



CONSERVATION VOTERS NEW MEXICO

Turning Environmental Values into State Priorities

Volume VI, Issue 2 April 2011

Legislative Recap: The Good, The Bad, and The Downright Ugly

“You’ve got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky? Well, do ya, punk?”

While this quote is not actually from “The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly,” it was the most appropriate G-rated Clint Eastwood quote that we could find. But Eastwood’s 1966 film remains the best description we found of the 2011 legislative session. So, with that in mind, here is our legislative recap from the front lines of the legislative session: *The Good, The Bad, and the Downright Ugly*.

The Good

CVNM is proud to say that we were the only conservation group that was working to defeat every attack during the 2011 legislative session on the common-sense safeguards that protect New Mexico’s families and communities. And it had nothing to do with luck -- we worked tirelessly to ensure that all environmental rollbacks were defeated, making 2011 the 7th consecutive year of halting 100% of the attacks on our air, land, and water.

Many of our legislative champions stepped up to the plate and fought hard for the health and safety of New Mexicans, and we would like to express our gratitude to those champions. There are far too many to name here, but you know who you are.



Senior Lobbyist Leanne Leith, left, and Junior Lobbyist Molly Brook, right, discuss strategy with their “kill bill” list in the background.

CVNM also led a large and diverse coalition of individuals and organizations that successfully worked to preserve \$5 million in funding for land conservation and river restoration projects. We would not have been able to accomplish this without the efforts of Representatives Don Tripp (R - Catron, Socorro, and Valencia) and Kiki Saavedra (D - Bernalillo and Valencia).

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Executive Director's Message



Dear Conservation Voter,

Happy Earth Day! I hope you are taking this time to enjoy the outdoors by hiking, going for walks, and appreciating the natural beauty that we are so blessed with here in New Mexico. Earth Day is also a great time to reflect upon what we hold most dear and how we can use our votes, our voices, and whatever influence we have to make sure those things aren't lost.

This week marks the one-year anniversary of the BP oil spill. This tragedy caused the loss of 11 lives, extensive damage to wildlife and habitats, had health and economic consequences that experts are still continuing to unravel, and may take decades - or longer - to set right. The spill demonstrated that absence or disregard for regulatory safeguards can have a devastating impact on human health, wildlife, and our economy. We also just passed the one-month mark of the horrific Fukushima nuclear plant meltdown. The unacceptable and outrageous impacts to human health and the global economy will be with us for many years to come.

But there's another side to this coin. This spring we remember the one-year anniversary of the passing of one of our greatest conservationists, Stewart Udall. In the life of Stewart Udall, we see that one dedicated person can change the way a nation thinks about conservation and positively change environmental policy in our state and nation.

Earth Day is our opportunity to think about how we, as New Mexicans, can stand up to polluters and make our voice heard in the political arena. Along those lines, we want to share with you the results of two recent and encouraging polls which demonstrate that the vast majority of New Mexicans want our to keep common-sense environmental safeguards in place (pg. 3).

In our front-page feature, CVNM's advocacy team gives their report of the 2011 legislative session. As a supporter of CVNM, we hope you join us in celebrating these victories - after all, we could not have maintained our record of defeating 100% of the anti-conservation bills without your help.

As always, we appreciate your support and commitment to conservation in New Mexico. Thank you for being a conservation voter and Happy Earth Day!

Sandy Buffett
CVNM Executive Director

Coming Soon....

CVNM's 2011
Legislative
Scorecard!



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CVNM is a nonpartisan, non-profit 501c(4) organization that works to protect New Mexico's natural environment and our cherished way of life by:

- Educating legislators and voters on critical conservation issues;
- Lobbying on behalf of pro-conservation legislation;
- Holding legislators accountable for decisions that impact the environment; and
- Endorsing and electing pro-conservation candidates to public office.

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New Mexicans Support Environmental Safeguards

Two Recent Polls Show Broad-Based Interest in Protecting Environment

From the water that comes out of our faucets, to the acequias that nurture New Mexico's crops, clean water is a natural resource on which all New Mexicans depend. When water and other resources are threatened by contamination and climate-induced scarcity, we risk the health of our children, the self-sufficiency of our communities and our long-term livelihoods.

New Mexicans have known for generations that "el agua es la vida". However, we are currently hearing claims from the big, multinational corporate interests on Governor Martinez' so-called "small-business task force" that sensible clean water protections must be repealed in the hunt for economic growth—as if prosperity were somehow inconsistent with, instead of dependent upon, the availability of clean water. We also witnessed an unprecedented attack on safeguards that protect the water we drink and the air we breathe at the 2011 Legislature (thankfully, all those efforts to eliminate or undermine common-sense protections were defeated).

