

# SAN JUAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

PHOTO BY JACK BRAUER





# DEAR SUPPORTERS,

We often labor for years with our heads down, noses to the grindstone, aiming to protect and enhance the environment, communities, and landscapes of our chosen home region. 2022 was a remarkable year to rise for a breath, and take stock of the impact of our collective efforts.

Momentous steps occurred that will create a lasting transformation of the San Juan Basin, one that greatly reduces our contribution to climate-changing pollution and that provides increased certainty for cherished landscapes.

The closure of San Juan Generating Station in September, 2022 marked the end of an era dominated by fossil fuels. The 847-MW coal-fired power plant outside Farmington closed for good, and in December filed its plan for demolition and reclamation. After 50 years of operation, the Four Corners region is embarking on a future characterized by renewable energy sources and economic transformation.

The cultural landscape and communities surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park advanced towards increased protection against the ravages of oil and gas extraction. The Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management unveiled plans to withdraw over 330,000 acres from future mineral development, buffering Chaco from future impacts associated with oil and gas leasing, coal mines, or uranium development.

San Juan Citizens Alliance welcomed new staff and board members in 2022. Jimbo Buickerood stepped into an advisory role after more than 15 years shepherding our public lands program, and we brought on John Rader as our Public Lands Manager. Our Animas Riverkeeper, Marcel Gaztambide, moved over to Fort Lewis College after a successful 5-year stint dealing with pollution and access issues on the Animas, and in September Sara Burch joined the Alliance to steer our river program. Our stalwart finance and administration backbone, Susan Etter, took a well-deserved break after 7 years with the Alliance, and Drew Rozean stepped in to assume membership and administrative duties.

San Juan Citizens Alliance ended 2022 in its strongest financial position ever, thanks to the generous support of our members and donors and strong partnerships with charitable foundations.

*In gratitude,*



**Mark Pearson**  
Executive Director

**Michael Rendon**  
Board President



# HD MOUNTAINS

## FOCUSING ON THE SAN JUAN'S LESSER-KNOWN MOUNTAINSCAPE

SJCA staff and volunteers maintain a continuous watch over potentially destructive activities across the region. One particular focus has been on the HD Mountains, a 25,000-acre block of roadless land in the San Juan National Forest east of Bayfield. The HDs are remarkable for significant stands of old-growth ponderosa pine, and provide critical winter range and migration corridors for elk and deer. The HD Mountains have also been a target for coalbed methane drilling since the 1990s.

SJCA staff and volunteers provided review and feedback of a new effort to drill a half-dozen horizontal wells atop the HD Mountains, and install natural gas and produced water pipelines along a steep access route parallel to Spring Creek.

We mapped conflicts with required stipulations and best management practices designed to protect steep slopes, riparian areas, and wildlife habitat, and flagged several legal and policy concerns with the proposed development.

The HD Mountains are an oft-overlooked part of the San Juan Mountains, lower elevation foothills with relatively scant biological information. We undertook an effort during 2022 to mobilize a biological inventory. Volunteers from the Colorado Partnership for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation conducted surveys for reptiles and amphibians, we deployed bat detectors that identified nine of the 18 bat species known to be present in Colorado, and volunteers with Weminuche Audubon Society documented 61 species of birds. An undergraduate project with a Fort Lewis College student generated an extensive list of plant species in the HDs as well.







# *CLIMATE* **& ENERGY**



## THESE SMOKESTACKS ARE AN IMAGE OF THE PAST.

SAN JUAN GENERATING STATION SHUT DOWN THIS YEAR, ELIMINATING 6 MILLION TONS OF CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS ANNUALLY.

