

SAN JUAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

PHOTO BY JACK BRAUER



DEAR SUPPORTERS,

The year 2021 offered welcome gains in environmental policy at the state and federal levels. At SJCA, we rebounded from another year of Covid by welcoming two new staff members, Rane Dickerson as our Communications Manager and Emelie Frojen as our Climate and Energy Program Associate, who both played key roles in advancing our programs.

Cherished landscapes across the Four Corners region moved towards lasting protection. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland imposed a two-year moratorium on new oil and gas leasing surrounding Chaco in preparation for a 20-year withdrawal. And the House of Representatives voted in favor of lands conservation bills that offer permanent protection to 1 million acres across Colorado in the CORE Act and the Colorado Wilderness Act.

New Mexico and Colorado set high marks as national leaders in cutting methane emissions from the oil and gas industry in 2021. Methane is a potent contributor to climate change, with a heat trapping capacity more than 80 times that of carbon dioxide. SJCA staff and members played a significant role bringing to bear our experience living under the Four Corners methane hotspot.

The clock continued ticking down on closure of San Juan Generating Station during 2022. The coal-fired power plant has been in operation for almost 50 years, and speculators hope to keep it running as an experimental, taxpayer-subsidized carbon capture project. We highlighted the financial and technical shortfalls of Enchant Energy's boondoggle.

Our efforts benefitted greatly from the generous financial support of more than 1,000 individual donors, and the confidence of our foundation partners. We ended the year in our strongest financial position ever, leaving us poised for success in 2022.

In gratitude,



Mark Pearson

Mark Pearson
Executive Director



Buz Bricca
Board President



PROGRESS IN *LANDS PROTECTIONS*

AFTER A WHIRLWIND YEAR, WE TOOK STOCK OF LAND CONSERVATION GAINS DURING 2021.

CHACO CULTURE HISTORIC PARK

One cherished landscape gained a reprieve in November when **Interior Secretary Deb Haaland placed a two-year moratorium on new oil and gas leasing within a 10-mile buffer zone surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park** at the request of many Puebloan tribes. The pause allows for a more comprehensive assessment of impacts from energy development on cultural landscapes and local communities, and could eventually lead to a 20-year prohibition on expanded energy development.

HALTING OIL & GAS LEASES IN THE SAN JUAN NATIONAL FOREST

Pending oil and gas lease sales in the San Juan National Forest were also put on hold. In January 2021, Trump Administration plans were afoot to sell new oil and gas leases across 2,500 acres of the San Juan National Forest, including more than 1,000 acres immediately across from Chimney Rock National Monument. **Now, both Chimney Rock and the nearby HD Mountains roadless area have breathing room from the pervasive impacts of more energy development.**

COLORADO WILDERNESS PROTECTIONS PASS HOUSE

Two sweeping land protection efforts pending in Congress gained traction during 2021, with the **House voting in February and again in September to support both the Colorado Wilderness Act and the CORE Act.** The Colorado Wilderness Act was first introduced back in 1999, and provides permanent wilderness designation to remote desert canyons, including the spectacular Ponderosa Gorge and Dolores River Canyon. The CORE Act benefits San Juan Mountains wildlands, including Ice Lake Basin and the Sneffels Range, with added protections.

The two bills together would permanently restrict incompatible development on roughly 200,000 acres of some of the most breathtaking yet unprotected places in our corner of Colorado. They still await approval in the Senate before becoming law.



