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.

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.

In gratitude,

Mark Pearson
Executive Director

Gary Skiba
Board President
FACES OF CHACO
One Community’s Fight for Oil and Gas Protections
PHOTOS: ROB ZEIGLER
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.

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

FULL DOCUMENTARY: facesofchaco.org
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

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.

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
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:
- Membership/Contributions: 35%
- Grants: 58%
- Events: 6%
- Other: 1%

Expenses:
- Events: 6%
- Fundraising: 12%
- General/Admin: 77%
- Programs: 5%

Donors:
- General ($78K)
- Major ($101K)

Membership & Revenue Growth:
- 2014: $0
- 2015: $50
- 2016: $100
- 2017: $150
- # of Members: 0 to 200
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.

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“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

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

– Paula

“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

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Susan Etter, Finance & Administration Manager
Marcel Gatzambide, Animas Riverkeeper
Mark Pearson, Executive Director

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