



AMIGOS BRAVOS
FRIENDS OF THE
WILD RIVERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

*Restoring Waters,
Sustaining Communities*

LETTER FROM BOARD PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of the Wild Rivers,

As we write, Amigos Bravos is celebrating its 20th Anniversary and preparing to launch an exciting Four-Year Strategic Plan. What better time to reflect on last year's victories and accomplishments, as well as on the challenges and triumphs of Amigos Bravos' first two decades of dedication to the protection of the Rio Grande watershed and New Mexico's rivers? Amigos Bravos has grown into an organization with influence, credibility, and staying-power as a result of a concerted effort, every step of the way, to adhere to lessons learned from relating directly with the river and the animal and human communities that have been sustained by it for millennia. We value ecological diversity as well as the cultural, spiritual, and intergenerational diversity of ideas and dreams. Embracing those values, we believe the greatest accomplishment in our 20 years has been the building of an organization that aims to be, and often is, both environmentally effective and culturally competent. It is only in healing what divides our communities that we have a chance at healing our rivers, our world. Healing within our communities means respectful listening and empathy among allies in the effort to ensure that all voices sincerely committed to environmental and social justice are heard and taken seriously. It also means a profoundly rooted commitment to place.

Over the past year we have brought to fruition many of the goals laid out in our 2003 Strategic Plan, including the most ambitious one of holding Los Alamos National Laboratory accountable for 65 years of toxic dumping on the Parajito Plateau, ancestral home of the indigenous peoples of a number of northern New Mexico Pueblo nations. In that work, Amigos Bravos not only did the research, assemblage of data, and site visits necessary to substantiate our claims, we helped to gather and sustain a coalition of impacted communities and organizations representing a range of concerns and values, including traditional Hispanic farmers, members of religious communities in Albuquerque, tribal and feminist environmentalists from rural northern New Mexico, river recreationalists, and urban environmental justice activists. Tremendous creative energy springs forth when diverse interests make common cause.

In this same vein, during 2007, Amigos Bravos became part of the Rural People Rural Policy Network, a national initiative to develop policies designed to sustain rural communities. The network is composed of organizations that provide healthcare and legal services, rural economic development, and child advocacy research and support. As the sole environmental representative in the southwest portion of the network, our aim is to ally with service providers in creating policies that address the critical link between environmental impacts, health issues, child development, drug abuse, and economic development. Reflective of this intention was our preparation in 2007 to launch a water quality monitoring project in the economically disadvantaged South Valley of

Albuquerque. After years of concerted effort, Amigos Bravos also experienced a major victory this past year when the New Mexico Court of Appeals ruled that the state could set water quality standards more stringent than federal standards drastically weakened under the Bush Administration. Amigos Bravos and its allies succeeded despite a well-financed attempt by the mining, construction, dairy, and oil & gas industries to defeat the ruling.

Last year, Amigos Bravos came very close to accomplishing a goal seven years in the making to reintroduce river otters in New Mexico. The playful creature had not been seen in these parts since the 1950's. We were thwarted by last minute complications, but we expect the otters to be joining us unimpeded in the fall of 2008. In a different but related project, we continue to effect river restoration on the upper Red River by working to protect water quality and streambed erosion from off-road vehicle use, which is one of the largest problems facing national forests at this time. Our thanks to the many volunteers who spend their summer weekends producing the hands-on labor necessary to make this effort successful. Finally, we should mention one of the biggest victories Amigos Bravos has experienced in the last 20 years: the protection of the 100,000 acre Valle Vidal from oil, gas, and minerals development by a Congressional Act signed into law at the dawn of 2007.

As the year came to a close, forty members of the Amigos Bravos Advisory Council, board of directors, and staff gathered for three days at Ghost Ranch to develop a strategic plan that will guide our work for the next four years. The last time we gathered we chose to take on LANL. The time before, our challenge was to develop allies between land-based communities and the traditional environmental movement. This time, we came away alarmed by the disparity of environmental impacts between affluent and low income and/or people-of-color communities, as well as the growing pressure to develop rural resources, specifically water, for municipal and industrial uses. The Council recognized that existing laws and regulations could not cover all current environmental ills, and that every New Mexican not only deserves the right to a clean and healthy environment, but also deserves to have that right protected under the state's constitution.

With these thoughts in mind, we will be launching the Strategic Plan on May 17, 2008 at our 20th Anniversary Celebration in Taos. We hope you'll join us there to celebrate how far we've come, and to rise with us to meet the challenges of the future.

For the Rio,



Mary Humphrey, President



Brian Shields, Executive Director

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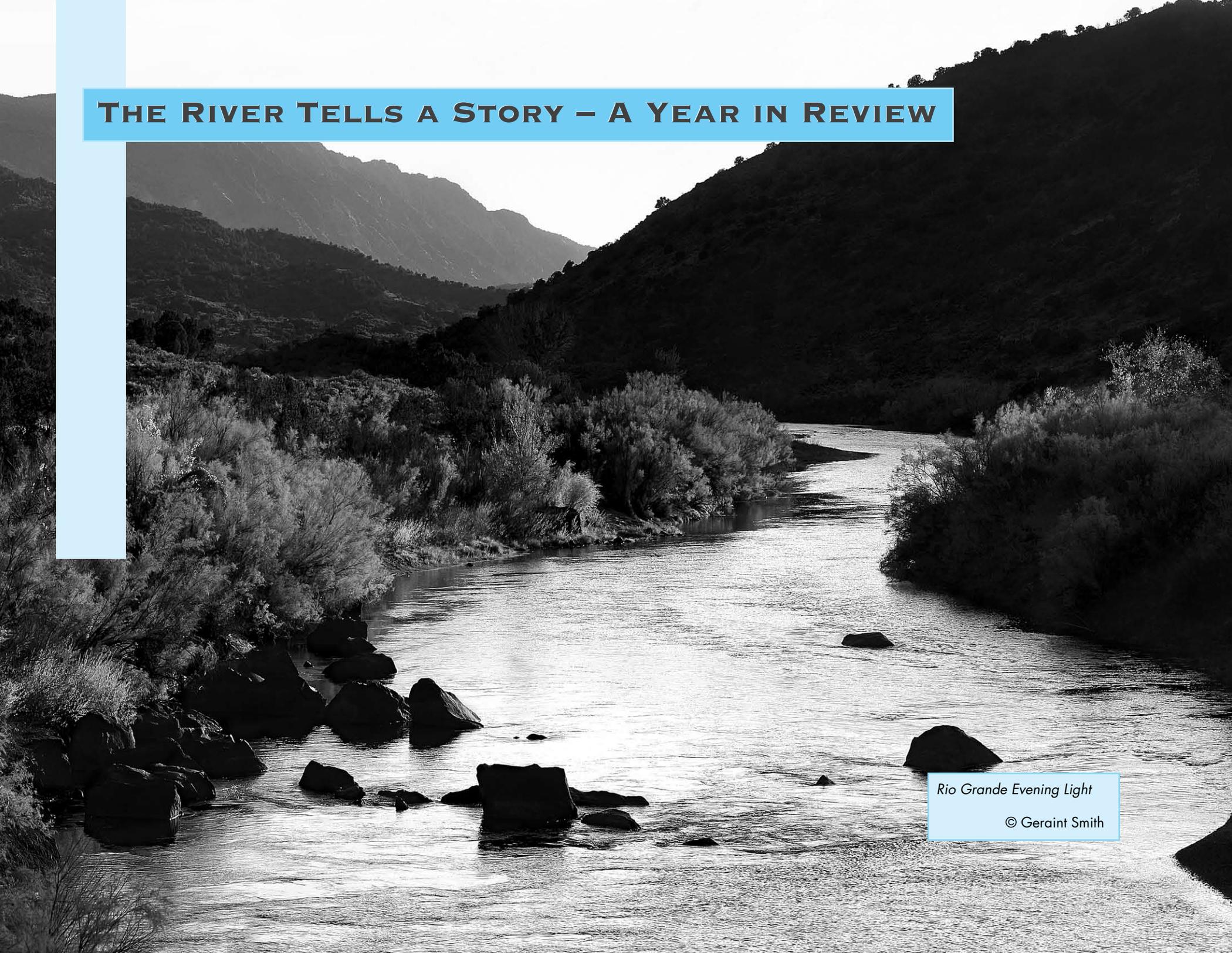
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Cover Photo:
Rio Grande before Sleeping Beauty
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THE RIVER TELLS A STORY – A YEAR IN REVIEW



