

San Juan Citizens News

Fall 2001

Organizing for the people and land of the San Juan Basin

A Call to Action for Dolores River Users

—Carolyn Dunmire

I first heard the call while standing ankle deep in a dribble of lukewarm water on the boat ramp at Bradfield Bridge. Upstream, the river was flowing 2500 cubic feet per second (cfs), but here, below the dam; the mighty Dolores was running 52 cfs. While I was not looking forward to another year without a boatable release of water from McPhee Reservoir, I thought how bad the few fish remaining in this section of the river must feel - their survival was at stake. With an ever-increasing demand for irrigation water and the Ute tribe taking its full allotment this year, future water prospects did not look good for my boat or the fish.

Is Anybody Out There?

As a Dolores River user (an avid boater and sometimes fly fisher), I kept track of the rumors of future projects on the Dolores – I had heard of WETPACK but had no idea what it stood for (Water for Everyone Tomorrow Package). I also heard that the legal minimum flow in the Dolores was even lower than the dribble I was standing in. It was clear to me that it was not nearly enough water to keep fish alive or for the Dolores to be awarded gold medal fishing status. I was wondering if there was anybody out there wondering about the fate of the river. How can we get some water in the river for wildlife and boating?

There are several groups looking out for Dolores River interests: commercial boaters, Trout Unlimited, San Juan Citizens Alliance, the BLM and Forest Service...but no one represented my specific interests as a public citizen and river user. So that is why a like-minded group of folks from the greater Dolores area hooked up with San Juan Citizens Alliance to form the Dolores River Action Group or DRAG. DRAG has the expressed purpose to get some water in the Dolores River! DRAG's specific mission and strategy are outlined on the next page. Overall, we would rather work cooperatively (rather than combatively) with the interested parties to improve recreation in/on the Dolores River. We want to improve the standing of river uses in the hierarchy of water allottees as well as change the view of downstream flows through language and example (afterall



Dolores Drag: This forlorn kayaker dragging his boat down the streambed below Bradfield Bridge boatlaunch on Memorial Day weekend characterizes the problems with current management of McPhee Reservoir and the lack of concern for downstream recreation and fishing.

Action is our middle name). For example, a spill is not lost water but a downstream flow benefiting river users and the community at large, both economically and recreationally. Let's remind the Bureau of Reclamation and the Dolores Water Conservancy District that Dolores...It's a River! And to operate McPhee dam accordingly.

A Hopeless Cause?

Trying to get water for uses that have weak standing regarding water allotment may at first seem hopeless. But, we believe that non-

consumptive uses such as whitewater boating, canoeing, fishing, and wildlife viewing are just as valid as consumptive uses (e.g. irrigation for private gain on private lands). River users have a right to Dolores River flows. While we don't want to stifle the decision process for future improvements, our views regarding another season of dragging our boats down the Dolores River need to be considered with the rest of the water users.

Recent studies indicate that the water from the Dolores Project could be used more

optimally while providing for more profitable agriculture. This would produce water savings that should be left in the river. Examples include providing financial incentives for the optional use of irrigation improvements for hardware improvements and time of day irrigation systems. No longer should we be subjected to watching watering during the hottest windy days. Politically, the Dolores could be the trailblazer and beneficiary of a new style of water management, where instream flows are encouraged by political mandate. The combined power of the environmental and ag communities could make this a good deal for everyone.

Dolores River Action Group (DRAG)

This loosely formed group of river users includes whitewater boaters, fishermen and women, birders and other wildlife watchers, and other folks that want to see water flowing in the Dolores River downstream of McPhee dam. DRAG is currently operating under San Juan Citizens Alliance who is generously providing administrative and other financial support as well as non-profit status for the

group. Currently DRAG and SJCA are aligned in their views about the Dolores River, however, if our views diverge in the future, DRAG maintains the option to become independent of SJCA.

Our mission and objectives:

- Work to maintain and increase river flows for recreation.
- Advocate river flows that maintain and improve health of the river ecosystem.
- Pursue Wild and Scenic River designation for the Dolores River.
- Change the perception of Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec) and Dolores Water Conservancy District (DWCD) that they are managing a river system not a reservoir.
- Lobby the BuRec to require DWCD to document how they are meeting the needs of these river consumers. Change the language around “non-consumption” about future projects and developments on the Dolores River. Provide public comment and review of proposals.

- Monitor WETPACK to be sure that basic environmental and recreational needs are met first

- Raise awareness of social and economic benefit of recreation on the Dolores River.

- Instigate a study into the economic benefits of recreation & boating on the Dolores River.

- Document the true environmental costs of McPhee reservoir operations including lost power generation at McPhee, lost power generation downstream, downstream environmental mitigation required because of irrigation.

- Document the out of state and out of basin transfers proposed through expansion of McPhee.

For regular updates on Dolores River issues, sign up on the Dolores River electronic listserv at www.sanjuancitizens.org/dolores.html.

San Juan Citizens Alliance

www.sanjuancitizens.org

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.

OFFICERS: Carolyn Lamb, President; Dan Randolph; Vice-President/Secretary; Paul Bendt; Treasurer.

DIRECTORS: Terry Fitzgerald, Dylan Norton, Michael Carroll

STAFF:

Mark Pearson(970) 259-3583
Executive Director mpearson@frontier.net

Olivia Lopez.....(970) 375-9406
Organizer, Compañeros Latino Resource Center companeros@frontier.net

Alan Rolston(970) 259-3583
Organizer, Oil and Gas Task Force

Julie Koehler(970) 259-3583
Office manager

Layout & Design by Cynthia Dow

What's Inside

<i>DRAG: A Call to Action for Dolores River Users</i>	1
<i>Alliance Helps Local Residents Defend Water Quality Standards</i>	3
<i>Director's Column</i>	4
<i>Musings from the President</i>	4
<i>Energy Bills Threaten Southwest Colorado</i>	5
<i>Piano Creek Ranch Resort Stalls</i>	6
<i>Calendar</i>	6
<i>Can I Fish Along the East Fork?</i>	7
<i>Alliance Once Again Staves Off Leases in HD Mountains</i>	8
<i>Environmental Violations Rampant in New Mexico Oil and Gas Fields</i>	8
<i>Counties Draft Regulations to Protect Landowners</i>	9
<i>Court Rules La Plata County Has Right to Regulate Oil and Gas Development</i>	10
<i>Fee Demo Comes to SW Colorado</i>	10
<i>Durango Mountain Resort Proposes 1,735 Homes and Condos</i>	11
<i>Jack Scott Receives Award</i>	11
<i>Updates on Wild San Juans</i>	12
<i>Coloradans Support Lynx and Wolves</i>	13
<i>La Plata County Open Space Initiative on November Ballot</i>	14
<i>First Year of Compañeros a Smashing Success</i>	15

Alliance Helps Local Residents Defend Water Quality Standards

State Commission Agrees to Uphold Existing High Water Quality

—Mark Pearson

The Southwest District wants to allow ten times as much fecal matter in our streams, you say? Are you kidding?"