OUTSTANDING *WATERS*

BRYAN WOOLBRIGHT



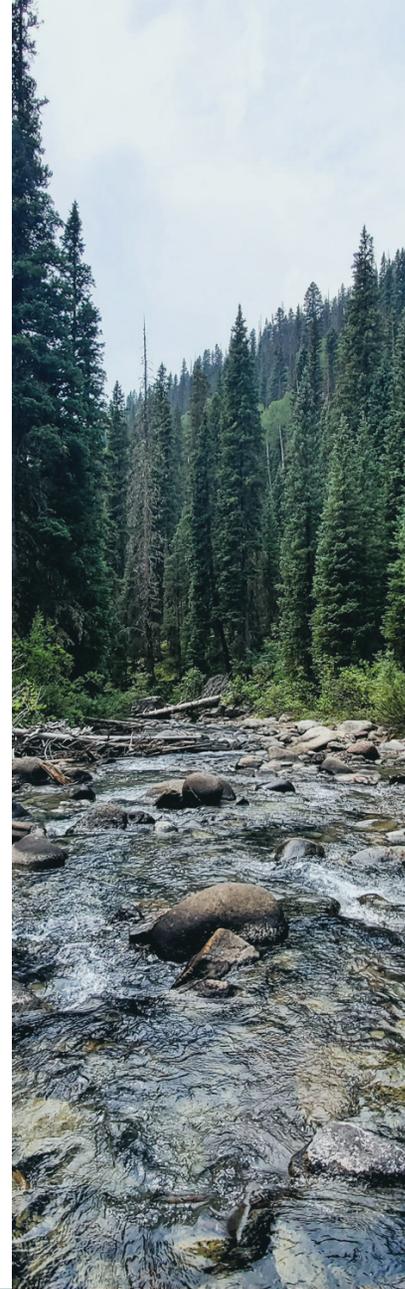
As we move into a future of climate uncertainty, and as streams with exceptional water quality become increasingly rare, it becomes ever more important that we protect the high-quality water that still exists in our mountains and forests.

That's why we began working with partners in 2020 to identify high-quality streams, collect critical water quality data, document natural resource values, and gather community support for protecting high-quality water through a process known as "Outstanding Waters designation".

Through this process, the Clean Water Act gives individual states the authority to designate special protections on pristine waterways to ensure water quality is not degraded. In Colorado, the decision to designate "Outstanding Waters" is made by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) based on specific criteria like water quality standards and the presence of outstanding natural resource values (like aquatic habitat

or recreational use). The WQCC ultimately makes their decision during a rulemaking hearing that culminates in a triennial review of water classifications and standards for each basin in the State of Colorado.

For our San Juan Basin, which contains the Animas River, this hearing is scheduled for June of 2022, and our group is ready to propose enhanced protection for 26 tributaries to the Animas, the San Juan, the Dolores, the San Miguel, and the Gunnison rivers. These are streams that contain extremely high-quality water and aquatic habitat, add resilience to our water systems, and offer exceptional recreational opportunities from fishing to paddling.



STREAMS UP FOR DESIGNATION

BIG DOMINGUEZ CREEK
UPPER AND LOWER
ROUBIDEAU CREEK
TABEGUACHE CREEK
SOAP CREEK
TAYLOR RIVER
WATERFALL CREEK
SNOW SPUR CREEK
STONER CREEK
WILDCAT CREEK
QUARTZ CREEK
WOLF CREEK
BOULDER CREEK
BEAR CREEK
CASCADE CREEK
UPPER AND LOWER
LIME CREEK
GRASSHOPPER CREEK
COAL CREEK
WEST FORK DOLORES
PRIEST CREEK
DOLORES BEAR CREEK
POTTER CREEK
ESCALANTE CREEK

What is **OUTSTANDING WATERS?**

Outstanding Waters is a designation awarded to reaches of streams, rivers or other bodies of water with high water quality and exceptional recreational or ecological significance that are deemed worthy of increased protections by the State of Colorado.

FIGHTING *Climate Change*



New Mexico and Colorado adopted new rules in 2021 to limit methane emissions from the oil and gas industry, steps that should help with the infamous Four Corners Methane Hotspot. Methane is a potent contributor to climate change, trapping more than 80 times as much heat as carbon dioxide.

TIGHT REGULATIONS ON METHANE EMISSIONS

After more than a year of public comments, **New Mexico's Oil Conservation Commission approved regulations to require capture of 98 percent of natural gas emissions** by 2026, and also prohibit venting or flaring.

Colorado's Air Quality Control Commission approved strong new methane rules that require regular inspections of all oil and gas wells, whereas before some low-producing wells were only ever measured one time. The rules aim to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets of 36 percent by 2025 and 60 percent by 2030.

LA PLATA ELECTRIC PURSUES CLEAN ENERGY

La Plata Electric Association took steps towards further reducing its greenhouse gas emissions.

