque oil and gas “realtor,” came knocking on doors. Not to tell the residents in the Ocate area that oil and gas would be drilled on their property, but to negotiate to lease their mineral rights.

Unlike other places in the country, many residents own their mineral rights. In fact, Hispanic families who have lived on their land for generations often have mineral rights that landmen, like Lee, want desperately to acquire. For others whose mineral rights have already been severed from their land, drilling could occur at any time. And Lee's explorations in Mora County could speed up that timeline.

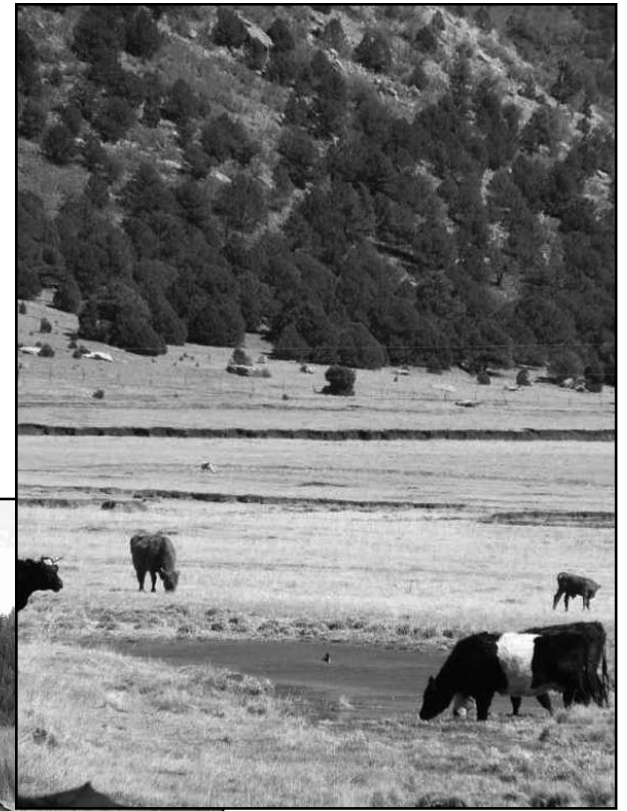
Taking land and a way-of-life from the local Hispanics is not new to Mora County. Nearly 200 years ago Mora County families fought for their land. In a revolt in 1847, they faced General Kearney who claimed the territory for the United States government, and from the “Notorious Santa Fe Ring” who dispossessed Mora County of their land in 1876. Today, the government not only supports another “taking” of Mora County, but encourages petroleum exploration. The outcome, however, has yet to be proven.

The County's canon, the Development Guidance System, governs and protects the agricultural activities and discourages any development that threatens them – whether it is the water, air, land, health, or culture. These laws, adopted in 1994 and legally binding, will pit U.S. v. Mora County in a fight for life. Should federal law require Mora County give way to oil and gas development's degradation, the “taking” will be more than just the minerals beneath the soil. It will be the health of the fields, our children and animals, the water and air. And more gravely still, a sense of deep loss that something as vacuous as money has destroyed yet another culture.

In the Ocate area, such a crisis is occurring – where the land and the people are one in the quiet, peacefulness of the llanos, cañons, and forests; where their animals graze, gardens and orchards flourish, fields ripen; where the people sleep and work by the seasons and moon-cycles; and where family and church are a way of life, there is a shattering of a community happening.

Of course it is an issue of money. Oil and gas has pitted families who desire to lease against those who desire to maintain their traditions on the land in spite of the lure for money. Poor by national standards, county revenues, and end-of-the-year taxation statements, Mora County, however, is rich in tradition, culture, and land use. It is a grave loss when people lose sight of these basic values and sell to an industry that cares not what happens to a way of life. There can be no saving grace.

A group of concerned citizens, Drilling Mora County, has organized, as have numerous other people in the communities, to work with the local county government to help preserve the ranchers' and farmers' cultural existence in Mora County. Together with the generous help of organizations and people from other counties and states, Drilling Mora County is finding ways to curtail the degradation of oil and gas development. If by all counts drilling cannot be stopped, then education is the only partial grace.



Above left: The church in Ocate.  
Above: Cows grazing on land leased for oil and gas exploration, Ocate.  
Left: The author disking millet fields, Ocate. (Photos by Kathleen Dudley)

Unfortunately, nothing shy of expediency mandates oil and gas production. What happens to the safety of cattle and sheep moseying down country roads or open acequias across fields where tanker trucks choose these routes? And about the unintentional spill that mixes benzene and mercury into the water well, depths below, and are not known or disclosed? Or the aquifers beneath drilling pads, which ooze with chemical-laden mud from hydraulic fracturing procedures?

How can an industry, exempt from the federal Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, have any accountability in these scores? They don't. And that is why oil and gas development and an agricultural way of life do

not mix without dire consequences. And why Mora County is at such risk of losing its rich, earthy culture. Darn it anyway – for a few months of gas!

The Mora County Commissioners have called a special meeting on oil and gas development in Mora County on Tuesday, May 6, at 6:00 p.m. at the Mora High School gymnasium. There will be a slide presentation as well as a panel to field questions from the audience.

For more information, contact Kathleen Dudley with Drilling Mora County (575/666-2529, drillingmoracounty@gmail.com) or visit [www.drillingmoracounty.blogspot.com](http://www.drillingmoracounty.blogspot.com).

—Kathleen Dudley

### An Opportunity to Finally Reform the 1872 Mining Law

The following was adapted from a bulletin from Earthworks, an organization devoted to modifying (if not eliminating) the 1872 Mining Act and halting the depredations to the land, air, and water in the west

The House did its job...

Late last year, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation that would effectively reform the 1872 Mining Law for the first time since it passed 135 years ago.

...now it's the Senate's turn.

By taking action today, you can help ensure the Senate creates mining reform legislation that will protect communities and the environment.

As you know, the 1872 Mining Law gives hardrock (metal) mining special priority over communities, the environment, hunting, fishing, camping, and everything else. Adding insult to injury, it also gives away publicly owned hardrock minerals for free – even to foreign corporations. Please tell your senators that *real* mining reform must:

- End hardrock mining's special priority over other uses of public lands, like conservation and recreation.
- Protect clean water by creating mining-specific operation and reclamation standards.
- Allow local and tribal governments to try to set important lands off-limits to mining.
- Protect taxpayers by charging royalties to mining companies who mine public lands – now and in the future.
- Conserve valuable fish and wildlife habitat by placing national forest roadless areas and other special places “off limits” to new mining claims.

Take action! Tell your senators to support real mining law reform (see contact info, page 2).

For more information, visit the Earthworks Mining Reform Campaign site ([www.miningreform.org](http://www.miningreform.org)) or contact Cliff Larsen, Chapter Mining Chair (see masthead, page 2).

## The “Few Bad Apples” Keep Breaking the Rules

A recent off-road vehicle event in the Gila National Forest drew the attention of conservation groups from New Mexico, leading the Center for Biological Diversity to monitor the event. While monitoring the event in the Gila, fresh tracks were discovered going past a clearly closed area. The off-road vehicle enthusiasts who are breaking the rules do a wonderful job of proving our point – the rules are being broken, fragile areas are being damaged, and nothing is being done about it. Why then is the Forest Service considering rewarding those who are breaking the rules by driving off-road and creating illegal trails and roads? The Forest Service in New Mexico may authorize miles of user-created routes in an attempt to appease the off-roaders. This will do nothing more than encourage the renegades to continue violating the rules, especially after many of their trails and areas are closed to motorized travel following implementation of the Travel Management Rule. Although off-road vehicle advocates keep saying it is just a “few bad apples” who are breaking the rules, recent reports ([www.wildlandscpr.org/biblio-notes/just-few-bad-apples-research-shows-many-off-readers-break-law](http://www.wildlandscpr.org/biblio-notes/just-few-bad-apples-research-shows-many-off-readers-break-law)) and surveys ([www.commondreams.org/news2007/1211-04.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/news2007/1211-04.htm)) are proving it is more than just a few who are rotten.

Travel management continues to be a controversial topic in New Mexico, but the conservation community is making progress. The New Mexico Department of Tourism website has recently undergone a makeover and now focuses less on off-road vehicles than it has in the past. Conservation groups in New Mexico, including the Center for Biological Diversity, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, WildEarth Guardians, Sierra Club, Amigos Bravos, Great Old Broads, and [glorietamesa.org](http://glorietamesa.org), have partnered to share information with each other and the public and to work together to protect wild places and quiet recreation opportunities. We expect to see proposed plans from the Santa Fe, the Cibola and the Lincoln in the next few months. Please continue to engage

the Forest Service, go to public meetings, and fight for clean air, clean water, and fragile wildlife habitat.

### Cibola National Forest, Mt. Taylor Ranger District

In April, the Forest held workshops in Grants and Gallup to gather public input on where motorized recreation needed to be reined in. New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and other conservation groups worked hard to get members to these meetings and speak out to protect our wild places.

Expect to see a proposed action from the Cibola in May, with additional public meetings to follow. Contact Nancy Brunswick (505/281-3304, [nbrunswick@fs.fed.us](mailto:nbrunswick@fs.fed.us)) for more information from the Forest Service.

### Lincoln National Forest

The proposed action from the Lincoln is expected in May, with public meetings to follow. The draft proposed action from the Lincoln indicated new motorized routes would be created and some routes see increased motorized use. Areas around Bluff Springs are especially sensitive to motorized recreation because of the large number of springs and streams in the area. Please contact Connie Zipperer (505/434-7297, [czipperer@fs.fed.us](mailto:czipperer@fs.fed.us)) for more information from the Forest Service.

### Santa Fe National Forest

The proposed action for the Santa Fe will be



Off-road vehicle damage is evident at the Sandia Rock Riparian Restoration Area in the Cibola National Forest. The sign in the photo states: “The area behind this sign has been closed to motorized use.” (Photo by Craig Chapman, NMWA)

released sometime in late April or early May. We expect to see highly attended public meetings that are sure to attract a large number of off-road vehicle supporters. The Santa Fe newspapers have been closely watching travel management and it is key that those who care about quiet recreation and the environment attend the upcoming meetings and speak out against unrestrained motorized use of our forests. Contact Julie Bain (505/757-6121, [sftravelmgt@fs.fed.us](mailto:sftravelmgt@fs.fed.us)) for more information from the Forest Service.