Alas, we were not kidding when we started informing landowners and users of the La Plata, Mancos, Dolores, and other local rivers about an incredible proposal by the Southwest Water Conservation District. Every three years, the state of Colorado revisits water quality standards for every stream in each river basin. As part of the water quality rulemaking for our local rivers, the local water establishment community offered a proposal to increase the permitted fecal coliform levels by a factor of ten — from 200 organisms to 2,000 organisms per 100 milliliter — and increase levels of *E. coli* by five times.

Fortunately, the rules were on our side in this situation. In order to drop water quality standards, the District had to prove that no primary human contact presently occurred in any of these rivers, and that human contact was unlikely in the future. This is because the Clean Water Act figures that adults and children splashing and swimming are mostly likely to swallow water, so keeping as little fecal matter as possible in streams makes them healthy for all to enjoy. The District obtained written statements from their consulting engineer and other water users alleging no one ever swam, waded, splashed, or otherwise came into recreational contact with the La Plata, Mancos, and other local streams so concentrations of fecal matter could be increased dramatically.

According to Steve Harris, the District's consulting engineer, "there are no primary contact uses" such as swimming, wading, or water play by children in the La Plata River. Newly appointed state senator Jim Isgar chimed in that no children swam, waded, or played in the La Plata "to my knowledge." Even the local division water engineer, Bruce Whitehead, claimed no knowledge of swimming or other recreational uses of the La Plata and other streams.

Too bad they didn't bother to ask landowners along the La Plata. The Alliance contacted La Plata River landowners, thirteen of which submitted statements attesting to their own and other's recreational uses of the river. "This is a lovely, accessible, and recreationally well-used segment of the river," says Michael

Rosenberg, a landowner along the La Plata River. "My family, kids, and guests all enjoy wading, splashing, and swimming in the river. We don't want to see increased amounts of fecal matter allowed in the water."

"Most of the families living on the river and nearby wade, swim and splash in the river frequently," says Dr. William Calvert, a landowner along the lower La Plata. "I'm horrified by any increase in contamination of the river. It is a threat to the children."

At its July 9 rulemaking hearing, the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission wrestled with these competing visions for safeguarding the water quality of the La Plata, Mancos, and other local rivers and streams. Commissioners weighed their responsibility to meet the Clean Water Act's national goal to maintain the nation's rivers and streams in a fishable and swimmable condition against the desire of the Southwestern Water Conservation District for vast increases in allowed pollution.

For the most part, the Commission sided with citizens and against those hoping for standards allowing increased pollution. The Commission kept the La Plata River at the highest standard for summer months (200 fecal coliform organisms per 100 mL), but adopted a moderately lower standard of 325 fecal coliform organisms for the winter months. The Commission's action roundly repudiates the Southwestern District's avowed goal of dirtier water and protects the health of our children and families enjoying the attractions of southwest Colorado's appealing rivers and streams. ■

Director's Column

—Mark Pearson, Executive Director

As summer winds on, the Alliance's many efforts to protect the land and lifestyle of the San Juan Basin are cranking in high gear.

Alan Rolston joined us in April as a staff organizer focussed on oil and gas issues. Many of you have already met Alan as he travels around La Plata and Archuleta counties in Colorado, and San Juan County, New Mexico, to learn more about impacts on landowners and ecosystems from burgeoning oil and gas development. Alan will be working particularly hard in coming months to organize public pressure to improve county regulation of oil and gas development. He'll also be spending time scrutinizing ongoing industry practices on public lands in both New Mexico and Colorado.

Another staffer joined us in late March, our new part-time office manager and all around assistant, Julie Koehler. Julie immediately threw herself into organizing our membership database, files, and the other necessary functions to keep the Alliance running smoothly.

Several of our long-term issues are reaching



Executive Director Mark Pearson

a crescendo. The proposed Piano Creek Ranch luxury resort, planned for the San Juan River's East Fork Valley near Pagosa Springs, has apparently run out of steam after hitting walls of public opposition. La Plata County is pushing forward with strong regulations to protect landowners from oil and gas development, even in the face of industry lawsuits. Organizing efforts among Latino residents have sparked a new Spanish radio show and many community workshops.

With the rolling blackouts in California, and the Bush Administration's emphasis on expanded oil and gas development, we can expect our public and private lands to be ground zero in the national energy debate in the coming months. Residents of the Four Corners are already doing more than their fair share towards meeting America's energy needs. We need to be vigilant that our wild forests and peaceful homesteads are not sacrificed on the alter of a manufactured energy "crisis". ■

Musings from the President

—Carolyn Lamb

"They paved paradise and put up a parking lot..."

That old Joni Mitchell song comes to mind more and more often now as I read the paper or watch the news, or visit family in the city. Worse still, it comes to mind these days even as I walk the streets of Durango or drive somewhere in La Plata County. Have you driven behind the college recently? A monoculture of condos and apartments has gone up, gas station, convenience store and all. When do these things happen I ask myself? While I was eating lunch?

Developers argue there is a need for more housing in our "market" (as if that is all we are to them, a market) and new construction will help lower costs to the consumer overall. Just check out the rental section of the Herald's classified sometime or browse the homes for sale in every Realtor's windows downtown and you will see how untrue that statements is.

Another line comes to mind... "if you build it they will come." Like the recent Herald's front page cover of the proposed Oakridge

Village. They say, if it were built just as the proposal reads it would create enough new housing to increase the population of Durango by 50% in 20 years. I personally have mixed feelings about this.

Our population is likely to increase by 50% in 20 years anyway, and where are all these people going to live? Perhaps the concentrations of closely built mono-homes on smaller acreage is slightly better than the sprawling 35-acre after 35-acre parcel that may be the alternative. How would wildlife

view this? It seems to me it would be easier for animals to find there way around the outskirts of development areas and generally avoid high density human populations than it would be to work their way through the unending maze of county roads and "ranchettes" complete with fence lines, yapping dogs, and speeding trucks.

I feel like it is a choice of two evils. I know for a fact that high density population areas

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

are more efficient and conserve energy better (fewer roads, utilities, etc...) but for anyone who has ever biked or hiked in Horse Gulch and knows the incredible beauty that exists there, just a stone's throw and out of sight of humanity also values deeply this little oasis in our community. The decision isn't as simple as picking the lesser evil, it is about educating ourselves on the issues, participating in the hearings and taking a stance one way or another.

