



# SAN JUAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE

## 2008 Annual Report

*Organizing for the people and land of the San Juan Basin*

### San Juan Public Lands Protection Takes Shape During 2008

The San Juan National Forest and Bureau of Land Management took major strides in 2008 towards setting the future course for 2.6-million acres of forests, canyons and mountains across southwest Colorado. San Juan Citizens Alliance (SJCA) played a significant role in favorably shaping the outcome of draft management plans affecting the national forest, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and desert lands surrounding the Dolores River Canyon.

#### San Juan Forest Plan

The draft San Juan Forest Plans supported area designations and management prescriptions urged by SJCA. A short list of worthy recommendations include: 1) Wilderness designation for the west-side of the Hermosa Creek drainage, 2) protection for sections of the Dolores River Canyon and some of its tributaries, 3) snowmobile-free areas on Red Mountain and Molas passes, 4) limiting commercial ski area operations to the presently utilized areas while deleting two long-defunct sites permitted in the 1980s, but never developed, at East Fork and Wolf Creek Valley, 5) increased protection for the areas adjacent to the Uncompahgre National Forest such as Grizzly Peak and upper Cascade Creek, and 6) numerous proposed wild and scenic river sections including the Animas, Piedra, and Hermosa Creek.

#### Canyons of Ancients National Monument

The Bureau of Land Management released the long-awaited management plan for Canyons of the Ancients National Monument that encompasses the richest archeological district in America. As many as 30,000 archeological sites, including dozens of spectacular standing ruins, grace

the canyons and mesas across 165,000 acres west of Cortez. Highlights of this plan, supported by SJCA, include:

- Emphasizing the protection of cultural resources on a landscape scale by focusing not only on individual cultural resource sites, but also on how the sites relate to one another.
- Manages citizens proposed wilderness additions (5,223 acres) for their wilderness character, in addition to the 25,549 acres of existing wilderness study areas in Cross Canyon, Cahone Canyon, and Squaw/Papoose Canyon.
- Improves travel management in the Monument by cutting the total mileage of roads open to public motorized travel from 131 to 74 miles.

- Keeps the Sandstone Canyon/Woods Canyon roadless area closed to motorized use.

#### San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act

SJCA worked closely with key stakeholders and staff of Rep. John Salazar during 2008 preparing for the introduction of the first new wilderness designations in the San Juans since 1993. The draft San Juan Mountains Wilderness Act adds wilderness protection to more than 50,000 acres in the Dolores River Basin's headwaters, and includes an 8-mile segment of the Dolores River Canyon below Snaggletooth Rapid. The highlights of the bill include protection for the stunning Sheep Mountain roadless area off Lizard Head Pass. We anticipate the bill will be introduced early in 2009.



*Cliff dwelling in Woods Canyon roadless area, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.*

## Challenging Irresponsible Energy Development

### HD Mountains Roadless Area

Organizations led by SJCA and representing landowners, farmers, hunters, and other users of the HD Mountains continued their decades-long effort to keep the HD Mountains free of coalbed methane wells during 2008 when we filed a lawsuit challenging the approval of new wells and roads planned for the

most rugged terrain in the San Juan Mountains. The roads and gas pads will also obliterate remaining stands of the old-growth ponderosa pine forests in the HD Mountains, many over 300 years old. Ponderosa pine has the least remaining old-growth of any forest type in the San Juans, less than 5% left.

The lawsuit argues the Forest Service



The view east from the crest of the HD Mountains, looking across to Chimney Rock.

watersheds and critical winter wildlife habitat of the roadless area near Bayfield. The lawsuit is in response to authorization by the San Juan Public Lands Center for 27 new wells and 11 miles of new roads within the HD Mountains roadless area.

Residents oppose drilling that threatens not only the majestic stands of old-growth ponderosa pine and abundant herds of wildlife, but also the very health and safety of their homes and families. The Forest Service's preferred alternative waives a long-standing health and safety regulation that bans drilling along the outcrop of the coal-bearing Fruitland Formation that holds the coalbed methane.

