Dear Friends of Wild Rivers,

2006 was a terrific year for the Río Grande and for Amigos Bravos! Highlighting our victories are permanent Congressional protection of the over 100,000-acre Valle Vidal and the State’s decision to reintroduct river otters to New Mexico’s rivers in 2007. This report also enumerates our many other successes and accomplishments. We thank and congratulate every contributor to Amigos Bravos for making these victories possible and we invite those of you who recognize the value in our work to join us.

Amigos Bravos takes a diversified approach to furthering our mission, which includes restoration of watershed health, holding polluters accountable, and building a river protection movement for the future. In contrast to the challenges we face, Amigos Bravos is a relatively small organization (we boast a staff of seven and two offices), but we are a creative, hard-working bunch with a sizable membership. We have learned to maximize our impact through well-considered strategies aimed at leveraging our knowledge and numbers to greatest possible effect, while building a socio-political movement that transcends conventional alliances.

The Valle Vidal campaign was successful because the fight rose out of grassroots action grounded in a philosophy of sustainability. The Coalition for the Valle Vidal includes local governments, chambers of commerce, businesses, and other organizations. Chaired by Amigos Bravos, the Coalition maintained the focus, dedication, and discipline necessary to implement a highly complex, dynamic, and multi-faceted campaign.

The first step in that campaign was to rally New Mexico’s population at the local level around a set of core values. Volunteers and Coalition staff traveled the state, speaking to communities and governmental bodies in a successful effort to gain widespread passage of town and county resolutions to protect the Valle Vidal. Next, we called on our congressional delegation, the State, and the Forest Service to place the Valle Vidal off limits to coalbed methane drilling – and did so with the backing of 60,000 letters of support gathered in a well-orchestrated letter-writing campaign with the help of national environmental organizations.

As we all know, popular support does not always carry the day, so in the campaign to protect the Valle Vidal Amigos Bravos brought to bear our expertise on state regulations affecting rivers. We advocated for all waters in the Valle Vidal to be labeled Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW). Thanks to our success the previous year in gaining first-time-ever ONRW status for a river in this state, Governor Richardson was happy to oblige us and took the issue a step further by adding the Valle Vidal to his petition regarding roadless areas in the state. The result: two state-mandated protections for the Valle Vidal, one (which passed) prohibiting all water pollution, another prohibiting the construction of new roads (still on the docket).

In the end, water reversal in the national election of 2006 was a saving grace for the Valle Vidal. The people of this country spoke, and a week after the elections, Amigos Bravos received word from New Mexico’s Republican Senator that he planned to send Democratic Representative Tom Udall’s Valle Vidal Protection Act to the Senate floor for a vote. The Bill received unanimous approval in both House and Senate, and in December the Act was signed into law.

From start to finish the campaign to save the Valle Vidal took three years and three months, an amazing feat under an aggressively adversarial administration. The effort to save the Valle Vidal was conceived as a locally-lead grassroots action campaign. The true champions of the successful campaign were the many individuals who responded to numerous action alerts by repeatedly calling and writing to key decision-makers. We thank you for your dedication.

The crucial groundwork for the success of the Valle Vidal campaign began long before a threat to the Valle Vidal was identified. It began in 1988 when a handful of people dedicated to environmental protection as well as social justice formed Amigos Bravos and began the work of sincere communication and exchange with communities up and down the Río Grande on the potentially divisive subject of water. That beginning has been carried forward by a continuing commitment to provide communities with the information and technical support to say NO to degradation and depletion of rivers, and YES to clean water and a mighty and free-flowing Río Grande.

Every three to four years, Amigos Bravos gathers at least forty advisors for three days of strategic planning that analyzes our strengths in relation to upcoming challenges facing New Mexico’s rivers. That three-day dialogue determines the direction our work will take over the next three years. It is a highly creative and energizing process resulting in a dynamic plan of action. We have accomplished most of what we set out to do in 2003, and as we approach our twentieth anniversary we are preparing to create a new strategic plan.

Now and in the years to come, we will be up against enormous challenges that promise to test our capacity for faith and perseverance. Included on the list are nuclear contamination from Los Alamos National Laboratory, impacts from energy development and extractive industries, water contamination by pharmaceuticals, uncontrolled development, and the growing influence of big money in water distribution decisions. All of this is occurring against a background of climate change, drought, and the widening gap between rich and poor.

We invite you to help us develop the next Amigos Bravos Three Year Strategic Plan by providing your thoughts and opinions via the strategic planning survey on our web page http://www.amigosbravos.org/survey.

