



San Juan Citizens Alliance 2004 Annual Report

San Juan Citizens Alliance is a volunteer-based and volunteer-directed grassroots citizens' organization. We are a community-organizing group with 500 local citizen members located in the San Juan Basin of southwest Colorado and northwest New Mexico. Since 1986, we have tackled issues of environmental, economic and social justice based on the needs of our communities and

the interests of our volunteer activists. Our organizing approach results in a diverse range of environmental and social justice issues with a correspondingly diverse membership base and allies. We believe this diversity of issues and support base makes possible progress on public policies in a variety of realms with direct consequences to the daily lives of countless area residents.



SJCA water coordinator Chuck Wanner enjoys the serenity of the Dolores River's Ponderosa Gorge with SJCA Board members Kent Ford (at the oars) and Carolyn Lamb.

The San Juan Citizens Alliance promotes stable communities that actively recognize and respect social and ecological diversity, increase genuine democracy, and foster social, economic, and environmental justice in the San Juan Basin.

SJCA Program Areas

Challenge Irresponsible Energy Development

We challenge industry and government to require environmentally responsible oil and gas development. With at least 15,000 new natural gas wells planned for the San Juan Basin over the next 20 years, we face immense challenges to make sure development protects our quality lifestyle of peace and quiet, clean air and clean water. We insist on the use of clean technology, strict reclamation, and fair rules that respect the rights of home-owners, ranchers, and residents.

Protect Spectacular Lands and Native Wildlife

From Canyons of the Ancients National Monument to the ancient ponderosa pine forests of Hermosa Creek, the San Juan Basin offers prospects for a half-million acres of additional wilderness areas,

and vast habitat to sustain wide-ranging species like lynx and wolf. SJCA advocates for wilderness protection and reintroduction of native wildlife.

Safeguard Free-Flowing Rivers & Clean Water

The San Juans give birth to remarkable rivers and streams, providing life-giving waters for farms and cities but also supporting recreation and aesthetic values. We challenge dams that might destroy our last free-flowing streams while striving for efficient use of water and promoting democracy in water policy.

Build a Safe and Hospitable Society

SJCA strives to create social, economic, and environmental justice for all residents of the San Juan Basin. Our Los Compañeros project campaigns to end racial profiling that often targets Latinos and other ethnic minorities, and to promote acceptance of diverse cultures

Coalitions

SJCA expanded its participation in coalition efforts around energy, forest protection, water and civil rights projects in 2004. These include the Western Coalbed Methane Project, Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance, Western Slope Water Network, and La Plata Unity Coalition. These coalition efforts provide measurable financial benefits to SJCA, and greatly ease the burden of individual group fundraising. SJCA staff played leadership roles in each of these coalitions.

Green Business Roundtable

San Juan Citizens Alliance launched the Green Business Roundtable in 2002 to inspire, educate, and improve the business community on environmental issues through a monthly lunch networking event. Through gentle peer pressure, we aim to improve our individual and company contributions to sustaining the environment. The idea is to mimic the systems used by Rotary and other service clubs to influence the community.

During 2004, we began to see spin-off benefits such as renewable energy workshops, a Chamber of Commerce-sponsored award to the "Green Business of the Year," and sales of energy efficiency devices. Monthly luncheons routinely averaged 60 attendees throughout the year. Luncheon topics during 2004 included biodiesel in Durango, enhancing recycling and energy efficiency within businesses, and operating restaurants utilizing locally-produced crops.



SJCA's power lies in its base of motivated, citizen volunteers and their passion for protecting the land and people of the San Juan Basin.

Campaign Highlights

HD Mountains

Since our inception in 1986, protecting the HD Mountains from the ravages of coalbed methane development has remained a steadfast commitment of San Juan Citizens Alliance. A hard-fought campaign in 1992 culminated in a successful outcome with just a handful of wells drilled by Amoco. A decade later, a consortium of oil companies has once again targeted the HD Mountains with plans for several hundred coalbed methane wells. Industry plans culminated in 2004 with a government study documenting the expected environmental impacts to this pristine, low-elevation roadless area in the San Juan Mountains near Bayfield, Colorado.

True to our roots, SJCA mobilized a vast, diverse, and overwhelming public response to safeguard the HD Mountains from this devastating potential development. Industry planned at least 79 wells and 36 miles of roads inside the official roadless area boundary, along with dozens of wells drilled on the Fruitland formation outcrop. Wells previously drilled along the outcrop resulted in homes contaminated by methane, large swaths of vegetation killed by methane seeps, and spontaneous underground coal fires.

