

**2017**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**

photo: Jack Brauer

**SAN JUAN**  
**CITIZENS**  
**ALLIANCE**



# DEAR SUPPORTERS,

2017 was a banner year for San Juan Citizens Alliance. Our membership continued to soar, reaching an all time high, and we achieved landmark conservation victories.

Most notably, we prevailed against developers in a high stakes decades-long battle over the future of Wolf Creek Pass, one of our region's most crucial wildlife corridors.

In solidarity with indigenous peoples struggling to safeguard their homeland and cultural antiquities, we continued to fight rampant oil and gas industrialization of the Chaco landscape.

And driven by heightened awareness and concern after the Gold King Mine Spill, we recommitted ourselves to river conservation advocacy, launching the Animas Riverkeeper.



*Mark Pearson*

**Mark Pearson**  
Executive Director

**In gratitude,**

*Gary Skiba*

**Gary Skiba**  
Board President

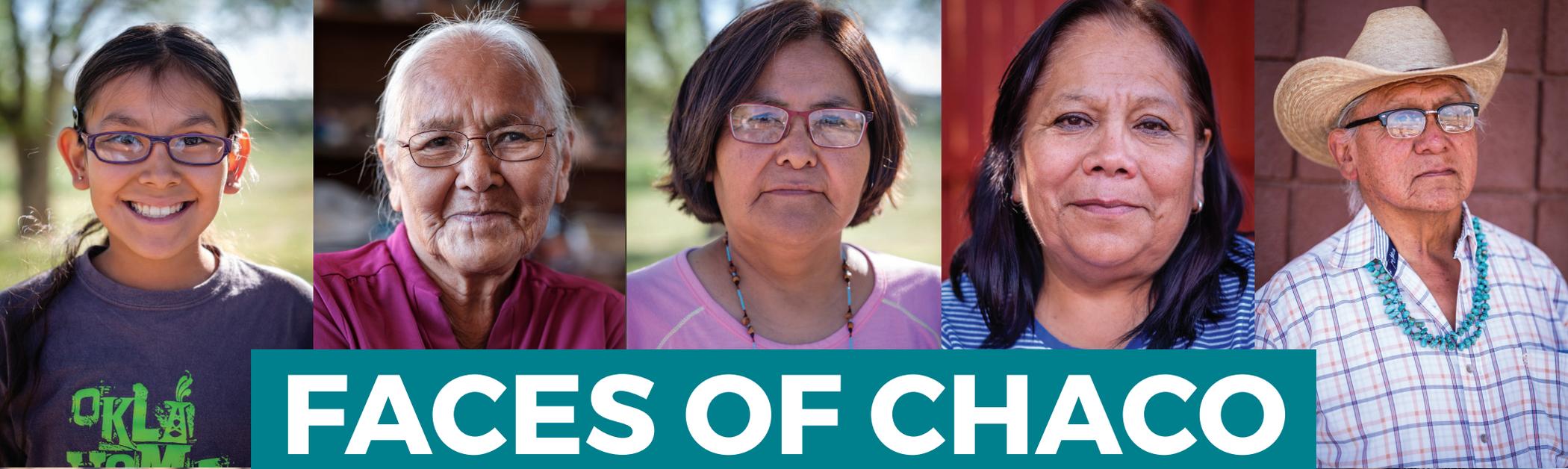


While pressing forward on long-running priorities, we also couldn't ignore unprecedented assaults on our public lands and bedrock environmental laws launched by this administration. Such attacks require constant vigilance and persistent defenders.

We closed out 2017 poised for more success - with a strong balance sheet, an active and experienced board of directors, and a professional and accomplished staff. We are grateful to our members and supporters for both financial and campaign support essential in furthering our shared conservation vision in the region.

We're looking forward to celebrating more success in 2018.

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.