Working together we can ensure clean water and vital communities in New Mexico.

For the river,

Mary Humphrey, President
Brian Shields, Executive Director
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Cover Photo:  
Little Costilla Peak in the Valle Vidal  
© Dai Baker
The River Tells a Story – A Year in Review

We call upon the waters that rim the earth, horizon to horizon, that flow in our rivers and streams, that fall upon our gardens and fields, and we ask that they teach us and show us the way.

– Chinook blessing

We had much to celebrate in 2006 and two successes require special mention:

- In August, the New Mexico Game Commission approved plans to reintroduce river otters to New Mexico. This was the result of five years of persistent effort by New Mexico Friends of River Otters (co-founded and coordinated by Amigos Bravos) and the outpouring of support from people across the state who share a special appreciation for the playful creatures.

- In November, Congress approved permanent protection for the Valle Vidal from all extractive industry; the President signed the legislation, authored by Tom Udall, in December. In a concerted effort, local county and municipal governments, chambers of commerce, businesses, and other organizations came together to form the Coalition for the Valle Vidal (co-founded and coordinated by Amigos Bravos) to defend “New Mexico’s Yellowstone” from the Bush administration’s energy plan.

Both of these tremendous achievements were the result of the coordinated and determined effort for which Amigos Bravos has become so well known: we partnered with diverse organizations, we established a strong technical basis for our position, and we built public and media awareness that resulted in overwhelming support for our cause.

In many cases, community members or grassroots organizations bring an issue to our attention, seeking our participation, assistance, or partnership. We became involved in the Los Alamos/White Rock project when we invited a citizen action group concerned with nuclear weapons issues at the Lab to participate in our 2003 strategic planning. They convinced our Board and staff of the strong link between Lab activities and Amigos Bravos’ concerns for the Rio Grande watershed and we accepted their invitation to begin participating on sampling trips and in permit hearings. That initial contact has developed into a true partnership and resulted in the formation of a broad community-based coalition – Communities for Clean Water – that is taking on the most economically and politically powerful entity in the state. In May 2006, we filed a Clean Water Act Notice of Intent to Sue Los Alamos National Laboratory for its long history of toxic discharges and dumping.

The Molycorp molybdenum mine has been a core issue for Amigos Bravos since our founding in 1988. In 2006, the State agreed to require that, as part of its permitting process, Molycorp develop a study focused on the feasibility of installing water treatment and recycling facilities at the mine. We believe that recycling the water at the tailings site is an important step toward reducing pollution of the Red River and protecting residents of Questa from the mine’s impact.

During the past year, we have been defending the State in the legislature and the courts from industry efforts to weaken protection for New Mexico’s fragile waters. In 2006, Amigos Bravos helped the State create strong draft legislation to implement the NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permitting program at the state level. Amigos Bravos is working to defend New Mexico’s ability to protect its waters and has joined with other groups in a case before the New Mexico Appeals Court to defend the Water Quality Control Commission’s decision to maintain...
water quality protections for waters that are at risk of losing federal protections.

For several years, Amigos Bravos has worked with a network of organizations sharing a social and environmental justice perspective. In 2006, that network made important progress in formalizing a set of tactical priorities centered on public welfare criteria for water decisions. As a member of the Taos Regional Water Plan Steering Committee, Amigos Bravos played a key role in the formation and adoption of a strongly worded public welfare statement and implementation plan.

We are also working at the grassroots level to empower residents to take back control of their water. In Albuquerque’s South Valley, we helped establish five acequia associations and assisted with over 175 declarations of senior water rights. This effort enables us to further our goal of building a strong voice for addressing the clean-up and sustainable use of water in the most highly-polluted community in the city. We also began working with South Valley Partners for Environmental Justice to begin first-ever monitoring of the contaminants affecting acequias and other waterways in Albuquerque’s South Valley. The results showed occurrence of E. coli in a number of acequias and the persistence of toxic wastes in a canal running through one of three Superfund sites in the South Valley.

Amigos Bravos has a well-developed program to provide training and capacity-building to local river and watershed groups and to carry out river restoration projects. In 2006, we coordinated development of the Río Pueblo de Taos Watershed Group’s Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS). Responding to community concerns, we worked with the Arroyo Honda Community Association and Taos Pueblo to ensure that protective limits were set for the Village of Taos Ski Valley’s wastewater treatment plant permit.