Visit the Center for Biological Diversity’s newly updated website ([www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/travel-management\\_planning/index.html](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/travel-management_planning/index.html)) for updates and more information on the Travel Management Rule, or contact Cyndi Tuell (520/623-5262 ext. 308, [ctuell@biologicaldiversity.com](mailto:ctuell@biologicaldiversity.com)).

—Cyndi Tuell

## New Exhibition Highlights NM’s Natural Beauty

The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum is pleased to present “Georgia O’Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities” from May 23 to September 7, 2008. This exhibition brings together for the first time 97 works by two of America’s best-known artists. The two first met in Taos in 1929 and a lifelong friendship ensued. They shared a deep, profound appreciation of the natural world and traveled together with other friends to explore the Southwest. During their lifetimes O’Keeffe and Adams became two of America’s most celebrated icons. Adams was a lifelong environmentalist as well, and served on the national board of the Sierra Club for many years.

The museum is offering Sierra Club Members free



admission by showing their membership card the weekend of June 13-15. Jackie M., Director of Education, will present a talk on the exhibition on May 20 at the Northern Group’s general meeting (see Northern Group pages). The museum’s hours are 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (closed Wednesday until June 1). Admission is \$8.00, seniors \$7.00, full-time New Mexico residents \$4.00, students 18 and over \$4.00, youth free.

Friday night admission is free from 5:00-8:00 p.m. For more information, call 505/946-1000.

“Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico” by Ansel Adams, 1941.

## Book Offers Fresh Look at Grazing

There have been some very fine and important books written from a scientific perspective about the ecological impacts from livestock grazing on public lands and the failure of federal agencies to live up to their stewardship responsibilities. Mike Hudak’s *Western Turf Wars* (Biome Books, [www.biomebooks.com](http://www.biomebooks.com)) takes a refreshingly different approach.

*Western Turf Wars* honors people whose stories and experiences have been ignored by the media in our culture. Hudak’s compilation is the first of which I am aware that tells several stories of former and current public agency employees and ordinary citizens who have struggled to reduce the impacts of grazing on land owned by all Americans.

There are some very powerful stories, to be sure. The decisions by agency people to quit in the face of illegal intimidation, corruption, or both, knowing that nothing can be done, are telling. So are the stories of political pressure, harassment, or death threats against those exercising their constitutional rights.

Of the many contributions of *Western Turf Wars*, perhaps the most important is its personal, emotional wallop. This book effectively counters the media demonization of environmentalists, conservationists, and agency people and shows them to be real people and citizens concerned about the fate of our public lands and our country. For that alone, it is worth reading.

—Gary Macfarlane

## Is Groundwater in Place a Sound Measure of Sustainability?

Some believe that groundwater in place tells us a lot about the available groundwater supply. The definitions of “groundwater in place” vary but generally involve multiplying the average height of the column of groundwater by the area of the parcel in question. There may be reductions based on the perceived ability to actually lift this groundwater to the surface.

Once groundwater in place has been determined, there is a tendency to use this to determine the sustainability of an intended use. Basically people divide the groundwater in place on their property by the forecasted rate of usage to get the number of years of supply. Does this make sense? Is it a useful way to determine sustainability?

I think not. If we were talking about a static situation where the water under my property just stayed there until I pumped it, then it would make sense. Thus it might make sense where water cut off from streams (fresh or brackish) is being mined. But water that is not connected to streams is the exception. In most cases our groundwater is on the move and flowing towards streams. Thus the water that is under the surface of my property today is not the water that will be there some time in the future.

Water currently in place may not tell us much about the future water supply.

If we take only that amount of groundwater where recharge allows most wells to remain reasonably functional, then we have an indefinite supply subject only to the natural precipitation cycles and perhaps unnatural cycles due to human-assisted climate change.

If we take more than that amount, where there is little water in storage, we will experience negative impacts almost immediately. So to me there is no such thing as a 100-year supply where groundwater is moving. It is either indefinite or very short. Where some of the water is not moving but represents long-term storage, the answer will be somewhere in the middle. Here where I live in the Galisteo Basin south of Santa Fe, there is little, if any, long-term storage in the aquifers currently being utilized.

Because my future water exists today up-gradient from my well (at a higher elevation and flowing underground towards me), the supply for me and other users depends less on my planned usage and more on the future plans of others. It is not like there is a supply of water under each property that each property owner can draw on, which is the way I hear 40- and 100-year sustainability being expressed, i.e. I have X acre-feet of water in place. It is more like the

Everglades where there is a sheet of fresh water flowing in their case to the ocean, and here where I live to the Rio Grande, and in other parts of New Mexico to the Pecos or other surface water. Everyone up-gradient from a given well impacts that well, which in turn impacts everyone down-gradient. Each well is impacted by the future diversions up-gradient.

And generally there is no control over the future because of domestic wells and the ability to transfer in water rights. We may need a different concept to determine groundwater sustainability. Such sustainability calculations must factor in planned and allowable additional diversions or tapings.

I am challenging the concept of water in place when you have a moving aquifer with little storage. The water does not stay in place; it is moving. So my water 100 years from now is in the atmosphere somewhere right now overhead or in India or who knows where, or is ancient groundwater flowing towards my well.

So if you want to know if I will have water in 10 years or 40 years or 100 years, you have to know what is going on up-gradient between me and the recharge area.

I am challenging the notion that the height of the water column is at all relevant to sustainability. The water column at my property is about 30 feet. I am more concerned about the water flowing towards me than the water that happens to be above my pump today. If there are few straws between me and the recharge zone, I have an infinite amount of water and the well will never go dry. If there are enough straws, it will go dry quickly. Recharge, rather than storage, is what is important.

Transmissivity is very important. If the transmissivity is low enough, that which is on my property is stored water. But even as low as 2 feet per day, this is 730 feet per year, which is a mile in seven years. So if I were lucky enough to have a property with a radius of a half of mile and if I had a lot of water on my property and just up-gradient a large village was created that used all or most of the flow onto my property, I would be out of water in seven years pretty much independent of my rate of consumption.

And in another short period of time, those down-gradient from me would be out of water also.

Based on my modeling experience, I believe we need a water budget for every large well applicant. This water budget should address water in, water stored, water out, and water consumed or lost. Then

we need to adjust all of those estimates by what we see happening over N years. Only then can we say that something is sustainable for N years.

Many of the same issues also apply to surface water that moves. You either have an indefinitely sustainable situation when average annual consumption equals or is less than average annual stream flow, or you have shortages in a short period of time. In most cases, the concept of 40-year sustainability or 100-year sustainability means nothing more than plans are in place to divert water from agricultural use.

We need a different mindset in regards to sustainability. Part of that mindset involves being honest with ourselves rather than looking for ways to make untenable situations appear to be acceptable.

New Mexico has extensive water resources both developed and undeveloped. Opportunities for conservation are also plentiful. If we approach our water situation intelligently, we can meet all important needs for people while preserving wildlife, and preserving or possibly even expanding agriculture. But to do this we have to get away from our instincts which are to justify land-use decisions rather than attempt to make better decisions. Realistic concepts for assessing sustainability will help with improved decision-making, which will both improve the future and reduce its cost.

For more information, contact Water Issues Chair Sigmund Silber (see masthead, page 2).

—Sigmund Silber

## RiverXchange Project Connects Students

Two classes of fourth graders from Los Ranchos Elementary in Albuquerque have high-tech “pen pals” this year with two classes from Godfrey, Illinois, to share what each class is learning about their own local river. The two groups are fortunate to live close to two of our nation’s great rivers – the Rio Grande and the Mississippi. In fact, Godfrey is located near the confluence of three great rivers: the Mississippi, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers.

The classes will meet three times this year via state-of-the-art video teleconferencing equipment to share what they are learning about the geography, science, and culture of their rivers. Each session includes writing, drawing, and hands-on activities that meet several science, social studies, and language arts standards. The pilot project is part of the 2007 Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Children’s Water Festival’s outreach to teachers to help them use water as a theme to teach the curriculum standards throughout

the school year. The New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance serves as fiscal partner to Experiential EE, LLC, which produces children’s water festivals in Albuquerque and Rio Rancho.

Through the RiverXchange project, students examine many aspects of the river in their own back yard and take pride in sharing their knowledge of their local ecosystem. RiverXchange gives these students the unique opportunity to see and hear each other, ask questions, and share personal experiences about a distant place. Learning from their peers about another river ecosystem and comparing it with their own gives students a broader understanding of the importance of a river to human life.

For more information about the Children’s Water Festivals and Outreach Program, contact Katie Babuska, Experiential EE, LLC (505/975-0036) or visit the festival website ([www.waterfestnm.com](http://www.waterfestnm.com)).

—Katie Babuska

### Volunteer Needed!

**N**EEDDED! A volunteer who likes data entry to be responsible for maintaining a list of our members who chose to opt out of a mailed copy of the *Sierran*, and instead receive an email each time an issue is mailed, telling them it is available on the website. Must take a short (hourlong) training to become familiar with Helen, the Club’s new database. We want to start this option for getting the newsletter (saving paper and money), but first we need a volunteer to handle the data work. Email Norma McCallan ([nmccallan@mindspring.com](mailto:nmccallan@mindspring.com)).

### Webmaster Wanted!

**W**ANTED! Experienced webmaster to oversee the Rio Grande Chapters website, replacing our indefatigable webmaster, Geoff Brown, who has moved to Colorado. Two volunteers have bravely stepped forward to help out (Steve Markowitz and Nick Rimmer) but they would like to work with someone who already has good experience in the art of website construction.

Contact Norma McCallan ([nmccallan@mindspring.com](mailto:nmccallan@mindspring.com)) if you are interested in this critical volunteer job.

### Rio Grande Chapter Quarterly Meetings

**T**he Chapter’s Conservation and Executive Committee meetings will be held in June 7-8 at Black Range Lodge in Kingston, NM. The date and place for the fall meetings are yet to be determined. Contact Conservation Chair Ken Hughes or Chapter Chair Susan Martin (see masthead, page 2) for more information. Carpooling is encouraged.

## Los Alamos County Is Soaring Towards Cool

In its Draft Environmental Sustainability Proposal, the County council and staff reiterate the imperative of developing a strategy for dealing with changes in both climate and culture, and their impacts on quality-of-life issues, including water (both quality and availability), air quality, and costs for energy and commodities.