The San Juan National Forest released its long-awaited Northern San Juan Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in June, 2004. The action kicked off an aggressive public mobilization effort by SJCA staff, board members and volunteers operating with a loose confederation of Bayfield area residents called the HD Mountains



Public comment from concerned residents like these flooded the Forest Service.

Coalition.

SJCA launched a July media blitz that included TV, radio, and print ads to drive citizens to the public hearing on the DEIS and to www.savehdmountains.org. We turned out over 200 people to the official public hearing on the DEIS in Bayfield, where speakers opposing drilling outnumbered those in favor by 47-3. With the assistance of email alerts from our national partner groups, we generated almost 70,000 comments on the DEIS. We also submitted detailed technical comments from consultants on air quality, alternative drilling technologies, and archeology.

Most importantly, our organizing efforts concentrated on recruiting support among sympathetic local governments. We obtained strong resolutions of

support for our position opposing drilling along the Fruitland Formation outcrop and in the roadless area with unanimous votes by La Plata County and Archuleta County commissions, and the town/city councils of Bayfield, Ignacio, and Durango. These resolutions were crucial to obtaining a similar unanimous recommendation by the full 15-member BLM Southwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council.

These outcomes resulted directly from a diverse, robust grassroots organizing effort. The collective result was overwhelming, broad, deep public opposition to destroying the HD Mountains. Our ultimate test of success lies in the final decision rendered by San Juan National Forest managers, expected late in 2005.

Landowner Protection

The second major prong of our oil and gas work focused on obtaining landowner protections on private lands with split-estate mineral ownership. One key strategy was highlighting the substantial, negative consequences to ranchers, farmers, and rural landowners from ongoing tactics and practices of the oil and gas industry. We obtained numerous sympathetic regional and national news reports featuring SJCA members in New Mexico and Colorado that detailed their challenges in protecting their homes, property, and livelihoods in the face of an aggressive, bullying industry. These efforts resulted in favorable articles in *Mother Jones*, *Los Angeles Times*, *LA Weekly*, *Audubon*, *Denver Post*, *Albuquerque Journal*, *Durango Herald*, and *The Pine River Times*.

We focused much of our effort during 2004 on creating a citizens' enforcement campaign to enforce laws and regulations where governments cannot or will not. We completed a Citizens Enforcement Guide to oil and gas operations that empowers individual citizens with a checklist of federal regulations and allows anyone to visit well pads to determine compliance

Desert Rock Coal Power Plant

During 2004, SJCA started challenging three new coal-fired power plants proposed for northwestern New Mexico. The proposed power plants, especially the Desert Rock Energy Project, pose significant threats to the Four Corners' air quality. We initially built a strong coalition with partner groups within the Navajo Nation, most specifically Diné CARE.



SJCA members in northern New Mexico led challenges to industry dominated plans by BLM that would allow over 10,000 new gas wells.

with mitigation and reclamation standards. SJCA members perfected the compliance checklist, completed inspections, developed a database for each well's information, and researched the BLM records.

A major strategy for landowner protection was enactment of new state legislation in Colorado and New Mexico to elevate the rights of landowners faced with industry demands for surface access for drilling. We worked closely with allies in both states to craft bills for introduction to state legislatures in early 2005.

SJCA has focused on community organizing in the off-reservation towns across the Four Corners, building public awareness through media outreach, and submitting exhaustive scoping comments for the pending Desert Rock Project Environmental Impact Statement. A primary achievement was educating the Navajo communities near the proposed Desert Rock plant by

We challenged BLM's approval of the Farmington Resource Management Plan in a federal lawsuit. Our co-plaintiffs included two individual ranchers (both SJCA members), the Navajo grassroots group Dine CARE, several Navajo Nation Chapters, the Oil and Gas Accountability Project and Natural Resources Defense Council. The lawsuit received extensive press coverage across the country, including in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, with headlines such as "Ranchers, Navajos, and Environmentalists Challenge BLM."

bringing informational posters to Chapter meetings, and supplying CD-Rom's to key individuals. We also tapped the Western Clean Energy Campaign for legal and

**Protecting the Wild San Juans
Canyons of the Ancients National Monument**

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CANM) is the premier archeological monument within the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System. The 164,000-acre monument in Colorado's extreme southwest corner was proclaimed in 2000 to protect the remarkable array of thousand-year-old pre-Puebloan archeological sites and the natural



landscape in which they occur. More than 20,000 sites occur within the monument, with over 300 sites per square mile in some locations. BLM is drafting a plan to guide the Monument's management over the next 20 years.

