



PHOTO - WEMINUCHE WILDERNESS BY JACK BRAUER

SAN JUAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



DEAR SUPPORTERS,

We were reminded in 2025 that conservation progress rarely occurs in a straight line. The Trump Administration attacked America's bedrock environmental laws with a vengeance, and systematically undertook dismantling safeguards around methane pollution, wetlands protection, public lands conservation, and many others.

The national conservation community rallied against these attacks, and San Juan Citizens Alliance participated as we could. One particularly egregious proposal was an effort by Utah's Sen. Mike Lee to sell off millions of acres of public land to the highest bidder. This continued an assault on the very premise of public lands, one that dates back to the 1940s and is resurrected with unfortunate regularity every generation. The public responded with outrage across the political spectrum, and SJCA was able to support that effort by successfully targeting Colorado's elected officials.

While the maelstrom of chaos reigned at the federal level, SJCA was fortunately able to double down on more favorable circumstances locally and with conservation-minded state level administrations in New Mexico and Colorado. One particular example was Colorado's adoption of strong new state-based rules to protect wetlands, fens and intermittent streams in the wake of the Supreme Court's evisceration of the Clean Water Act. SJCA joined a statewide coalition that provided strong, community-based support for the new rules at the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission, rules that could be particularly relevant to any proposed future development proposed for the still-speculative Village at Wolf Creek.

SJCA staff and volunteers engaged in a variety of community collaboratives focused on forest management and responsible recreation development. One outcome was a settlement with the Forest Service with regard to timber management that protects the largest remaining ponderosa pines across 25,000 acres of national forest near Dolores. As a result, forest managers can continue to implement thinning projects aimed at forest health and wildfire prevention, while retaining the largest trees most resilient to climate change and insect attacks.

In a similar vein, SJCA's staff and members in northwest New Mexico maintained momentum on energy transition. Building off the demolition of the San Juan Generating Station, we supported approvals for new, large solar energy projects that will bring hundreds of mega-watts of clean energy onto the grid in the next couple of years.

SJCA's experienced staff continued to keep a finger on the pulse of other long-running efforts. Plans for the massive proposed Village at Wolf Creek remained in hiatus for yet another year. Meanwhile, wolves continued to regain a foothold across Colorado, with the first dispersing wolves appearing in the San Juan Mountains.

San Juan Citizens Alliance maintained a strong financial position in 2025, thanks to the generous support of our members and donors, and strong partnerships with charitable foundations. As we continue to expand outreach across our region, we are growing our membership and influence.

In gratitude,

Mark Pearson

Executive Director, San Juan Citizens Alliance

PUBLIC LANDS UPDATES

SALTER PROJECT

SALTER PROJECT

In 2025, SJCA reached a successful settlement with the Forest Service in a suit filed to protect large, mature ponderosa pines on the Dolores District of the San Juan National Forest. That settlement protected the largest 10% of trees in the project area, sparing tens of thousands of large diameter pines. Now, SJCA is working with the Forest Service and local stakeholders to develop a program to remove unauthorized motorized and social trails on the same landscape. Our efforts focus on areas with critical wildlife habitat, riparian areas, wetlands, and state recognized biodiversity hotspots. We have ground truthed the approach through field trips with the Forest Service and identified a pilot project in severe elk winter range to close and remove unauthorized motorized routes this summer.

SJCA HEADQUARTERS
(Durango)

Silverton

Bayfield

Pagosa
Springs

Farmington

STATE LAND BOARD

Did you know Colorado's State Land Board (SLB) is the second largest landowner in Colorado, after the federal government? SLB manages 2.8M surface acres in our state, often scattered across the landscape in small parcels. Historically these lands have had a legal mandate to maximize revenue for Colorado's public schools. Thus, they are often leased for oil and gas development, mining, timber, and other extractive industries. In 1996, Colorado voters changed SLB's mandate to balance revenue generation with protecting the long term value of the lands, and created a "Stewardship Trust" program to protect "natural values" on a subset of state lands. SJCA worked with partners to pass legislation giving teeth to this change. That legislation passed, creating a statewide working group to investigate conservation and recreation opportunities on state lands. SJCA is continuing to help refine state trust land policy through our engagement with the SLB and working group, and identify specific parcels with conservation potential in our region.