Under a Clean Water Act 319 grant administered by the State, Amigos Bravos carried out three on-the-ground work projects in the Upper Red River watershed. These projects included building cattle exclosures to protect a stream bank, fencing meadows from off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and developing and disseminating educational materials regarding the impacts of unauthorized OHV use. As part of the OHV education effort, Amigos Bravos provides funds for a Forest Service enforcement officer who talks with people using the area, ensures that fences and gates are secure and that OHV users are obeying rules, and distributes educational materials. We also worked closely with national, state, and local organizations to provide comments and testimony regarding proposed new rules regarding OHV use.

The truly inspiring victories for the Valle Vidal and for river otters in New Mexico, as well as important progress made in relation to other issues affecting the Río Grande watershed, brought us a little closer to the accomplishment of our mission in 2006.
As a community-based organization, Amigos Bravos sources all of its projects in the stated needs of affected communities and their local waters. As New Mexico’s statewide river organization, we seek to develop and sustain programs focused on policy and regulatory issues that affect the entire state – including some that have the potential to impact regional and national river and water policies.

In 2004, Amigos Bravos was successful in winning nomination of the Río Santa Barbara as New Mexico’s first Outstanding National Resource Water (ONRW), which is the highest level of protection available under the Clean Water Act. We followed this with a successful effort, culminating in January 2006, to convince the Governor to petition for ONRW status for all surface waters in the Valle Vidal. With these successes and numerous requests from community and conservation groups, we have started a movement for creating ONRWFs in special places throughout the state, a push that has attracted national attention.

Three years ago, Amigos Bravos co-founded the Coalition for the Valle Vidal to protect “New Mexico’s Yellowstone” from coalbed methane (CBM) drilling. We continue to play a critical leadership role in the Coalition, for which we are the fiscal agent and Chair of the Executive Committee. Drilling in the Valle Vidal would have had devastating effects on wildlife, the rivers and streams passing through the area, water supplies to downstream communities, and the tourism that is an important source of sustainable economic activity for the region. The Coalition came to number 400 organizations, businesses, and local governments, and generated over 60,000 letters to the Forest Service. The creative multi-faceted campaign we ran received national attention (including a front page article in the 25 July 2006 Washington Post). On November 17, 2006, Congress unanimously passed the Valle Vidal Protection Act, permanently removing the Valle Vidal from extractive activity. The President signed the bill in December. (Currently, the Valle Vidal is not included in the Carson National Forest Management Plan. During 2007, the Plan will be amended to include the Valle Vidal and Amigos Bravos will be involved – every step of the way – and working to insure its holistic protection.)

Amigos Bravos was rewarded on August 24th, 2006, – after five years of persistent public outreach and mobilization, supported by strong technical analysis – when the Game Commission voted to bring river otters back to New Mexico by the end of 2007. The feasibility study and plan approved by the Game Commission has otters released at two restoration sites in the Upper Río Grande and the Upper Gila. Amigos Bravos will work with New Mexico Friends of River Otters (which we co-founded and coordinate) and the Department of Game and Fish to carry out community education, assess specific release sites, purchase and transport otters, and develop a monitoring program.

The Bush administration has succeeded in rolling back application of the Clean Water Act. Without effective State authority, waters across as much as 40% of New Mexico’s land area could be subject to unregulated discharges and
depletion, affecting not only wildlife but rural communities that depend on those waters for their livelihoods. In order to convince the State to maintain authority over all New Mexico waters, Amigos Bravos began supporting community groups in the effort to bring forward testimony about the importance of local waters. As a result, in 2004, the State adopted much of the language Amigos Bravos proposed for the definition of “waters of the state” – language intended to ensure that New Mexico’s waters continue to receive state water quality protections despite rollbacks of Clean Water Act protections at the federal level. These efforts to maintain state water quality protections for New Mexico’s waters came under immediate attack by the oil & gas, mining, construction, and grazing industries at the State Legislature and in the courts. Amigos Bravos responded by assembling a coalition of grassroots environmental and social justice organizations that continue to help defend local waters.

A corollary issue that dominated 2006 has been the State’s interest in becoming a “delegated” state for purposes of implementing and enforcing the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. Amigos Bravos, appointed to the NPDES Regulation Advisory Group, worked to ensure that voices from affected communities were heard. The result was a groundbreaking proposal that includes a Citizen Suit provision (similar to the one in the Clean Water Act) and protection of Native Nations’ water quality standards. A group of for-profit entities, including the mining, oil and gas, dairy and grazing, and construction industries has opposed this effort so successfully that the State has temporarily withdrawn the proposed legislation. Amigos Bravos continues to pull together a strong and committed coalition of community and environmental justice groups to press local and state politicians and agencies to see the wisdom of continuing protection for New Mexico’s waters and the natural and cultural landscape they sustain.