One of the programs that the County would benchmark itself against is our own Sierra Club's Cool Counties/Cool Cities program. The proposal lists as goals our seven solutions for energy efficiency, which include green building, recycling, renewable energy, land use, and water conservation.

Few other local governments have such comprehensive goals; fewer still the chutzpah to push them through. The predicament is that County staff and council cannot accomplish this effort unilaterally. The community must participate. We, you, I, he, and she must each commit to doing at least one small thing a week.

To support the County in its goal to protect our Earth, each member of We must first conserve, then collaborate.

First, the County needs our support with conservation. A few conservation efforts from no-skin-off-a-nose to a huge commitment are:

1. Turn off the lights when you're not in a room.
- Turn off any electronic device when you're not

using it, including your computer. A screen saver on a computer isn't saving power; it's only saving your screen.

2. Turn off the water when washing hands or brushing teeth; shorten your showers.
3. Bundle your errands to drive as little as possible.
4. Recycle (a list of recyclables often comes with your utility bill).
5. Machine wash only when you have a full load of dishes or laundry. Dry your clothes on the line.
6. Leave your car parked for one day a week; walk, bike, or take the bus. Don't give the keys to the kids, either. (Donate the gas money you save to the Sierra Club.)
7. Carpool. (Did I mention, don't give the keys to the kids?)
8. Reduce lawn size; exchange grass for natural landscaping or Xeriscape rather than gravel.
9. Exchange the old hot appliances for new energy- and water-saving ones.
10. Turn off the TV and go outside.

Second, the County needs our support in its decision-making. We must help the public understand that conservation is good not only for them, their children, and all life as we know it, but for their pocket-books. To support this future we could:

1. Attend meetings (preferably by foot, bike, carpool, or public transportation) to voice our support and offer ideas. Write letters to all the councilors urging them to continue toward Cool: P.O. Box 30, Los Alamos, NM 87544 (their emails are listed below).
2. Write letters to the editor stating why going Cool is smart.
3. Apply to be on the Utilities Board or the new Sustainability Board.
4. Run for president of the USA in 2012.

We are Sierrans because we love the Earth and the astonishing variety of life it supports – our souls thrive because of its beauty, and wither when it withers. We know we must be conscious of how our actions affect its survival. We must take steps to protect what we love. As Sierrans, the steps we follow are John Muir's. The trail is steep, the mountain seemingly insurmountable, but we've done it before. Step by step.



*Ken Hughes and Mark Jones at the March Powwow.*

There has never been a more critical time than now or a more critical journey than ours.

Here are the Council email addresses:  
 jhall@newmexico.com, rgibson@swcp.com,  
 wheels@newmexico.com, nbowman@cybermesa.com,  
 fberting@losalamos.com, ken@milder.us,  
 jimwest@comcast.net

If you haven't checked out the Sierra Club Cool page yet, it's at <http://coolcities.us>.

### Pajarito Group Directory

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

#### Executive Committee

Chair: Ilse Bleck  
 ibleck@yahoo.com 505/662-2368  
 Vice-Chair: Jody Benson  
 505/662-4782  
 Secretary: Deirdre Witherell  
 witherell@lanl.gov 505/661-8249  
 Treasurer: David Gemeinhart  
 ddgem@losalamos.com 505/672-6267  
 Michael Di Rosa  
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 Mark Jones  
 jonesmm1@comcast.net 505/662-9443

#### Committee Chairs

Conservation: Michael Di Rosa  
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 Energy, Transportation: Deirdre Witherell  
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 Grazing, National Forests, Wetlands,  
 Wilderness: David Gemeinhart  
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 Jody Benson 505/662-4782  
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 Mark Jones  
 jonesmm1@comcast.net 505/662-9443  
 Global Warming: Charles Keller  
 alfanso@cybermesa.com 505/662-7915  
 Webmeister: Jennifer Macke  
 jpmacke@comcast.net 505/695-9275

### Meetings

**Wednesday, May 7, 7:00 p.m. • PEEC at 3540 Orange Street (behind the high school) – Joint meeting with the Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC): Dorothy Hoard: The Valles Caldera Rim Trail**

Learn about local efforts to create a 78-mile contiguous trail around the Valles Caldera rim.

**Wednesday, June 4, 7:00 p.m. • Upstairs Meeting Room, Mesa Public Library – Brad Traver: Meet the Superintendent**

Brad Traver is the new Superintendent of Bandelier, our own backyard National Monument. Learn of his vision for Bandelier; come with your questions.

*There will be no general meetings July and August. We invite you to go out and revel in the natural world.*

### Outings

*Please check the Northern Group and the Outings Page for additional activities.*

**Sunday, May 4 • Ancho Rapids hike to the bottom of White Rock Canyon** – A moderate 6-mile walk along the Rio Grande, 1040' gain. Mark Jones (505/662-9443).

**Thursday, May 15 • Valles Caldera spring highway cleanup** – Meet at Ponderosa Campground at 4:30 p.m. and carpool to our miraculous mile of road along the edge of the Valles Caldera. Bring work gloves. David Gemeinhart (505/672-6267).

**Saturday, May 31 • Chicoma Mountain and Polvadera Peak hike, NW of Espanola** – Highest mountain in Jemez at 11,530'. Strenuous. Michael Di Rosa (505/663-0648).

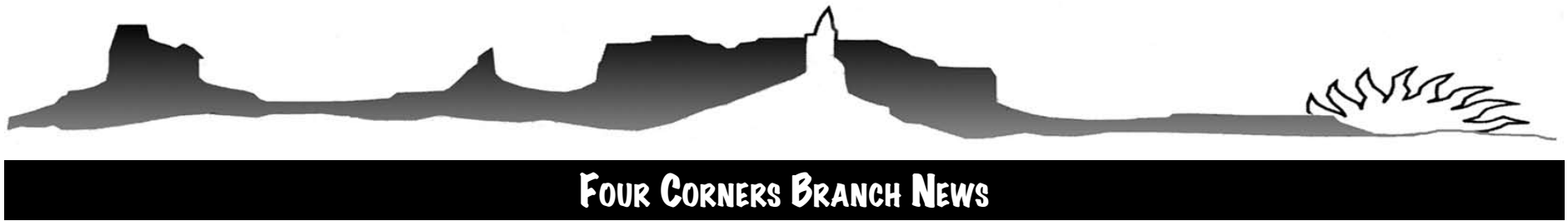
**Sunday, June 1 • East Fork Jemez River hike**

– Moderate, 8-10 miles round trip. Striking cliffs, abundant wildflowers. Mark Jones (505/662-9443).

**Saturday, June 7 • Scooter Peak and Rabbit Ridge hike in Bandelier** – Great views of the Valle Grande. Strenuous, 7-plus miles, mostly off trail. 2000' gain. Michael Di Rosa (505/663-0648).

**Friday, June 20 • Our popular annual Summer Solstice Hike and Potluck Dinner** – Meet at the Pajarito Mountain Ski Area parking lot at 5:15 p.m. Bring food/drink to share, plate/cup/utensils, warm jacket, flashlight. Hike down by dark. Jean Dewart (505/662-9592).

**Saturday, July 12 • Manzano Peak hike, south of the Sandias** – Strenuous, 11.5 miles round trip, 2500' gain. Alligator junipers along the way, sweeping views from the top. Michael Di Rosa (505/663-0648).



## FOUR CORNERS BRANCH NEWS

### Proposed Desert Rock Coal-Fired Plant Continues to Flounder

Organizers and members of the Sierra Club, Diné Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment (Diné CARE) and San Juan Citizens Alliance (SJCA) met in Farmington on April 2 to discuss the proposed Desert Rock Energy Facility (Desert Rock) – the 1,500 MW coal-fired power plant in northwest New Mexico on the Navajo Nation.

The Sierra Club, Diné CARE, and SJCA continue to work strategically against the proposed project based on existing adverse air quality conditions in the Four Corners region, including carbon dioxide emissions, emissions of precursors of ozone, and the aggregate impacts of the “clustering of industrial facilities” in the area. The proponents of Desert Rock, Sithe Global LLC (Desert Rock Energy Company LLC) and Diné Power Authority, have been unsuccessful in acquiring any of the primary permits that would allow construction of the plant. In March of 2008, Desert Rock Energy Company LLC sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for failing to finalize the Air Quality Permit for Desert Rock.

The proposed Desert Rock project is representative of challenges facing communities throughout the United States. Continued reliance on coal-fired

power plants for electricity generation in energy-intensive regions, such as the Four Corners, must account for public health costs and the externalities associated with burning coal (contributions to climate change, implications of global warming, disproportionate impacts to local citizens). With impending carbon taxes/liabilities on coal, projects such as Desert Rock look less appealing as financial investments. The proposed costs of Desert Rock have increased from \$1.5 billion in 2003 to \$3.6 billion in 2008. Desert Rock is a merchant plant, meaning that there are no contracts with utilities in place and potential contracts would rely on low-cost electricity generation. The proponents of Desert Rock have always intended to pass on the impending costs of carbon taxes/liabilities to utilities, utility ratepayers, and the Navajo Nation.

SJCA and Diné CARE released a report, “Energy and Economic Alternatives to the Desert Rock Energy Project,” in January of 2008 that evaluates renewable energy alternatives to Desert Rock. The report can be found online ([www.box.net/shared/static/tirr6zsw0g.pdf](http://www.box.net/shared/static/tirr6zsw0g.pdf)). The major premise of the report is that the Navajo Nation can pursue renewable energy (solar and wind alternatives) to Desert

Rock that would provide more jobs, comparable electricity production, and economic development that could position the Navajo Nation as a leader in renewable energy.

The result of the April 2 meeting in Farmington is that the Sierra Club, SJCA, and Diné CARE are more committed than ever to defeating the ill-advised Desert Rock project and working to transition to more economically viable and environmentally sound energy decisions in the Four Corners region.

For more information, contact one of the steering committee members.

