

SUMMER 2015



SAN JUAN
CITIZENS
ALLIANCE

photo: Alex Pullen





OUR METHANE HOTSPOT

What's the scoop on our now infamous regional methane emissions?

HERMOSA CREEK WATERSHED PROTECTED!

A six-year long grassroots community effort wins permanent protections.

6-7

San Juan Citizens Alliance advocates for clean air, pure water, and healthy lands – the foundations of resilient communities, ecosystems and economies in the San Juan Basin.

8-9

A 10,000 PERSON CITY ON WOLF CREEK PASS?

This 30 year battle to preserve Wolf Creek Pass is far from over.



10

STAFF HIGHLIGHT:

Jimbo Buickerood

From experiential educator to public lands watchdog, meet Jimbo.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

With the first-ever SJCA crossword puzzle!

4 OUR METHANE HOTSPOT

“That’s a huge spike right there. It’s scary big. That means that this [coal mine] is blowing out stuff like crazy.”

Steve Conley, atmospheric scientist from UC Davis during a methane detection overflight.

Everyone in our community has the right to breathe clean **AIR**. We work to make that right a reality.

By now hopefully you’ve heard the news: above the Four Corners hovers the country’s largest concentration of methane. Between 2003 and 2009 the San Juan Basin released 10% of the nation’s annual methane emissions. Why is this a big deal? Because methane is 86 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period.

The methane hotspot discovery has focused needed national and international attention on the region’s air quality issues – a topic the Alliance has been working hard to highlight for years. As scientists narrow in on the exact sources of our hotspot, all initial signs point to our massive fossil fuel infrastructure – coal, oil, and natural gas extraction – as the likely culprit.

As politicians across the nation tout natural gas as a clean transition fuel, residents of the Four Corners need to speak up. We know the evils of coal-fired power plants, but we also know what it’s like to live in the gas patch. The picture is not pretty.

Clean air is a right, not a luxury. Help the Alliance take the offensive against reckless fossil fuel extraction in the Four Corners. Methane hotspot of the nation is one distinction we can live without.



Scientists Convene

In April a team of scientists descended on the Four Corners equipped with five aircraft, two vehicles and countless amounts of monitoring equipment. They held a forum for the public to explain their work and what they were doing to pinpoint local sources of methane. Over 200 people attended.



HERMOSA CREEK WATERSHED PROTECTED!

Success! At the end of 2014 the Alliance, along with our partners, succeeded in winning Congressional protection for Hermosa Creek. The Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection Act protects the watershed through the combination of a 70,000-acre Special Management Area and the 38,000-acre Wilderness Area. This community-created public lands protection bill was specifically designed to preserve the multiple uses of Hermosa Creek for generations to come.

The Act shines as a local example of diverse local stakeholders sitting down at the same table, listening to

each other, working hard, and creating something that benefits everyone. The concept for this legislation was spawned by the River Protection Workgroup's (RPW) Hermosa Creek committee, which spent 7 years to ensure the watershed had adequate protections for the values and resources honored by the community.

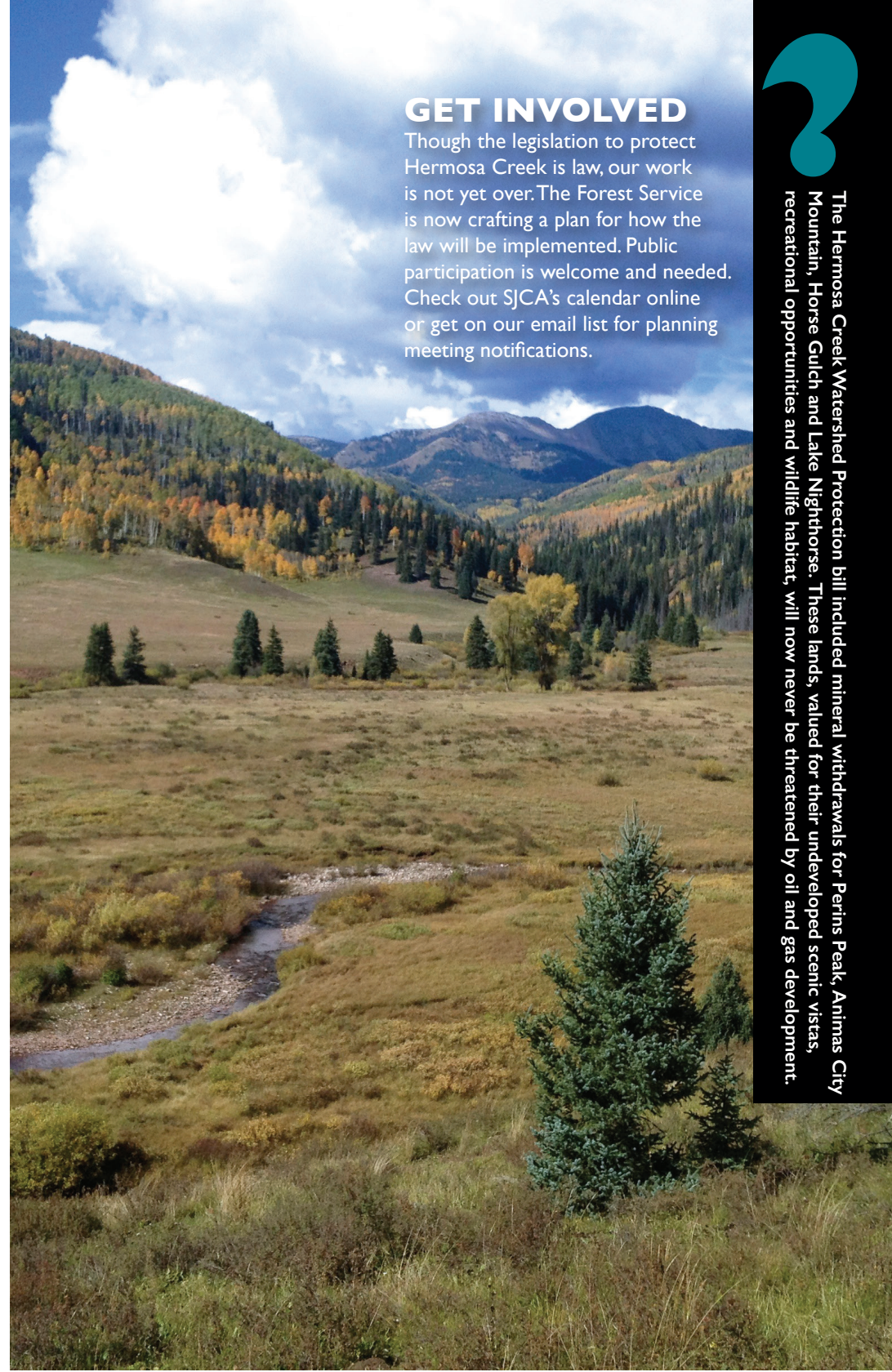
As a founder of the RPW, the Alliance continues to work alongside a diverse group of stakeholders to determine if other area watersheds could benefit from congressionally designated protections.