**In September, the last remaining unit at coal-fired San Juan Generating Station shut down, silencing the plant after 50 years of operation.**

The closure is an enormous victory for tackling greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, taking offline the annual emission of 6 million tons of carbon dioxide. Notably, the skies across the Four Corners region are already clearer, as the plant also halted spewing its haze causing pollutants like sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. The plant's majority owner, Public Service Company of New Mexico, is moving forward with contracts for a number of large-scale solar projects, including one or more immediately adjacent to the shuttered coal-fired powerplant. Simultaneously, the San

Juan coal mine also closed as the powerplant was its only customer.

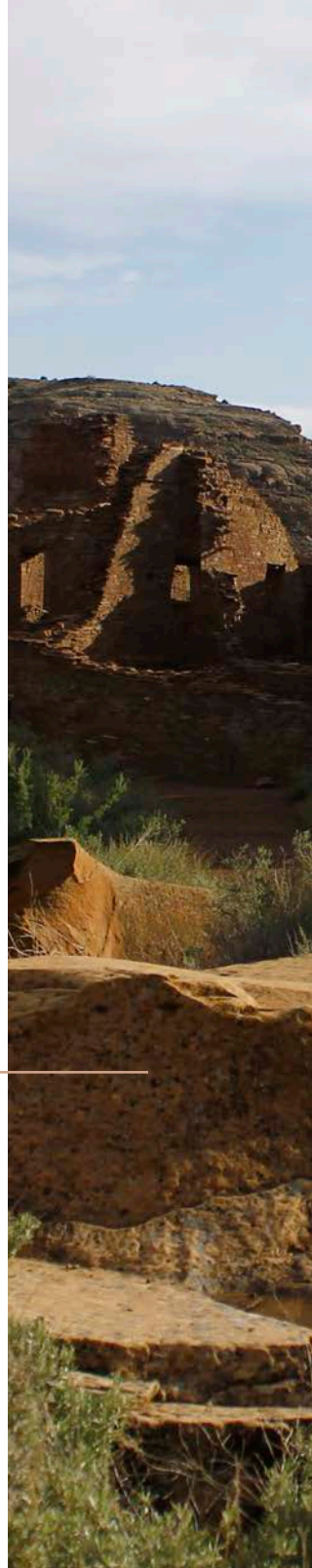
A speculative last ditch effort to keep the aging coal-fired power plant operating as an experimental carbon capture project ended in December. An outfit called Enchant Energy hoped to capitalize on millions in taxpayer subsidies to keep the plant burning coal and capture some of the emitted carbon dioxide. Enchant persuaded the City of Farmington to underwrite more than \$3 million in legal bills in pursuit of the effort, but the plan collapsed, meaning San Juan Generating Station's electricity output will be replaced by solar rather than an unproven Rube Goldberg carbon capture scheme.

## — *An update on* **GREATER CHACO** —

**In 2022, we saw significant progress towards safeguarding the cultural landscape and communities surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park from additional oil and gas development.**

The Department of Interior launched an environmental review and associated public comment early in the year to

evaluate the benefits and consequences of prohibiting new oil and gas leases within a 10-mile buffer surrounding Chaco. The Interior Department proposed a 20-year ban on new leasing that would affect about 338,000 acres on federal lands in the Chaco region. The proposed withdrawal would protect cultural landscapes and local communities from impacts caused by expanded oil and gas development.





A scenic view of a rocky stream flowing through a dense evergreen forest. The water is clear and turbulent as it flows over numerous large, dark rocks. The surrounding forest is lush with tall, dark green coniferous trees, and the sky is overcast. The text "OUTSTANDING WATERS" is overlaid in the center of the image.

# *OUTSTANDING* **WATERS**



## 25 STREAMS ACROSS SOUTHWEST COLORADO RECEIVE “OUTSTANDING WATERS” DESIGNATION

**We concluded a multi-year effort in 2022 with the successful designation of 25 streams across southwest Colorado as “Outstanding Waters.”**

The outcome required a robust partnership to collect water quality data, document natural resource values, and gather community support for protecting high-quality streams across the headwaters of the Animas and Dolores rivers.