During 2004, SJCA staff organized a series of monthly meetings in Cortez, routinely attended by 15-20 local residents, to discuss management issues facing the Monument. The discussions resulted in significant improvements to the management recommendations made by BLM's official CANM citizens advisory committee.

In addition to proactive efforts around the future management plan, SJCA also devoted considerable energy to monitoring ongoing development activities. BLM was processing various development proposals including requests to drill seven new oil wells in the southwest corner of the Monument and a proposal to significantly modify grazing practices over about 25-30% of the Monument.

Colorado Wolf Management Plan

The Colorado Division of Wildlife appointed a Colorado Wolf Management Working Group in the spring of 2004. The group was composed of four livestock producers, four wildlife advocates (including SJCA Executive Director Mark Pearson), two sportsmen, two county commissioners, and two professional wildlife biologists.

The group was given the difficult task of coming to an agreement on how the DOW should manage wolves that migrated into Colorado from recovery areas in the northern Rockies or Arizona and New

Mexico. At the end of 2004, the group concluded its deliberations and recommended a wolf management plan to the Colorado Wildlife Commission. The plan's premise is that if and when wolves arrive in Colorado, they will be managed without limitations on numbers or location as long as wolves avoid causing significant disruptions to livestock and other human activities. The plan has particular significance for southwest Colorado because the San Juan Mountains are considered prime habitat for wolves owing to its remoteness and large elk herds.

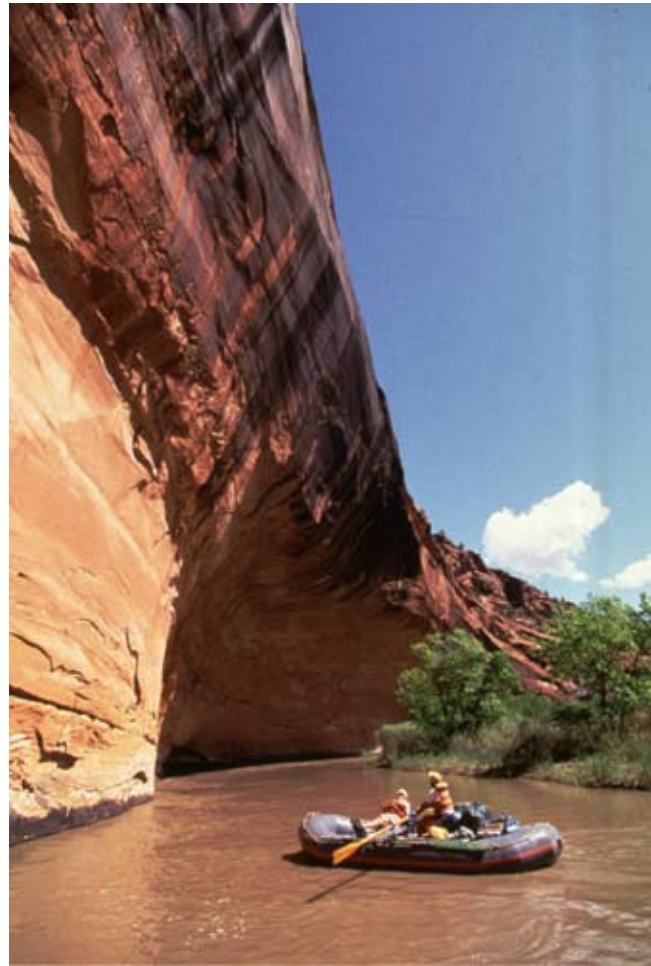
Village at Wolf Creek

A Forest Service proposal to grant unrestricted access to Texas billionaire Red McCombs for his massive Village at Wolf Creek ran headlong into overwhelming opposition. SJCA worked closely in collaboration with the "Friends of Wolf Creek", led by Colorado Wild and San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council, to help mobilize several thousand individuals express their outrage about plans for a new city of several thousand housing units atop Wolf Creek Pass. Numerous state and federal agencies panned the Forest Service's Environmental Impact Statement. Colorado Department of Transportation, for example, took the Forest Service to task for ignoring the traffic impacts to Highway 160 caused by the massive new development. A major failing in the EIS was the Forest Service's refusal to consider the environmental impacts caused by the massive real estate development. Fighting this insane real estate proposal will occupy significant attention during 2005.