#### Steering Committee

**Art Jaquez, Co-Chair**

505/360-0176 • [artjaquez2@yahoo.com](mailto:artjaquez2@yahoo.com)

**Nick Cullander, Co-Chair**

505/334-0935 • [ncullander@hotmail.com](mailto:ncullander@hotmail.com)

**Gordon Glass, Air Quality, Outings**

505/564-4460 • [agglass@earthlink.net](mailto:agglass@earthlink.net)

## TAOS BRANCH NEWS

### Taos Meeting Set for May 8

The Taos presence is gaining speed after a successful public meeting held in February, featuring the film *Pollen Nation* and presentations by the film’s composer Michael Shorr and from Jim O’Donnell. regarding local wilderness issues. An enthusiastic group attended, and some of those have expressed interest to be part of growing Sierra effort in Taos. Thanks to all who participated.

We are going to have a local members meeting on May 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Tequila’s Restaurant. It is located across the street and south of Ace Hardware on Paseo Del Pueblo Sur. The owners are kind

enough to offer their facility for our meetings, and the restaurant will be serving dinner, if desired.

At that meeting we hope to fill some of the leadership roles for Taos. These include chair, treasurer/secretary, and committee seats for wilderness, recycling, sustainable growth, energy, Cool Cities, political action, outings, etc. All are welcome to the meeting...and to take on one of these positions. These roles will help determine the future of the Taos and our planet! Please join us and be part of our effort. For more information, please call Scott Estep (575/770-7969).

#### Contact List

**Eric Patterson, Taos contact and Director of Rios de Taos Water Sentinels** • 575/776-2833, [cepatt@gmail.com](mailto:cepatt@gmail.com)

**Anna Walters, email alert list** • [annaainsworth@kitcarson.net](mailto:annaainsworth@kitcarson.net)

**Norma McCallan, Northern Group contact** • 505/471-0005, [nmccallan@mindspring.com](mailto:nmccallan@mindspring.com)

**William Brown, The Climate Project** • 575/758-8008, [nmglobalwarming@yahoo.com](mailto:nmglobalwarming@yahoo.com), [www.nmglobalwarming.org](http://www.nmglobalwarming.org)

**Scott Estep** • 575/770-7969, [wetmtn@rmi.com](mailto:wetmtn@rmi.com)

#### Outings

**Sunday, June 15 • Very strenuous hike near Taos Ski Valley** – Up Gavilan Trail to ridge top and Gold Hill. Top-of-the-world views. Down by way of Bull-of-the-Woods. Car shuttle. 16 miles, 4400’ gain. Dogs okay. Hal Davis (575/758-3949):

**Sunday, June 29 • Very strenuous hike to Venado Peak in Latir Wilderness** – Camp the night before at Cabresto Lake. Magnificent views in seldom-hiked area. 17- to 18-mile loop, 3400’ gain. Venado Peak is 12,734’. Dogs okay. Hal Davis (575/758-3949):

See the main Northern Group pages for additional hikes in the vicinity of Taos.

**Just say no to bottled water. It takes five liters of water to process that one-liter bottle that you buy for \$1.25 and then pitch in the recycle. The United States has clean water out of the tap. Isn’t it Earth-wise to simply bring your own cup to the faucet?**



# RECYCLE

Your old cell phones, pagers, PDAs & chargers at your nearest

**STAPLES**

a portion of the proceeds come back to Sierra Club!



Explore, enjoy & protect the planet



## NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

Tuesday, May 20, 7 PM  
A NATURAL AFFINITY

**Ansel Adams and Georgia O'Keeffe**

**Jackie M, Director of Education for the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum**, will give a talk on the upcoming exhibit the museum is presenting from May 23-September 7, 2008, on **Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: Natural Affinities**. This exhibit brings together for the first time 97 works by two of America's best-known artists. Ansel Adams was on the board of the Sierra Club for many years and was a devoted environmentalist, as well as a pioneer in the art of photography. Please join us for this fascinating discussion on two of the great icons of the American Southwest. See write-up elsewhere in this newsletter for more information on the exhibit.

### GROUP COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Sierra Club Office, 1807 Second Street, Unit #45

**Group Executive Committee:** Tuesday, May 6, 7 PM  
Tuesday, June 3, 7 PM

**Group Conservation Cmte:** Tuesday, May 27, 7 PM (contact Dexter if interested)

*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.*

Saturday, June 21, 5-9 PM  
SUMMER SOLSTICE POTLUCK

A great way to celebrate the longest day of the year! Join us for our annual Summer Solstice Potluck at The Commons, 2300 West Alameda (corner of Camino Carlos Rael). A special opportunity to visit with old friends or meet new ones!

**Congressman Tom Udall** has been invited to join us – if he is able to be there, we certainly look forward to seeing him.

Please plan to each bring a main course, salad or dessert for 6-8 people, or beer wine, soft drinks or fruit juice. If you can come, RSVP to **Jean Watts (jeanwatts@comcast.net or 989-5010)**. Be sure to include the names of those attending and what category of food you will be bringing. Social hour from 5-6, food served at 6 PM.

### YARD SALE FUNDRAISER

Saturday, May 10, 9 AM to 3 PM

**1859 Camino de Pabito (off Galisteo between Zia & Rodeo)**

We need your saleable items to make this a successful fundraiser! Clean out your cupboards and clear up the clutter. Encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same. Volunteers are needed to put ads in papers, price on Friday afternoon, set up and put out signs on Saturday morning, then work the sale. We could also use a pickup to transport heavy items.

To volunteer, or for more information call hostess **Carol Owens (471-4769)** or **Norma McCallan (471-0005)**.

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

### GROUP CHAIR

**John Buchser**

I hope everyone has opportunities to get out this spring and enjoy the outdoors. If you can manage the urban landscape, walking door-to-door supporting our endorsee Martin Heinrich in Albuquerque or outlying areas of District 1 would be great too! As our endorsement process chugs along, watch our political page [http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/politics/chap\\_politics.htm](http://riogrande.sierraclub.org/politics/chap_politics.htm)

By now we hope to have our Cool Biz website complete. This program, developed by board members Mark Walztoni and Carol Raymond, encourages Santa Fe businesses to take steps to conserve energy. You can also think about your energy footprint and how you can reduce it.

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Publicity** – Richard Kristin (982-1671 or [rkristin@csf.edu](mailto:rkristin@csf.edu) until May 15) or Norma McCallan (471-0005) Send out announcements of meetings and events.

**Membership Data Entry** – Donna Michalski (473-3734) or Norma McCallan (471-0005) Help Donna keep our membership and volunteer records up to date, 2-3 hours a month.

**River Cleanup Coordinator** – Paige Grant (982-4081) or Kathleen Davis (438-0357 or [kdav40@aol.com](mailto:kdav40@aol.com)) Need another member of our team to take turns coordinating monthly cleanups of our section of the Santa Fe River.

**Writer** – Dexter Coolidge (988-1197, [dextercoolidge@yahoo.com](mailto:dextercoolidge@yahoo.com) until June 1) or Alice Cox (505-757-2145, [auntialice@pecosplaza.com](mailto:auntialice@pecosplaza.com)) Create a summary of Northern New Mexico projects, campaigns, and volunteer openings for the web and handouts.

**Survey of members and the general public** – Sig Silber ([ssilber1@juno.com](mailto:ssilber1@juno.com)) or Norma McCallan (471-0005) Help implement the survey (mail, phone, email, events, etc.).

**Forest Issues** – Tom Gorman (438-3932) Need a second person for the Carson and Santa Fe Forests oversight teams.

### CONSERVATION CHAIR

**Dexter Coolidge**

With the State legislative session behind us, our most significant conservation efforts have centered around the Santa Fe Cool Cities program, which launched in April. The Mayor featured this program at his monthly Coffee with Coss that focused on sustainability. The cfl program has gone gangbusters, with assembly presentations and bulb handouts in all but two elementary schools in the city and many more in the surrounding area. The last two schools are currently scheduled for the coming weeks. When we are through, we will have handed out almost 14,000 bulbs.

As part of Cool Cities, we are working with the City on zoning issues and on the City's revision of its building code, which we expect will significantly reduce greenhouse gases from buildings. We plan to meet with the new City Council to devise our legislative strategy for the City. We expect support from the Council, since all of its candidates whom we endorsed were elected and some of the holdovers have previously supported our climate change objectives.

Our Forest Committee is taking on new life under the energetic leadership of Tom Gorman. Its focus continues to be the Travel Management Plans for the Santa Fe and Carson Forests. These plans, currently under development by the Forest Service, will designate, and limit, the roads in the forests. There is heavy pressure from the off-road vehicle interests to keep the forests wide open, and the Committee will need your help in the coming weeks and months to keep the forests from being completely overrun.

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

<b>Chair</b> – John Buchser * ‡	<a href="mailto:jbuchser@comcast.net">jbuchser@comcast.net</a>	820-0201
<b>Vice-Chair</b> – Norma McCallan * ‡	<a href="mailto:nmccallan@mindspring.com">nmccallan@mindspring.com</a>	471-0005
<b>Secretary</b> – Jean Watts *	<a href="mailto:jeanwatts@comcast.net">jeanwatts@comcast.net</a>	989-5010
<b>Treasurer</b> – Anne Stauffer	<a href="mailto:arsinnm@comcast.net">arsinnm@comcast.net</a>	986-1412
Office – Joann Lucas	<a href="mailto:joannlucas@comcast.net">joannlucas@comcast.net</a>	466-6691
Book Distributors – Keith Grover	<a href="mailto:darkvern@comcast.net">darkvern@comcast.net</a>	466-4278
Joe Lewis	<a href="mailto:jcoulerlewis@yahoo.com">jcoulerlewis@yahoo.com</a>	505-216-7529
Book Mailer - Gail Bryant		757-2576
Chapter Rep – Dexter Coolidge *	<a href="mailto:dextercoolidge@yahoo.com">dextercoolidge@yahoo.com</a>	988-1197
Membership – Alice Cox	<a href="mailto:auntialice@pecosplaza.com">auntialice@pecosplaza.com</a>	757-2145
Newsletter – Kay Carlson	<a href="mailto:kcarlsonwp@earthlink.net">kcarlsonwp@earthlink.net</a>	982-3926
<b>Sierran</b> Distribution – Marcia Rodda		986-0449
Outings – Norbert Sperlich	<a href="mailto:bsperlich@cybermesa.com">bsperlich@cybermesa.com</a>	474-4354
Tobin Oruch	<a href="mailto:oruch@lanl.gov">oruch@lanl.gov</a>	820-2844
Political Committee – Susan Martin	<a href="mailto:smartin31@comcast.net">smartin31@comcast.net</a>	988-5206
Tom Robey	<a href="mailto:trobey@cybermesa.com">trobey@cybermesa.com</a>	955-9578
Phone Answerer – Bebs Taylor		983-9129
Publicity – Richard Kristin *	<a href="mailto:rkristin@csf.edu">rkristin@csf.edu</a>	982-1671
Kia Mudge 474-6697 and Mary Thomson		982-5486
Social Cohesion – Jean Watts *	<a href="mailto:jeanwatts@comcast.net">jeanwatts@comcast.net</a>	989-5010
Las Vegas Branch – Betty Quick	<a href="mailto:betty@mathllc.com">betty@mathllc.com</a>	505-454-9123
Taos Branch – Scott Estep	<a href="mailto:wetmtm@rmi.com">wetmtm@rmi.com</a>	575-770-7969
Farming Branch – Art Jaquez	<a href="mailto:artjaquez@yahoo.com">artjaquez@yahoo.com</a>	505-326-5229
Nick Cullander	<a href="mailto:ncullander@hotmail.com">ncullander@hotmail.com</a>	505-334-0935