Notably, according to two recent polls, New Mexicans across the state aren't buying into the out-of-state corporations' and lobbyists' wish list for dismantling our existing safeguards. To be sure, the polls demonstrate support for even more protective environmental safeguards to keep our water, land, and air clean and healthy.

Last fall, Conservation Voters New Mexico Education Fund (CVNM-EF) released its poll of conservation values in several rural New Mexico counties. The poll, conducted in rural McKinley, Mora, Cibola, San Miguel, Rio Arriba, Grant and Luna counties, shows that

environmental safeguards, jobs in renewable energy, and holding polluters accountable are things that rural New Mexicans strongly value.

Another notable poll on attitudes toward the environment is Colorado College's State of the Rockies Survey of Five Western States, released in January 2011. According to this poll, New Mexico voters agree on the importance of clean water, clean air, natural places, and wildlife preservation - even when they disagree on political and economic issues.

The CVNM-EF poll reveals that 77% of rural New Mexicans polled in these counties support the adoption of stronger safeguards to protect our drinking water and soil from contamination. This closely mirrors data from the State of the Rockies report, in which—after hearing a neutral explanation of environmental safeguards--72% of New Mexicans polled said that current safeguards should be maintained.

The State of the Rockies poll further reports that 77% of all New Mexicans believe that we can keep the safeguards that protect our air, land and water, while maintaining a strong economy; only 20% feel that the environment and the economy are in conflict.

Despite a bombardment of propaganda from polluting special interests, New Mexico voters continue to maintain a common-sense, balanced view when it comes to protecting our air, land and water. Although the economy is still

the first concern in the minds of New Mexicans, these voters believe that environmental safeguards are not in conflict with job growth. Indeed, sensible environmental protections are laying the foundation for New Mexico's robust, healthy economy of the future.

Renewable Energy

The growth of the clean, renewable energy industry continues to be a bright spot in our state's economy, spurring competition and providing high-paying jobs for New Mexicans that improve their health, safety and economic well-being. In CVNM-EF's poll, 78% of rural New Mexicans polled in the seven counties favored investing public funds in renewable energy sources.

In the State of the Rockies poll, when asked to rate their impression of energy sources on a scale of 1-100 (100 being the highest), voters in Western states ranked solar and wind power significantly higher than oil and coal, at 79% and 76% for solar and wind, versus only 58% and 52% for oil and coal. Two-thirds of these voters (67%) agreed that increasing renewable energy production will create jobs.

A whopping 91% of New Mexicans also said that they would be willing to pay more to increase the state's use of renewable energy. Looking at these figures, there is no room for doubt: New Mexicans agree that renewable energy is an important part of our future and they are enthusiastic about the jobs and economic growth that this industry brings to our state.

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Legislative Recap

Continued from page 1...

In other good news, a handful of pro-conservation measures passed the legislature, including measures that:

- encourage investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy (SB 237; SB 266);
- improve safety of cyclists on New Mexico roads (SB 124); and
- help keep highly-toxic mercury out of our waste water (SB 12).

Unfortunately, none of these measures was signed into law. More on that later... but it's a good sign that the legislature is still actively supporting pro-conservation legislation.

It was also encouraging that CVNM was able to collaborate and compromise with some freshman legislators, including Representatives Yvette Herrell (R - Otero), Nate Gentry (R - Bernalillo), and David Chavez (R - Valencia). On several measures that these legislators sponsored, they worked with CVNM and other advocates to negotiate language that everyone could agree on.

The Bad

This year, the scope, intensity and volume of attacks on our public health and environmental safeguards were unprecedented. The 2011 legislative session truly set a record new low. While there were far too many anti-conservation bills introduced to describe here, CVNM advocated against and helped to defeat more than 60



bad measures. Some of those measures included bills that would have:

- reduced public access to important hearing notices and permit applications (SB 147);
- placed insurmountable obstacles in the path of cultural and historical site designations (HB 422, SB 421);
- reversed or gutted existing environmental safeguards (HB 69, HB 225/SB 249, HB 276, HB 396, HB 409, HB 546, HB 579, SB 91, SB 190, SB 459, SB 489, HJR 3, SJR 3);
- gutted endangered species protections (HB 543, HB 567/SB 565);
- incentivized reallocation of water, instead of conservation (SB 394); and
- merged critical agencies and departments in ways that would have inevitably undermined public and environmental health and safety (HB 80, HB 84, HB 157, HB 206).