LPEA announced a tentative agreement with Tri-State for a partial contract buyout, allowing LPEA to purchase up to 50% of its power supply from other sources. LPEA believes the arrangement will save customers \$7 million annually over the next 20 years and lower LPEA's carbon footprint by 50%. LPEA's direction is the result of a board majority comprised of forward-looking directors, many of whom we've supported in years past.

SAN JUAN GENERATING STATION POISED TO CLOSE

While the countdown continues towards 2022 closure of San Juan Generating Station outside Farmington, we continue to scrutinize a speculative last ditch effort to keep the aging coal-fired power plant operating as an experimental carbon capture project.

An outfit called Enchant Energy hopes to capitalize on millions in taxpayer subsidies to keep the plant burning coal, and capturing some of the emitted CO2. We are insisting on a full-fledged Environmental Impact Statement to analyze the many interconnected impacts of this proposal.



REINTRODUCING *WOLVES*



COLORADO VOTERS IN NOVEMBER 2020 APPROVED RESTORATION OF WOLVES TO THE STATE, WITH A 2023 DEADLINE.

In the past year, Colorado Parks and Wildlife created a stakeholder advisory group to help sort through the details of how wolves will be reintroduced and managed.

SJCA's Wildlife Program Manager, Gary Skiba, represents conservation interests on the advisory group.

The advisory group is charged with making recommendations about crafting a fair program to compensate livestock producers who might suffer depredation from wolves, and with proposing programs to proactively head off conflicts between wolves and livestock. Throughout 2021, the advisory group met monthly and made progress towards meeting deadlines for the 2023 reintroduction of wolves, at a location yet to be determined in western Colorado.

An update on

BIGHORN SHEEP

SJCA's priority wildlife programs include native bighorn sheep, Colorado's state animal. The number of bighorns in Colorado today is just 7,000, a number unchanged from the early 1900s. Bighorns might once have been the most common ungulate species in the state, and were greatly reduced by unregulated hunting. Today, the primary culprit preventing recovery of bighorns is a respiratory disease transmitted by domestic sheep, hence the need to create large spaces for bighorns to roam without risk of contact with domestic sheep bands in the high country.

During 2021, we increased public awareness and focused pressure on public land agencies to control and reduce the extent of domestic sheep across the San Juan Mountains. The plight of bighorns was featured in local publications like the Durango Telegraph and national publications like High Country News.