Web Master – Monika Bittman		505-466-0130
Dan Rusthoi	<a href="mailto:rusthoi@earthlink.net">rusthoi@earthlink.net</a>	474-3965
Kathy Priola	<a href="mailto:kjpriola@gmail.com">kjpriola@gmail.com</a>	466-1040
<b>Conservation – Chair – Dexter Coolidge *</b>	<a href="mailto:dextercoolidge@yahoo.com">dextercoolidge@yahoo.com</a>	988-1197
Activist Outings – Norma McCallan * ‡	<a href="mailto:nmccallan@mindspring.com">nmccallan@mindspring.com</a>	471-0005
4 Corners' Power Plants – Robb Thomson *	<a href="mailto:robbm@toast.net">robbm@toast.net</a>	988-8958
Santa Fe Nat'l Forest – Tom Gorman		438-3932
Carson Nat'l Forest – OPEN		
Genetically Engineered Food – Jim Hannan	<a href="mailto:jhannan505@aol.com">jhannan505@aol.com</a>	988-5760
Mining – Cliff Larsen	<a href="mailto:clarsen1@ix.netcom.com">clarsen1@ix.netcom.com</a>	466-2128
Cool Cities Campaign		
Coordinator – Mark Walztoni *	<a href="mailto:mark@leadershipchanges.com">mark@leadershipchanges.com</a>	603-5810
Eco Footprints – Brian Skeele	<a href="mailto:brianvida@nm.net">brianvida@nm.net</a>	984-1739
Resources – Ken Hughes ‡	<a href="mailto:b1family@comcast.net">b1family@comcast.net</a>	474-0550
Water – Sig Silber ‡	<a href="mailto:ssilber1@juno.com">ssilber1@juno.com</a>	473-7006
Paul Paryski ‡	<a href="mailto:pparyski@aol.com">pparyski@aol.com</a>	992-1984
Wildlife/Nat'l Parks/Rangelands - Roger Peterson ‡	<a href="mailto:rogpete@aol.com">rogpete@aol.com</a>	983-7559
Brendan Miller *	<a href="mailto:bmiller59@comcast.net">bmiller59@comcast.net</a>	490-2680
Carol Raymond *	<a href="mailto:Carol@SFSR.com">Carol@SFSR.com</a>	989-8600, ext 27 (w)

\* Member of the Northern Group Executive Committee

‡ Member of the Core Conservation Committee



## NORTHERN GROUP NEWS

### NORTHERN GROUP OUTINGS

Sat Sun May

- 3 **Strenuous Hike** to Stone Lions shrine in Bandelier, maybe as a loop, about 13 miles, 2700' gain. **Bogdan Mihaila** (662-0421)
- 4 **Easy to Moderate Dale Ball Trail Hike** in town, under 8 miles and 800' gain, dogs okay on leash. **Bogdan Mihaila** (662-0421)
- 10 **Strenuous Hike** up La Luz trail in Sandias, one-way uphill only from trailhead or lower tram terminal, tram down, 8-10 miles, 4000' gain. **Dan Rusthoi** (690-8967) (*changed from previous listing of May 17*)
- 11 **Strenuous Hike** Shaggy Peak and Deer Creek near Glorieta. ± 10 miles, 1700' gain, off-trail, great views from top of Shaggy, slickrock, cool dip in creek optional. Dogs okay. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- Saturday, May 17 to Sunday, May 24**  
**Springtime Car Camping And Moderate Day Hikes** in Utah's canyon country, centered around the Abajo Mountains. Some off-trail, some exploratory, in this delightful landscape of forest and red rock. Dogs okay. Call for details. **Norma McCallan** (471-0005)
- 17 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** bring binoculars. **Ron Duffy** (466-6398)
- 17 **Moderate Hike** on Winsor Trail with car shuttle, maybe ski area down to Borrego or there to Chamisa, 7-8 miles and 900' gain max, dogs okay. **Robert Reifel** (984-1253)
- 17 **Strenuous Hike** to Glorieta Baldy via Apache Canyon. About 13 miles, 2700' gain, historic fire-lookout tower on top. Dogs okay. **Les Drapela** (438-3306) (*changed from previous listing of May 10*)
- 18 **Easy to Moderate Hike** to Glorieta Ghost Town, 7 miles, 900' gain, dogs okay. **Bogdan Mihaila** (662-0421)
- 18 **Strenuous Hike** on Tunnel Spring trail in Sandias, 14 miles, 3200' gain, dogs okay. Expect interesting views, early spring flowers. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844 before 8 PM)
- 24 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** to Pedernal, famous O'Keefe landmark. Rock scramble to top for sweeping views in all directions. About 8 miles, 1900' gain. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- 25 **Moderate/Strenuous Hike** to Los Griegos Ridge near the Valle Grande, 8.5 miles, 2000' gain, one steep off-trail section. Dogs okay. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- 31 **Strenuous Hike** to Chicoma Mtn and Polvadera Pk NW of Espanola. Chicoma is highest in Jemez at 11,539. **Michael Di Rosa** (663-0648)
- 31 **Santa Fe River Cleanup** combined with the river festival. *See inset article.* **Kathleen Davis** (438-0357 or Kdav40@aol.com)

#### SANTA FE RIVER CLEANUP AND VEGETATION MAINTENANCE

Saturdays – 9 to 11 AM – May 31, June 21, July 19

Help keep our river looking great! Park at Lower Alto Street north end of Closson. Bring work boots, gloves and drinking water. Be sure to connect with appropriate contact prior to cleanup date. **Kathleen Davis** (438-0357 or Kdav40@aol.com) or **Paige Grant** (982-4081) or **John Buchser** (820-0201)

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

Sat Sun July

- 5 **Strenuous Hike** to Horsethief Meadow (Pecos). 11 miles RT, 2200' gain. Hike along a creek, visit caves, reach a lovely mountain meadow. Dogs okay. **Alan Shapiro** (424-9242)
- 6 **Moderate Hike** Dockwiller Trail (Pecos). Meadows, flowers, aspen. 8 miles RT, 1700' gain. Dogs okay. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- 12 **Moderate Hike** Rio En Medio waterfalls, lovely streamside hike. 7-9 miles, 1500' gain. Dogs okay. **Tobin Oruch** (820-2844 before 8 PM)
- 12 **Strenuous Hike** to Manzano Peak, south of Sandias. 11.5 miles RT, 2500' gain. Alligator junipers along the way, sweeping views from the top. **Michael Di Rosa** (663-0648)
- 13 **Strenuous Hike** on Deception-Lake-Penitente Peaks Loop. Views and more views. 11 miles RT, 3100' gain. Dogs okay. **Bogdan Mihaila** (662-0421)
- 19 **Santa Fe River Cleanup** *See inset article.* **John Buchser** (820-0201)
- 19 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** Bring binoculars. **Ron Duffy** (466-6398)
- 19 **Strenuous Hike** to Lobo Peak. Steep loop hike to high peak near Taos. 10 miles RT, 3700' gain. Dogs okay. **Dan Rusthoi** (474-3965)
- 20 **Moderate Hike** to Hamilton Mesa. Flowers, aspen, views. About 7 miles RT. Dogs okay. **Michael Goldey** (820-7302)
- 20 **Moderate Hike** to Nambe Lake. Water, flowers, rocks. Some steep sections. 7 miles RT, 2100' gain. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- 20 **Strenuous Hike** Lake Katherine. High altitude hike leading to lovely lake. 14 miles RT, 3300' gain. Dogs okay. **Royal Drews** (699-8713)
- 26 **Moderate Hike** La Vega, meadow at the foot of Santa Fe Baldy. 7 miles RT, 1500' gain. Dogs okay. **Lester Drapela** (438-3306)
- 27 **Strenuous Hike** to Wheeler Peak, New Mexico's highest. Up by way of Williams Lake (steep climb), down long way (Bull of the Woods). 12 miles RT, 4300' gain. Dogs okay. **Patrick O'Keefe** (820-2359)

Sat Sun June

**Saturday and Sunday, May 31 and June 1 - Field Trip/Car Camp**

**Proposed Sabinosa Wilderness – see article below for details.**

- 1 **Moderate Hike** into Valle Grande, Valle Grande Trail, to Cerro Grande, Bandelier. 6 miles RT, 1750' gain. **Robert Reifel** (984-1253)
- 7 **Easy/Moderate Hike** to Otowi Mesa (near Los Alamos). 5 miles RT, 500' gain. Some rock scrambling on narrow trails. **Michael Goldey** (820-7302)
- 7 **Strenuous Hike** to Scooter Peak and Rabbit Ridge in Bandelier. Great views of the Valle Grande. 7+ miles, mostly off-trail, 2000' gain. **Michael Di Rosa** (663-0648)
- 8 **Moderate Hike** Rio En Medio waterfalls. About 7 miles RT, 1000' gain. Many stream crossings. **Art Judd** (982-3212)
- 8 **Exploratory Petroglyph Hike** to Mesa Prieta (north of Española). Early start. Off-trail. Call for details. **David Van Winkle** (820-1006)
- 14 **Moderate Hike** to San Lorenzo Ghost Town (Jemez Mountains). 5-8 miles RT, 1000' gain. Many stream crossings. Dogs okay. **Stephen Markowitz** (983-2779 before 8 PM)
- 15 **Moderate Hike** along the East Fork of the Jemez. 7-8 miles, 700' gain. Some hiking in water (bring extra footwear), some steep, rocky off-trail sections. **Norbert Sperlich** (474-4354)
- 15 **Very Strenuous Hike** near Taos Ski Valley. Up Gavilan Trail to ridge top and Gold Hill. Down by way of Long Canyon. Car shuttle. 16 miles, 4400' gain. Dogs okay. **Hal Davis** (575-758-3949)