RESPONSIBLE RECREATION

As recreation demand in our region grows, SJCA advocates for responsible, proactive recreation planning that protects natural and cultural resources. Working through the Four Rivers Collaborative in cooperation with the San Juan National Forest, SJCA participated in a draft planning effort for an upcoming recreation and conservation project in the Junction Creek watershed called Durango NW. The project would analyze, improve, and where appropriate, reroute and decommission dozens of miles of trail overlapping critical big game habitat, wetlands, and riparian zones. Stakeholders worked with the Forest Service to develop a pre-NEPA draft plan with input from trails groups, conservation advocates, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, hunters and anglers, and other local interests. The resulting draft plan would entail a net reduction of motorized and non-motorized trails in sensitive habitat, sustainable trail design and reroutes to reduce environmental impacts and improve user experiences, appropriate seasonal wildlife closures, restrictions on cross country mountain bike travel, and protections for Indigenous cultural resources. We look forward to securing the plan through the NEPA process and implementation.

LEGEND

U.S. FOREST SERVICE	BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
TRIBAL LAND	NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

0 3.75 7.5 15 22.5 30 MILES

Colorado steps forward to *protect wetlands*

IN DECEMBER, THE COLORADO WATER QUALITY CONTROL COMMISSION APPROVED REGULATION 87, ESTABLISHING NEW STATE-LEVEL PROTECTIONS FOR WETLANDS AND EPHEMERAL STREAMS.

This ruling came in direct response to the Supreme Court's 2023 decision in *Sackett v. EPA*, which stripped Clean Water Act protections from any wetland lacking a "continuous surface connection" to navigable waters, a ruling that left vast stretches of the American West newly vulnerable. SJCA engaged on multiple fronts by generating public comment, placing op-eds, driving media coverage, and amplifying the effort through social media, all while maintaining formal party status in the proceedings. The new rules could prove especially significant if development pressure returns to the wetlands surrounding the still-speculative Village at Wolf Creek.