The Colorado Water Quality Control Commission accepted our recommendations for 25 of 26 proposed stream segments. These include five tributaries in the upper Animas watershed – notably the two streams that provide Silverton’s water supply, Boulder Gulch and Bear Creek, along with well-known streams Lime Creek and

Cascade Creek. Additionally, the designations included Grasshopper Creek, a tributary to the Animas east of the Animas River Gorge.

And thanks to the stalwart effort of Trout Unlimited volunteers, a raft of Dolores River tributaries obtained designation including another Bear Creek, Coal Creek, Priest Creek, Stoner Creek, and several others. The streams collectively represent extremely high-quality water and aquatic habitat, add resilience to our water systems, and offer exceptional recreational opportunities from fishing to paddling.

### ***WHAT WAS PROTECTED UNDER OW?***

**520** MILES

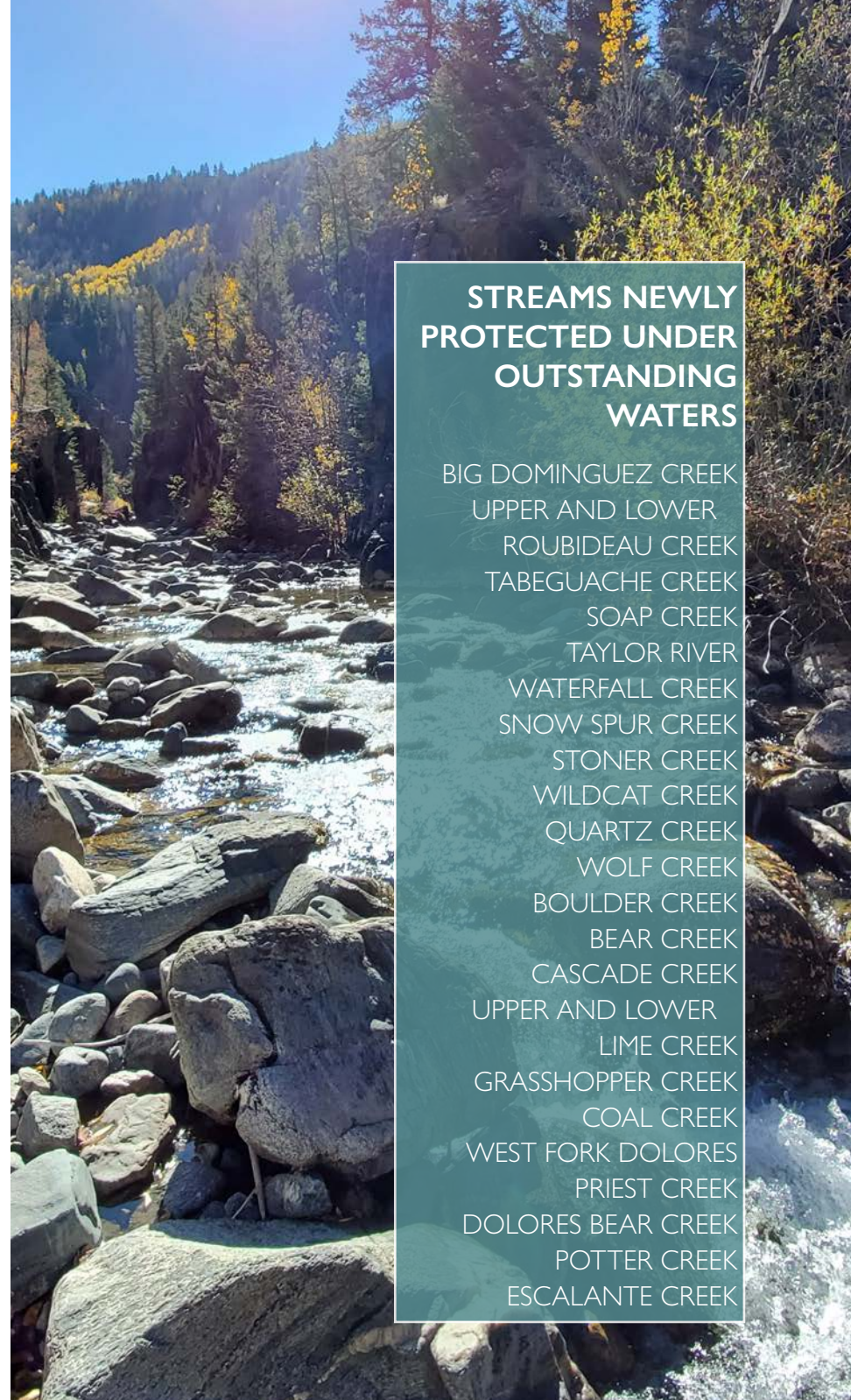
**25** STREAMS

**Southwest  
COLORADO**

***Animas, Dolores, San Juan, and Gunnison Basins***

### **STREAMS NEWLY PROTECTED UNDER OUTSTANDING WATERS**

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







# *WILD* LIFE

AARON HILL



## WORKING TO PROTECT COLORADO'S BELOVED STATE ANIMAL, THE BIGHORN SHEEP, IN SOUTHWEST COLORADO

**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.

### *An update on the* **WOLF REINTRODUCTION**

**Colorado voters in November 2020 approved restoration of wolves to the state, with a 2023 deadline.