Industry plans for drilling the HD Mountains, as approved by the Forest Service, will lace the currently roadless mountains with at least 11 miles of new roads cut into some of the steepest and

and BLM decision to approve new drilling violates the requirements of the current San Juan Forest Plan to protect old-growth forest, wildlife habitat, water quality and riparian areas. The plaintiffs also claim the project will worsen the region's ozone pollution and further impair declining visibility at Mesa Verde National Park and the Weminuche Wilderness.

### Colorado Adopts Strong, New Rules

The Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) adopted sweeping revisions to state regulations governing oil and gas development in 2008. Drafted in response to House Bills 1341 and 1298, which were passed in the 2007 legislative session, the COGCC regulations include the following improvements:

- Requires full disclosure of all chemicals used in oil and gas production; and allow access to that information by

affected parties;

- Collects data, initiates health studies, monitor air, water and soil, and establishes advisory committees in a manner that is designed to prevent health impacts from oil and gas development;

- Includes local governments, surface owners and adjacent property owners in the consultation process and preserves local authority to regulate oil and gas impacts;

- Prevents and reduces oil and gas impacts to the public by requiring Comprehensive Development Plans, closed loop/pitless drilling systems, greater setback from homes and other domestic/public structures, greater attention to noise, and prohibiting on-site burial of oil and gas waste;

- Prevents and reduces oil and gas impacts to wildlife and the environment by requiring minimum disturbance to habitat;

- Holds industry accountable by increasing bonding and reducing time frames for reclamation.

### Updated La Plata County Regs

La Plata County revised its land use code in 2008 with several substantial modifications to its oil and gas regulations. This is the culmination of a multi-year effort that began in 2006 with a concerted campaign by SJCA members to update and improve the county's regulations that dated back to the early 1990s. Our campaign achieved some modest goals, short of what we hoped, but still an advancement in landowner protection and public safety.

- We secured industry disclosure of all chemicals and hazardous materials used on a drill site to be made available to emergency responders;

- We insisted that pit liners be removed from, and not buried on, site. The industry does not need to leave 'toxic burrito time bombs' as its legacy.

- We obtained more involvement by adjacent landowners in well-siting considerations and for getting them the right to appeal administrative decisions.

## Acting Locally on Global Warming

SJCA continued the fight against the massive 1500-megawatt Desert Rock coal-fired power plant proposed for Navajo lands near Shiprock, New Mexico. This would be the third coal-burning behemoth in our region. In 2008, SJCA joined a coalition of Navajo and conservation groups to challenge the EPA's air quality permit, and asserted the EPA scrapped a rigorous scientific review of critical issues including ozone pollution and mercury emissions to ram through the permit quickly, while the Bush Administration was still in office.

One key element of the permit concerns the issue of carbon-dioxide, fingered as a major source of global warming. EPA declined to assess the consequences of 12 million tons of additional

CO<sub>2</sub> from Desert Rock, despite court rulings that CO<sub>2</sub> is a pollutant that can be regulated by the EPA. We scored an initial victory at the end of 2008, when the EPA decided to withdraw a portion of the permit decision for further consideration of the CO<sub>2</sub> issue. The incoming Obama Administration will likely be far less friendly to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than its predecessor.

We ended the year optimistic that Desert Rock continues to teeter on the edge of abandonment, as the project proponents still have yet to secure any of the major needed permits for the project, even after 8 years of effort

on their part. The nation's financial collapse also cast ever more doubt on the viability of Desert Rock, whose initial cost estimates have tripled to \$4 billion.



San Juan Generating Station near Farmington, New Mexico.

## Protecting San Juan Basin Rivers

SJCA's ambitious initiative to secure permanent protection for the rivers and streams of the San Juans gained steam during 2008 with the successful initiation of the Hermosa Creek Work Group, a facilitated group seeking community consensus on appropriate means to protect Hermosa Creek, including Wild and Scenic River designation. The Hermosa Work Group is the first of six planned community discussions surrounding key rivers, and is the brainchild of SJCA working in collaboration with water users and state and federal agencies. We hope to lead the way in securing only the second officially protected Wild and Scenic River in Colorado, the first since 1986.