Rio Grande Evening Light

© Geraint Smith

*The thing is like a river, from source to sea-mouth
One flowing life.*

- Robinson Jeffers, "Monument"

Amigos Bravos experienced another year of significant achievement in 2007 (Fiscal Year 07: October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007):

- In December, 2006, the Valle Vidal Protection Act, authored by Representative Tom Udall, was signed into law. The Act permanently withdraws 101,794 acres of the Valle Vidal – "New Mexico's Yellowstone" - from extractive industry. This success represents the single largest victory in our history and is a testament to the persistent and persuasive efforts of communities, individuals, businesses, and conservationists who came together across political and social "divides" to form the Coalition for the Valle Vidal (co-founded and coordinated by Amigos Bravos).
- In June, 2007, the NM State Court of Appeals upheld our contention – against an industry coalition suit – that the state has an obligation to protect all of New Mexico's waters to the fullest extent possible, regardless of lower federal standards. Amigos Bravos brought together community groups to intervene in the case on behalf of the Water Quality Control Commission and its decision to define "waters of the state" (waters that could have state water quality standards applied to them) broadly. The Appeals Court's decision made it clear that the Court viewed the protection of New Mexico's fragile waters to be of paramount importance in our arid climate.

The Clean Water Act citizen complaint against Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) continued to move forward in 2007. Within the community organizing process, much of the year was devoted to consultations with surrounding Pueblo nations. Work by Amigos Bravos and our partners in Communities for Clean Water prompted more aggressive action by the NM Environment Department to hold LANL accountable for its permit requirements and the terms of the 2005 Consent Order. We were successful in advocating for strong state 401 certification conditions of

LANL's wastewater permit and have intervened on behalf of NMED to defend these conditions during the LANL instigated appeal. Amigos Bravos continued to collect data in preparation for the litigation and EPA's long-delayed release of LANL's Individual Stormwater Permit, which is meant to control the flow of contaminants into streams and canyons below the lab.

The Molycorp molybdenum mine in Questa, NM is an area of critical concern in which the regulatory process (USEPA/ Superfund, NMED and Mining & Minerals Department) is moving at a frustratingly slow pace. During the process, Molycorp was purchased from Unocal by Chevron, and in 2007 changed its name to Chevron Mining Inc. (CMI). CMI began active participation in discussions over remediation, but is pressuring the State to allow it to reclaim areas of the mine before reclamation standards are established that are protective of ground and surface water. Amigos Bravos continues to insist that Chevron Mining install water treatment and recycling facilities at the mine to protect the Red River and the drinking water of the Village of Questa.

As a member of the Public Welfare Committee of the Taos Regional Water Plan, Amigos Bravos helped develop a strong and innovative Public Welfare criteria and implementation strategy, which attracted the attention of other regional water planning districts hoping to improve the implementation of their public welfare statements. Thoughtful public welfare criteria within the various Regional Water Plans can help provide a mechanism to prevent market-based water diversions and transfers from destroying local agriculture and rural communities. However, before it can be put into action, the Public Welfare statement must receive approval from a majority of the region's municipal governments and water and sanitation districts. After that, the Interstate Stream Commission decides on acceptance.

In June, 2007, the Water Quality Control Commission approved an Outstanding National Resource Waters rule that is much stronger than federal regulations and EPA policies. Because we are recognized as the ONRW experts in New Mexico, NMED came to us for ideas on specific language when they were considering changes to the rule. With the help of Western Environmental Law Center, we presented technical testimony at the ONRW hearing in support of strong protections. Our recommendations are reflected in the final rule.

Amigos Bravos carried out three on-the-ground volunteer work projects aimed at reducing sediment loads in the Upper Red River watershed, thus completing the final year of a Clean Water Act 319 grant administered by the State. These projects included repair and expansion of cattle enclosures, installation of fencing and gates to protect sensitive areas, development and dissemination of educational materials about the impacts of unauthorized Off Highway Vehicle use, and payment for a seasonal full-time OHV enforcement officer, working for the Carson National Forest.

2007 was significant for several new partnering opportunities that further solidify our commitment to environmental justice principles and connect our work on rivers and water with work being done by public health and rural community-based organizations:

- We continued to expand our collaboration with environmental and social justice groups in Albuquerque's South Valley by working to prevent polluting industry from locating in the middle of residential areas, building capacity for citizen action on water issues, and aiming to ensure that development and zoning decisions protect and preserve the water and semi-rural character of the area;
- Amigos Bravos began a three-year project to conduct youth-led sampling and monitoring of the *acequia* system in the South Valley, as well as to carry out community-led *acequia* cleanups and restoration activities;
- Amigos Bravos became a member of the National Rural Assembly and the Southwest Network within the Kellogg Foundation's national Rural People, Rural Policy program. Our goal is to ensure that policies developed to promote sustainable rural communities address environmental justice issues and the critical role that water quality plays in rural health and economies.

After our very gratifying Valle Vidal victory, Amigos Bravos decided to take on another issue that – like the Valle Vidal, MolyCorp, and LANL campaigns – will have a long timeframe and place tremendous demands on our time and resources. We began discussions with local advisors regarding the feasibility of advocating for a State Constitutional amendment for a "Clean and Healthy Environment." This amendment will shift the burden of proof onto state agencies and the regulated community to show that proposed actions will not harm human health or the environment, and it will also provide venues for direct citizen action in the event of bad regulation and law.

2007 was also the year that climate change brought widespread – even global – attention to the Southwest. The 2007 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) included for the first time a series of regional models. One of these predicted that "within a few years or decades" the Southwest, including New Mexico, will undergo a shift to a new climate regime in which drought will become the "base climate." The IPCC report and the regional model brought new urgency to earlier reports from the Western Governor's Association, the Governor's panel on climate change, the State Engineer's Office, and the USGS. Amigos Bravos staff, Board, and partners are working to find ways to incorporate this concern into the rest of our work in order to ensure that responses at the local, state, regional, and national level actually work to preserve our waters and the communities that depend on them.