Under a Clean Water Act 319 grant administered by the State in 2006, Amigos Bravos carried out three on-the-ground work projects in the Upper Red River watershed. Amigos Bravos initiated this project because many stretches of the Upper Red River were not meeting water quality standards. Turbidity and stream bottom deposits, caused by excessive erosion and disturbance in the watershed, are listed as two of the most prevalent contaminant problems. The New Mexico Environment Department reports that these water quality problems are impacting fish populations in the watershed. Projects brought together volunteers from the local area and from as far away as Albuquerque and southern Colorado. In the Upper Bitter Creek drainage, Amigos Bravos finished a riparian protection fence that was started in 2005 and worked to further close off an illegal road into the Valle Vidal. We installed a gate to help the Forest Service enforce a seasonal wildlife closure of a system of roads in the lower Bitter Creek drainage.

Studies have shown that irresponsible motorized use of public lands causes degradation of plant and wildlife habitat, erosion of soils, reduction of plant populations and plant diversity, water and air pollution, damage to cultural resources, and interference with other forms of recreation. Wildlife populations are especially sensitive and can experience increased mortality, changed behavior, and reduction in diversity. As part of its 319 grant, Amigos Bravos funds a Forest Service staff position to ensure that the Upper Red River is routinely patrolled, that fences and gates are secure, and that OHVs (off-highway vehicles) abide by agreements designed to protect the area. We also distribute educational materials to visitors. Amigos Bravos works with national, state, and local organizations to develop public and media outreach regarding OHV use and proposed rule changes to OHV access to public lands.
Deep in the Rio Grande Gorge flows the river itself. From it we venture forth, to it we return. In winter, the river turns an arctic teal, its edges frothed and stained by the wine red of tamarisk, the copper sheen of cliff face and jagged rock. In spring, it plunges, heavy and swift with snow melt. In summer, it slithers lazily between viridian slopes, over and around the great fallen blacks and browns of ancient lava turned basalt. Raven and eagle, sparrow hawk and canyon wren circle above, minnow and trout dart below. In autumn, the river moves amid the sprung gold of giant cottonwoods. Our famous turquoise sky spans that legendary ribbon of water, is reflected in it: river-sky across which the eye may wonder.

—Sawnie Morris, 2007
Holding Polluters Accountable

Dripping water hollows out a stone
– Ovid

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.

**Molycorp.** Amigos Bravos’ long struggle to hold Molycorp mine accountable for polluting the Red River and the Village of Questa has resulted in a number of major victories that have served as models for what is possible in dealing with mines in the Rocky Mountain West. In 2006, we continued to apply pressure to the state and the mine (now owned by Chevron) regarding several State and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permits for the tailings facility and the mine. A major goal on our part has been to see Molycorp install a tailings water treatment and recycling facility at the mine. We have also been pursuing early reclamation of the waste rock piles to stop acid mine drainage. These actions will address pollution coming off the tailings and put more water into the Red River above mine operations, which will mitigate pollution of community wells, protect future water supplies, and offer increased river flow, further diminishing pollution.

As a result of our solid technical arguments using:
1) an EPA report showing that Molycorp’s pollution is by-passing interception barriers and extraction wells at its tailings facility;
2) a USGS study of pre-mine water quality; and
3) our own consultant’s analysis of water treatment and recycling, the State agreed with us and is requiring that Molycorp develop a feasibility study for installing water treatment and recycling facilities at the mine.

Furthermore, we want to ensure that health concerns and principles of economic and resource sustainability are taken into account in the ongoing Superfund Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study process. The long-term goal is to continue working with the residents of Questa to create a “restoration economy” that will provide local jobs and lay the foundation for a sustainable and diversified – and healthier – post-mining economy.

**Los Alamos National Laboratory.** Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has a sixty-three year legacy of burying and discharging toxics on the mesas and into the canyons where the facility is located. Amigos Bravos and its partners have documented the presence of chemicals, metals, and radionuclides in the canyons and springs below LANL and Amigos Bravos has shown that stormwater runoff carries toxics off the LANL site. These toxic substances are polluting sites sacred to neighboring Pueblo Nations and are entering the regional drinking water aquifer and the Río Grande watershed, future water supply of Santa Fe and downstream communities. In 2006, Amigos Bravos published a comprehensive report, *Historic and Current Discharges from Los Alamos National Laboratory; Analysis and Recommendations.* We commented extensively on a number of ground and surface water permits currently being negotiated between LANL and the New Mexico Environment Department. We supported the 2005 Consent Order negotiated between LANL and the State, under which LANL agreed to a “fence-to-fence” cleanup of the lab.

