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.
SACRIFICING CHACO
Drilling away the past, present, and future.

STAFF PROFILE:
Dan Olson
Green business booster turned non-profit advocate, meet Dan.

HOW WE DO IT
The critical role members play in Alliance success.
“Given the health threats from ozone, greater health protections are clearly needed. The level chosen of 70 parts per billion (ppb) simply does not reflect what the science shows is necessary to truly protect public health.”

American Lung Association
The Four Corners is a far cry from the megacities we normally associate with air pollution, but thanks to three coal-fired power plants and tens of thousands of oil and gas wells, bad air quality is exactly what we get.

Let’s look at one example: ground level ozone. Ground level ozone, the main component of smog, is formed when nitrogen oxides (a major pollutant from coal combustion) and volatile organic compounds (emitted from oil and gas infrastructure) react with sunlight.

This year the American Lung Association gave La Plata County a D for ozone levels in their State of the Air report and the county is at risk of not meeting the new EPA standards. So much for clean mountain air and wholesome rural living.

Unsurprisingly, industry claims they are not to blame or, alternatively, that their cleanup efforts are working tremendously. The numbers tell a different story.

We need strong regulations in place to clean up our air. The EPA did recently strengthen the ozone standard, but their adoption of the weakest option recommended by their scientific advisory panel suggests they caved to robust industry lobbying.

Clean air is a right. Period. Whether it be ozone, methane, haze or other forms of air pollution, the Alliance will continue to demand the health of our communities be protected over corporate profits.

**Shiprock Haze**

The iconic view of Shiprock from Mesa Verde is increasingly obscured by air pollution and now completely vanishes about 18 days a year.
Red and Bonita mines pictured above continue to drain 300 gallons per minute, 157 million gallons a year, of untreated acid mine waste into Cement Creek and the Animas River.
Unless you’ve been on an epic backcountry trip, you have heard the sad tale of the Gold King Mine spill. Worse, you probably also learned that acid mine waste has been leaking into the Animas River every minute of every day, for decades. The pollution we saw with the Gold King spill was not new, just dramatic.

This spill needs to be a wake-up call to our communities. Now that the orange plume has passed, but the persistent pollution remains, are we ready to demand action and finally start the permanent clean up of a mining legacy that taints the lifeblood of our communities?

The Alliance knows the answer is yes. Our communities are ready to speak out, organize, and create solutions to this stubborn problem. In response to this need, SJCA is partnering with the Waterkeeper Alliance to revive the Animas Riverkeeper. The Animas Riverkeeper will be a home for the advocacy efforts our river has long deserved.

But we need your help. It will take a full time river organizer to be an effective advocate for the Animas River. Will you help us fund this position and protect the Animas from future Gold King spills?
SACRIFICING CHACO

“As a society, why do we seek knowledge of those who died centuries ago while failing to listen to those who are still living?” Laura Paskus

Chaco Canyon is known the world-over as a treasured and irreplaceable cultural site. Regrettably, it has also become ground-zero for a new fight over fracking in the San Juan Basin.

As one of 820 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Chaco Culture National Historic Park benefits from stringent protections within the park’s 53 square miles, but the Chacoan landscape is vastly larger. Encompassing 40,000 square miles, tens of thousands of villages and hundreds of miles of roads, this entire Chacoan complex is threatened by rampant and unplanned oil and gas development.

The LAND is our home. We work to ensure the viability of this landscape and all of its inhabitants.
To date, the Bureau of Land Management has permitted 230 oil and gas wells around Chaco, this despite the agency lacking any plan for managing the impacts of this new development into the Mancos Shale. While the threat to archeological sites is evident, more pressing is the impact this development has on modern native communities. Navajo Nation areas such as Counselor and Lybrook have been literally overrun by wells, with local residents suffering from the resulting air pollution, traffic, noise, and industrialization of their rural communities.

The Alliance has successfully challenged numerous BLM attempts to lease lands adjacent to the park, and is involved in an active lawsuit challenging all fracking in the Mancos Shale. Help us remind the BLM that they are public servants, not industry servants. Help us defend Chaco.

**Flaring**
The lower San Juan Basin lacks infrastructure to collect gas that emerges from oil wells. As a result, extensive flaring wastes a valuable resource and diminishes the clarity of the night sky for which the region is known.
STAFF PROFILE: Dan Olson
Executive Director

After 14 years pioneering best-practices for green business operations, Dan became frustrated by the private sector’s inability to move the needle on our generation’s greatest environmental and social challenges. As our Executive Director, Dan has put his leadership, creativity and organizational management skills to work strengthening the Alliance and setting us on a trajectory to meet the next 25 years of regional environmental challenges.

Originally from New York, Dan relishes living in the mountains with his wife and young son. He and his family steal away at every opportunity to explore the cultural and wild treasures of the mountains, rivers and desert surrounding home.

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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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Our ability to continue protecting air quality, cleaning up waterways and defending local lands is largely dependent on your contributions. Here’s a peak at just how important you are:

75% of donations to the Alliance are $100 or less. Small acts can lead to big change.

Are you a member?

The Alliance needs 200 new members to help us fight the good fight. Will you help us grow this movement? Use the enclosed envelope or contribute online to become a member today.