# FACES OF CHACO

*One Community's Fight for Oil and Gas Protections*

**PHOTOS: ROB ZEIGLER**



## FACES OF CHACO

Through Faces of Chaco, a photo-documentary project launched in collaboration with local and photographer Rob Zeigler, we are bringing attention to the seldom-seen yet devastating impacts of reckless, unplanned oil and gas drilling in Greater Chaco. This project is their story, images that paint a picture of how their home has changed, where they find the inspiration to push forward against the odds, and how the rest of us can help them fight for a better future for their children.

Chaco Canyon is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, National Historical Park, and Dark Sky Park in the heart of the San Juan Basin. From 850 to 1250 A.D. the Chacoan peoples constructed many great houses in Chaco Canyon. The center core of the Canyon receives the most attention, but **“Greater Chaco”** encompasses a vast treasure of over 230 outlier settlements. The massive structures, connected by a web of ancient roads, are internationally recognized architectural and engineering wonders, the purpose and use of which remain a mystery.

**In addition to vast cultural resources, Chaco Canyon is home to many living native communities.** Over two dozen tribes still hold the region sacred and many people use the cultural sites for ceremonies and celebrations. Yet, for decades the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has permitted reckless and poorly planned oil and gas development in the area. **Local communities, cultural resources, and the environment have been pushed aside in the interest of oil and gas.**

**FULL DOCUMENTARY:**  
**facesofchaco.org**



“ Things are never ever going to be the same. What’s destroyed is destroyed, what’s done is done, but I pray and hope that it’s going to bring our community together, even our young people....I know that things are changing, every year, as time goes on. But there’s no way it’s ever going to be the same again.”

**- Marlene, Community Representative**





# DEFEATING THE VILLAGE AT WOLF CREEK

## DEFEATING THE VILLAGE AT WOLF CREEK

Back in 1986 an out-of-state developer, B.J. 'Red' McCombs set his eyes on Wolf Creek Pass for development of the next big ski resort in Colorado. Twenty miles from the nearest town, the 8,000-person city would threaten the critical southern Rockies wildlife corridor, rare fen wetlands, nearby local businesses, backcountry recreation opportunities, and water quality and quantity for downstream land users and anglers. Along with our partners, we've been successfully fighting this Village at Wolf Creek for decades. In 2017, we secured a decisive victory.

***"This is welcome news for everyone who loves and appreciates Wolf Creek Pass in its current condition. The Village at Wolf Creek has always been the wrong project in the wrong location."***

**- Jimbo Buickerood**

Lands and Forest Protection Program Manager

*Rendering of the maximum density development for the Village at Wolf Creek*



What NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) requires is that before taking any major action, a federal agency must stop and take a careful look to determine the environmental impact of that decision, and listen to the public before taking action...The Forest Service failed to do that.

*Senior Judge  
Richard P. Matsch*



*A picture of the meadow where the Village would be built as it is today. The area is at the headwaters of the Rio Grande River, is home to rare fen wetlands, and acts as a critical wildlife corridor.*

The land in question is an inholding within publicly owned lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service. In order to utilize the property year round they need access from the highway. In 2014 the Forest Service approved a land exchange, granting developers highway access that would allow them to finally develop. The approval, however, was based on a deeply flawed Environmental Impact Statement that failed to even assess the impacts of development. We sued and won.

### **The Village at Wolf Creek would negatively impact:**

- » A critical southern Rockies wildlife corridor
- » Backcountry recreation opportunities
- » Nearby local businesses
- » Rare, valuable fen wetlands
- » Water quality and quantity for downstream land users and anglers
- » Views from the highway and the Continental Divide Trail

# WE'RE THE ANIMAS Riverkeeper®





## THE HEADWATERS

Protecting and restoring the health of the Animas River, primarily through engaging in the Superfund process and working to prevent future mining-related pollution



## RECREATION

Ensuring safe, reliable access to recreation on the river between Durango and Farmington



## WATER MANAGEMENT

Promoting transparent and accountable water resource management by engaging the Southwest Water Conservation District, the taxpayer-funded entity that makes critical decisions about how water in the river is managed and allocated.