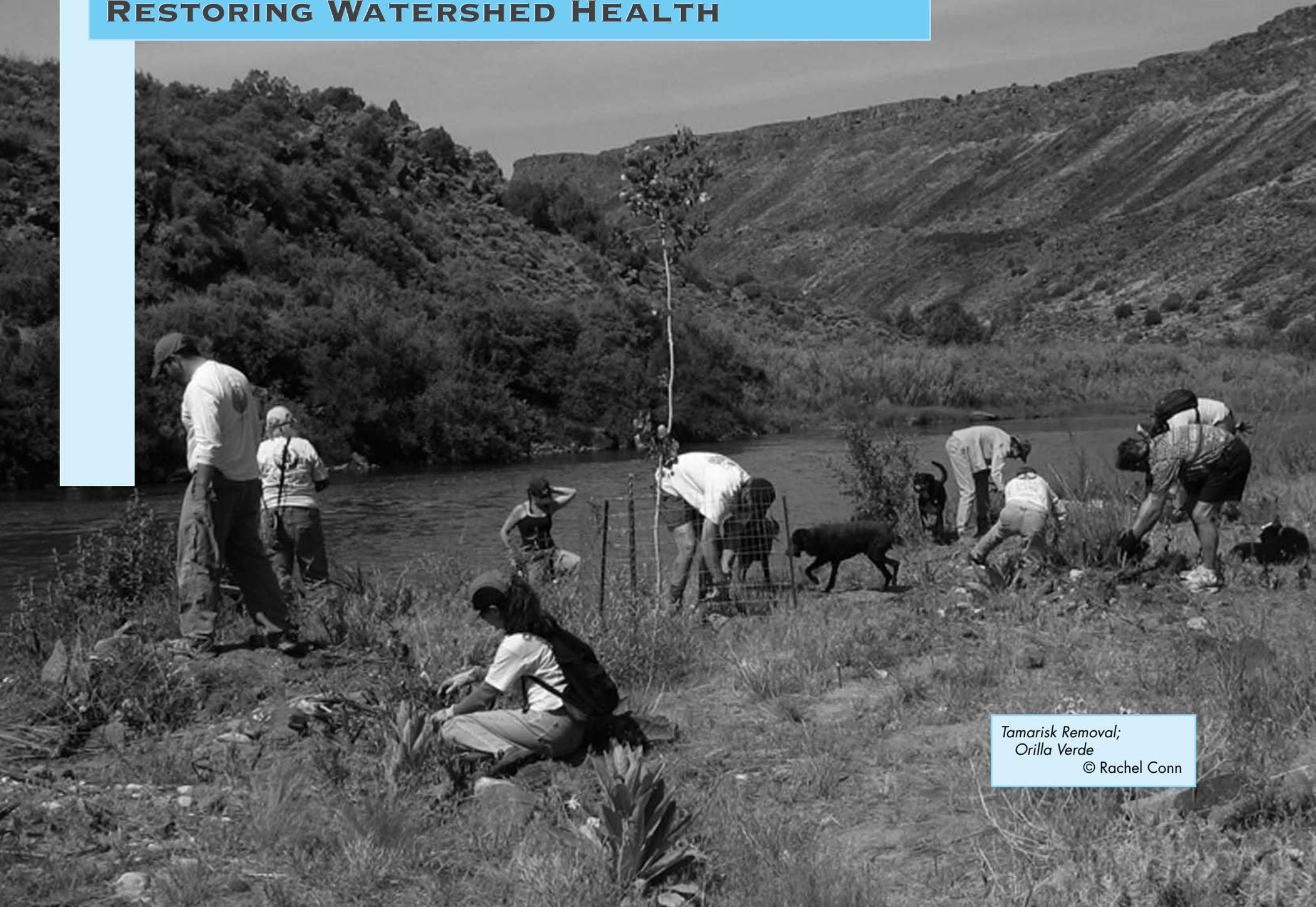
Finally, with the close of 2007, we entered our 20th year! In 1988, a small group of community volunteers came together to press for full use of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in order to protect New Mexico's rivers. From that quiet beginning, we have become a nationally recognized organization, respected as a model for bringing environmental justice concerns into the conservation agenda, for partnering with traditional land-based communities, for our innovative strategies, and for our tenacious and tireless commitment to ensuring that polluters are held accountable, that laws and regulations are adequate to the task, and that communities have the tools and resources necessary to protect their local rivers and streams.

Water needs many biographers, because in truth it is not a personality but more like a culture to itself, with laws, arts, and a unique history and geography.

- Philip Ball, H₂O, "A Biography of Water;"
quoted in Basia Irland, "Water Library"



RESTORING WATERSHED HEALTH



*Tamarisk Removal;
Orilla Verde*
© Rachel Conn

*... I am a dry man whose thirst is praise
of clouds, and whose mind is something of a cup.
My sweetness is to wake in the night
after days of dry heat, hearing the rain.*
- Wendell Berry, "Water"

Amigos Bravos' first strategic goal is to restore New Mexico's impaired rivers and streams to drinkable quality where possible, to contact quality everywhere else, and to protect and restore key native species indicative of the health of our watersheds.

In New Mexico's arid environment, all surface waters are important. They provide drinking water for many communities, irrigation for agricultural activities, habitat for local and migratory wildlife, and the medium of choice for a recreation/tourism economy that is a major part of the state's economy. Recent Supreme Court decisions and Bush administration efforts to weaken enforcement of the Clean Water Act (CWA) mean that as much as 94% of New Mexico's stream miles are now at risk of unregulated pollution. Water in closed basins, which make up 20% of New Mexico's land area, are also without protection. This weakening of federal water protection threatens the health of the state's surface waters, jeopardizes the public health and livelihoods of land-based communities across the state, and interferes with cultural practices of Native peoples.

In May 2007, the New Mexico Appeals Court ruled in favor of our intervention to support the Water Quality Control Commission's (WQCC) 2005 definition of "waters of the state", which expanded the ability of the state to apply its water quality standards to nearly all surface waters in the state. In doing so, the Court rejected the claims of an industry coalition and supported our major contentions: that industry's approach could significantly limit the scope of water protection and that in an arid state like New Mexico, the state has an obligation to adopt a broad definition of surface waters and enforce the most stringent standards possible. The Court went so far as to say:

the WQCC would have acted in derogation of its responsibilities under the WQA had it failed to adopt a definition of surface waters of the State that allows it to protect surface waters of the State to the full extent contemplated by the legislature.

Our victory in May 2007 is significant, but a hobbled federal Clean Water Act (CWA) – severely limited by recent Supreme Court decisions and subsequent Army Corps and EPA guidance on how they interpret those decisions – still makes protection of New Mexico's surface waters difficult. (Under the CWA, states have the right to establish pollution discharge control programs. New Mexico chooses to delegate its authority over surface water discharges to federal agencies, thus when federal protections are lost, New Mexico's waters suffer more than other states.) The Corps has already ruled in at least twelve cases in New Mexico that they have no jurisdiction under the current guidance and there is evidence that many in the regulated community believe that permit applications are no longer required. It is impossible to intervene in a permit process that is never requested or to monitor pollution at a site that is never disclosed in a public process.

To deal with this situation, Amigos Bravos has been working closely with the state to find ways to strengthen the state's ability and willingness to act in the absence of effective federal jurisdiction. We worked with the WQCC to draft legislation allowing New Mexico to write NPDES

permits (state “delegation” under the Clean Water Act), but major industries in New Mexico (oil & gas, mining, dairy, construction) are pressuring the NM Environment Department to withhold it. We are also working with the state to develop “safety-net” regulations that would allow the state to intervene to protect surface waters when federal agencies declare they do not have jurisdiction.

Equally significant, Amigos Bravos is working at the local level to increase protection of rivers and streams through innovative use of Outstanding National Resource Water (ONRW) protections, the highest level of protection under the CWA. We began the use of ONRWs in New Mexico in 2004 with the successful nomination of the Río Santa Barbara. In June of 2007, the Water Quality Control Commission approved a revised ONRW Rule that is much stronger than federal regulations and EPA policies. This is a good example of “initiation, follow-through, completion” advocacy, because Amigos Bravos has been involved in all nominations, regulations, changes to the regulations, etc. associated with ONRWs.

Nationally, Amigos Bravos serves on the Clean Water Network Executive Committee working with other state and national organizations to support water quality protections of national significance including the Clean Water Restoration Act (HR2421, S1870), which aims to undo the damage caused by recent Supreme Court decisions and administration interpretations. Amigos Bravos works to educate the public, the media, and influential interests including farmers, sportsmen, faith-based organizations, and green developers, as well as the state’s Congressional delegation about the importance of this legislation and the impact of recent federal changes to the CWA.

Amigos Bravos and its partners from downstream agricultural communities continued work on a legal case against the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (WUA) and the Office of the State Engineer regarding the city’s plan to divert water from the Río Grande as part of the San Juan-Chama “Drinking Water Project”. We are concerned that 16 miles of the Río Grande and the *Bosque* will be dewatered, that downstream communities will be negatively impacted, and that the WUA has not made a serious effort to conserve water before it takes from the river. The case is now fully briefed before the State Appeals Court and waiting for a decision.

Albuquerque’s “Drinking Water Project” would divert a combined total of 94,000afy (an acre foot is 326,000 gallons) of “native” Río Grande water and “San Juan-Chama” water, shipped under the Continental Divide from tributaries of the San Juan River. Given the unreliable supply of SJ-C water due to drought and global climate change, this is a short-sighted and unsustainable “solution” to the city’s critical water supply problem. It threatens the viability of 16 miles of the Río Grande and the adjacent *Bosque* habitat through the heart of the city, robs the regional aquifer of critical recharge capacity, and threatens the livelihood of downstream farmers and residents who depend on clean water for family farm irrigation and shallow domestic well supplies. The project also poses questions regarding potential health risks to city residents, since the proposed treatment facility will not clear the water of possible contaminants, including pharmaceuticals, bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens.

Amigos Bravos has been at the forefront of a campaign to inform the public, media, and water planners and advocates about the serious negative consequences for the river and downstream communities likely to result from the city of Albuquerque’s plans to begin diverting river water for drinking. We are also pressing the State Engineer to force Albuquerque to meet a conservation goal of 150 gallons of water per person per day; the current goal is 175gpd. By contrast, Santa Fe uses 108gpd.