If we are going to grow, let's be smart about it. Where are our greenbelts? What are our stances towards new residential and

commercial growth? We have Walmart now, what are we willing to have tomorrow? Cost-plus, Target, Home Depot? Do we want Oakridge here, as proposed, as modified? If it comes, will there be an Oakridge II somewhere down the road? And just how many 35-acre ranchettes are going to be built before we decide we have enough. I am sure the County Commissioners have an idea of what our future holds, and even though I refer exclusively to La Plata County and Durango issues, these issues are practically mirrored in every Western mountain community in America. There is more to it than staking a sign in your front lawn that says "Save Animas Valley" because even though that is one way

to participate, that alone won't cut it. Full participation in the process is what is required to affect an outcome. I personally know what my stance is on Oakridge, 35-acre "ranchettes" and Home Depot if they ever consider us a "market" and I plan on making my opinion heard at planning hearings, with signs in my front yard and in conversations on Main Avenue. Hope to see you there! ■

Energy Bills Threaten Southwest Colorado

—Mark Pearson

Ongoing debate about America's national energy policy threatens public, private and tribal lands in southwest Colorado. Various proposals by President Bush and congressional representatives and senators could accelerate the pace of drilling and open up new areas to exploration and development.

It's worth noting that La Plata County already produces more than 40% of the natural gas in Colorado with about 2,000 producing wells. Our neighbors just over the state line in Farmington and Aztec are surrounded by a whopping 25,000 oil and gas wells! Most of the New Mexico wells are located on federal lands managed by BLM and the Forest Service. All told, this amounts to

40% of all the wells on federal land in the entire country! New Mexico also offers evidence about the lack of compunction oil companies and land managers have about enforcing existing laws and regulations. More than 1,800 abandoned wells litter the Farmington area that industry and BLM refuse to reclaim, and thousands of violations in the form of oil spills, unlined waste pits, livestock and wildlife fatalities, weed invasions, and other environmental transgressions go unmitigated around Farmington.

Much of La Plata County's coalbed methane boom was created by federal tax subsidies to encourage new technologies for expanding

natural gas production. With the credits soon to expire, gas companies are begging for more taxpayer handouts to the tune of another \$1 Billion dollars in extended tax credits. It's hard to argue these are needed to spur even more production in our already booming gas fields. The "Section 29" tax credits are

...gas companies are begging for more taxpayer handouts to the tune of another \$1 Billion dollars...

included in legislation that passed the House of

Representatives in July.

Several sections of the House bill also would eliminate restrictions to drilling on federal lands. One section would strip the Forest Service of its ability to stop or mitigate drilling on national forests, with major implications for pending development in the HD Mountains and Sauls Creek areas. Another provision would ban stipulations that protect calving wildlife and prohibit drilling on steep slopes.

Industry is also lobbying to get hydraulic fracturing exempted from the Safe Drinking Water Act. Right now, industry routinely

injects hundreds of chemicals underground to "frac" wells and improve the flow of coalbed methane gas to the wellhead. These could easily pollute domestic water wells, but despite the real threat industry does not want to either report the chemicals they use nor be responsible for the safety of people's drinking water.

The Senate seems less inclined to go along with many of these environmentally damaging provisions. New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman chairs the Senate Energy Committee and will be a key player in the debate. Colorado Senators Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Wayne Allard have largely aligned themselves with the Bush Administration and House.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact Senators Bingaman, Campbell, and Allard and urge a common sense energy policy that emphasizes conservation, protection of property rights, and protecting people's health and welfare over industry profits. U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510. ■

Piano Creek Ranch Resort Stalls

—Mark Pearson

Massive Opposition and Environmental Concerns Delay Permits

Piano Creek Ranch continues to meet overwhelming opposition in its plans to convert the wild East Fork Valley into a luxury golf course and resort. As a result of massive public comment and highly critical agency reviews, Piano Creek Ranch suspended its application to dredge and fill wetlands.

In an April 20 letter to the Army Corps of Engineers, Piano Creek Ranch asked that its permit application be suspended “until such time as the Piano Creek Ranch can properly respond to substantive comments.” These substantive comments included 800 letters, postcards, and emails submitted by the public in February and March, plus a handful of comments from federal agencies. Piano Creek Ranch had requested approval to fill in wetlands to build its golf course and for other features of its planned luxury resort — a 100,000 square-foot lodge and dozens of homes and condos. The wetlands permit — also called a “404” permit for the relevant section of the Clean Water Act — is a critical step in Piano Creek Ranch’s development plans.

Both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service submitted comments extremely critical of the development. Both agencies stated a full-scale Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared because of the serious environmental impacts associated with the proposed resort.

Both agencies also said that the developers had not demonstrated why no alternative locations exist that are better suited to a luxury resort than the wetlands of the East Fork Valley. The Clean Water Act requires developers to evaluate other locations and alternatives that create fewer impacts on wetlands and aquatic ecosystems.

“This project represents a substantial development of the East Fork of the San Juan River and is likely to significantly change the character of wildlife habitat occurring within this drainage,” according to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The EPA stated that “we believe that the project, as currently proposed, is not in compliance” with the Clean Water Act.

Coupled with the serious concerns raised by public comments, including 35 pages of

comments offered by San Juan Citizens Alliance and the Friends of East Fork, Piano Creek Ranch was forced to back off and reconsider its application.

Status of Other Permit Applications

Piano Creek Ranch has not vigorously pursued other required permit applications either. In January, they approached Mineral County about obtaining approval to create a 150-acre lot within the larger ranch boundary that would accommodate the 25-30 trophy homes of the founding investors. A half-dozen Pagosa Springs residents tramped over Wolf Creek Pass to the county commission meeting in Creede one frigid January night and expressed their concerns about the development directly to the Mineral County commissioners. Subsequent to the January meeting, Piano Creek Ranch has had no further contact with Mineral County and has failed to provide any additional requested information that the county needs in order to consider this subdivision request.

Piano Creek Ranch is also not pursuing another critical permit application, this one for its wastewater treatment facility. They submitted the application in August, 2000 and several dozen public comments were offered later in the fall. Staff from the Colorado Water Quality Control Division visited the site by snowmobile in March, but hasn’t heard anything from the developers for several months since.

What Does It All Mean?

Piano Creek Ranch’s inability to make any progress on these various permit applications over the past two years is a testament to the effectiveness of grassroots organizing and public opposition. The developers still have no permits for year-round access, filling wetlands for their golf course, subdivision for their trophy homes, or treatment of their

sewage. Potential members and investors must be seriously concerned about the resort’s viability given the complete lack of progress.