**Saturday and Sunday, June 21 and 22**

- Strenuous Pecos Backpack** into the heart of the wilderness. Dogs okay. Saturday: drive to Jack's Creek Campground, backpack to Pecos Baldy Lake and Trail Riders Wall. Sunday: climb South Truchas, return to Santa Fe. **Patrick O'Keefe** (820-2359)
- 21 **Santa Fe River Cleanup** *See inset article.* **John Buchser** (820-0201)
- 21 **Easy Birdwatch Walk** Bring binoculars. **Ron Duffy** (466-6398)
- 21 **Moderate Hike** to Nambe Lake. Flowers, water, views. 7 miles RT, 2100' gain, steep sections. Dogs okay. **Lester Drapela** (438-3306)
- 21 **Strenuous Hike** to Santa Fe Baldy. Sweeping views, alpine flowers. 14 miles RT, 3600' gain. Dogs okay. **Dan Rusthoi** (474-3965)
- 22 **Easy Hike** on Chamisa Trail. 5 miles RT, 1240' gain. Dogs okay. **Royal Drews** (699-8713)
- 22 **Strenuous Loop Hike** to Grass Mountain (Pecos). 11 miles RT, 2400' gain. Several stream crossings. **Marcia Skillman** (699-3008)
- 28 **Moderate Exploratory Hike** in Rio Mora area (Pecos). 7-8 mi. RT, half off-trail. Stream crossings. Dogs okay. **Page Press** (946-0169)
- 28 **Strenuous Hike** on La Junta Loop. 13 miles RT, 2900' gain. Many stream crossings. Dogs okay. **Bogdan Mihaila** (662-0421)
- 29 **Strenuous Hike** on Deception-Lake-Penitente Peaks Loop. 11 miles RT, 3100' gain. Dogs okay. **David Van Winkle** (820-1006)
- 29 **Very Strenuous Hike** to Venado Peak (12,734') in Latir Wilderness. Camp the night before at Cabresto Lake. Seldom-hiked area. 17-18 miles loop, 3400' gain. Dogs okay. **Hal Davis** (575-758-3949)

#### SABINOSA TOUR

**Saturday, May 31, and Sunday, June 1**

Congressman Tom Udall has introduced a bill to make the Sabinosa WSA a Wilderness. It is a high grasslands plateau cut by deep canyons and rimmed with colorful cliffs. Its diverse habitats support abundant wildlife and lush native vegetation. Surrounded by private lands, it has no public access, but we have arranged with Bob Ritter, one of the key landowners, to take us into the largest canyon, Largo, where multiple springs bubble up to create pools, and thence across the canyon floor to an old road where we can walk up to and along the WSA at the top, with its far-sweeping vistas. Camp at Kiowa National Grasslands C.G. Saturday night and Sunday explore the Canadian River bottomlands, threatened by ORV abuse. If you cannot take two days, come for Saturday or Sunday. If you have a heavy-duty 4x4 vehicle, let Norma know. Call **Norma McCallan** (471-0005) for information and reservations.

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

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

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

## Compact Fluorescent Bulb Distribution Update

**W**e have distributed about 20,000 compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) in Albuquerque to date. Here's the breakdown of distribution of these CFLs so far:

- Schools: 28%
- Neighborhood walk: 10%
- Sierra Club-organized event: 1%
- Churches (all are members of NM Interfaith Power & Light): 38%
- Social workers (based at local schools): 1%
- Public events (sometimes co-organized by Sierra Club): 22%

### Program Progress Report

In our first year of the CFL program in Albuquerque, we have given our "Bright Ideas about Energy" slideshow presentation to a total of 19 elementary schools. This is less than 25% of elementary schools in the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) system, but we were able to reach schools in different parts of town such as the NE and SE Heights as well as the westside and South Valley. We hope to continue bringing environmental education to these schools in the future with a focus on different topics, and we may extend our "Bright Ideas about Energy" program into the 2008-2009 school year so that we can reach more of the APS elementary schools.

On average, we were able to trade bulbs with only 15% to 20% of the households at each participating school for various reasons. Therefore, we began partnering with other groups and organizing more "public event" bulb exchanges in order to distribute all 26,000 CFLs that were ordered for Albuquerque.

By the end of May, we will certainly meet our goal of distributing 26,000 CFLs in the Albuquerque area. Together with the 14,000 CFLs distributed in the Santa Fe area, we will have helped prevent the equivalent of at least 16,000 tons of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere over the lifespan of these CFLs.

### Preparing for CFL Program in Schools

Getting ready for our school assemblies and bulb trades takes a lot of advance work to pull everything together. For example, we had a volunteer gathering on Saturday, March 15, where the Sierra Club office became a fun little factory. We have a lot of prep work for the CFL program at schools – labeling brochures that go to every student and all staff, and repacking the CFLs so that they're already in bundles of four. We also go through all the incandescent bulbs we receive to dispose of broken bulbs, recycle any paper/plastic/cardboard packaging, and reuse plastic bags (that's what we use to bundle the CFLs). Everyone seemed to have a good time getting to know each other and breaking bread (i.e. pizza) with one another.

We had 18 volunteers, including two whole families (parents and kids). Our new young volunteers also came. These gatherings have been great for engaging volunteers that want to help with the program but don't like the early morning shifts required of helping trade bulbs at schools (typically from 7:30-8:30 a.m.). A number of college students from CNM community

college have begun to volunteer for us. For the most part, they have helped with data entry and picking up the CFLs from the warehouse.

The bulb program will be coming to an end soon. Once this program is over, we'll have a volunteer gathering that's just fun and games – complete with volunteer awards – so that those who turned out and volunteered will be encouraged to stay active in future activities.

—Shrayas Jatkar



*Volunteers take a break from preparing for bulb trades at schools to eat lunch and watch the "Bright Ideas about Energy" slideshow. (Photo by Shrayas Jatkar)*



*Preparing for a CFL event takes a lot of work from dedicated volunteers. Left: On February 16, volunteers exchanged a record 2,000 CFLs in less than two hours at the Assistance League of ABQ! Bottom left: Breaking down the CFL cardboard packaging for recycling. Bottom right: Collecting plastic bags to use for bundling the bulbs. (Photos by Shrayas Jatkar)*



## Central Group Directory

### Executive Committee

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#### Eva Thaddeus, Co-Chair, Secretary, Global Warming Issue Chair

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#### David Ther, Treasurer, Outings Chair

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#### Patrick Redmond, Political Chair, Water Chair

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#### Rick Preston, Newsletter Editor

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#### Lori Healy, Membership Chair

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The Executive Committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., at the Sierra Club office, 142 Truman NE, Albuquerque.



## SOUTHERN GROUP NEWS

### CAFO Permit Denied

The Chapter and the Southern Group are celebrating a major victory in the fight to stop a dangerously sited 2,000-head dairy concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO). New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry has denied a required groundwater discharge permit to a very poorly located large dairy operation. The ParaSol Dairy would have been located precariously close to the floodplain of Percha Creek, less than 2 miles from Caballo Reservoir on the Rio Grande in Sierra County. This denial sends an appropriate message to the ParaSol promoters and to the state's dairy industry: Don't plan to build your environmentally risky operations in environmentally sensitive areas of New Mexico.

Caballo Concerned Citizens (over 400 local residents from the surrounding community) formed in opposition to the proposal, the Southern Group mobilized member/activists in Sierra County to speak against the groundwater discharge permit application at Environment Department hearings last November, and hundreds of letters opposing the permit were written and submitted. Additionally, the Chapter wrote to Secretary Curry, asking him to deny the permit because of the many environmental hazards not examined in the groundwater discharge permit application process. The secretary's decision was based on many of the very same reasons cited in our letter opposing the permit. The Rio Grande Chapter thanks Secretary Curry for continuing to protect our fragile and irreplaceable natural resources.

—Dan Lorimier

## A Path from Water Scarcity to Abundance

More rain falls on the city of Tucson in a year than that city uses, even at current excessive consumption levels. Yet Tucson imports massive amounts of water from the distant Colorado River. Why? Such simple facts are hard to evade, especially when presented with the dynamic energy of water-wizard Brad Lancaster. What does an alternative look like? What are the implications for cities throughout the arid Southwest, such as T or C? An enthusiastic crowd of about 70 gathered at the Episcopal Church on Saturday evening, March 1, to find out.

The ensuing full-screen images of bare gravel and hot, hot city-scapes transformed into welcoming oases of greenery, food, and shade stirred up contagious energy. They are examples of real-world lushness created in the dry desert using simple techniques to retain rain water and reuse household greywater. The techniques include curbcuts diverting floodwaters from streets to waiting trees, rain-catchment systems for nourishing gardens, and simple systems for channeling greywater. They illustrate a path from water scarcity to water abundance that looks awfully appealing.

Brad Lancaster is the author of *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond, Volume 1*, first published in 2006 by Rainsource Press. The book has been a hit, and attendees to the T or C event can attest to the reason: Brad delivers what he's learned in a direct, engaging way that's easy to absorb, and his focus on economical home- and community-scale efforts makes it achievable.

The possibilities for a place like Sierra County are obvious, with its typical dry ethos punctuated by brief-but-mighty flood moments. After Brad's talk, those flood moments appear as powerful opportunities bringing us to awareness of how much water actually is available if we but welcome it in. Saturday's



The author's late winter garden grown entirely from rainfall and roof runoff harvested in 1,200-gallon ferrocement tank in 2005. (Photo copyright Brad Lancaster)

crowd of folks from T or C and the surrounding area was certainly interested.

As water issues explode on the radar screens of people in all orientations of life, information and inspiration found in Brad's book and talk provide needed fuel to power a revolution in the way we interact with water. No doubt, some vibrant local action will sprout from the evening spent with this water-guru.