In January 2006, we formed a collaborative of community and Pueblo Nation-based organizations called Communities for Clean Water. We held several organizing meetings in the winter and spring, with participation by organic farmer and farmers market associations, faith-based groups, acequia and land grant organizations, and environmental and environmental justice organizations. In May 2006, Amigos Bravos and other groups associated with Communities for Clean Water filed an historic 60-Day Notice of Intent to Sue LANL for violations of the Clean Water Act. Over the next several years, we will pursue a combination of legal and regulatory strategies as well as community organizing to hold LANL accountable for its irresponsible toxic discharges. The Notice and related grassroots organizing exemplify valiant citizen action to hold accountable an egregious polluter with deep financial pockets (a $2 billion annual budget) and extensive political connections.
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 the ability of local community-based organizations to take responsibility for, and control over, decisions that affect their rivers and waters. 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.

Beyond issue-specific collaboration, 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. In every undertaking, we seek out the views of affected communities, 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.

In 2005, Amigos Bravos decided to re-focus attention on the Middle Río Grande. This small step turned into a major community organizing activity that has attracted attention across the state. In 2006, we helped establish five acequia associations and assisted with over 175 declarations of senior water rights. By empowering residents (many of whom have kitchen gardens, orchards, or small truck farms) to take back control of their water, we were able to further our goal of building a strong voice for addressing the clean-up and sustainable use of water in the most highly polluted community in the City. We also began working with South Valley Partners for Environmental Justice to start first-ever monitoring of the contaminants affecting acequias and other waterways along the Middle Río Grande and we are working to establish a broader volunteer-based monitoring program with local high school volunteers.

In 2006, we coordinated an opportunity for high-school youth in the South Valley to engage in leadership activities on important water-related issues. Students conceived and implemented their own projects, with guidance from teachers and Amigos Bravos staff. Student presentations dealt with the hydrogeology of the Middle Río Grande, the cultural role of the river, and demonstration of a student-led river water quality monitoring program. It is the intention of Amigos Bravos that South Valley youth gain an increased awareness of the Río Grande as their river to care for, to learn from, and to enjoy.

Another South Valley activity tied to the river is the annual San Isidro Fiesta, which Amigos Bravos has coordinated since May 2005. At the same time that churches in the South Valley commemorate the feast day of San Isidro, patron saint of farmers, Amigos Bravos works with many faith communities and a broad array of organizations with ties to the cultural and social life of South Valley residents to build a community-wide event that celebrates acequias and traditional farming activities, while also serving as a forum for discussions of critical water-related issues.

For the last two years, Amigos Bravos has worked with an informal network of state-wide organizations sharing a social and environmental justice perspective. In 2006, Amigos Bravos and its partners developed a consensus definition of public welfare as it applies to water transfers. Public
Welfare is one of three criteria the State Engineer is supposed to evaluate when deciding on such things as water transfers and diversions. In practice, the State Engineer has avoided defining and using public welfare criteria and has passed that responsibility on to regional water planning groups. As a member of the Steering Committee of the Taos Regional Water Plan, Amigos Bravos played a key role in the formation and adoption of a strongly worded Public Welfare statement and implementation plan, with stringent criteria to analyze water transfers within and outside of the region. Public welfare principles are key to countering the perverse market driven approach to water distribution, and to institutionalizing effective water conservation and sustainable, equitable water use practices.

Amigos Bravos has a well-developed program to provide training and capacity-building to local river and watershed groups and to carry out river restoration projects. The Clean Water Circuit Rider (CWCR) program is the core of our community-based approach. Our training and capacity-building work – as many as 12-13 trainings per year – has been enhanced through participation as one of a limited number of state organizations in River Network’s EPA-funded Watershed Health Support Network. (A complete list of workshops, trainings, and related services follows this section)

Within our Media and Communications Initiative, Amigos Bravos continues publishing a quarterly Bulletin. The Bulletin is written and designed by Amigos Bravos staff, with occasional articles by community members or representatives of groups with whom we work. In 2006, we began redesigning and updating our website. We also continue our monthly 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 produced for us by Cultural Energy (Taos). We are grateful to KUNM (89.9) for providing occasional production assistance for shows recorded in the Albuquerque area.
CLEAN WATER ACT WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