Our legal team – which largely works *pro bono* – regards this case as one of the most important water law cases in the history of the state. We are carrying out community organizing efforts in the city’s semi-rural South Valley – the area most directly impacted by the plan – as well as disseminating information through various media outlets, encouraging several local citizen groups working on the issue, and attending a wide range of meetings to provide accurate information on Albuquerque’s diversion project. We are also bringing awareness with regard to the widespread disconnect between land use and water planning, and to possibilities for more sustainable, equitable, and environmentally sound solutions.

Amigos Bravos – and environmental justice organizations in general everywhere – are constantly engaged in new struggles to defend or challenge public officials and to challenge industry over pollution of our rivers and waters. In order to strengthen our efforts, Amigos Bravos has begun exploring the viability of amending the

State Constitution to declare a right to a “Clean and Healthy Environment.” Several other states have passed similar constitutional amendments. Our vision is for an amendment that would place a positive obligation on all state agencies to ensure that their actions do no harm to the state’s waters. Passage of the amendment will be an enormous undertaking, lasting several years. We envision a campaign starting at the grassroots among small rural communities most at risk for public health and environmental damage from lax regulations. Building from their support, we will pull together a strong and committed coalition of local officials, businesses, and environmental, public health, and environmental justice groups.

Amigos Bravos continues to analyze local, state, and federal policies and regulations that impact water quality. In 2007, one important regulation was the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) issuance of a general permit for stormwater discharges from small municipalities in New Mexico. Amigos Bravos submitted multiple comments and spoke at several public meetings on the draft MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) Stormwater general permit. Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater runoff from naturally soaking into the ground. Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly into a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the water bodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water. The final permit was issued late in 2006 and includes several substantial improvements, most of which we addressed in our comments. They are:

- Better protections for endangered species;
- Stronger public participation requirements, including: public notice requirements of individual notices of intent (NOIs) to obtain coverage under the general permit, and public comment opportunities on NOIs, annual reports, and changes to Stormwater Management Plans;
- Better protections and restrictions for discharges into waters that are already polluted.

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) that are used in irresponsible ways on public lands degrade plant and wildlife habitat and diversity, erode soils, cause water and air pollution, damage cultural resources, and interfere with other forms of recreation. The impact to wildlife is most severe, and includes increased mortality, behavioral changes, and reduced diversity. As part of a Clean Water Act 319 grant, Amigos Bravos funded a Forest Service staff position to ensure that the Upper Red River is routinely patrolled, that fences and gates are secure, and that OHVs abide by agreements designed to protect the area. Amigos Bravos collaborated with national, state, and local organizations to develop public and media outreach materials regarding OHV use, proposed rule changes to OHV access to public lands, and created and set up informational signage aimed at OHV users. We also carried out three volunteer restoration projects in the Upper Bitter Creek drainage that repaired and expanded cattle enclosures to stabilize stream banks, reduce erosion, and improve habitat for local fish populations. Volunteers also set up gates to regulate OHV access to restricted areas.

As part of National River Cleanup Week, in June 2007, local citizens banded together to tackle pollution in Taos area *rios*. Amigos Bravos coordinated with Centinel Bank Taos, The Rio Pueblo de Taos Watershed Group, The Bureau of Land Management, and Water Sentinels-Rios de Taos to conduct three stream cleanups.

The long-awaited reintroduction of River Otters to New Mexico – at a site in the Upper Rio Grande – came a step closer with identification of an otter source and transportation. However, it took much longer to conclude these logistics than expected and we decided against reintroduction late in the season when weather might have become too harsh. Fall of 2008 is now the likely reintroduction date.

*Once we were saints, not ghosts, on this river.
We leapt one thousand times over the yelping coyote’s
back until he ran for cover.*

...
We await our resurrection in the wild eyes of the Holy One.
- Victoria Edwards Tester, “Otter”

HOLDING POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE

Bosque Dawn

© Geraint Smith

HOLDING POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE

Water is always a metaphor of social, economic, and political relationships – a barometer of the extent to which identity, power and resources are shared.

- Veronica Strang, "The Meaning of Water;"

quoted in Sylvia Rodríguez, Acequia: "Water Sharing, Sanctity, and Place"

Amigos Bravos' second strategic goal is to hold polluters accountable. We demand that corporations honor their commitments and seek to conduct their activities under the highest environmental and public health standards.

Polluters inevitably claim that they are in compliance and that "over-regulation" threatens jobs and the state's economic vitality. This short-sighted perspective is often sufficient to kill effective regulation. The task of pressuring regulators then falls to citizens' groups and the non-profit community. Amigos Bravos believes that if corporations want to be the good citizens they claim to be, they should ensure that their activities do not harm the environment or threaten public health. Failing that, they must be held accountable for their pollution and made to clean it up or mitigate its impact to the greatest extent possible.

Another way to protect the environment is to prevent activities guaranteed to cause harm from gaining foothold. When the Valle Vidal Protection Act was signed into law in December 2006, it was an extremely satisfying end to a long and difficult battle. Amigos Bravos, both individually and through the Coalition for the Valle Vidal (as co-founder, fiscal agent, administrative support, and Chair of the Executive Committee) managed to hold off Bush administration efforts to fast-track a Forest Service plan to open the Valle Vidal to coal-bed methane development. The Coalition came to number more than 400 communities groups, municipalities, and businesses who realized that the Forest Service plan would destroy the soul of the Valle Vidal, harm local drinking water sources, and weaken the local tourism-based economy ... all for two days of the nation's energy supply over the twenty-year life of the project. We

are now working to ensure that the Forest Service's amendment to the Carson National Forest Management Plan incorporating the Valle Vidal adheres to both the legislation and clearly expressed community values for the area.

In 1946, scientists at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) wrote a memo to LANL management expressing concern over the practice of dumping toxic radionuclides, chemicals, and metals into the canyons that run off the Pajarito Mesa site of the lab. They were worried that these toxic contaminants would reach the Río Grande and the regional aquifer. LANL management failed to act on their own scientists' concerns. Now, the regional aquifer – drinking water source for Los Alamos and Santa Fe – contains contamination from perchlorates and chromium. Surrounding Pueblo nations have expressed concern about health problems and impacts to cultural practices. The state has issued the first-ever "do not eat" fish advisory for the Río Grande through White Rock Canyon and at Abiquiu and Cochiti reservoirs. PCBs have been detected in canyons at levels 38,000 times the New Mexico standard considered protective of human health.

In the face of denials and delays from LANL management, Amigos Bravos helped form Communities for Clean Water and brought together a group of community activists and Pueblo nation and faith-based groups who in 2006 filed a 60 day notice of intent to sue under the Clean Water Act

(CWA) against LANL. After extensive consultation and dialogue with all Pueblo nations in New Mexico, the CWA Notice of Intent was refiled against LANL's new management, headed by Bechtel Corporation, in March 2007. Filing of the actual CWA litigation was put on hold while we waited – and waited – for a long-delayed but critical Individual Stormwater Permit to be issued by EPA, since a large part of the litigation also deals with stormwater runoff.

The CWA legal process and the work of Communities for Clean Water have gained the attention of the City of Santa Fe, concerned about the water in the Buckman Well Field, as well as the future use of Río Grande water for drinking. NMED has acknowledged that because of citizen activism they have been more aggressive in confronting LANL's failures to meet cleanup obligations under the Consent Order with the State. The CWA legal process has also increased media attention on LANL's toxic discharges and the lab's failure to meet its obligations under the Consent Order and the CWA. In June 2007, we and our partners received requests from the Department of Energy's Department of Justice attorney, LANL staff attorneys, and EPA staff to meet with us to discuss their efforts to control toxic discharges at LANL.

In fall of 2006, Amigos Bravos, Natural Resources Defense Council, Oil and Gas Accountability Project, and Powder River Basin Resource Council appealed a final rule – issued by the EPA – before the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The EPA rule exempts oil and gas activities from critical CWA requirements and results in unregulated discharges of contaminants.