With construction forestalled at least another year, Piano Creek Ranch would be well served to explore conservation alternatives, including a sale to the Forest Service or other public entity that would both allow Piano Creek Ranch’s investors to recoup their money and forever protect the valley’s wildlife and recreation for public enjoyment. ■

Calendar

September 20, Durango:

Great Outdoors Colorado public workshop for new strategic plan. Attend to offer your support for continuing to prioritize purchase of open space and wildlife habitat. 7:00 pm at City Hall.

September 21-23, Crested Butte:

Sustainable Communities Symposium will provide information on sustainable building practices and energy efficiency. Contact High Country Citizens Alliance, 970-349-7104, office@hccaonline.org.

October 3-4, Montrose:

Communities Engaged in Public Land Planning Conference to discuss perspectives on public land management planning issues. Sponsored by Delta/Montrose Public Lands Partnership. Held at the Montrose Pavilion. Call 970-874-2195 for more information.

November 16-18, Montrose:

Colorado Wilderness Network leaders meeting to strategize, learn and celebrate with the Colorado Wilderness community. For more information, call the Alliance office at 970-259-3583.

Can I Fish Along the East Fork?

—Mark Pearson

That's a good question. According to the historic documents describing the 1943 land exchange between the Forest Service and rancher Whitney Newton, yes, the public does have the right of foot access for fishing along portions of the East Fork of the San Juan River near Pagosa Springs.

After we raised this issue with the Forest Service in late 1999, they requested an official legal opinion from their regional solicitor in Denver. Despite repeated inquiries, the Forest

Service has taken no further action on securing public fishing access.

In correspondence, Mr. Newton readily agreed to reserve public fishing access along

the East Fork. This fishing access, along with a number of specific trail easements such as for the Quartz Ridge and Windy Pass trails, was spelled out in a memo from the Forest Service to Mr. Newton. However, the deed issued by the Forest Service to Mr. Newton just generally mentions reservation of easements for "public roads, trails, and telegraph lines" without describing in detail each specific road and trail.

The urgency for addressing this issue comes from the proposed Piano Creek Ranch luxury resort. The project's developers have aggressively challenged historic public uses on the property, including fishing access. The public needs to get their legal access rights clarified before our rights are lost in the fog of history.

Take Action!

Let's secure the public's right of access to the East Fork before out-of-state developers shut us out. Write to the Forest Service and our Congressional delegation. Ask them to assert our public right of fishing access:

*Jo Bridges
Pagosa District Ranger
PO Box 310
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
(970) 264-2268*

*Rep. Scott McInnis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510*

*Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell
Senator Wayne Allard
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515*



An angler fishes along the East Fork of the San Juan River, where public fishing access was reserved by the Forest Service in a 1943 land exchange. Anglers are urging local forest rangers to step forward and assert this public fishing right before proposed Piano Creek Ranch resort closes it off completely.

Alliance Once Again Staves Off Leases in HD Mountains

—Mark Pearson

Last November, the Alliance successfully stopped the San Juan National Forest from leasing 2,000 acres in the Turkey Creek watershed in the HD Mountains. We caught the Forest Service with its paperwork pants down, and forced them to withdraw the parcels from the lease sale. Our sighs of relief were short-lived, however, as the San Juan NF returned with new leasing proposals in May, not just for these 2,000 acres but for another 4,000 acres as well, including 2,500 acres within the HD Mountains Roadless Area and another 1,500 acres in a proposed ecological research area, Deep Canyon near Chimney Rock.

Once again, the Alliance revved up its technical analysis of the proposed lease parcels. We challenged the Forest Service on the legal grounds that they could not use a 1983 Environmental Impact Statement to issue new leases for coalbed methane development, particularly when the words “coalbed methane” were never once mentioned in the EIS. We also challenged their compliance with laws requiring protection of viable wildlife populations and the lack of information about the ever increasing impacts of coalbed methane development — methane seepage which kills large swaths of vegetation, dewatering of coal seams which lead to lowered water tables and underground coal fires, and methane migration into domestic water wells.

In the end, the Forest Service agreed with our arguments that it could not issue leases that permit disturbance of surface resources — vegetation, wildlife, water, recreation, and so forth — without first preparing an updated EIS. Consequently, the Forest Service revised all five leases covering 6,000 acres to permit no surface disturbance by attaching “No Surface Occupancy” stipulations. These allow the lessee to tap the underground natural gas and methane deposits only through slant drilling, thus preserving the roadless area characteristics of the HD Mountains and the ecological values of the



Majestic ponderosa pine forests characterize several thousand acres in the Turkey Creek watershed in the HD Mountains where the Alliance successfully persuaded the San Juan National Forest to prevent any surface disturbance in future oil and gas leasing and development.

proposed Deep Canyon research area.

Every three months, the Forest Service and BLM hold a statewide auction of oil and gas leases. The Alliance continues to closely monitor these quarterly lease sales for parcels with sensitive environmental values. ■

Environmental Violations Rampant in New Mexico Oil and Gas Fields

—Alan Rolston

Federal agencies in the northern New Mexico part of the San Juan Basin are not enforcing their own oil and gas regulations. After only two exploratory trips to New Mexico, the San Juan Citizens Alliance found many examples of irregular permitting of wells, lack of enforcement of existing regulations and requirements, and sloppy oversight of the industry.

The Farmington Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has leased minerals and permitted coal bed methane wells while lacking an updated Resource Management Plan (RMP). Last fall the Interior Board of Land Appeals ruled that the BLM cannot lease minerals for coal bed methane (CBM) use unless their RMP addresses coal bed methane development. The Farmington region’s RMP was written in 1988 and amended in 1991, but does not specifically address issues raised by CBM development.

The Farmington office has not enforced its own rules regarding conventional gas development. Well-access roads violate width restrictions and slope-gradient requirements. Soil erosion is rampant. Roads are not maintained in usable condition. Many well pads have never been re-seeded and where reclamation has been attempted, it has failed. At least one well spill has never been reported by the operating company. Pipeline rights-of-way are not properly reclaimed.

The Carson National Forest’s Jicarilla Ranger District is equally as bad as the BLM. Most of the Districts’ wells were permitted under categorical exclusions; no environmental assessment was done for each well. The District doesn’t know with certainty how many gas wells it has. Some 30 gravel quarries have been permitted but the District Office cannot find the original Environmental Assessment for quarry operations. We haven’t found any evidence of a reclamation plan for

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8

the existing quarries. This plan is supposed to be done prior to issuing a quarry permit. The Forest Management Plan does not allow more than one mile of road per square mile, but the latest roads inventory was done in 1995. A Cumulative Effects Analysis completed for the District this past May stated that, "Activities conducted by the industry (oil & gas) have not always complied with the

Conditions of Approval of the lease or stipulations that apply to Application for Permission to Drill. No regular inspections have been conducted by the District to insure compliance with Conditions of Approval or lease stipulations".