Workshops
- “Watershed Solutions, Turning Data into Information”, Sandia Pueblo. 7 pueblos in attendance (20 people total)
- “Overview of Water Quality Standards”, during the Quivira Coalition annual meeting. A one-hour presentation to over 100 people representing approximately 50 groups working with agriculture, grazing, and protecting family farms and ranches
- “New Mexico Waters at Risk – Threats to CWA Protections in Closed Basins” and “ONRW Designations – How to Protect Your Favorite River”. A full-day two-part workshop to four groups and one state agency (10 people total)
- “Protecting our Rivers: Issues and Solutions”. A two-hour evening workshop that gave an overview of water quality standards, pollution issues, and possible solutions in the Taos area (20 people)

Training and Support Services
- Coalition for the Valle Vidal – Intensive services: technical (Media, General CWA assistance, ONRW nomination assistance, water quality standard evaluation) and organizational support (board development, strategic planning, financial management)
- Rio Pueblo de Taos Watershed Group - Intensive services: technical (CWA training, NPDES permits, BMPs, watershed restoration plan development) and organizational support (strategic planning, startup help such as mission statement development, fundraising support)
- Rio Colorado Reclamation Committee – Intensive services: technical (superfund, state groundwater protections, NPDES, mine reclamation information) and organizational support (board development, fundraising, strategic planning, staff hiring and oversight)
- NM Trout – Technical intensive services (ONRW nomination)
- Upper Gila Watershed Alliance – Technical services (Water quality standards and ONRW nominations)
- Santa Cruz Watershed Citizens – Technical services (319 program) and organizational support (start-up help, strategic planning)
- Taos Noxious Weed Committee – Technical (water quality standards, Forest Service EIS review) and organizational support (board development, financial management, fundraising, strategic planning)
- Taos Sierra Club Water Sentinels – Technical services (water quality standards, water quality monitoring)
- Rio Hondo Community Association – Technical services (TMDL, stormwater issues, 404, Forest Service DEIS)
- Santa Fe Watershed Association – Organizational support (vision and mission statement development)
- Truchas Chapter of Trout Unlimited – Technical (TMDL) and organizational support (Fundraising)
- Individuals in the Rio Fernando Watershed: Technical (water quality standards, non point source pollution, watershed planning) and organizational support (start-up information)
- Communities for Clean Water (formerly LANL Water Watch): Technical (Water quality standards, NPDES permits, Stormwater issues) and organizational support (startup assistance, fundraising, strategic planning)
- Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety: Technical services (NPDES, 401, Stormwater issues)

Electronic Communications
- We run email updates with information about issues in the Rio Hondo watershed and provide information about meetings and documents. We have helped an established group – the Rio Hondo Community Association – comment on a TMDL and DEIS and helped a new group get started – Taos Sierra Club Water Sentinels who will be doing water quality sampling in the watershed
- We send out action alerts on statewide issues (both federal and state) that impact water policy
- We draft comments on state and federal water quality policy and send them out to other groups in the state to educate them about the issue and to get them to sign on to the comments
- We follow proposed changes to the NM Water Quality Standards and elicit support from other groups to fight bad proposals and support good ones
- We are the lead group in the conservation community regarding the NMED taking primacy over the NPDES program. We keep other groups across the state informed about the status of this issue by providing analyses and overview documents
**Fiscal Year 2006 (October 1, 2005 – September 30, 2006)**

Amigos Bravos ended its fiscal year September 30, 2006 with net assets of $125,364.

In FY2006, total revenues for Amigos Bravos decreased by 3.8% over the previous year. * This slight decrease reflected the ending of some large long-term foundation support, as these foundations shifted their grantmaking emphases following internal reorganizations. 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 and planned giving campaign, housed at the New Mexico Community Foundation.

**SUPPORT & REVENUE FY2006**

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**ASSETS**

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WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

- **Foundations**: 83.26%
- **Contributions**: 3.30%
- **Memberships**: 6.94%
- **Appeals**: 1.95%
- **Sales**: 3.59%
- **Fiscal Agent Fees**: 0.91%
- **In-kind Donations**: 0.05%

...AND WHERE IT GOES

- **Programs**: 81.16%
- **General & Administrative**: 3.43%
- **Fundraising**: 15.41%