Mining is another source of persistent pollution in which corporate management routinely seeks to evade responsibility. Amigos Bravos joined with the Idaho Conservation League, Sierra Club, Great Basin Resource Watch, and the public interest law firm EarthJustice to take legal action making it harder for mining and other polluting industries to evade cleanups by declaring bankruptcy. EPA ranks the mining industry as the nation's top toxic polluter, reporting more toxic releases annually than any other industry. The industry generates more than 2 billion pounds of toxic waste each year, and has polluted more than 40 percent of western watershed headwaters.

Our legal action followed US House of Representative's approval of the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation bill, which would reform

the Mining Laws of 1872. The bill requires operators of hardrock mines to post a bond to cover future cleanup costs before receiving a permit to mine on public lands. When the Superfund law was passed in 1980, EPA had five years to put financial assurance regulations in place, but EPA has done next to nothing. Although many industries that handle hazardous materials are subject to bonding requirements under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), hardrock mining and other polluting industries are not. Our effort would ensure that mines on private lands (in addition to public lands) are subject to federal bonding requirements. The case also would apply to other hazardous waste processing industries like coal waste sites, metal finishers, and wood treatment facilities. In 2004, the EPA reported that 63 hardrock mining sites were listed as Superfund sites, with an estimated cleanup cost of \$7.8 billion. Of that, \$2.4 billion was expected to come from taxpayers. One of those Superfund sites is the Molycorp/CMI molybdenum mine near Questa, New Mexico. Amigos Bravos has long called for Molycorp to take responsibility for the toxins it released during the mine's 40-year history, contaminating the Red River and nearby groundwater aquifers that provide drinking water to the Village of Questa. Under New Mexico state regulations, and after much of the damage was already done, the company agreed in 2002 to set aside \$152 million for cleanup. According to a report prepared for Amigos Bravos by Jim Kuipers and Associates, cleanup costs at the Questa mine could reach \$400 million – with the public having to pay the difference if CMI walks away.

Last year, the state agreed with Amigos Bravos that Molycorp/CMI had to undertake a water balance analysis and a feasibility study on recycling tailings water and installing a water treatment facility at the mine site. Amigos Bravos' action has two goals: 1) stop the seepage of pollutants from the tailings facility; and 2) early reclamation of the 380 million tons of acid-generating waste rock piles next to the river. Progress on the four permits dealing with these two issues continues to be painfully slow. CMI did start taking steps to do some remediation at the mine and tailings sites; we believe this is "greenwashing" to circumvent what will be more stringent reclamation requirements under the Superfund process and a proposed state ground water discharge permit.

Amigos Bravos also provided testimony in two mining cases:

- We spoke in opposition to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's draft "Generic" EIS for *in-situ* leach mining of uranium
- Amigos Bravos testified on behalf of the Gila Resources Information Project to support WQCC requirements for more stringent conditions on the Phelps Dodge Tyrone mine closeout permit and GRIP's request that the WQCC's determinations always consider three general principles: that every aquifer is a "place of withdrawal", that our arid climate makes this an issue of the public welfare, and that the WQCC not favor closure plans requiring perpetual maintenance

From this point of view, what we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument.

- CS Lewis, "The Abolition of Man"

Rio Chama

© Geraint Smith



The following poem was sent to the Coalition for the Valle Vidal by a student whose class heard a presentation on the issue, spent 6 weeks studying the Valle Vidal, then produced a 3-minute video that went to the entire New Mexico Congressional delegation.

*The Yellowstone of the southwest,
the shining golden land,
the amazingly beautiful Valle Vidal,
was threatened by human hands.*

*The drills were ready, the workers set,
To send this land away,
Then men and women, brave and strong,
rose up to save the day.*

*They traveled around to all the schools,
they showed us what to do,
and now the fight they fought is over
Valle Vidal is safe for me and you.*

*Oh yes, the fight is over,
the long hard journey done,
we fought the battle of righteousness
and in the end we won.*

- Dylan Felt

BUILDING A RIVER PROTECTION MOVEMENT



Fishing in Sunset

© Anna Solovei

BUILDING A RIVER PROTECTION MOVEMENT

Then you better start swimming or you'll sink like a stone ...
– Bob Dylan, “The Times They Are A-Changin’ ”

Our third strategic goal, “Building a River Protection Movement”, is critical to the success of our other goals. Our existence as an effective organization depends on having an educated and empowered membership of individuals and allies with the ability to effectuate change for the long-term health of rivers and waters in their own communities. Building a river protection movement is essential for the achievement of Amigos Bravos’ mission and the sustainability of community efforts to restore and preserve local waters.

Local citizens and organizations must have the tools to defend their own waters and hold both polluters and agencies accountable. Every major victory we have won has been the result of strong coalition-building and a commitment to empower impacted communities. We say – and are often praised for it – that we provide a voice for the rivers. However, we cannot provide a voice for impacted communities, only help in getting *their* voices heard.

We provide technical assistance to individuals and community groups dealing with polluters, and we work to strengthen the ability – and the will – of regulators to act in the public’s interest, rather than in the interest of polluter’s. Most importantly, we believe that the best response to chronic pollution issues is to build broad-based coalitions from among impacted communities and provide avenues for people from these communities to get their story to the general public, the media, and public officials.

Amigos Bravos has become a leading advocate in Albuquerque’s South Valley for protection of the Río Grande, the associated irrigation system (*acequias*), and the traditional small farming culture of the region. Working with the New Mexico Acequia Association, we have helped revitalize six *acequia* associations in the South Valley, helped nearly 300 people declare – and thus protect – their senior water rights, and developed strong relationships with some of the major environmental justice organizations working in the area – such as South Valley Partners for Environmental

Justice and the Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice – which is largely Hispanic, poor, and marginalized by city and county government.

We have been working on issues such as the South Valley Superfund Site plans, protection of the Mountain View neighborhood against location of a gravel crushing plant, establishing a school-based water quality sampling program for the *acequias*, mobilizing neighborhoods to pressure the city to replace polluted domestic wells and outdated septic systems with city water and sewer service, and building youth capacity and leadership on water issues. We are establishing an even wider network among local, state, and federal agencies and community groups working on water issues in the Middle Río Grande region, which is the economic and population center of the state.

Amigos Bravos works closely with New Mexico’s largely Hispanic and Pueblo nation land-based communities, including an informal network of statewide organizations sharing a social and environmental justice perspective. The group has been developing Public Welfare principles for water decisions in the state. (Under New Mexico water law, the State Engineer must consider three factors in any water transfer or diversion. One of these is whether the permit is in the public welfare, although this factor is largely undefined and ignored by the state).

In Taos, Amigos Bravos made significant contributions to

the most strongly worded Public Welfare statement and implementation criteria among the 16 regional water plans in New Mexico. Public Welfare principles – and their effective implementation – could have a large impact on the growing commodification of water. The commodification of water is to the detriment of water’s clear cultural, social, and environmental roles (the “public welfare,” as we see it). Given the current water crisis in the state (and the Southwest and West) and the likelihood that climate change will result in severe reductions in water quantity and quality, it is essential that we work across New Mexico’s diverse communities to create an expansive vision of water as a resource that must be preserved so it can sustain our unique landscape and the vibrant cultures we all treasure.

In January 2007, the WK Kellogg Foundation awarded Amigos Bravos a five-year grant to participate in the foundation’s “Rural People Rural Policy” (RPRP) program, which is aimed at creating regional and national policy networks around issues of rural development and sustainability. The project is an opportunity for Amigos Bravos to expand our dialogue and cooperation with a wide range of state, regional, and national organizations dealing with public health, immigrant, Native American, land use, and social justice issues. It is also an opportunity to bring to the table the fact that policies aimed at “sustainable” rural development must include water quality and quantity concerns. Our goal is to educate in regard to the critical role that clean water must play in any policies developed to support sustainable rural livelihoods and culture.

In late Summer 2007, Amigos Bravos was awarded a three-year grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Middle Río Grande *Bosque* Initiative. We plan to conduct long-term water quality sampling and analysis of the *acequia* system running through the Middle Río Grande. The *acequia* sampling work is school-based, with students carrying out the sampling and working with project data to determine if there are problems, and the best ways to address those problems. Another component of the work is to plant trees in key places that will offer maximum restoration potential. The project goal is to develop youth capacity and leadership around water issues through participation in the monitoring and restoration program; to increase community awareness of water issues and capacity to protect local waters through direct involvement of communities in all activities; and to continue

building a broad network of governmental, community, and NGO organizations with a common focus on preserving and restoring the Middle Río Grande.