A second volume to accompany the existing book is due out in April, written in the same casual, user-friendly style. Brad will, no doubt, be welcomed enthusiastically back for another presentation. 'Til then, *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond, Volume 1* is available from [www.HarvestingRainwater.com](http://www.HarvestingRainwater.com).

Read it, get inspired, share it with your neighbors, and watch our water-wealth grow.

—Margot Wilson

### Outings

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

**Sunday, June 1 • Coffee Pot Canyon dayhike in the San Mateos** – Easy hike in a remote upper-elevation canyon with a real trail. There are open meadows, Ponderosa pine, and gambel oaks. It's also in Mexican Spotted Owl critical habitat. Meet at the Black Range District office parking lot in Truth or Consequences at 8:00 a.m. Please call Margot Wilson (575/744-5860) or Mary Katherine Ray (575/772-5655) beforehand to be sure the forest

hasn't been closed for fire danger and also for camping opportunities if coming from a greater distance to preclude one-day driving.

**Saturday, June 28 • Hike to Hillsboro Peak in the Black Range** – Meet Margot Wilson at the Hillsboro Country Store for breakfast at 8:00 a.m. Come prepared with water, lunch, and sunscreen. Remember to put a poncho in your pack because the rainy season might have started. This is a moderate hike, 10-miles-plus with an elevation gain. Call Margot (575/744-5860) for details and to let her know you are coming.

Members of the Southern Group enjoyed an outing in Limestone Canyon on a day miraculously between spring wind storms. Despite evidence of heavy grazing – making parts of the canyon appear, as Aldo Leopold wrote, as “a world of wounds” – being under the sky in good company proves the ability of even a damaged landscape to delight. We found butterflies, a raptor feather, neat rocks, a raven nest, and several old bones, the identification of which prompted some creative and entertaining speculation. (Photo by Mary Katherine Ray)



### Southern NM Group Directory

#### Executive Committee

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#### Mary Katherine Ray

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#### John Waugh

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#### Earle Pittman

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#### David Farrell

Political Chair  
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## Fence Threatens Rio Bosque

El Paso Sierran John Sproul has made environmental projects his life-work. He helped put Franklin Mountains State Park together. He pioneered the City of El Paso's recycling program while running the El Paso Regional Group's Environmental Center, personally separating the paper, glass, and tin folks dropped off while maintaining the building and collecting the rent. And for the last ten years he has been reclaiming a bit of El Paso's long-lost bosque using wastewater from El Paso Water Utilities and his own sweat. After a hard day at the bosque John can often be seen returning to his deskjob at UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management to catch up with paperwork and phone calls. El Paso Times correspondent Brandi Grissom writes. —Ed

AUSTIN — The manager of El Paso's largest city park is concerned that federal plans for a border fence will undo years of work to restore natural wetlands on the Rio Grande. And U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff's decision last week to circumvent environmental protection laws that could hold up progress on the barrier have John Sproul, manager of Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, wondering whether sensitive wildlife and habitat will even be considered before construction begins. "It's a landscape you just don't see in our river valley today," Sproul said. The Department of Homeland Security plans to build about 57 miles of fence on the border starting at Socorro and continuing east of the Fabens port of entry. The fence will be 15 to 18 feet high, though its final positioning and design have not been decided. About a mile of that fencing would abut the 372-acre city park, which is managed by the University of Texas at El Paso Center for Environmental Resource Management. Sproul said staff and volunteers at the park have been working for 10 years to restore the wetlands, the only one of its kind in the El Paso region, to its original condition. Recently, he said, coyotes and beavers have returned to the area. And UTEP is planning an exhibit to celebrate progress to restore native plants and animals in the park. "The opportunity for the full range of plants and animals found historically in the river valley to eventually get established at the park would be compromised" by the fence, Sproul said, in a letter to the Department of Homeland Security last month. Commenting on the department's assessment of the fence's environmental impact in the region, Sproul wrote that the fence would prevent animals from moving between the park and the river.

The Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club echoed those concerns in comments it sent last month to the Department of Homeland Security. The department relied on brief visits to the area to conduct its environmental analysis, wrote Cyrus Reed, the chapter's conservation director. "A much more robust survey should be taken to assess the types of species present in the construction area," Reed wrote.

It is unclear whether the department will account for those concerns after Chertoff last week said he would use waiver authority to bypass laws that require environmental studies before construction of the fence could begin. The department's goal is to build 670 miles of fence on the border in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas by the end of this year. Lloyd Easterling, U.S. Border Patrol spokesman, said in an e-mailed statement Wednesday that the agency would conduct environmental work "where needed." "We will continue to be stewards of the environment and take those issues into consideration each step of the way," Easterling said. In public statements last week, Chertoff said that despite using the waivers, "DHS is neither compromising its commitment to responsible environmental stewardship nor its commitment to solicit and respond to the needs of state, local, and tribal governments, other agencies of the federal government, and local residents."

But the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife and more than a dozen congressmen are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to declare unconstitutional the law that gave Chertoff authority to use waivers. The group, which includes U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes, D-Texas, argues that the waivers violate the constitutional separation of powers between Congress and the executive branch. Bill Addington, who is on the executive committee of the local Sierra Club, said he hoped the legal case would increase political pressure on federal officials to stop the fence, which has faced widespread opposition in Texas. "The politics of it is what's going to kill the wall," he said.

## Selected Group Outings

### June 9-22: Trans-Gila Wilderness Wander

Place: Gila Wilderness north of Silver City, NM

Class: Strenuous

Length: 80 miles

Elevation gain: 9000 feet

Leader: Laurence Gibson (915) 309-5419 lgibson@utep.edu

Come escape the city's 100 degree June heat with a backpack in the high Gila Wilderness. There will be layover days at the river and overnights at springs with a resupply half-way through where folks could join or leave the backpack. Itinerary is negotiable but the concept is to begin at Sandy Point, making an initial thrust out to Mogollon Baldy, and then hike two large loops out to the East and West with the resupply in the middle, probably around June 15-16. Leader will be following two huskies. Dogs welcome!

### May 23-26: Black Canyon Memorial Weekend 3-Day Backpack

Place: Aldo Leopold Wilderness north of Mimbres, New Mexico

Class: Strenuous

Length: 23 miles

Elevation gain: 2000 feet

Leader: Rollin Wickenden (915) 855-6705 (H) rwwickgila@aol.com

Departing Friday night from El Paso we'll carcamp near the trailhead on the North Star road at Upper Black Canyon Campground. The hike begins on Trail 72, Black Canyon Trail, with Saturday night camp somewhere near Black Canyon Box after a 7- 8 mile day. Sunday will feature an exploration of Reed's Meadow, after which we'll return and break camp, moving a few miles back toward the North Star Road for Sunday night. Monday we'll hike back out to the vehicles and return to civilization. Water will come from Black Canyon, which runs yearround but will need to be treated as usual. Black Canyon Trail sees little travel so we may have it to ourselves. Nighttime temperatures should be above freezing with warm days.

## El Paso Group Directory

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

### Executive Committee

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<b>Chapter Delegate (Alt.)</b>		
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<b>Editor, Outings</b>		
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<b>Inner City Outings, Membership</b>		
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<b>Outings</b>		
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<b>Webmaster</b>		
<b>Terry Sunday</b>	sundayt@zianet.com	915/584-9301

**Welcome** (continued from page 3)

and ethnobotany has permitted him to work with the Tarahumara Indians of northern Mexico. He has also worked in Venezuela and Ecuador.

Michael joined the Sierra Club staff in the fall of 2006 as Associate Representative in charge of our Building Bridges to the Outdoors program aimed at getting New Mexico's youth back into the outdoors. Michael spearheaded the effort to build a statewide No Child Left Inside coalition and successfully lobbied the New Mexico State Legislature to fund the New Mexico Outdoor Classroom Program in 2007 and 2008. Michael brings to his new job an extensive network of contacts throughout the state as well as valuable media skills. Michael also serves as state co-chair for the Cesar Chavez holiday campaign.

His new responsibilities include managing New Mexico field staff and directing our Building Environmental Communities and Building Bridges to the Outdoors programs. Michael oversees the implementation the Sierra Club's Power2Change campaign, which is aimed at elevating climate change and energy issues in 2008 political campaigns up and down the ticket.

The Sierra Club faces a year in which members will have many exciting opportunities to make a difference. Please call our office in Albuquerque at 505/243-7767 and ask how you can participate. Or send an email to michael.casaus@sierraclub.org and congratulate Michael on his new job.

—Lawson LeGate

**An Outrage on the Border** (continued from page 1)

of the proposed "muro del odio" at the cost of dangerous environmental destruction has led congressional Representative Sylvester Reyes of Texas to join at least a dozen other congressmen in support of the Sierra Club legal action asking the Supreme Court to rule on the constitutionality of the law used to bypass existing environmental statues. Mr. Reyes was a Sector Chief of the Border Patrol and is quite knowledgeable about border security issues.

Is there something embedded in the human psyche that keeps us believing that a fence is an effective defense measure or deterrent despite all the centuries of evidence to the contrary? Does this kind of thinking perhaps lie in our primitive reptilian brain along with the 'flight or fight' pattern? Or are we helpless prisoners of our genetic makeup? Are we locked into blind, knee-jerk reactions on the basis of old, outmoded, and ultimately futile patterns of behavior, no longer able to respond rationally to situations? Are we doomed to destroying ourselves as we destroy our environment? Or, does our ability to survive as a race depend on our being able to override primitive thinking and develop new, rational solutions to old problems?

For those of you reading this article who feel that you have evolved beyond the caveman status of our ancestors, there is something that you can do. The border fence is being foisted upon us on the basis of a claim that we want it to be built. If you are not already a Sierra Club member, you can easily join

online now at [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org). Add your voice to the approximately 1.5 million other voices in the Sierra Club, as well as the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Defenders of Wildlife, who are also opposing the building of a border fence. A swell of protest from the borderland may prove difficult for even for the most hidebound of thinkers to ignore. You can also contact as many of your elected officials as you choose to state your concerns about this serious design to circumvent the law. Information on how to reach your elected officials in New Mexico is obtainable at the NM Legislature website (<http://legis.state.nm.us/LCS/legislatorsearch.asp>) or from your County Clerk's office.

Perhaps the prophetic last two sentences of that thin book found so many months ago tell the story the best: "Confronted by nuclear weapons, any nation that wants to feel secure in the future will have to reach some sort of understanding with its enemies. It can't hope to achieve security by building a wall."