**

During 2022, Colorado Parks and Wildlife created a draft plan for the management of wolves once reintroduced. SJCA's Wildlife Program Manager, Gary Skiba, represents conservation interests on a stakeholder advisory group that provided significant input into the draft plan. The plan includes a fair program to compensate livestock producers who might suffer

depredation from wolves, and proposes programs to proactively head off conflicts between wolves and livestock. Notably, the plan declines to allow for a public hunting season of wolves.

Successful reintroduction of wolves will continue progress in southwest Colorado towards recovery of extirpated species. Notably, lynx have made a successful comeback after reintroduction into the San Juan Mountains 20 years ago, and river otters previous to the that in the 1980s.





# *New faces of* **SAN JUAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE**

MEET OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBERS BROUGHT ON THE TEAM IN 2022!



## **DREW ROZEAN**

Membership & Finance Manager

### *What's my role?*

Connecting with our members and supporters, orchestrating office operations, and diving into the data every chance I get.



## **JOHN RADER**

Public Lands Program Manager

### *What's my role?*

Helping to protect our public lands and the many uses they support for ourselves and future generations.



## **SARA BURCH**

ANIMAS RIVERKEEPER®

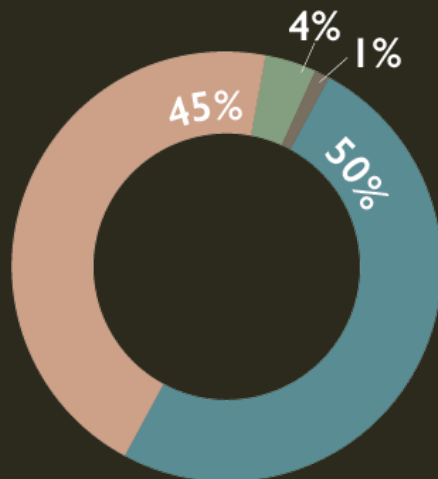
### *What's my role?*

Protecting, improving, and advocating for the health and integrity of our waters throughout the Animas Watershed.