Within our Media and Communications Initiative, Amigos Bravos publishes a quarterly *Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* is written and published by Amigos Bravos staff, with occasional articles by community members or representatives of groups with whom we work. Our website underwent a number of major improvements in 2007. A new Action Alert system helped us mobilize our members to respond quickly and effectively to issues as they develop. We continue our monthly thirty-minute radio program, *Radio Río*, aired on Alamosa-based KRZA (88.7) and other stations that broadcast to northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. *Radio Río* is co-produced with *Cultural Energy* (Taos). We are grateful to KUNM (89.9) for providing regular production assistance for shows recorded in the Albuquerque area.

Two things are needed to guide our judgment and sustain our psychic energies for the challenges ahead: a certain alarm at what is happening at present and a fascination with the future available to us if only we respond creatively to the urgencies of the present.

- Thomas Berry, “Evening Thoughts:
Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Earth Community”

COMMUNITY & EQUITY



Fiesta de San Isidro;
Albuquerque
© Brian Shields

*“...the battle to save the planet begins within each of us,
and progresses when we each resolve to take responsibility
for preserving little bits of it – our backyards, our neighborhoods,
our communities, our river valley.*

*After all, our planet is being destroyed piece by piece.
It will only be saved in the same fashion.”*

- John Cronin & Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., “The Riverkeepers”

Amigos Bravos is a community-based organization that partners with local communities, rather than simply delivering a service. We emphasize working with – and providing technical and organizational development assistance to – local groups that want to protect sustainable water uses. We have a hard-earned local and national reputation as a river conservation organization guided by social justice principles and we are seen as a model of how to not only work with, but help empower traditional land-based communities as they seek to protect their local waters and way of life.

One of the most important initiatives ever undertaken by Amigos Bravos was our effort to provide a venue for dialogue that brought environmentalists, land-based communities, and urban environmental justice activists together over their common interest in preserving and protecting the health and sustainability of New Mexico’s watersheds. That multi-year project – *Somos Vecinos* (We Are Neighbors) – built a lasting foundation for cooperation among the various groups in northern New Mexico, spawned other community-based organizations that play a leading role in advocating for New Mexico’s land-based communities, and evolved into several collaborative projects that collectively form our current “Environmental Justice, Diversity, and Youth” initiative.

We are committed to using every opportunity to build bridges among river and watershed groups, across urban & rural concerns, and between environmental organizations and traditional Hispanic and Pueblo Nation organizations, all of which bring information and insights that greatly strengthen our collective effort. Rather than seeing ourselves as the “leader” of any particular collaboration, we view our role as one of bringing resources and expertise to collaborative community organizing efforts.

We achieve the most when we are able to connect sound scientific, technical, and legal arguments with the values held by New Mexico’s traditional Pueblo and Hispanic communities who have lived with New Mexico’s water ways for centuries – in other words, when we act on water issues because they are social justice issues

We believe it is critical to always work – first and foremost – with impacted communities and their representatives, as well as with a wide range of stakeholders, including: local communities; local, state, and national environmental groups; local and state government agencies; and technical experts and other professionals. We have long had a good relationship with the environmental office of Taos Pueblo, have worked with Picuris and Sandia Pueblos, and are developing strong relationships with two emerging Pueblo-based organizations: Tewa Women United and Honor Our Pueblo Existence.

Over the past nineteen years, Amigos Bravos has been a founding and principal member of well over a dozen national, regional and local initiatives, including Rio Grande/Río Bravo Basin Coalition, Río Grande Alliance, Alliance for the Río Grande Heritage, Río Chama Coalition, Río Pueblo/Río Embudo Watershed Protection Coalition, Reviva el Río Costilla, Red River Watershed Association, New Mexico Mining Act Network, Mining Impacts Communications Alliance, New Mexicans for Sustainable Energy and Effective Stewardship, Taos County Noxious Weed Committee, Río Pueblo

de Taos Watershed Group, Río Colorado Reclamation Committee, Coalition for the Valle Vidal, and Communities for Clean Water.

We are also on the Executive Committee of the Clean Water Network and one of a handful of state representatives for River Network's EPA-funded Watershed Support Network. In 2007, we joined the National Rural Assembly and are part of the Southwest Network of the Kellogg Foundation's national Rural People, Rural Policy program.

The following table lists primary partner organizations in several of our collaborative project areas

Program Area	Primary Partners	Program Area	Primary Partners
<i>Clean Water Policy</i>	Taos Pueblo, Arroyo Hondo Community Association, Río Pueblo de Taos Watershed Group, Río Colorado Reclamation Committee, Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, Gila Resources Information Project, New Mexico Friends of River Otters, Western Environmental Law Center, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, Center for Civic Policy, Middle Río Grande Water Assembly, New Mexico Water Dialogue, River Network, American Rivers, Clean Water Network, Citizens Agenda for Rivers, Sierra Club, 1,000 Friends of New Mexico, NM Trout, Trout Unlimited, Wild Earth Guardians, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, Natural Resources Defense Council		Justice, SouthWest Organizing Project, New Mexico Legal Aid, Social Justice Office/Catholic Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico Conference of Churches, high schools in Albuquerque's South Valley
<i>Communities for Clean Water</i>	Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, Embudo Valley Environmental Monitoring Group, Honor Our Pueblo Existence, Tewa Women United, New Mexico Acequia Association, Don Gabino Andrade Community Acequia, SouthWest Organizing Project, Partnership for Earth Justice, Río Grande Restoration, Western Environmental Law Center, New Mexicans for Sustainable Energy and Effective Stewardship	<i>Rural People Rural Policy Network</i>	McKinley Community Health Alliance, International Sonoran Desert Alliance, Doña Ana County Colonias Development Council, DNA-Legal Services, Arizona Community Foundation/Arizona Rural Development Council, Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona, New Mexico Voices for Children, Nogales Community Development Corporation, University of Arizona Sponsored Projects Services
<i>Environmental Justice, Diversity & Youth</i>	New Mexico Acequia Association, American Friends Service Committee, New Mexico Environmental Law Center, South Valley Partners for Environmental Justice, Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental	<i>Mining Reform</i>	Gila Resources Information Project, New Mexico Environmental Law Center, Southwest Research and Information Center, Eastern Navajo Diné Against Uranium Mining, Earthworks, Center for Science in Public Participation, Kuypers & Associates, Río Colorado Reclamation Committee, Westerners for Responsible Mining, Western Mining Action Network (Southwest Caucus and Uranium Caucus)
		<i>On-the-Ground Restoration</i>	New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, US Forest Service, Río Pueblo de Taos Watershed Group, Taos Noxious Weed Committee, scores of community volunteers

For many of us, water simply flows from a faucet, and we think little about it beyond this point of contact. We have lost a sense of respect for the wild river, for the complex workings of a wetland, for the intricate web of life that water supports. We have been quick to assume rights to use water but slow to recognize obligations to preserve and protect it... In short, we need a water ethics guide to right conduct in the face of complex decisions about natural systems we do not and cannot fully understand.

- Sandra Postel, "Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity"

FINANCIAL REPORT & SUPPORTERS

Castle Rock; Ghost Ranch

© Kenneth Seal

FINANCIAL REPORT FY2007

FISCAL YEAR 2007 (October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007)

Amigos Bravos ended its fiscal year September 30, 2007 with net assets of \$160,866. [an increase of 28% over FY2006]

In FY2007, total revenues for Amigos Bravos decreased by 29.9% over the previous year. However, this decrease reflected the successful conclusion of the campaign conducted by the Coalition for the Valle Vidal, for whom we act as fiscal agent and whose revenues and expenses were reported as part of Amigos Bravos' financials. In FY2006, this amounted to nearly \$192,000. Factoring this change into our FY2007 financials, the effective decrease was only 4%. This decrease reflects the loss of some long-term foundation support (foundations whose boards decided to no longer fund water issues, or the environment, or New Mexico as a geographical region), which was largely replaced over the course of the year. On the other hand, we greatly increased membership contributions. Amigos Bravos continues to build its long-term financial viability through growth in its Capital Reserve Fund and in the *Amigos Bravos Friends of the Wild Rivers* Endowment Fund, housed at the New Mexico Community Foundation. In 2007 Amigos Bravos established a new agency endowment fund at the Taos Community Foundation.

