



Thousands rally around Otero Mesa

Working to preserve a unique landscape

Environment New Mexico's outreach staff have spoken face to face with more than 36,000 people about the need to protect Otero Mesa—the unique Chihuahuan grassland that hosts more than 1,000 native species and sits above the state's last untapped freshwater source.

As a result of our outreach efforts, thousands of people have sent postcards to President Obama urging him to protect Otero Mesa by designating it as a National Monument.

More than 180 mining claims

Otero Mesa has been open to gas drilling since 2004. In addition, early this year, we discovered hard-rock mining claims on the Mesa's Wind Mountain.

By May, a multinational corporation called Geovic had staked more than 180 claims that could seriously damage the Mesa. The company would use destructive techniques to extract minerals such as zirconium, commonly used to make fake diamonds. Mountains could be literally blasted away, and toxic runoff from the chemicals involved could leach into the groundwater below.

Resources too valuable to risk

As anyone who has been there knows, Otero Mesa deserves protection. The Mesa hosts more than 1,000 native species, is home to 1,000 archeological sites, and sits above state's last untapped source of drinking water: the Salt Basin Aquifer. Estimates show that there is enough



flickr user: Paul Garland

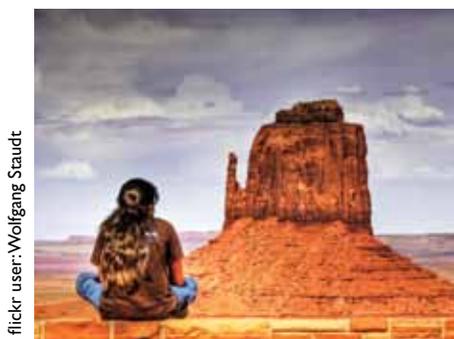
▲ *Otero Mesa—home to more than 1,000 native species and the state's last untapped source of drinking water—could be permanently damaged by drilling.*

water in the aquifer to supply 1 million New Mexicans for 100 years. By contrast, scientists estimate the gas under Otero Mesa would only meet 16 days worth of current demand—yet the damage could be permanent.

A simple solution

With a stroke of the pen, President Obama could protect the Mesa by des-

ignating it as a national monument. This would not affect current activities like camping and hunting, but would protect the land from drilling and mining. Environment New Mexico has been working with a broad coalition, including sportsmen and tribes, to advocate for this crucial step to preserve New Mexico's natural heritage.



flickr user: Wolfgang Staudt

more online

We're fighting to end our addiction to fossil fuels, keep mercury pollutants out of our air, and much more.

For the latest updates on our work and how you can help, visit www.EnvironmentNewMexico.org



Staff

To our members

The political climate in New Mexico has changed drastically since the beginning of the year, especially for the environment. There have been attacks on energy efficiency and water and air quality, some successful and others not. Regardless, Environment New Mexico is continuing to fight each attempt at every turn—and we could not do it without you.

Your support gives us the strength it takes to tackle these obstacles and stand up for our environment and our health. As you weigh in with elected officials, it demonstrates how important the environment is to you and other constituents and encourages them to protect our air, water and open spaces.

Your voice is irreplaceable and imperative in maintaining the quality of our environment.

Thanks for your support,

Sanders Moore, Advocate

Recent action

Defending energy efficiency in court

Environment New Mexico—along with the Sierra Club, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project and Sundancer Creations—is going to court to defend New Mexico’s progress on energy efficiency.

This spring, the Construction Industries Commission decided to move New Mexico backward by reverting to a national standard for energy conservation and abandoning the strong standards New Mexico passed last year. The New Mexico-specific code—which takes into account our unique climate and architectural heritage—required that homes built from this year forward be 20 percent more energy efficient than those built earlier. The state-specific codes would have saved New Mexicans money on utility bills, improved air quality by reducing emissions, and made New Mexico a national leader on energy efficiency.

The CIC’s decision to abandon the New Mexican energy conservation code is a big step in the wrong direction. That’s why Environment New Mexico and other groups are appealing the decision with the New Mexico Court of Appeals.

Grand Canyon gets short reprieve from mining

Mere weeks after Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced that his agency would consider strong protections for 1 million acres around the Grand Canyon, the uranium mining industry launched an attack with its allies in Congress to block him.

More than 1,000 uranium mining claims have already been staked within just five miles of Grand Canyon National Park, and the radioactive waste that results from uranium extraction poses a real threat to the park’s stunning landscape, its fragile desert ecosystems, and the rivers and streams that feed the Colorado River—which provides drinking water for more than 25 million Americans.

Two years ago, an outpouring of support from nearly 100,000 people like you enabled us to win temporary protection from new mining claims near the canyon. We’ll keep working to ensure that those protections stay in place.



Photo: equrman, shutterstock.com

How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment New Mexico.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or e-mail PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNewMexico.org.