WATER is essential to life. We work to protect the abundance and quality of life-giving water.

GET INVOLVED

Though the legislation to protect Hermosa Creek is law, our work is not yet over. The Forest Service is now crafting a plan for how the law will be implemented. Public participation is welcome and needed. Check out SJCA's calendar online or get on our email list for planning meeting notifications.

The Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection bill included mineral withdrawals for Perins Peak, Animas City Mountain, Horse Gulch and Lake Nighthorse. These lands, valued for their undeveloped scenic vistas, recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat, will now never be threatened by oil and gas development.



A 10,000 PERSON CITY ON WOLF CREEK PASS?

“The impacts of a 10,000 person city atop Wolf Creek Pass cannot be mitigated.”

Jimbo Buickerood, Public Lands Coordinator

The **LAND** is our home. We work to ensure the viability of this landscape and all of its inhabitants.

Wolf Creek Pass normally elicits images of wilderness, lynx slinking through a spruce-fir forest, or an epic weekend of fly-fishing, skiing, or hunting. Unless, apparently, you're Texas-billionaire Red McCombs. McCombs and company have been pursuing a development the size of Aspen on the pass for nearly 30 years, willing to trade lynx for luxury living high on the Continental Divide.

This year the Forest Service improperly approved a land exchange granting McCombs and his team the road frontage so needed to pursue their profits.

Does this mean the fight is over? Far from it. The Alliance is heading to court to challenge this deeply flawed decision, and that's just the start of it.

Make sure you're on the Alliance email list and social media accounts to stay in the loop on other ways you can help support the fight to permanently protect Wolf Creek from pillage.



Art for Endangered Landscapes: Honoring Wolf Creek Pass

Artists of all types converged on Wolf Creek Pass June 20th to celebrate the high country threatened by the Pillage at Wolf Creek. Wolf Creek inspired art will tour the state in the fall of 2015.



13,000

The number of Wolf Creek documents the US Forest Service failed to make available to the public until compelled by the courts.

STAFF PROFILE: Jimbo Buickerood

Public Lands Coordinator



Jimbo's knowledge and passion for the landscapes of Southwest Colorado is hard to match. After spending 20 years working with Colorado Outward Bound School, Jimbo joined the Alliance eight years ago as a public lands watchdog and powerful advocate for sound land and watershed protections.

When not in marathon meetings, talking to reporters, or educating us on the issues, you can find Jimbo hiking the backcountry, rafting a river, tending his extensive garden, or cheering on his son at everything from soccer to ballroom dancing.

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Come visit the Alliance's website (sanjuancitizens.org) to learn more about our 20+ active campaigns. While there, or using the enclosed envelope, please consider making a donation to help out Alliance efforts.

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TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

ACROSS

- 1 Name associated with the UNESCO World Heritage site in NM now threatened by oil and gas development
- 4 The wasteful practice of burning off natural gas at an oil well
- 5 Greenhouse gas 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide
- 6 River with headwaters 5 miles south of Lizard Head Pass
- 7 Opponents name for the proposed Village at Wolf Creek
- 8 The watershed protected through a grassroots-driven bill in 2014
- 10 Predator re-introduced to the San Juan Mountains in 1999

DOWN

- 2 An air pollutant formed from by-products of fossil fuel combustion and sunlight
- 3 The Alliance helped stop the expansion of this coal mine for a second time in 2015
- 9 The cheery building where most Alliance staff toil away
- 11 Type of protection the Alliance and other stakeholders are seeking for the Lower Dolores River, in short

ANSWERS
Across
1. Chaco
4. Flaring
5. Methane
6. Dolores
7. Pillage
8. Lynx
9. Hermosa
10. Smiley
11. NCA
Down
2. Ozone
3. Navajo Mine
7. Lynx
8. Hermosa
9. Lynx
10. Smiley
11. NCA



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