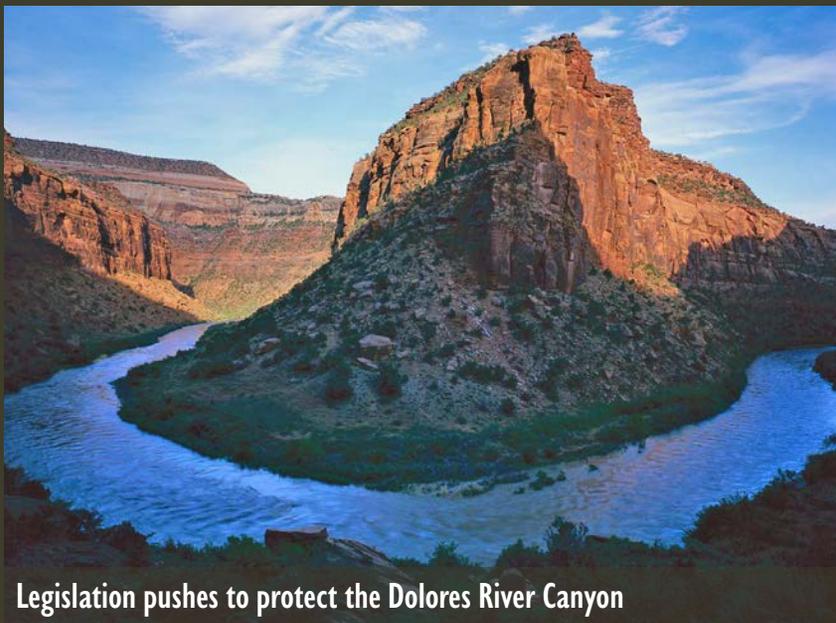




350,000 acres off-limits to leasing around Chaco



Colorado leads the way in methane emission regulations



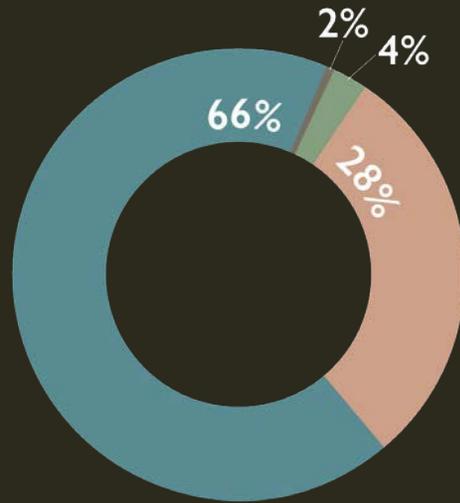
Legislation pushes to protect the Dolores River Canyon



The planning process for wolf reintroduction continues

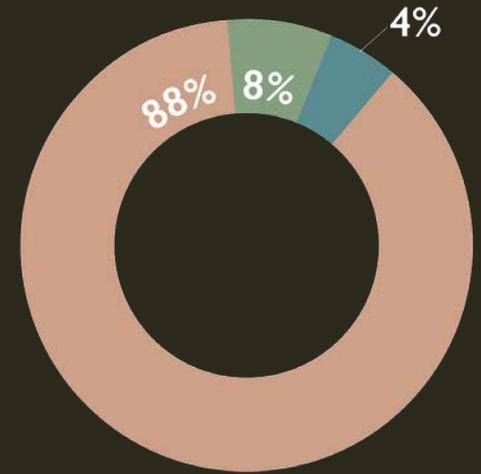
2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUE



GRANTS	\$482,000
MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTIONS	\$211,000
EVENTS	\$17,000
OTHER	\$3,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$713,000

EXPENSES



PROGRAMS	\$534,000
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE	\$46,000
FUNDRAISING	\$29,000
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$609,000

BALANCE SHEET

(IN THOUSANDS)

ASSETS

Current assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	467
Donations receivable	32

Non-current assets:

Equipment and deposit	1
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TOTAL ASSETS 500

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current liabilities:

Accrued PTO	16
Accounts Payable	1

TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES 17

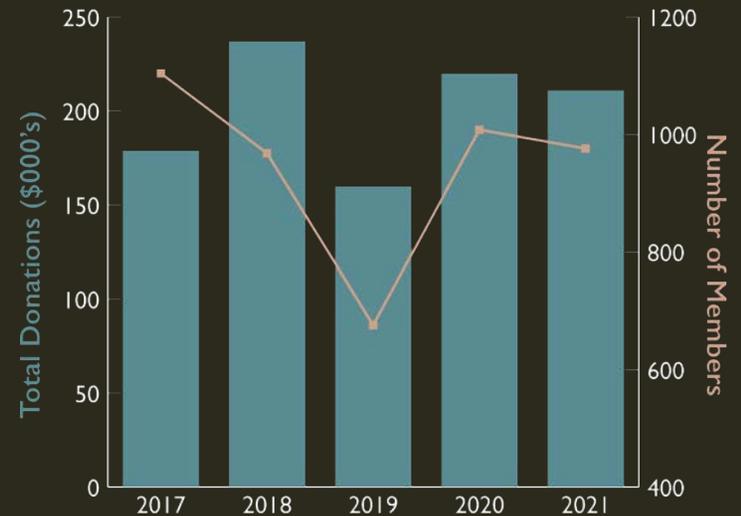
Equity:

Temporarily restricted	130
Unrestricted	24
Net Revenue	104

TOTAL EQUITY 483

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 500

MEMBERSHIP & REVENUE GROWTH





SUZANNA LOURIE



JACK BRAUER



MATT NUNEZ



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Visit our website to learn more about our 20+ active campaigns.

sanjuancitizens.org

+ a special shoutout to Jack Brauer, Suzanna Lourie, & Matt Nuñez, who have generously donated their photography.

All other photos were shot by staff, donated, or from Pexels or Unsplash.