The Alliance is working with New Mexico residents and one cattleman's association to hold the agencies accountable by monitoring new leases, drilling permits and pressuring the agencies to enforce existing rules. ■

Counties Draft Regulations to Protect Landowners

—Alan Rolston

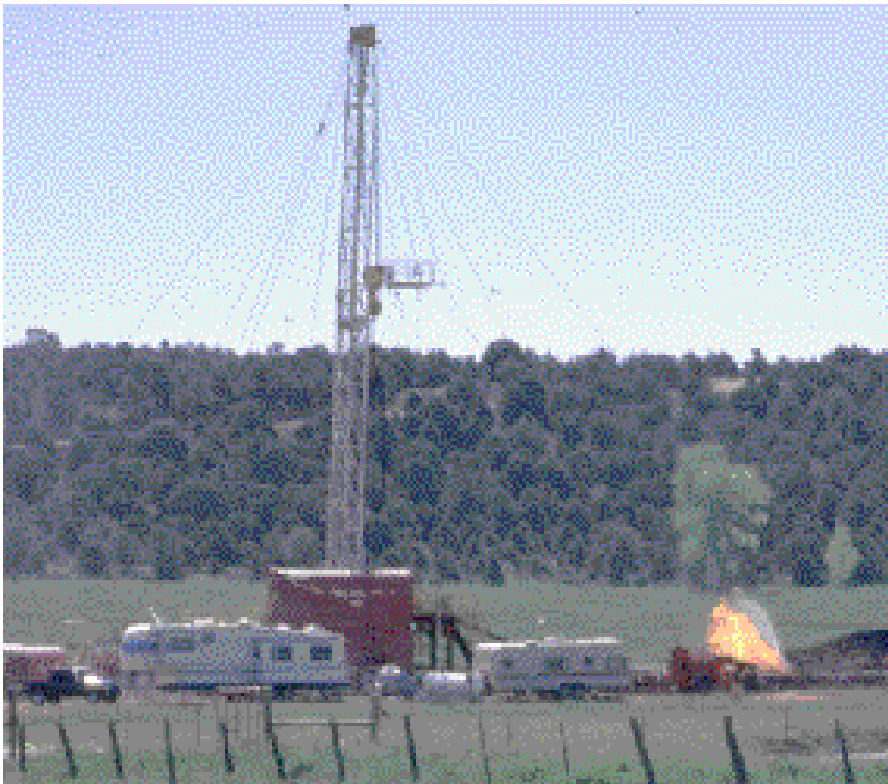
Two southwest Colorado counties have taken the bit between their teeth to adopt local land use regulations that offer increased protections to landowners impacted by oil and gas development. The Alliance is pushing both counties to develop regulations which ensure that neighbors of any proposed gas facility have a process for submitting written objections to the facility and to request a public hearing on the proposed facility. The Alliance believes Judge Dickinson's recent court ruling strongly supports the county's right to regulate oil and gas development. Counties are the only governmental

entity with any power to protect their citizens from the excesses of oil and gas development. They must provide, through their regulations, a method for neighbors and residents to express their objections to proposed oil and gas regulations.

Local energy giants turned out in force for several Archuleta County Planning Board public hearings on their proposed oil and gas regulations. The industry's message, delivered by Gail Aalund, spokesperson for La Plata Energy Council, warned the Board not to emulate La Plata County. She asserted that La Plata County had spent over \$100,000 fighting the oil and gas industry in court to defend their regulations. Ms. Aalund said that under current Colorado law, counties don't have regulatory authority over the oil and gas industry. This position was rebutted by Travis Stills, staff attorney for the Oil and Gas Accountability Project, who reiterated the county's right under state land use laws to manage surface impacts from oil and gas development.

The San Juan Citizens Alliance (Alliance) turned out several members and supporters for the meetings. Paul Lerno and Penny Holmes spoke about the problems and consequences that landowners faced with development. Both of them encouraged the Board to protect landowners by passing effective regulations.

La Plata County Commissioners heard public comments on the mandated changes to their oil and gas regulations and adopted new regulations in August. Judge Dickinson's March 2 ruling had struck down that part of La Plata County's regulations which gave well-siting authority to the affected landowner. The county revised its regulations to address the court's concern with this one aspect, and to return well-siting authority to the county commissioners. The Alliance submitted suggested rule changes as part of the public comment and review. Numerous county residents and Alliance members attended the hearings to urge adoption of these suggested changes that include a process for neighboring landowners to require a local public hearing when well sites are contested. ■



One of innumerable coalbed methane wells being "cavitated" around La Plata County. The wellbore (next to Sunnyside Elementary School) is pressured to fracture the coal seam, and the methane and coal dust burns as the wellbore depressurizes.

Court Rules La Plata County Has Right to Regulate Oil and Gas Development

—Jim Fitzgerald, Alliance Oil and Gas Task Force, and
Travis Stills Oil and Gas Accountability Project

Those who believe that local government should be able to exercise their land-use authority over oil and gas operations should pay close attention to the recent decision by Judge David Dickinson concerning La Plata County's oil and gas regulations. This decision discards an assertion often heard over the last decade: only the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) has power to regulate this powerful industry. Clearly La Plata County has the ability to pass more comprehensive regulations than most residents ever hoped for.

The thoughtful, detailed decision by Judge Dickinson rejected two important claims made by the oil and gas industry and their COGCC friends. First, he rejected the assertion that the county regulations are an unconstitutional taking of industry's property. Industry argued that "operators have an absolute right to the selection of the surface location for drilling and that this right is a property right." However, the Court agreed with the County and the San Juan Citizens Alliance and found that "the 'absolute right' claimed by Industry Plaintiffs does not exist." He quoted from a Colorado Supreme Court decision to emphasize that "mineral rights owners [are required] to accommodate surface owners to the fullest extent possible. . ." He also affirmed the basic principal that

government may place "reasonable restrictions on development, mineral or otherwise. . ."

Second, he rejected claims that County regulations conflict with state oil and gas laws and that the COGCC regulations so "occupy the field" that the County cannot regulate the industry. Importantly, the decision strongly states that the COGCC cannot manipulate its regulations to exclude the County's land use planning authority. The court was openly "incredulous" toward industry's and COGCC's misinterpretation and denial of County powers. "[T]o characterize these interpretations as 'strained' would be charitable," Judge Dickinson wrote. Both the COGCC and the County have legitimate authority, "Merely because the

[COGCC] regulates does not make it a 'technical issue' over which [COGCC] has exclusive jurisdiction."