* In addition to its own revenues and expenses, Amigos Bravos served in FY2006 as fiscal agent for the Coalition for the Valle Vidal, which reported revenues of $191,574 and expenses of $191,574 for the period.
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.** Amigos Bravos established this planned giving Endowment Fund in 2006 through generous initial funding from Messengers of Healing Winds Foundation and the New Mexico Community Foundation, which will administer the endowment. Once funded at an appropriate level, interest from the endowment will provide supplementary, flexible funding across Amigos Bravos’ programs and activities. For more information, 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.
New Directions Gallery
Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs
Ojo Sarco Pottery
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Patrick Dunbar Antiques & Rugs
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Rancho Arriba Bed & Breakfast
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Santa Fe Greenhouses, Inc.
Shal Neymark Architectural Ceramics
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Snowblaze Ski Shop
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Sons of the Heart
Southwest Family Practice
Stephen Kilborn Pottery Studio
Stone Forest
Street Flyfishing/Taos Flyshop
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Taos Inn/Doc Martin’s Restaurant
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Taos Mountain Wood Works
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The Ark Bookstore, Inc.
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The Face Place
Thunderbird Lodge, Inc.
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ORGANIZATIONS
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Citizen’s Monitoring & Technical Assessment Fund
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthworks
Natural Resources Defense Council
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
New Mexico Environment Department
319 Grants
River Network
Rio Grande Chapter of Sierra Club
Santa Fe Garden Club
Taos County Economic Development Council
Western Resource Advocates

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Just Woke Up Fund of the Santa Fe Community Foundation

MARK RENDLEMAN CHARITABLE GIFT ACCOUNT AT SCHWAB FUND FOR CHARITABLE GIVING
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New-Land Foundation
New Mexico Community Foundation
Panta Rhea Foundation
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  Martha Egan  
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  Richard and Virginia Ellenberg  
  Alvin Elliott  
  Sheila and Kirk Ellis  
  Wade Elston
“Water is the most critical resource issue of our lifetime and our children’s lifetime. The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land.”

- Luna Leopold (1915-2006)

Luna Bergere Leopold was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1915. He was the son of environmentalist Aldo Leopold, who is generally considered the father of wildlife ecology. His mother, Estelle Bergere, came from the Luna family in Santa Fe.

He earned degrees in Civil Engineering, Meteorology, and Geology. In 1950, he began a 22-year career with the US Geological Survey (USGS), eventually serving as chief hydrologist of the Water Resources Division and turning the USGS into a respected water resources research institution.

Luna Leopold was one of the first people to look at rivers and streams scientifically. His realization that streams have the same characteristics at every scale – from small creeks to the Gulf Stream – pre-dated the concept of fractals so common today. His observation is still the basis of research about the cause of this relationship and a central aspect of both theoretical and practical river studies.

He opposed the original design and planning documentation for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, forcing several years of delay while the builders redesigned the pipeline to get it off the ground and over rivers. In the process, Leopold is credited with essentially inventing the idea of the Environmental Impact Statement.

A colleague said of him: “It can be fairly said that Luna Leopold has changed the way this society approaches environmental problems and conducts environmental science in the service of people and the natural environment.”
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 both 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 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.

Hope Buechler, Taos
A former librarian, Hope also served as a volunteer coordinator for Amnesty International in Massachusetts before retiring to Taos in 1997. Since then, she has been a volunteer for Amigos Bravos, providing research and support for our Molycorp Watch and Río Santa Barbara protection efforts, and in organizing our library. Hope joined the Board in 2002 and has served as Secretary since 2003. She is involved in the work of the Río Colorado Reclamation Committee, a citizen initiative to oversee the Molycorp Superfund Process, sings in the Taos Community Chorus, and enjoys Contra and English Country Dancing in Taos and Santa Fe.
Don Bustos, Santa Cruz

Don Bustos has been farming at Santa Cruz Farm and Greenhouses in the Española Valley in northern New Mexico. Santa Cruz Farm is a family-owned and operated certified organic farm. The farm has been in his family for generations, and has been organically certified by the New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission for three years, though they have been farming organically since 1993. Santa Cruz Farm grows traditional and regional crops, according to the weather and seasons. The farm combines traditional farming methods with more modern techniques such as hoop houses and greenhouses, which extend the growing season. The farm 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 also sits on several NGO boards including New Mexico Acequia Association, Rio Arriba County Extension Service Advisory Committee, and The Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant board.

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), Alliance for Rio Grande Heritage, the Coalition for the Valle Vidal, and a newly formed (and as yet 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 affect 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.
As Office and Outreach Assistant Linda supports other staff and contract personnel in the implementation of special fundraising and outreach events and is responsible for mailings and database entry of returns from all mailings. She 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.

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 10 other clients, but considers Amigos Bravos her “baby” and creative challenge. She also is a single mother of four even greater challenges – Snowflower, Fawn, Lake, and Brook Romero of Taos Pueblo.

Michael serves as the primary grant writer for Amigos Bravos, including tracking and reporting. He also 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 bachelor’s degree in American Studies from UC Santa Cruz.