Although the attacks were plentiful, CVNM fought diligently to keep them at bay. In the end, after a grueling 60 days, the environment prevailed.

The Downright Ugly

In the “downright ugly” department is the “Small-Business Task Force,” established by Governor Martinez in January. Thanks to investigative reporting by journalist Tracy Dingmann with Clearly New Mexico, it was revealed that the Task Force included few, if any, small-business representatives and was dominated by lobbyists for big industry, including many out-of-state corporations.



Senator Ortiz y Pino enjoys a glass of lemonade, served by 2-year-old Olive Biedscheid at CVNM's "Pit Rule Preservation" lemonade stand on Feb. 14

The Best, the Worst... and the Downright Strange

✓ Best legislation of 2011:

SB 442, Building Energy Disclosure Act, sponsored by Senator Cisneros. In a legislature and administration so focused on common-sense policy and transparency, this bill was the epitome of both. SB 442 would have given investors the right to know the energy rating for a commercial building before completing a transaction, allowing them to compare the energy efficiency of buildings. SB 442 failed to make it out of its first committee.

X Worst legislation of 2011:

HJR3/SJR 3, Legislative Nullification of Rules, CA, sponsored by Representative Nunez and Senator Neville. A surefire way to bring the legislature to a grinding and screeching halt, this constitutional amendment would have allowed the legislature to override executive policies and rules. This would have deterred the administration from adopting safeguards, bogged down the legislature in the minutia of pollutant levels, and further alienated the public from the rulemaking process. Both HJR3 and SJR 3 died in committee

♣ Best entertainment:

As the 2011 legislature neared its end, most of us at the State Capitol were feeling the wear and

tear of the 60-day session. Senator Sharer's Saint Patrick's Day outfit - a dazzling display of green leprechaun-ism, complete with Irish accent - was a welcome breath of fresh air.

? Wackiest commentary from a legislator:

In the final minutes of the legislative session, Senator Ryan filibustered legislation by speaking on a wide range of topics... colored paper... the Senate microphones... Beavis and Butthead...

X Best way to unwind at the end of the day:

The end of the day? What's that? The Business and Industry Committee regularly met until 2:30 in the morning!

✓ Session "Must-have":

Definitely coffee from Ohori's. One CVNM staffer was routinely spotted ordering quad-shot Americanos.

✓ Most anticipated end-of-session tradition:

Still holding strong: Eating toasted double-stuff peanut butter and jelly sandwiches from the House Cafe on the last night of session (by special request only).

Additional investigation yielded a list of 47 rules that the Task Force recommends be rescinded, revised, or repealed. The targeted rules include standards for dairy waste, air quality, water quality, food processing, and hazardous waste management, among others. New Mexico simply cannot afford to lose these critical safeguards that protect the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the health of our loved ones.

A final report from the task force was released on April 13. You can access it online here: <http://nmpolitics.net/Documents/0401.SmallBusinessTaskForceReport.pdf>

As a very discouraging sign of things to come for New

Mexico's environment, Governor Martinez vetoed almost every pro-conservation bill that reached her desk - even bills that passed the legislature unanimously or by overwhelming bipartisan majorities (outlined in "The Good"). When the Governor refuses to enact common-sense, non-controversial bills that draw huge, broad-based support, it raises questions about her commitment to working cooperatively and representing the public's interest.

Moving forward, our eyes will be on the legislative interim committees and the 2012 elections, both of which will help define our efforts to protect the Land of Enchantment.

State Auditor Hector Balderas Honored at Legislative Reception



CVNM Executive Director Sandy Buffett hands the Sunshine Award to State Auditor Hector Balderas

In February, elected officials and CVNM members joined us in Santa Fe for one of our most anticipated traditions: CVNM's Annual Legislative Reception. With the 60-day legislative session in full swing, about 75 guests braved the cold to unwind at the Rio Chama Restaurant for an evening of food, drink, and conversation.

The highlight of the evening was recognition of State Auditor Hector Balderas' hard work to improve government transparency by awarding him CVNM's 2011 Sunshine Award.

We selected State Auditor Hector Balderas to be the 2011 recipient for his steadfast work in rooting out fraud and corruption, and

shining sunlight on the operations of state government. His hard work has resulted in millions of dollars of savings and the enforcement of key safeguards that protect New Mexico's precious land and water.

Especially in these tough budget times, when state government is cutting critical programs and services, we need someone to stand strong and work to ensure that our resources are being spent wisely. Auditor Balderas has fought tirelessly to improve government transparency and make the state more effective in meeting its vital obligations to protect our water, air, and communities.