The Court did rule against parts of the County regulations. Judge Dickinson said that the surface owner was given authority to determine the well site under County land use powers without adequate standards. The County's mediation process was also invalidated. In other words the Court upheld the County's power to determine the siting of a wells within the drilling window, but held that the County did not properly give this power to the surface owner.

The oil and gas industry, like everyone else, must comply with County land use authority. He said, "the County has the land-use authority to regulate well siting based upon impacts to adjoining owners and the community, environmental issues, and planned and orderly development of land. . ." And, the County has the power to encourage and include input from surface owners, neighbors, and the public as part of its land use procedures.

People concerned with the role of local government and our ability to regulate the oil and gas industry have reason to be excited and hopeful. Judge David Dickinson's recent ruling clarifies some of the murkiness over government's power to regulate the oil and gas industry. ■

Fee Demo Comes to SW Colorado

—Jan Holt, Sierra Club

Though there is great concern about growth and development in our county and state, few realize our public lands are similarly threatened by the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program (Fee Demo). Cuts in funding the Forest Service and BLM over the years helped create the artificial budget crises we now have in our public lands. Under the Fee Demo program, the Forest Service and BLM collect fees for driving, hiking, and picnicking on public lands.

Fee Demo has reached Ouray County, and La Plata could be next. It now costs \$5 to drive over Imogene Pass or to Yankee Boy Basin. San Miguel County has passed a resolution against Fee Demo, and other counties are expected to follow suit.

The House has extended Fee Demo for 4 more years. The Senate could do the same soon, or, under Senate Bill 1011, make Fee Demo permanent. This bill would also allow agency management budgets to be further cut by the amount of fee monies collected, necessitating more fees. It would effectively take the "demonstration" out of this trial program, and impede First Amendment rights, with new enforcement language. Write or call Senators Allard and Campbell at 202-224-3121 to cancel Fee Demo and restore funding.

To see what states, counties, groups that oppose it, and bills in Congress: www.freeourforests.org, www.wildwilderness.org, www.funoutdoors.com. For local action, our next protest, and information: jholt@durangolive.net, 382-8840 or 259-4616. Regionally, the Western Slope No Fee Coalition has formed to monitor, protest, and defeat Fee Demo. ■

Durango Mountain Resort Proposes 1,735 Homes and Condos

—Jeff Berman, Colorado Wild

Durango Mountain Resort (DMR) has proposed to develop a “World Class” resort on over 600 acres of private land at the base of the Purgatory ski area. In June, DMR applied for a permit to fill wetlands to facilitate construction of exclusive second homes. La Plata and San Juan County will hold hearings in the coming months as well. DMR’s proposal would:

- construct 1,735 new homes and condos,
- construct “several hundred million dollar homes”,
- require up to 3,000 new, mostly low-wage employees and other residents that will move from outside the county.

Conservation groups, including Colorado Wild and the San Juan Citizens Alliance, urged federal regulators to adopt “No Wetland Impact” Alternative. This would still permit 1,500 new units based on previous county approval, yet only on 100 acres of land with no wetlands destruction. Under this alternative, DMR claims it would suffer losses in tourism, employment, county taxes, and economic loss. Yet this would still allow only 235 fewer housing units than DMR’s preferred plan, and wouldn’t require any mitigation costs as Alternative A has zero wetlands impacts, plus it:

* will not require thousands of new employees that will strain housing, traffic, and county services,

* will not increase tourism beyond that which attracts visitors here in the first place,

* will not result in extra costs to taxpayers for increased police, judicial, and other social services.

This alternative is no major loss for DMR, and will protect La Plata and San Juan County’s quality of life. DMR could easily reduce the planned 4 acres of wetlands destruction by simply reducing the density of development, yet they refuse.

Unmitigated Impacts Of DMR’s High Density Development

Air Quality: Smoke from over 2,000 proposed woodstoves would pollute the entire Animas Valley downwind. Southwest Colorado has some of the best air quality in the country; reduced visibility from lowered air quality may harm tourism based on beautiful vistas of the San Juan Mountains.

Water Quality: Sedimentation from construction and increased road sanding would impact Cascade Creek’s trout

population. A source of Durango’s drinking water is located downstream from their sewage treatment plant (with obvious consequences if it malfunctions).

Affordable Housing: DMR promises to provide 25% of housing needs for the winter work force with 250 beds. With 1,000+ employees now, up to 3,000 new low income employees and other residents anticipated, and a growing dearth of affordable housing ALREADY in La Plata and San Juan counties, where will the REST of the employees live? 250 beds will only provide for 14% of housing needs, not 25%, and DMR thus far refuses to address offsite housing needs that will impact everyone’s housing options (i.e. costs!) in Durango and beyond.

Destruction of Wildlife Habitat: Despite claims to the contrary, comparison of the topographic and master development maps in DMR’s proposal shows they plan to develop practically every single acre of developable land, designating virtually no land protected as open space. Conservation easements must be instituted to protect wildlife habitat.

Increased Traffic: The Colorado Department of Transportation predicts that Highway 550 north of Durango will experience “Breakdown of Flow”, their worst traffic prediction grade. Only two other stretches of highway in the five county San Juan region receive this dire prediction, one of which - Highway 160 east of Durango - may also feel the impacts of the DMR development as low wage workers seek affordable housing toward Ignacio and Bayfield, exacerbating growing traffic in Durango. YET THE CDOT DID NOT EVEN FACTOR DMR’S DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN THEIR PREDICTION. DMR thus far refuses to provide any alternative transportation for up

to 10,000 new employees and residents, such as bus schedules, routes, frequency, or funding.

Development Must Pay Its Way: DMR speciously claims positive fiscal benefit to La Plata and San Juan County coffers, yet they ignore or minimize numerous costs, including police services, fire services in an area identified as HIGH fire risk, increased highway capacity needs, and winter snow removal on Hwy. 550. An independent fiscal analysis concluded that “La Plata County should anticipate growth in their expenditures for public safety, jails, court systems, housing programs, and public transportation”, NONE of which DMR is taking responsibility for.

For more information, contact Jeff Berman, Colorado Wild, at 970-385-9833 or via email: jeff@coloradowild.org.

Jack Scott Receives Award

The Citizens Coal Council recognized long-time Alliance member Jack Scott for his work to highlight the impacts of coalbed methane development. Jack received the award for outstanding environmental justice work at the April Board meeting of the Citizens Coal Council. Jack represents the Alliance on the CCC Board.

Updates on Wild San Juans

—Mark Pearson

Access Road Proposed for Lizard Head Roadless Area

The owners of Dunton Hot Springs have requested permission to construct a new road to a recently acquired private inholding west of Lizard Head Pass. The 280-acre parcel sits amidst the spectacular meadows south of El Diente and Mount Wilson. A faint two-track route cuts across the meadows to the property now, but the new owners wish to improve the access across the meadows and wetlands in order to construct as many as four rustic cabins on the property. The surrounding national forest lands comprise a roadless area adjacent to the Lizard Head Wilderness. Because of the significant impacts to the roadless area from building a new road, the Forest Service is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement on the road.