SUPPORT & REVENUE

FY2007

Foundations	351,313
Contributions	3,401
Memberships	97,460
Appeals	13,167
Sales	29,429
Fiscal Agent Fees	3,276
Total Revenue	498,046

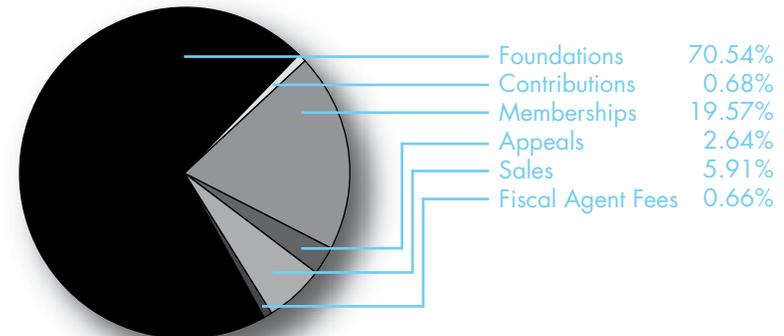
EXPENSES

Programs	359,044
General & Administrative	28,219
Fundraising	82,408
Total Expenses	469,671

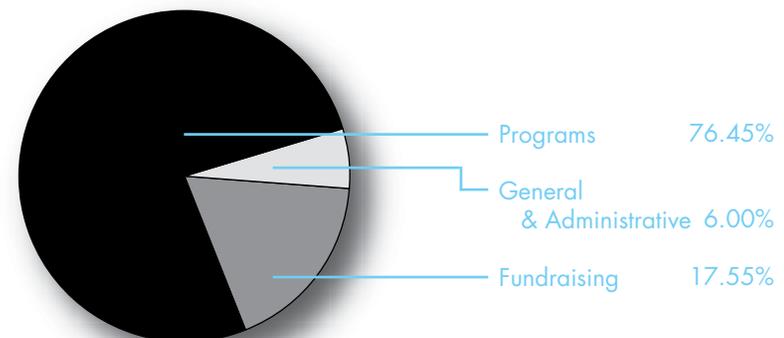
ASSETS

Net Assets, end of year	160,866
Increase in Net Assets	35,502

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



...AND WHERE IT GOES



Amigos Bravos takes its commitment to work with communities seriously. We deeply appreciate everyone who has contributed to support our efforts and sustain our organization, whether it was through a new or renewed membership, a family fund or foundation grant, a special contribution, or an in-kind donation. We accept these contributions as a sign that you share our vision and mission and believe that we represent a conscientious and effective effort to connect the environmental, social, cultural, and spiritual values that our rivers and waters sustain.

Ways to support Amigos Bravos

- **Annual Memberships and General Donations.** Amigos Bravos is a membership-supported organization. We depend on membership dues and donations to carry out our mission. Unrestricted membership donations provide us with the flexibility to take action on emerging issues.
- **Project-Specific Donations.** Many individuals and foundations prefer to donate to specific causes and campaigns. Amigos Bravos welcomes project-specific donations.
- **Capital Reserve Fund.** The Capital Reserve Fund is money set aside to ensure that Amigos Bravos can survive cash flow shortages in the annual operating budget. It can be accessed only following strict guidelines on when and how funds can be used, such as for payroll or emergency capital outlays. This is an interest-bearing account; our goal is to have \$150,000 in the Reserve Fund as a hedge against potential hard times, ensuring that Amigos Bravos stays financially healthy and able to carry out its mission. For information on making a special contribution to Amigos Bravos' Capital Reserve Fund, please contact our office at (505) 758-3874 or at PO Box 238, Taos NM 87571.
- **Amigos Bravos Friends of the Wild Rivers Fund.** In 2006 and 2007, Amigos Bravos established endowment funds at the New Mexico Community Foundation and the Taos Community Foundation through generous initial funding from Messengers of Healing Winds Foundation and matching funds from both community foundations. The two community foundations administer the endowments. Once funded at an appropriate level, interest from the endowments will provide supplementary, flexible funding across Amigos Bravos' programs and activities. For information about how to include Amigos Bravos in your planned giving, please send a letter, marked "Confidential," to Brian Shields / Executive Director / Amigos Bravos / PO Box 238 / Taos NM 87571.

We are proud to recognize the following local businesses, organizations, charitable foundations, and individual and family contributors for their support and trust in our efforts in FY2006.

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- \$25+

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Council, Strategic Planning
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mary Humphrey, El Prado, President

Mary is an attorney specializing in water law and was a founding member of Amigos Bravos' Board in 1988, serving as President in 1991-1992. Together with her law partner Connie Odé, Mary represents *acequias* and northern New Mexico communities on contentious water and land use law issues and has been instrumental in legal opposition to planned diversions from the Río Costilla and Río Grande. Prior to her career in law, Mary was an outfitter and river guide for 20 years and remains committed to the health of rivers and the people who live along their banks. She holds a juris doctorate degree from UNM.



Michael Coca, Las Vegas, Vice-President

Michael is an affordable housing consultant and the architect/contractor for *Tapetes de Lana*, a nonprofit wool processing facility in Mora County. He joined the Board in 1997 and has served as President from 2003-2006. Michael also serves on the board of the Northern New Mexico Educational Opportunity Center (Española), is a past board member of the New Mexico Acequia Association, is past chairman of the Acequia Madre de Las Vegas, and is affiliated with the Gallinas Watershed Partnership, the Acequia de los Cuarteles de Santo Domingo de Cundiyo Land Grant, the Río Gallinas Acequia Association, and the New Mexico Solar Energy Association. Through his work in and around Las Vegas, he has been instrumental in raising water quality standards for the Río Gallinas. Michael's partner, Diane, is a nurse practitioner in Santa Fe.



Tom Griego, Albuquerque, Secretary

Tom is an attorney concentrating on employment and labor law with Bill Gordon and Associates and frequently represents workers on discrimination and workers' compensation claim issues. He joined the Board in 2004. Though born in St. Louis, Missouri, Tom's family traces its New Mexico heritage back to the arrival of the Oñate

expedition, and his father – whose family is from Pecos and Santa Fe – grew up working in the mining and logging industries. Returning to New Mexico in 1976, Tom worked for both the City of Santa Fe and New Mexico State Parks in administering federal conservation grants. He holds a master's degree in Public Administration and a juris doctorate degree from UNM.



Jon Klingel, Santa Fe, Treasurer

For many years, Jon worked as a biologist with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish where he received an "Award of Excellence" for development of the Biota Information System of New Mexico. In addition to his volunteer efforts with Amigos Bravos – including extensive work on our river otter reintroduction and Valle Vidal projects – Jon has been involved in radio tracking of reintroduced wolves, a rattlesnake hibernaculum study and bighorn sheep surveys. Among his many adventures, Jon has experienced nine seasons of fire control/smoke-jumping in Alaska and the western states and, together with his wife Marlene, designed and built a cabin using hand tools in the northern New Mexico mountains. He holds degrees in Zoology and Wildlife Biology.



Don Bustos, Santa Cruz

Don Bustos farms at Santa Cruz Farm and Greenhouses in the Española Valley in northern New Mexico. The farm has been in his family for generations and continues to be family-owned and operated. A certified organic farm since 1993, it combines traditional farming methods with modern techniques such as hoop houses and greenhouses, which extend the growing season. Santa Cruz Farm grows traditional and regional crops, has been organically certified by the New Mexico Organic Commodities Commission for four years, and has been running a successful CSA for the last 7 years, both summer and winter. Don also works for American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) NM Program on land and water issues. He sits on several NGO boards including New Mexico Acequia Association, Río Arriba County Extension Service Advisory Committee, and The Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant board.