*"Watershed groups, researchers, and community members gather in November of 2017 at the Animas Valley Grange Hall to share perspectives on the impact of the Gold King Mine spill."*



## WE'RE THE ANIMAS RIVERKEEPER®

In 2017, San Juan Citizens Alliance teamed up with Waterkeeper ALLIANCE®, a global movement uniting over 300 Waterkeepers, to launch the Animas Riverkeeper. Marcel Gaztambide, the appointed Animas Riverkeeper, is the river's only full-time advocate, working to protect and restore the Animas River ecosystem, ensure safe, reliable access and promote democracy in water resource management.

The 2015 Gold King Spill, which memorably transformed the river into an opaque mustard hue, heightened the region's awareness of the watershed's most damaging threat. In addition to mobilizing public involvement and engaging in the Superfund process at the newly designated Bonita Peak Mining District, the Riverkeeper will be working to expand safe recreational opportunities and watchdog management of the river's water.

Rivers are the lifeblood of our communities, and like many rivers in the west, the Animas faces many challenges. Historic mining near the river's mineral-rich headwaters has degraded water quality for more than 150 years, and was underscored by the Gold King Mine Spill of 2015. Nutrient pollution, lack of access, drought and a growing demand for water resources also present management challenges, highlighting the need for community involvement and smart river management.



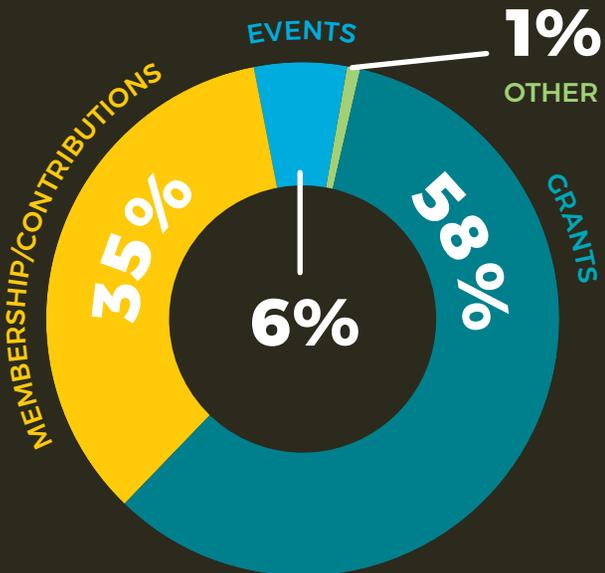
My aim is to provide strong advocacy to improve the quality of life for everyone who relies on the Animas River, whether for drinking water, recreation, agriculture or those who simply value the river's health. Our program provides a platform for people to engage with river issues, voice their concerns, and celebrate our region's most important resource.