The Alliance submitted comments on the proposed road access and urged the Forest Service to analyze the impacts of development that will be made possible by the permitting of a new road. The owners have also suggested a small land exchange to block up the configuration of their inholding, and broached the concept of placing a conservation easement on the bulk of the inholding. In our comments, we urged combining the road and the land exchange, and restricting future development of the inholding so as not to degrade the surrounding pristine environment.

To get on the Forest Service's mailing list for this project, contact John Reidinger at the Dolores Ranger District, (970) 882-7296.



Alliance roadless area inventory staff Harry Riegle learns how to operate our new digital camera and GPS unit from the Colorado Environmental Coalition's Kurt Kunkel.

Inventory of San Juan Roadless Areas Gets Underway

This summer, we initiated a field inventory of the roadless areas on the San Juan National Forest. The Forest Service's existing information dates back to the late 1970s and is woefully out of date. We hired a field worker, Harry Riegle, to spend the summer documenting the status of roads and determining roadless area boundaries through digital photos and maps. The San Juan National Forest contains over a half-million acres of roadless lands in at least two dozen areas. The Alliance is cooperating with a dozen other groups around Colorado under the umbrella of the Southern Rockies Forest Network to inventory all of the roadless areas in Colorado and southern Wyoming over the next two years.

We have focused our efforts initially on areas

most threatened by oil and gas or other types of development. During May and June, we completed the field survey of the HD Mountains near Bayfield, ground zero for potential new coalbed methane gas wells, and the Turkey Creek Roadless Area near Pagosa Springs, which could be impacted by the proposed Jackson Mountain timber sale. Field inventories should be completed for Hermosa and areas adjacent to the Piedra later this summer.

Revised San Juan Forest Plan Delayed Further

The San Juan National Forest continues to defer action on revising its almost 20 year-old management plan because of budget constraints. Once planned for completion by 1998, the San Juan is now hoping to release a draft plan for public comment sometime during 2002. The Alliance and a coalition of

a dozen other groups last year prepared its own vision for future management of the 2 million-acre San Juan National Forest. We hope to see our alternative, called the "Citizens Plan for the Wild San Juans," analyzed as an official alternative next to the Forest Service's other management alternatives. Our plan emphasizes protection of remaining roadless areas, restoration of native wildlife, and protection of the scenic beauty and recreation that enhance quality of life in southwest Colorado.

Forest Service Issues Molas Pass Decision

The San Juan National Forest released its long-awaited decision about winter management of Molas Pass in June. The decision essentially reaffirms the status quo, while making a few small concessions to

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

cross-country skiers concerned about expanding snowmobile use in the narrow corridor straddling Molas Pass. The Alliance's Wild San Juans Task Force commented on the plan two years ago, expressing greatest concern about potential expansion of snowmobile use into 3,600 acres of the San Miguel Roadless Area which is presently closed to motorized use year-round. Many skiers, including numerous novices and families with small children, ski only the

short distance to Andrews Lake and urged the Forest Service to place the area west and south of Molas Pass off-limits to snowmobiles.

In response to these concerns, the Forest Service maintained the present no-motorized recreation status of the San Miguel area. The Forest Service also prohibited snowmobiles from 200 acres around Andrews Lake, including the frozen lake surface itself, and also terminated commercial snowmobile tours and groomed snowmobile trails on the

area west and south of Molas Pass, but the decision still allows individual use by snowmobiles in this area.

The Colorado Off-highway Vehicle Coalition and snowmobile groups challenged the Forest Service decision by a formal appeal. In response, the Alliance's Wild San Juans Task Force intervened in the appeals in order to present the skiers' perspective in any negotiations. ■



The Alliance continues to keep a watchful eye out for developments such as the two proposed ski areas on Storm Peak near Silverton.

Coloradans Support Lynx and Wolves

Overwhelming majorities of Coloradans support recovering lynx, wolves, and other native wildlife species according to a recent poll commissioned by several conservation and wildlife organizations.

Almost 80% of Coloradans polled favored lynx reintroduction to the wild areas of the Southern Rockies. This bodes well for public support for ongoing lynx recovery program here in the San Juans. Two years ago, the Colorado Division of Wildlife initiated a multi-year program to restore the native lynx to the San Juans by releasing 92 lynx transplanted from Canada and Alaska. After

Almost 80% of Coloradans polled favored lynx reintroduction...

some initial setbacks, the lynx are now thriving and finding plenty of snowshoe hares and other prey, although there is not yet documented evidence the lynx have reproduced.

The same poll of 500 Colorado residents found continuing strong support for wolf restoration as well.

Almost 70% of those polled favored reestablishing wolves to the national forests and wilderness areas of the Southern

Rockies. The San Juans would be the obvious preferred location for future wolf recovery as well given our large elk herds and vast roadless landscapes. Most people think wolves are an essential part of the ecosystem and should be restored for the benefit of future generations. Almost two-thirds would also vote for a ballot initiative to restore wolves to Colorado. ■

La Plata County Open Space Initiative on November Ballot

—Residents for Open Space Initiative

The San Juan Citizens Alliance Board recently voted to endorse the La Plata County Open Space Initiative and urges members support it as well.

Q: WHAT IS THE OPEN SPACE INITIATIVE?

A: The Open Space Initiative will create funding on the local level for open space preservation and affordable housing in La Plata County, and will generate approximately \$1.3 million annually. 70% of the funding has been earmarked for open space preservation; 30% will be used to promote, coordinate and assist community-based affordable housing efforts in La Plata County.

The Open Space Initiative will be funded by a 2% county use tax applied only to purchases made outside of the county on oil and gas drilling materials, building materials on permitted projects, and vehicles that require registration inside La Plata County. Purchases made within La Plata County will not be assessed the use tax, as county sales tax is collected on those purchases. You will pay either county sales tax OR county use tax, but never both.

Q: WHY OPEN SPACE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

A: According to recent surveys, the majority of La Plata County residents cite uncontrolled growth and development sprawl as the most troubling issues facing our community today. Residents want to protect some of our county's beautiful open spaces before it is too late. But as open space is protected, less property becomes available to developers, and housing costs can increase as a result. Affordable housing proponents are satisfied that the funding earmarked for housing generated by the Open Space Initiative will be more than adequate to offset the loss of saleable property due to open space preservation.

It's been said that open space is what we want, and workforce and senior housing is what we need. Unfortunately, county commissioners have stated it is highly unlikely these issues will receive substantial funding without a specific revenue stream to address these needs.