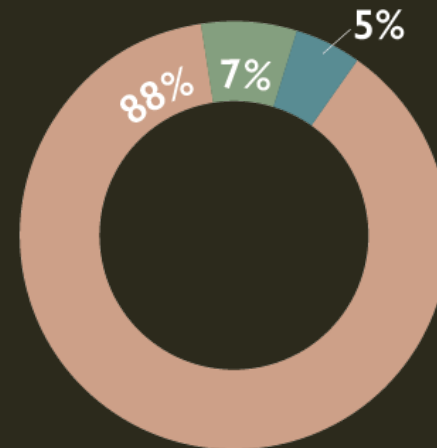
# 2022 FINANCIAL REPORT

## REVENUE



GRANTS	\$349,000
MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTIONS	\$324,000
EVENTS	\$27,000
OTHER	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$705,000</b>

## EXPENSES



PROGRAMS	\$545,000
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE	\$41,000
FUNDRAISING	\$31,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$617,000</b>

## BALANCE SHEET

(IN THOUSANDS)

### ASSETS

#### Current assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	533
Donations receivable	31
Other, prepaid health insurance	

#### Non-current assets:

Equipment and deposits	1
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**TOTAL ASSETS 568**

### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

#### Liabilities:

Accrued PTO	20
Accounts Payable	2

**TOTAL LIABILITIES 22**

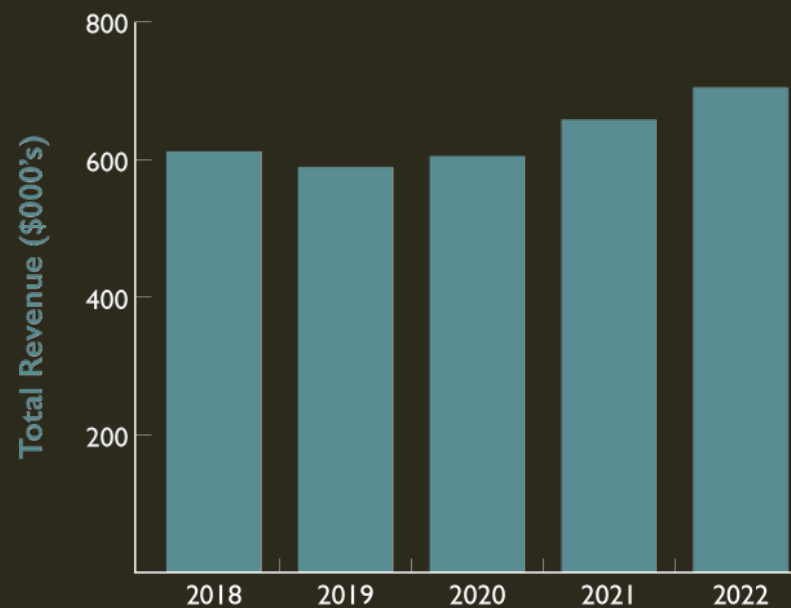
#### Equity:

Retained Earnings: Unrestricted	337
Retained Earnings: Temporarily Restricted	123
Net Revenue	86

**TOTAL EQUITY 546**

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 568**

## REVENUE GROWTH



\*Figures for fiscal year ending December 31, 2022, rounded to the nearest thousand. Audit results pending as of time of publication. Audited financials are available upon request.





JACK BRAUER



JOHN FIELDER



BOB WICK



ALEX PULLEN



## BOARD

**Michael Rendon**, *President*  
**Ryan Huggins**, *Vice President*  
**Steve Ellison**, *Treasurer*  
**Maya Kane**, *Secretary*  
**Buz Bricca**  
**Todd Gartner**  
**Rose Rushing**  
**Kobe Biederman**

## STAFF

**Mark Pearson**, *Executive Director*  
**Mike Eisenfeld**, *Climate & Energy Program*  
**Gary Skiba**, *Wildlife Program*  
**Emelie Frojen**, *Climate & Energy Program*  
**John Rader**, *Public Lands Program*  
**Sara Burch**, *Animas Riverkeeper*  
**Drew Rozean**, *Membership & Finance*  
**Rane Dickerson**, *Communication & Events*

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

**[sanjuancitizens.org](http://sanjuancitizens.org)**

*+ a special shoutout to Jack Brauer,  
who has generously donated his photography.*

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