For more information, contact Chapter Executive Committee Member Jane Grider (575/526-5620, [jane4u2@email2me.net](mailto:jane4u2@email2me.net)).



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Preserve the Future

**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 Cliff Larsen, 824 Los Lovatos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Please allow eight weeks for processing.

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

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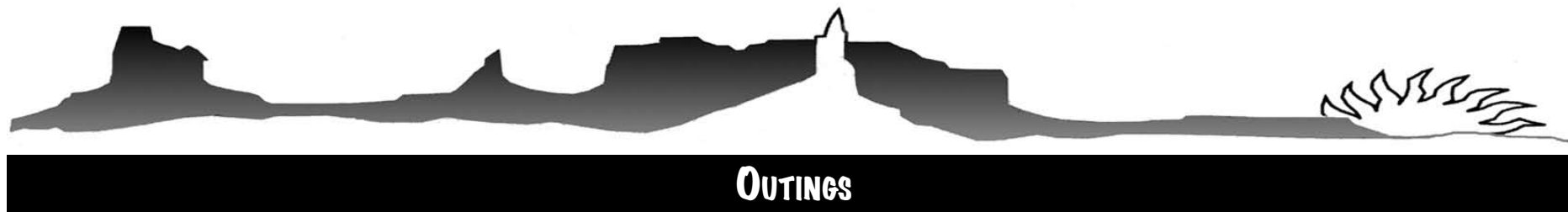
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Contributions, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletter.



## OUTINGS

# Selected Sierra Club Outings for May, June, and July 2008

**Saturday, May 3 • Stone Lions shrine hike, in Bandelier** – 13 miles, 2700' gain. Strenuous. Bogdan Mihaila (505/662-0421 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, May 4 • Ancho Rapids hike** – 6 miles, 1040' gain. Moderate hike to the bottom of White Rock Canyon. Mark Jones (505/662-9443 – Pajarito Group).

**Sunday, May 4 • Dale Ball Trail hike** – 800' gain. Easy/moderate. Bogdan Mihaila (505/662-0421 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, May 10 • La Luz Trail hike** – 8-10 miles, 4000' gain. Strenuous hike up; take tram down. Dan Rusthoi (505/690-8967 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, May 11 • Shaggy Peak and Deer Peak hike** – 10 miles, 1700' gain. Strenuous hike near Glorieta. Off-trail. Great views from the top. Norbert Sperlich (505/474-4354 – Northern Group).

**Thursday, May 15 • Valles Caldera spring highway cleanup** – David Gemeinhart (505/672-6267 – Pajarito Group)

**Saturday-Sunday, May 17-25 • Abajo Mountains, Southern Utah outing** – Car-camp and moderate hikes (some exploratory) in this delightful landscape of forest and red rock. Norma McCallan (505/471-0005 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, May 17 • Glorieta Baldy hike, via Apache Canyon** – 13 miles, 2700' gain. Strenuous hike to the historic fire tower on top. Les Drapela (505/438-3306 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, May 17 • Winsor Trail hike** – 7-8 miles, 900' gain. One-way moderate hike with car shuttle. Robert Reifel (505/984-1253 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, May 18 • Glorieta Ghost Town hike** – 900' gain. Easy/moderate. Bogdan Mihaila (662-0421 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, May 18 • Tunnel Spring hike** – 14 miles, 3200' gain. Strenuous hike on the northern edge of the Sandias. Interesting views. Tobin Oruch (505/820-2844 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, May 24 • Pedernal hike** – 8 miles, 1900' gain. Moderate/strenuous hike to the famous O'Keefe landmark. Rock scramble near top. Marcia Skillman (505/699-3008 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, May 25 • Los Griegos Ridge hike, near the Valle Grande** – 8.5 miles, 2000' gain. Moderate/strenuous. Norbert Sperlich (505/474-4354 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, May 31 • Chicoma Peak and Polvadera Peak hike** – 11,530' gain. Strenuous hike to the highest mountain in the Jemez. Michael Di Rosa (505/663-0648 – Pajarito Group).

**Saturday-Sunday, May 31-June 1 • Sabinosa WSA and Canadian River Canyon, Kiowa National Grasslands outing** – Tour this remote and rarely visited plateau, incised with steep, rocky canyons. Camp at the Grasslands Saturday night, and explore the Canadian River bottomlands on Sunday. Moderate hiking. Norma McCallan (505/471-0005 – Northern Group).\*

**Sunday, June 1 • East Fork of the Jemez River hike** – 8-10 miles. Moderate. Wildflowers and striking cliffs. Mark Jones (505/662-9443 – Pajarito Group).

**Sunday, June 1 • Valle Grande Trail and Cerro Gordo hike** – 6 miles, 1750' gain. Moderate hike into the Valle Grande, then Bandelier. Wonderful vistas. Robert Reifel (505/984-1253 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, June 7 • Otowi Mesa hike** – Easy/moderate hike on volcanic tuff trails; some rock scrambling. Near Los Alamos. Michael Goldey (505/820-7302 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, June 7 • Scooter Peak and Rabbit Ridge hike** – 7 miles, 2000' gain. Strenuous hike in Bandelier. Mostly off-trail. Great views of the Valle Grande. Michael Di Rosa (505/663-0648 – Pajarito Group).

**Sunday, June 8 • Rio en Medio waterfalls hike** – 7 miles, 1000' gain. Moderate. Many stream crossings. Art Judd (505/982-3212 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, June 8 • Mesa Prieta hike** – Exploratory, easy hike to some petroglyphs north of Española. Off-trail. David Van Winkle (505/820-1006 – Northern Group).

**Monday-Sunday, June 9-22 • Trans-Gila Wilderness Wander** – Strenuous backpack. Start at Sandy Point, loop to the east and west, re-supply in the middle. Layover days at the river; overnights at springs. Laurence Gibson (915/309-5419 – El Paso Group).

**Saturday, June 14 • San Lorenzo Ghost Town** – 5-8 miles. Moderate hike in the Jemez Mountains. Many stream crossings. Steve Markowitz (505/983-2779 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, June 15 • Gavilan Trail to Gold Hill hike, down by way of Long Canyon** – 16 miles, 4400' gain. Very strenuous hike near Taos Ski Valley. Hal Davis (575/758-3949 – Northern Group).

**Friday, June 20 • Annual Summer Solstice hike and potluck supper** – Pajarito Mountain Ski Area. Jean Dewart (505/662-9592 – Pajarito Group).

**Saturday-Sunday, June 21-22 • Pecos backpack into the heart of the wilderness** – Strenuous. Jack's Creek Campground to Pecos Baldy Lake and Trail Riders' Wall on Saturday. Climb South Truchas Peak on Sunday. Patrick O'Keefe (505/820-2359 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, June 21 • Nambe Lake hike** – 7 miles, 2100' gain. Moderate. Flowers, water, views, steep sections. Les Drapela (505/438-3306 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, June 21 • Santa Fe Baldy hike** – 14 miles, 3600' gain. Strenuous. Sweeping views, alpine flowers. Dan Rusthoi (505/474-3965 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, June 28 • Rio Mora area hike** – Moderate exploratory hike in the Pecos. Partly off-trail. Stream crossings. Page Press (505/946-0169 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, June 28 • Hillsboro Peak hike** – 10 miles, some elevation. Moderate hike in the Black Range. Margot Wilson (575/744-5860 – Southern Group).

**Saturday, June 28 • La Junta loop hike** – 13 miles, 2900' gain. Strenuous. Stream crossings. Bogdan Mihaila (505/662-0421 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, June 29 • Deception Lake-Penitente Peaks loop hike** – 11 miles, 3100' gain. Strenuous. David Van Winkle (505/820-1006 – Northern Group).

**Sunday, June 29 • Venado Peak hike** – 17- to 18-mile loop, 3400' gain. Very strenuous hike in Latir Wilderness. Camp night before at Cabresto Lake. Hal Davis (575/758-3949 – Northern Group).

**Saturday, July 5 • Horsethief Meadow hike** – 11 miles, 2200' gain. Strenuous hike along a creek in the Pecos, with caves. Alan Shapiro (505/424-9242 – Northern Group).

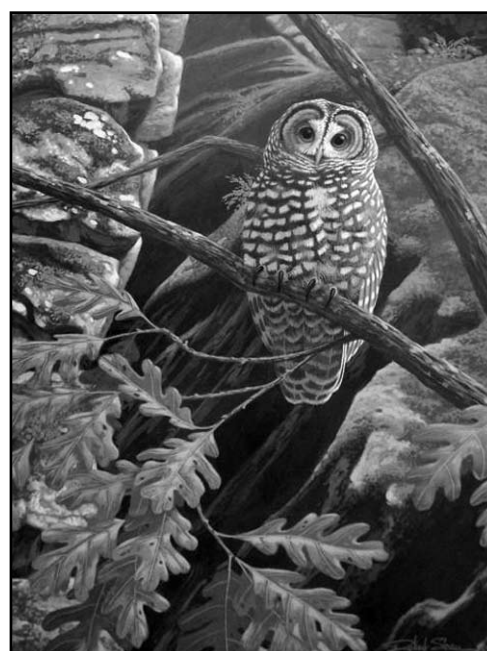
**Sunday, July 6 • Dockwiler Trail hike** – 8 miles, 1700' gain. Moderate hike in the Pecos. Meadows, wildflowers, aspen. Norbert Sperlich (505/474-4354 – Northern Group).

\* See writeup on page 11 (Northern Group) about Sabinoso, east of Las Vegas, which has recently been proposed as a wilderness area by Representative Tom Udall.

**Please check the five Groups' pages for more information on these trips and additional activities. All mileages are round trips. Participants must sign a liability waiver.**

## Bring Nature Indoors with This Beautiful Richard Sloan Print

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



Spotted Owl print

with the delivery of your choice of a signed and numbered Sloan print, shipped flat and ready for framing. Contact Dan Lorimier (575/740-2927, [daniel.lorimier@sierraclub.org](mailto:daniel.lorimier@sierraclub.org)) to make your donation and get a Richard Sloan print.

*"As a hunter and fisherman I want to help preserve the habitats that support New Mexico's game animals. I see the Chapter working hard to do just that, and enjoy contributing to their efforts through my business."*

—Tom Martin, Owner, TorC Postal Express