*- Marcel Gaztambide, Animas Riverkeeper*

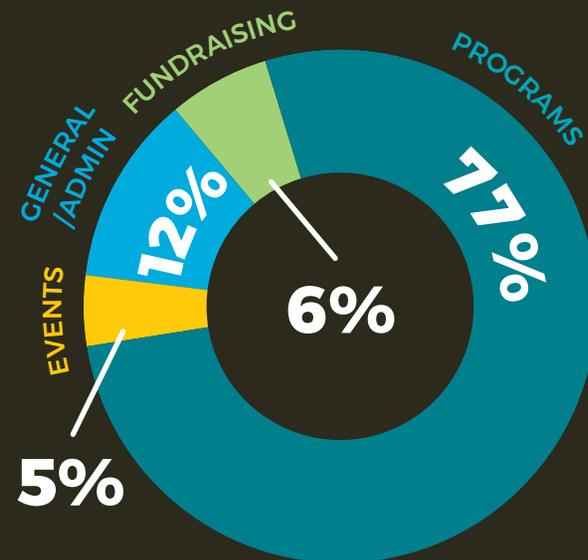


# 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

## REVENUE

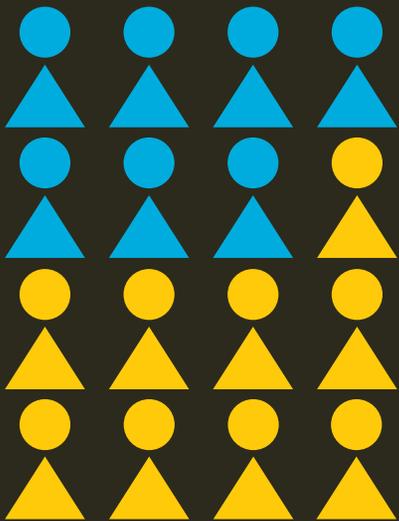


## EXPENSES



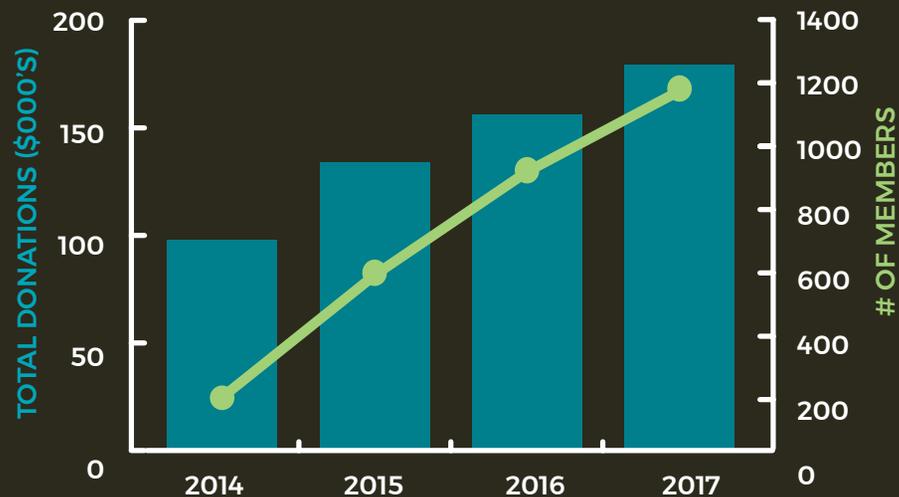
## DONORS

GENERAL (\$78K)



MAJOR (\$101K)

## MEMBERSHIP & REVENUE GROWTH





“SJCA was a great help to me and guided me along my adventure with BP. Since those long ago days, SJCA has expanded their horizons and continues to do great things for our community.”

- Julianne



# SJCA

“Thank you for the work that you do - It’s organizations like you that give us hope in a struggle to save our environment.”

- Daniel



“The world needs more dedicated folks like you taking care of and protecting what’s most important! Keep up the priceless work.”

- Paula



## BOARD

- Buz Bricca
- Andy Corra
- Steve Ellison, *Treasurer*
- Steve Monroe
- Anna Peterson
- Robin Richard, *Secretary*
- Gary Skiba, *President*
- Diana Vernazza
- Barb West, *Vice President*

## STAFF

- Emily Bowie, *Energy & Climate Campaign Organizer*
- Erika Brown, *Communications Manager*
- Jimbo Buickerood, *Lands & Forest Protection Program Manager*
- Mike Eisenfeld, *Energy & Climate Program Manager*
- Susan Etter, *Finance & Administration Manager*
- Marcel Gaztambide, *Animas Riverkeeper*
- Mark Pearson, *Executive Director*

**Come visit the Alliance’s website 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.**

San Juan Citizens Alliance  
1309 East Third Ave, Suite 5  
PO Box 2461  
Durango, CO 81302  
970.259.3583

info@sanjuancitizens.org  
[sanjuancitizens.org](http://sanjuancitizens.org)