250,000

**ACRES WETLANDS AND
STREAMS PROTECTED**

163

**SJCA MEMBERS SPOKE
UP IN SUPPORT**

26

**ORGANIZATIONS
WORKED ON THIS IN CO**

The Four Corners *energy landscape*

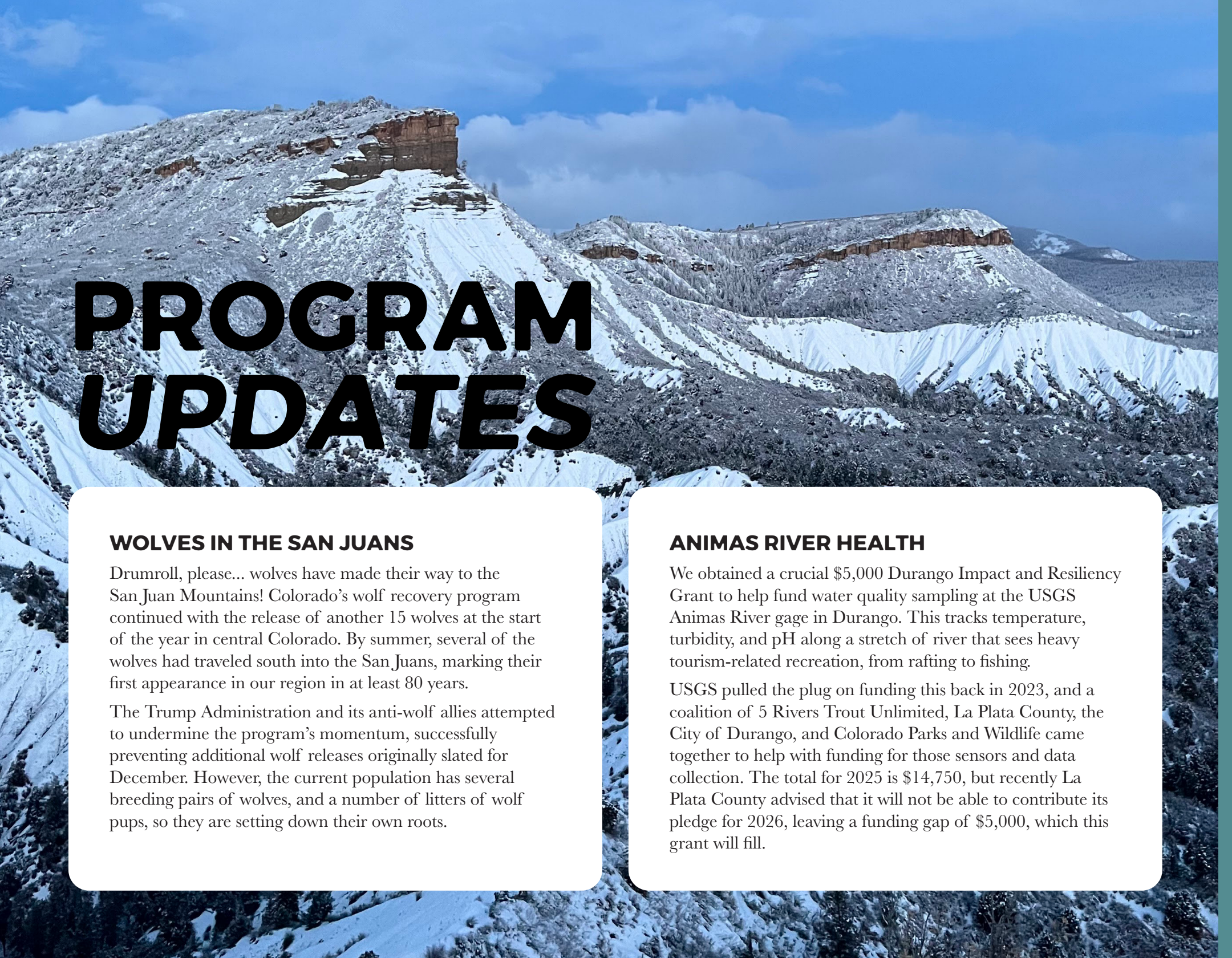
THE CONSEQUENTIAL AFTERMATH OF SAN JUAN GENERATING STATION

The closure of San Juan Generating Station marked a major milestone in Northern New Mexico, ushering in a new era of energy in the Four Corners. Since the closure, we've been closely monitoring the aftermath. This year, the New Mexico Environment Department oversaw an environmental assessment of Public Service Company of New Mexico's (PNM) demolition and reclamation efforts at San Juan Generating Station and adjacent San Juan Mine. The findings have revealed some sobering statistics. There appears to be significant contamination at the site, including boron, arsenic, mercury, selenium, sulfate and chloride. There is also apparently a groundwater plume beneath the San Juan River, possibly associated with the 50-year legacy of the powerplant and coal mine. New Mexico Environmental Department is now requiring PNM to prepare an abatement plan to address the contamination.

NEW SOLAR UNDERWAY

The energy transition is underway in Northern New Mexico, as evidenced by the final approvals for the Foxtail Flats Solar Project, otherwise known as San Juan Solar Phase 2. Both the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission and Bureau of Indian Affairs finalized their approval for the project, which sits on Ute Mountain Ute lands immediately adjacent to the San Juan Solar project completed last year.

Foxtail Flats will provide 180 MW of solar photovoltaic with 80 MW battery storage. For context, that's enough to power an estimated 30,000 homes. Construction is expected to start in spring of 2026.



PROGRAM UPDATES

WOLVES IN THE SAN JUANS

Drumroll, please... wolves have made their way to the San Juan Mountains! Colorado's wolf recovery program continued with the release of another 15 wolves at the start of the year in central Colorado. By summer, several of the wolves had traveled south into the San Juans, marking their first appearance in our region in at least 80 years.