Peggy Nelson, Taos

Judge Peggy Nelson completed eighteen years of service as New Mexico's 8th Judicial District Judge (Division I) in 2008. She began her career in Taos in her early twenties, working for Northern New Mexico Legal Services. She served there for five years, the last two as the Executive Director. For the next half-decade, she performed low-cost

and free legal services while employed by the Community Law Center, and for the five years that followed she had a private practice and contracted with the state as Public Defender. Nelson has served on a lengthy list of non-profit boards and commissions, including the early Rape Crisis Center and Battered Women's Shelter (two organizations which have since merged to become Community Against Violence) as well as the Taos County School board. She was appointed District Judge in February of 1988. In addition to hiking or cross-country skiing in northern New Mexico on a weekly basis, Nelson made the famous night-trek up Kilimanjaro in Africa in 2005. She plays the fiddle for the Taos Contra Band and the Kora, a 21-string African harp.



Roberto Vigil, Questa

Roberto is a fourth generation New Mexico artisan – a fine woodworker, artist, home designer, builder and landscaper, and owner of Vigil Studio in Questa – whose work has been displayed at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, and the New Mexico State Capitol Building (Roundhouse). He is the founder

of Artesanos de Questa – a traditional arts cooperative aimed at providing economic alternatives to mining. A native and resident of the mining-impacted Village of Questa, he is a founding member of Concerned Citizens of Questa and has worked tirelessly for over 30 years to address the negative effects of mining on his community.

EXECUTIVE STAFF



Brian Shields, Executive Director

Brian has provided visionary leadership of Amigos Bravos since its inception – serving as a founding member of the Board of Directors from 1988-1990, as Projects Director from 1991-1996, and as Executive Director since 1996. While creating and sustaining an organization with influence, credibility, and staying-power, he continues to build

lasting and highly productive alliances among a broad range of environmental and social justice advocates, along with decision-makers at the local, regional, and national levels. He repeatedly accepts leadership roles in the establishment of national, regional, and community-based campaigns including, most notably, the Citizens Agenda for Rivers, Westerners for Responsible Mining, the New Mexico Mining Act Network, NM-SEES (New Mexicans for Safe and Sustainable Energy), Communities for Clean Water, Alliance for Rio Grande Heritage, the Coalition for the Valle Vidal, and an unnamed network of individuals representing organizations working on water-related issues impacting poor, indigenous communities. Raised in an international family and under the Franco regime in Barcelona, Spain, Brian's early experiences convinced him that progress in any joint endeavor is only accomplished through mutual respect and understanding, and that in diversity exists the most potent energy imaginable for creative solutions. Brian has resided in New Mexico for the past 37 years.



Sawnie Morris, Assistant to the Director

Sawnie works on a contractual basis to assist the Executive Director in all aspects of organizational development, with an emphasis on major donors, human resource tasks, and social justice concerns. She was the founding executive director (1989-1996) and subsequently served on the board of directors (1997-2002). Sawnie has made Taos, New

Mexico her home since 1983.

STAFF



Rachel Conn, Clean Water Circuit Rider & Policy Analyst

As Circuit Rider, Rachel assists communities to establish citizen-led watershed protection groups and educates those groups in how to track and understand regulatory and policy actions that effect their rivers. Rachel is a leader in the ongoing campaigns to protect the Valle Vidal, hold Los Alamos National Lab accountable for pollution, restore river

otters to New Mexico, protect the Red River watershed from degradation caused by mining and unwise off-road vehicle use, oversee safe nontoxic control of noxious weeds in our public lands, and watchdog national, state, and local policies affecting rivers. Born and raised in the Boston area, Rachel has lived for the past fourteen years in Colorado and New Mexico, earning a BA in Environmental Biology from Colorado College and working as a conservation advocate in San Luis, prior to joining Amigos Bravos.



Linda Gomez, Office and Outreach Assistant

Linda is responsible for maintaining accurate membership and financial records, and for providing support in the areas of administrative tasks and major donor relations. Linda brings a wealth of advocacy experience to her work for Amigos Bravos, including service within the American Indian Movement (AIM), Legal Assistant and

Office Manager for the Western Environmental Law Center (Taos), and Program Manager for all Native American Programs in the Taos Municipal Schools. She was a political science major at UCLA and received legal assistance training from TVI at the University of New Mexico. Linda is a member of the Cheyenne-Arapahoe Tribe of Oklahoma and is married to Daniel Gomez of Taos Pueblo, her primary residence for the past thirty years.



Carol Hardison, Accountant

A native of North Carolina, Carol moved to Taos in 1990 and has been Amigos Bravos' accountant on a contractual basis since 1994. She received a bachelor's degree in business administration (accounting) from the University of Georgia. Carol has a number of other clients, but considers Amigos Bravos her "baby" and creative challenge.

She is a single mother of four even greater challenges – Snowflower, Fawn, Lake, and Brook Romero of Taos Pueblo.



Lucy Sanchez, Albuquerque Projects Director

Lucy leads the organization's environmental justice and youth projects in Albuquerque and the surrounding area. Prior to joining Amigos Bravos, she served as Vice President for the Albuquerque Educational Assistants Association Local 4129 and has 21 years of union organizing and membership development experience. Born in Hatch, NM, Lucy lived in Albuquerque's South Valley starting at the age of six and now lives in Bernalillo County. In 2002, Lucy received a Brindis a la Mujer Hispana for her work on behalf of the Hispanic community.



Kenneth Seal, IT and Database Manager

Ken is responsible for managing, updating, troubleshooting, and maintaining all forms of technology used at Amigos Bravos' two offices. His focus is on ensuring that our technology allows us to communicate in the most effective ways possible within the organization as well as to our members, the media, the public, and decision-makers. Ken

describes himself as an "avid outdoor enthusiast" in the areas of cycling, backpacking, and skiing. Ken is a graduate of Texas Tech University, where he received a B.S. in Microbiology, and is near completion of an M.S. in Chemistry.



Betsy Wolf, Administration and Publications

Betsy has been with Amigos Bravos since 1996. She oversees the administrative functions of the organization, serves as editor of our website and publications, and is the institutional memory that keeps Amigos Bravos together. Prior to joining Amigos Bravos, she served for 10 years as Administrative Secretary for the Harwood Foundation of the University of New Mexico. A lover of horses, Betsy earned a B.A. in art at Newton College, Newton, MA, studied printmaking and stained glass in Paris for five years, is a native of New York, and has lived in New Mexico for 33 years.



Michael Jensen, Grants and Communications

Michael is the primary grant writer for Amigos Bravos and as such maintains essential knowledge of Amigos Bravos' many projects and activities. He represents Amigos Bravos at a range of community organizing meetings, and works on campaign messaging development and other writing for publication, including the Annual Report. He came to Amigos Bravos in 2005 after working at UNM for almost eight years at the Alliance for Transportation Research Institute, as Outreach Coordinator for the College of Fine Arts, and as Program Coordinator for the US-Japan Center. Before moving to Albuquerque in 1990, he worked for international development management firms in Washington, DC. He has lived and worked in Norway, Germany, and Brazil and holds a bachelors degree in American Studies from UC Santa Cruz.

Amigos Bravos is a well-established and nationally recognized state-wide 501(c)(3) river conservation organization guided by social justice principles and dedicated to preserving and restoring the ecological and cultural integrity of New Mexico's rivers and watersheds. While rooted in science and the law, our work is inspired by the values and traditional knowledge of New Mexico's diverse Hispanic and Native American land-based populations, with whom we work.

Our Vision

We have a vision of New Mexico's rivers and streams running so clear and clean that you can bend a knee to the water, cup your hands, and drink without fear. Realizing this vision – *which was a reality in northern New Mexico only one lifetime ago* – requires the wisdom, knowledge, and participation of all New Mexicans in the effort to address social and political pressures poisoning our waters.

Our Mission

- To return New Mexico's rivers and the Río Grande watershed to drinkable quality wherever possible and to contact quality everywhere else;
- To see that natural flows are maintained and where those flows have been disrupted by human intervention to see that they are regulated to protect and reclaim the river ecosystem by approximating natural flows;
- To preserve and restore the native riparian and riverine biodiversity;
- To support the environmentally sound and sustainable traditional ways of life of indigenous cultures; and
- To ensure that environmental justice and social justice go hand-in-hand.



AMIGOS BRAVOS

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To learn more about Amigos Bravos and its work, please visit our website – www.amigosbravos.org



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