CVNM's award is presented each year to an individual that demonstrates a strong commitment to the health and protection of New Mexico's environment, citizens, and wildlife.

New Mexico Polls *...continued from page 3*

Holding Polluters Accountable

In our poll, we also asked rural voters in these selected counties about contamination by industry polluters. Overwhelmingly, these New Mexicans (76%) agree that we should increase penalties for polluters that contaminate our air and water. When polluters violate a safeguard or law, the state has the power to hold them accountable for that violation through fines and penalties. However, these voters agree that the current penalties are not enough to deter polluters from contaminating our air and our water.

Some of the best examples of pollutants that threaten our health are carbon and greenhouse-gas pollution - air pollutants that are exacerbating asthma, drought, and climate change. Recently, New Mexico passed safeguards to reduce carbon pollution, a move that is heavily supported by the rural voters in our poll. Fifty-three percent support regional action and 51% support state-level action to reduce carbon pollution - and this was not a poll of our environmentalist "base" in Santa Fe, this was a nonpartisan poll in several rural NM counties!

Although New Mexicans' opinions regarding climate change differ, 78% in this poll said that there is evidence that New Mexico is getting warmer and cycles of drought are increasing. And now, sadly, we see this unfolding--just last week the mayor of Las Vegas, NM, declared a drought emergency with only 84 days of drinking water left in its local reservoir.

These two polls show that New Mexicans agree that it is a priority to protect our air, land, and water, including during difficult economic times. It is time for our elected officials to listen to the people. New Mexicans want to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink and the land we cherish, and the great majority believe that enforcing and strengthening our existing safeguards is the way to do it.

The CVNM-EF poll was conducted from September 13, 2010 to September 19, 2010 by Third Eye Strategies. To view the full poll and the poll analysis, visit our website at www.CVNMEF.org

Colorado College's State of the Rockies poll is located at: http://www.coloradocollege.edu/StateoftheRockies/Conservation_West_Survey/ConservationWestSurvey_02_20_11ev1.pdf

Monthly Donor Spotlight: Tai Bixby



Where do you live, and what do you like most about it?

I live in Santa Fe in a co-housing community called The Commons on the Alameda with my wife of 14 years and our 3 children. The homeowners do all the management and maintenance as well as sharing a community meal several times a week. My favorite thing about my neighborhood is the security. Cars all park on the outside of the compound, the inside is beautifully landscaped and safe for kids and we know all our neighbors.

What type of work do you do?

I have been helping people buy and sell real estate in Santa Fe for 7 years. I am a Realtor with Sotheby's International Realty.

Do you have a favorite spring hiking spot?

My favorite spring hike is up Chupadero Canyon, just outside of Tesuque. It's about a 30-minute hike up to a beautiful box canyon that ends in a 30-foot waterfall.

Create a Legacy for Conservation.

Remember CVNM in your will.

Please email Allison@cvnm.org for more information.



Hey! Don't forget to renew your membership this spring. Visit www.cvnm.org or call 505.992.8683. Arf!

What are some of the things you do to help protect the environment?

I volunteer on various projects around Santa Fe. Last month I volunteered to help the Santa Fe Watershed Association clean up a stretch of the Santa Fe River near Camino Alire, and in December I did a workshop sponsored by Earthcare International where we stabilized an eroding arroyo that feeds into the Santa Fe River near Agua Fria Park. I'm currently working with clients to establish conservation easements on several large parcels in Santa Fe County.

Why did you decide to become a CVNM monthly donor?

Donations to CVNM are effective and highly leveraged. I know that the money I donate to CVNM is used to promote legislation and elect officials so that New Mexico's natural resources are protected on a large scale - much larger than if that money were used to buy or lease land for preservation. CVNM's Executive Director Sandy Buffett is passionate about what she does and has established a solid track record of success for CVNM.

I'm never too busy for a real estate referral from a fellow CVNM member. I will make a personal donation to CVNM for any properties that sell as a result of a referral to me from a CVNM member. Call me at 505-577-3524 or taibixby@gmail.com.



Join CVNM for Earth Day!

Saturday, April 23rd: Santa Fe; Earth Day Festival @ La Montañita Coop

Saturday, April 30th: Los Alamos; Earth Day Festival @ Pajarito Environmental Education Center, 3540 Orange Street

Saturday, April 30th: Las Vegas; SynergyFest @ Melody Park on the Campus of NM Highlands University

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