The Trump Administration and its anti-wolf allies attempted to undermine the program's momentum, successfully preventing additional wolf releases originally slated for December. However, the current population has several breeding pairs of wolves, and a number of litters of wolf pups, so they are setting down their own roots.

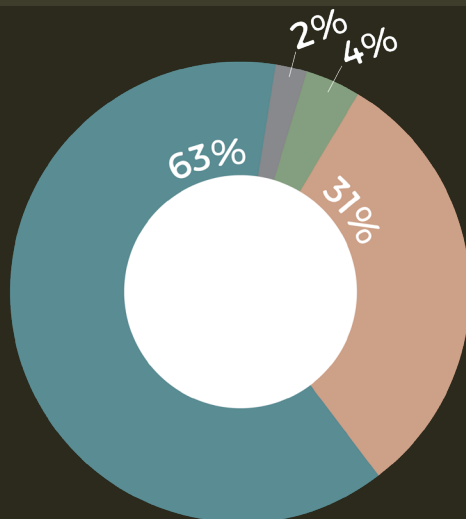
ANIMAS RIVER HEALTH

We obtained a crucial \$5,000 Durango Impact and Resiliency Grant to help fund water quality sampling at the USGS Animas River gage in Durango. This tracks temperature, turbidity, and pH along a stretch of river that sees heavy tourism-related recreation, from rafting to fishing.

USGS pulled the plug on funding this back in 2023, and a coalition of 5 Rivers Trout Unlimited, La Plata County, the City of Durango, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife came together to help with funding for those sensors and data collection. The total for 2025 is \$14,750, but recently La Plata County advised that it will not be able to contribute its pledge for 2026, leaving a funding gap of \$5,000, which this grant will fill.

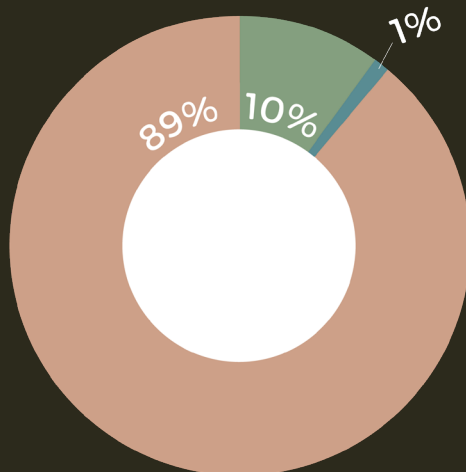
2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUE



GRANTS	\$729,735
MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTIONS	\$356,209
EVENTS	\$46,392
OTHER	\$34,229
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,166,595

EXPENSES



PROGRAMS	\$940,791
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE	\$102,818
FUNDRAISING	\$14,460
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$1,058,069

BALANCE SHEET (IN THOUSANDS)

ASSETS

Current assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	1,063
Donations receivable	20

Non-current assets:

Equipment and deposits	1
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TOTAL ASSETS	1,084
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LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities:

Accounts Payable	2
Payroll Liabilities:	9
Accrued PTO	24
Other Liabilities	

TOTAL LIABILITIES	35
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Equity:

Retained Earnings: Unrestricted	493
Retained Earnings: Temporarily Restricted	448
Net Revenue	108

TOTAL EQUITY	1,049
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TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	1,084
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BOARD

Ryan Huggins, *President*
Chris Wilkins, *Vice President*
Lindsey Ratcliff, *Secretary*
Leah Gillaspy, *Treasurer*
Michael Rendon
Sandy Kobrock
Kobe Biederman
Ashley Carruth
Gretchen Fitzgerald

STAFF

Mark Pearson, *Executive Director*
Mike Eisenfeld, *Climate & Energy Program*
Gary Skiba, *Wildlife Program*
Emelie Frojen, *Climate & Energy Program*
John Rader, *Public Lands Program*
Brian Rogers, *Membership & Finance*
Rane Dickerson, *Communication & Events*

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

sanjuancitizens.org

*+ a special shoutout to Mason Cummings, Jack Brauer, and Pete Kemery,
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All other photos were shot by staff, donated, or from Pexels or Unsplash.