Our Dolores River Campaign similarly made progress in 2008. We enjoyed the best recreational whitewater boating season in at least a decade, with almost three months of favorable water flows released from McPhee Dam for downstream enjoyment. This circumstance was a combination of an abundant snowpack



Dolores River Canyon Wilderness Study Area.

combined with new management of the Dolores Water Conservancy District that aggressively engaged in managing the run-off for multiple benefits beyond just filling McPhee Dam for agriculture.

Separately, the Bureau of Land Management launched a long overdue update to its Dolores River Corridor Management Plan. SJCA staff, members and allies joined the stakeholders group helping to guide development of the new plan, which will address protection of the river corridor from mineral development and oil and gas leasing, as well as tackle recreation management issues. The draft corridor plan is anticipated by the end of 2009.

## Building a Safe and Hospitable Society

Compañeros worked closely in a statewide campaign to defeat Amendment 46 on the fall, 2008 ballot. As proposed, Amendment 46 would have changed the Colorado Constitution as it relates to civil rights, resulting in an unfavorable precedent, eroding affirmative action and diversity practices that are important and valid concepts for business and the structure of our society. The Amendment was deceptively worded to confuse voters, but the "no" campaign successfully educated folks so that it was defeated statewide, and by a resounding margin in La Plata County.

## 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 homeowners and residents.

### 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 riparian values. We challenge dams that might destroy our last free-flowing streams while striving for efficient use and promoting democracy in water policy. On the Dolores River, we have engaged water users, government agencies, white-water enthusiasts, and conservationists in collaboration aimed at freeing more water for downstream flows.

### Protect Spectacular Lands & Native Wildlife of the Wild San Juans

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. Our longest running campaign is the effort to keep the rugged HD Mountains near Bayfield free of gas wells.

**Act Locally on Global Warming**  
We tackle head-on the largest contributors to global warming, new coal-fired power plants like Desert Rock and those proposed by Tri-State that would increase carbon dioxide emissions by millions of tons annually. We educate our members about individual choices to reduce global warming, and work to reform the institutions that make our energy future choices.

**Build a Safe and Hospitable Society**  
SJCA strives to create social, economic, and environmental justice for all residents of the San Juan Basin. Our Compañeros project campaigns to end racial profiling that often targets Latinos and to promote acceptance of diverse cultures.

The San Juan Citizens Alliance is a grassroots organization dedicated to social, economic and environmental justice. We organize San Juan Basin residents to protect our water and air, our public lands, our rural character, and our unique quality of life while embracing the diversity of our region's people, economy and ecology.

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#### Individual Supporters

SJCA owes its success to over 550 individual members who not only provide financial support, but also actively engage themselves in the hard work of moving forward our mission to protect and enhance the people, land, and resources of the San Juan Basin.

## Revenue

ITEM	AMOUNT
Membership Dues	15,724
Major Donations	39,257
Individual Contributions	5,104
Business sponsors	6,354
Cartridge recycling	1,496
Brainstorm Giveback Program	2,277
Green Business Roundtable	9,513
Events	56,383
Interest/Dividends	2,934
Foundation grants	399,700
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>538,743</b>
Cash Balance	161,110

### Foundation Supporters

Chinook Fund  
Donnell Initiative Fund  
Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation  
Educational Foundation of America  
General Service Foundation  
Hewlett Foundation  
Maki Foundation  
McCune Foundation  
National Council for La Raza  
New-Land Foundation  
Ruth Brown Foundation  
Sacharuna Foundation  
Wyss Foundation

## Expenses

ITEM	AMOUNT
Salaries	333,874
Retirement	7,650
Health Insurance	38,401
FICA	30,173
Accounting	3,300
Advertising	3,845
Consultants and attorneys	11,882
Copier maintenance contract	1,838
Dues and subscriptions	4,246
Fundraising events	48,105
Green Business Roundtable	12,545
Insurance	3,936
Office Supplies	7,435
Postage	3,665
Printing	4,867
Rent & Utilities	31,928
Technology	1,929
Telephone/internet	15,231
Travel	22,624
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>587,474</b>
Cash Balance	112,380