Q: HOW WILL THE OPEN SPACE \$\$ BE SPENT?

A: A 13-member Citizens Open Space Advisory Council comprised of representatives from the county's 10 planning districts and three municipalities will be appointed by county commissioners to make all project funding recommendations and to oversee project expenditures. No Council members shall be paid for their services, and a mandatory 5% cap will be placed on administrative expenses.

The open space funds will be used to give local landowners a financial alternative to development through the purchase of development rights, assistance with conservation easements, and, in rare instances, the purchase of lands for the public good. Property owner participation in the Open Space program is entirely voluntary.

Q: HOW WILL THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING \$\$ BE SPENT?

A: The Open Space Initiative will generate approximately \$350,000/year to fund a county-wide housing authority that will provide matching grants to existing affordable housing organizations, coordinate and

promote the development of workforce and senior housing, and assist local agencies with pre-development costs and services.

Because the Initiative will provide matching funds for granting applications, existing La Plata County organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Merced de Las Animas, Southwest Community Resources and others will qualify for state and federal subsidies that are not available to them today.

Q: IS THE USE TAX THE BEST APPROACH?

A: TABOR now prevents the passage of a real estate transfer tax and has severely restricted sales tax increases. That leaves two options for funding the Open Space Initiative: a county property tax increase, or the creation of a county use tax.

Financial and economic development experts believe an increase in property taxes is not likely to appeal to voters at this time. A use tax is a fair and sound alternative, because it is applied only to a few untaxed purchases that are made outside of the county. Because dollars spent outside of the community are not recycled within the community, a use tax

Continued on page 15



Landowners could receive financial incentives to protect La Plata County's rural landscapes if the Open Space Initiative passes.

Continued from page 14

on outside purchases also encourages residents to buy locally, thus strengthening La Plata County's economy.

most practical plan possible for funding the Initiative. Months of research and hundreds of volunteer hours have been invested by Initiative proponents to get the Open Space Initiative on the November 2001 county ballot.

Q: WON'T CAR DEALERS BENEFIT THE MOST?

A: Car dealers may sell more cars, local lumber yards may sell more lumber, and local hardware store owners may sell more building materials. While encouraging more commerce with local businesses is a positive

side effect of the Open Space Initiative, it is certainly not the primary purpose of proponents of the Initiative who have been working for months to create a local funding source for open space and affordable housing.

The primary beneficiaries of the Open Space Initiative will be county residents — present and future — who will enjoy views of open fields, deer and elk herds, and pristine river valleys that will remain free from development as a result of this program. Property owners will also benefit from the financial incentives to keep their lands free from development.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF THE STATE PASSES A GROWTH BILL?

A: The Open Space Initiative is a local

program that gives us local control over our own destiny. Proposed growth bills on the state level are highly political and contentious issues, and may be very difficult to enact. By creating funding on the local level to address our own specific growth and affordable housing challenges, we are not dependent on state or federal programs to "fix" our problems for us.

Our state representatives have said the Open Space Initiative will not inhibit or contradict any future state legislation, but will compliment any future actions on the part of state and federal government. Proponents of the Initiative believe we should do what we can for our own community, and not rely on state legislation that may never come to pass.

■

First Year of Compañeros a Smashing Success

—Olivia Lopez, *Compañeros Coordinator*

Since its creation last year, the Compañeros Latino Resource Center has outreached to the Latino and immigrant community through presentations, personal family visitations and community programs. These programs include several workshops intended to reinforce knowledge of existing civil rights, basic life skills, and family dynamics as well as obligations and responsibilities while living in the United States. The workshops — Know your Rights, Welcome to America and Los Padres Unidos — have been attended by dozens of immigrants in the past year.

In addition, Compañeros recently initiated a weekly Spanish-language radio show called "Radio Latina," hosted by an immigrant from Mexico as host and reporter and broadcast on Durango station KDUR. The purpose of this radio show is to reinforce pride and promote the Latin Culture. The show offers local news to the Spanish speaking community and information about health, social and political events. For example, one typical week, host Florencio interviewed the Rape Intervention Team in Spanish, and the following week he interviewed counselors from the Southwest Mental Health Center.

During the past year, Compañeros participated with the La Plata Unity Coalition and collaborated with the Cinco de Mayo festival. Through Compañeros, we were able to recruit participation in the festival from the immigrant community. Compañeros also outreached immigrant and Latino children to participate in the Mexico Lindo Folklore Group — a dancing program sponsored by the Durango Latino Education Coalition. Compañeros has also provided diversity presentations to several organizations,

schools, colleges and individuals with the purpose of raising awareness of immigrant and Latino issues. Compañeros also established ongoing communication with our local newspaper, the Durango Herald. As a result, the Herald for the first time published articles in Spanish as well as English. Currently the Durango Herald's Shirena Trujillo is investing time and effort to outreach the Latino Community.

During this year, some non-profit organizations became more aware of the need of providing bilingual information and services. Some of these organizations contacted Compañeros to translate their articles and brochures. With the involvement of Compañeros volunteers, we researched the local organizations that offer bilingual services to the undocumented population. Based on this research, Compañeros was able to accommodate the Latino Community to better guide individuals with any specific needs to appropriate service providers. Compañeros has assisted more than 150 individuals since the program was created last year.

Presently, Compañeros is coordinating with the Woman's Resource Center to offer a "Parenting our Daughters" Workshop. At the same time, Compañeros is working on "A la cocina" — a cooking program designed to interconnect and empower people from different backgrounds by letting them showcase their ethnic cooking skills to interested members of the community.

Lastly, Compañeros has contacted members of the Durango City Council, non-profit organizations, religious groups and individuals with a petition advocating adoption of a non-cooperation resolution that will direct local law enforcement organizations and city staff not to cooperate with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. This will force INS to do its own job itself, rather than imposing on local agencies to implement federal laws. If adopted, the non-cooperation resolution should greatly reduce the prevalence of racial-profiling in La Plata County.

To contact Compañeros, call Olivia at 970-375-9406 or email at companeros@frontier.net. ■

Join San Juan Citizens Alliance!

Put my tax-deductible gift to work for the land, wildlife, and people of southwest Colorado!

- \$1000 \$ 75 \$ 15 Student
- \$ 500 \$ 50 Business _____
- \$ 100 \$ 30 Other _____

Name(s): _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to SJCA or San Juan Citizens Alliance and mail to

P.O. Box 2461 Durango, Colorado 81302. Thank you!

San Juan Citizens Alliance
P.O. Box 2461
Durango, CO 81302

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 651
Durango, CO 81301

Organizing
for the
people
and land
of the
San Juan
Basin