AP Photo/US, Department of the Interior, USGS, Don Bliss

▲ We urged Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to extend a temporary ban on toxic mining near the Grand Canyon.

Cars of the future: A huge boost for fuel efficiency

With the cost of our oil addiction at an all-time high, we called on President Obama to take a bold step: Put us on the road to oil independence by making super-efficient cars the norm. He listened—announcing that fuel efficiency standards will double by 2025, to 54.5 miles per gallon.

The most important policy ever enacted to break our addiction to oil

In the weeks leading up to the president's decision, thousands of members of our national federation sent messages urging him to raise fuel-efficiency standards dramatically. We pointed out that if all the cars on the road today got 60 mpg, the average New Mexico household would save more than \$730 a year. Nationwide, a 60 mpg standard would reduce our oil consumption by 44 million barrels per year by 2025 and cut carbon pollution by 465 million metric tons—the equivalent of taking 70 million cars off the road.

More than 10,000 people across the country signed our petition urging the president to enact this ambitious but achievable standard. While the president's decision fell a few miles per gallon short of the position for which we fought, the new standard is a huge step toward a clean energy future.

The damage mounts

Unfortunately, oil-related environmental disasters keep piling up: In July, an ExxonMobil pipeline spilled 42,000 gallons of oil into the Yellowstone River. As one resident said after the spill: "You go down to where the oil is, and you don't hear anything anymore. No birds, no toads, no crickets, nothing." Our oil dependence has taken a terrible toll on wildlife, water quality and the economy in communities nationwide—from the Gulf of Mexico, to the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, to the Jordan River that feeds into the Great Salt Lake.

The good news is that a growing number of politicians are waking up to the fact

that we can't continue to depend on a fuel source that does so much damage to the places we love.

Big Oil won't back down

As the Obama administration worked on new efficiency standards this summer, oil companies ramped up pressure on Congress—even holding industry-funded rallies to make it look like the American public supports Big Oil's agenda.

The president didn't fall for it—and we're working to make sure Congress doesn't either. We're mobilizing citizens to speak up for a clean energy future, organizing town hall meetings where policy-makers can hear first hand that Americans are ready to get off oil.

We can't match the oil industry dollar for dollar, but we're working to make sure that decision-makers hear New Mexicans' voices just as loudly.



efficiency tips

Save energy, save money

We know energy efficiency is the cheapest and cleanest way to cut our fossil fuel use and pollution—but with all the options out there, it can be tough to figure out where to start.

Environment New Mexico Research & Policy Center designed our "Plugging Into Clean Energy" guide to help you cut through the clutter and pick what works for you.

Check it out at www.EnvironmentNewMexico.org/center/plug-into-clean-energy.

Bold action to cut mercury pollution

The Environmental Protection Agency is taking important steps to cut toxic air pollution from the Four Corners power plant in Crown Point and others nationwide.

In March, the EPA proposed new rules to cut mercury emissions by 91 percent—a huge victory, given mercury's toxic effects: Children who are exposed to low-dosage levels in utero can suffer deficiencies in attention, motor control and language. Wildlife may show slower growth and development, suffer reproductive failure, or even die. Elevated mercury levels led the New Mexico Department of Fish and Game to issue a new round of consumption advisories this year.

Since power plants are by far the greatest source of mercury pollution, setting limits on power-plant emissions is an important step toward reducing exposure.

Polluters and their allies in the Senate fought back with proposals to block the EPA, but staff and activists from our national federation were able to help defeat those measures—thanks in part to the activism of Environment New Mexico members.

This summer, our national federation delivered more than 800,000 public comments to the EPA in favor of the mercury rule—a show of the strong support that will be vital as the EPA fights back against attempts by Congress to block clean air rules.

Environment New Mexico
PO Box 40173
Albuquerque, NM 87196

Environment New Mexico

Address service requested

NON-PROFIT
ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BROCKTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 430



Fall Report

VOLUME 6 | NO. 2 | 2011

Environment New Mexico

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment New Mexico. We focus exclusively on protecting New Mexico's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

New Mexico's drinking water at risk

Working with our national federation, we're fighting to restore Clean Water Act protections to the streams and wetlands that feed the Rio Chama, the Gila River, and all of our waterways.

This spring, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson announced a plan to restore the Clean Water Act protections that years of polluter-driven lawsuits have eroded. But mining companies, developers and corporate agribusiness urged their friends in Congress to stop the EPA. ExxonMobil even threatened "legal warfare" over the issue. Fortunately, we anticipated this assault, and we had already begun to build support for the EPA's clean water initiatives. Field organizers in our network talked face to face with more than half a million Americans, mobilizing thousands to stand up for clean water.

Our drinking water is a precious resource—we'll keep working to make sure we don't waste a single drop to pollution.

Show your support



◀ You can stand up for our drinking water by posting this badge on your Facebook page (see our online action center for details). Together, we'll build a public outcry too big for Congress to ignore.



www.EnvironmentNewMexico.org/action