San Juan Basin Rivers

Dolores River

The Dolores River Dialogue continued to bring together key decision makers to find ways to get more water downstream the Dolores River during 2004. Participants, including the two major water users, Dolores Water Conservancy District and Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company, plus the Bureau of Reclamation, Forest Service, BLM, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Division of Wildlife, Nature Conservancy and Dolores River Coalition (led by SJCA) met to search for consensus on increasing downstream flows for the environment and recreation while not impacting agricultural users. The group created a technical committee to identify data sources and devise a work plan for future analysis of reservoir management.



SJCA hopes to return water to the Dolores River through our leadership in the Dolores River Dialogue, so generations to come can enjoy the river's unmatched beauty.

Los Pinos River

SJCA maintained a watchful eye over a proposed dam at Emerald Lake in the Weminuche Wilderness in 2004. The dam would inundate a beautiful and favored wilderness valley. Fortunately, one of the two dam proponents, the Southern Ute Tribe, dropped out of the project leaving only the Pine River Irrigation District continuing to push the dam.

Animas River

During 2004, the newly formed Animas River Nutrients Working Group obtained diverse support and participation from water users, governments, and conservation groups to address the sources and solutions to nutrient loading in the Animas. Along with SJCA, participants included Colorado Division of Wildlife, State of New Mexico Surface Water Quality

Bureau, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Animas River Stakeholder Group, San Juan Watershed Group, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, cities of Durango, Colorado and Farmington, New Mexico, and the Southwest Water Conservation District.

In 2004, the group undertook, for the second year, a coordinated low-flow synoptic sample of the Animas River over more than 100 river miles between Silverton, Colorado and Farmington, New Mexico. This is the first time that all of the four state and tribal governments that have water quality standards on the Animas or interests in its waters have cooperated in a sampling effort.

Changing the Decision-Makers

SJCA has realized that protecting basin rivers depends on the outlook and priorities of decision-making bodies. For that reason, we have focused on improving the make-up of water boards and commissions in the region. SJCA members and staff have been appointed to seats on the Durango Water Commission, La Plata County Water Commission, and Animas-La Plata Water Conservancy District.

Los Compañeros

SJCA launched Los Compañeros in 2000 to effect policy changes to improve the lives of Latinos and immigrants, to outreach to Latinos about issues of concern, and to increase participation by Latinos and immigrants in community institutions. We made substantial progress in each of these areas during 2004.

Los Compañeros achieved a dramatic milestone in July, 2004 when the Durango City Council unanimously adopted an "Immigrant Friendly" resolution that bars city employees from inquiring about immigration status in the normal course of providing services to individuals. This includes Durango city police who are now directed to only obtain immigration status in



organizing and by empowering Latino residents to step forth and speak out about the needs of their community.



criminal investigations but not for routine civil violations such as traffic offenses. We believe the resolution will improve the status of the Latino immigrant community by reducing fear of contacting city authorities for social assistance, reporting crimes, and so forth. The policy change was achieved through concerted, long-term grassroots community

Despite Colorado legislation that voids the legality of official Mexican government identification cards for legal identification purposes in Colorado, Los Compañeros worked with community institutions in Durango to secure approval of these "matricula consulares" which are identification cards for banking, library lending, and alcohol purchases, among others. Colorado legislation discriminates against people of Mexican nationality by voiding their government's identification cards, but does not similarly void identification papers from European countries. Our organizing efforts led to the Durango Public Library, Wells Fargo Bank, and other businesses accepting the matricula consulares for business purposes, thereby significantly improving the quality

of life for numerous immigrants.

We continued sponsorship of our weekly Radio Latina program on local station KDUR that provides a forum for disseminating news and commentary to the community. We also began sponsoring a regular monthly column on political change and voting rights in the region's primary bilingual newspaper, *El Valle Hispanic News*.

San Juan Citizens Alliance

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Financial Summary

January 1, 2004- December 31, 2004

Our organizational income in 2004 was \$353,764 and our expenses were \$361,367, leaving us with a cash balance of \$70,252 at the end of the year. We raised \$256,000 in grants and about \$97,000 from membership, major donors, and other internal sources. The Alliance ended the year with 426 current members. Our renewal rate averages about 70%.