Lucy leads the organization’s environmental justice and youth projects in Albuquerque, including coordination of the San Isidro Fiesta in the South Valley, and monitoring of contaminants – as well as re-establishment of acequias and water rights – along the Middle Rio Grande. 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.

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 is also responsible for maintaining a secure document backup and retrieval system for the organization’s records and he has primary responsibility for the organization’s membership database, including accurate reports, membership solicitation, direct mail campaigns, special appeals, and web-based action alerts. He has a B.S. in Microbiology from Texas Tech University.

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 was educated in France, is a native of New York, and has lived in New Mexico for 32 years.

The following staff left Amigos Bravos during 2006
Nicole Marcus, Outreach Coordinator and Denise Martinez, Membership & Outreach Coordinator
Amigos Bravos’ programs and activities are based on our Strategic Plan. The plan was developed in 2003 through a collaborative process with our Board of Directors, staff, and an Advisory Council of 40 constituents. Amigos Bravos has held periodic Strategic Planning meetings since shortly after its founding in 1988. The Advisory Council is composed of local community members, legal and technical experts with whom we work, and representatives of national organizations. Our Board is made up of people from communities in which we have on-going projects as well as people with legal and technical skills on which we rely to do our work.

The strategic planning group emulates Amigos Bravos’ self-description: “...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 ...”. The planning process assures that Amigos Bravos remains close to its diverse constituency of land-based local communities and Native American tribes while linking those insights with expertise from a variety of local professionals working on natural resources, legislative policy, science, health, and education, as well as with representatives from regional and national conservation organizations.

The Strategic Plan sets out three over-riding goals: 1) Restore watershed health; 2) Hold polluters accountable; and 3) Build a river protection movement.

Participants in the planning process confirmed the importance of continuing and refining our work on mining reform and water quality standards on a statewide level and on empowering specific communities with the tools to protect and restore their own resources. Participants also identified an immediate need to address the environmental legacy of Los Alamos National Laboratory and possible contamination of the surrounding watershed. Shortly after the retreat, the threat of coalbed methane gas development in the Valle Vidal added an additional project and priority for our work in the coming years. In late 2004, defense of the new state definition of “waters of the state” became a singularly important area of activity.

The following summarizes Amigos Bravos’ programs and major activities under the Strategic Plan. In conjunction with the Strategic Plan, Amigos Bravos developed a set of Criteria & Principles for all work undertaken by the organization.

Criteria & Principles for Amigos Bravos Projects

Amigos Bravos applies the following principals to its work both internally and externally:

1. All projects must support and further the Amigos Bravos Mission
2. All communities impacted by our projects and work should be included; none should be excluded
3. All projects should recognize the important role of land-based communities in preserving the quality of life and characteristics of the landscape of New Mexico
4. New projects should build on prior successes and lessons learned
5. All projects must be do-able, win-able and measure-able
6. Where practicable, projects should build capacity in communities, as the communities see the need
7. All projects should further intercultural communication and understanding
8. All projects must have integrated media outreach and funding strategies
9. Projects should leverage the collective resources of the organization

Overarching Themes for All Projects

Media/Outreach: By incorporating media outreach into all of our projects, we will get out the message that “The River Lives!” An informed public is essential for protecting our rivers

Capacity Building: By inspiring others to become active and effective river protectors, we can multiply our effectiveness in preserving and restoring the ecological and cultural richness of the Rio Grande

Diversity: By including many voices in our projects, the buy-in and success of our work will be increased. Intercultural communication and understanding is essential for a healthy river movement

Objectives for Each Project

- Hold Polluters Accountable
- Restore Watershed Health
- Build Capacity and Provide Assistance to Communities
- Develop Policy Initiatives
- Build a Voice for the River and create a diverse rivers movement
- Link environmental impacts to human health issues
Goal #1 – RESTORE WATERSHED HEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Objectives/Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rio Grande Campaign</td>
<td>• Pursue legal and negotiation strategies regarding water diversion projects along the river</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Clean Water Initiative        | • Pursue river-friendly changes to state and federal water-related laws and regulations  
                               | • Assure stringent application of state and federal clean water laws and regulations (TMDLs, CAFOs, antidegradation, mixing zones) |
|                               | • Set precedent by including mandatory Best Management Practice as part of a permit |
|                               | • Participate in state, regional, and local water planning and regulations (ISC/OSE/WQCC) |
|                               | • Oppose detrimental water transfers                                            |
|                               | • Link water quality and quantity, help define “public welfare” and water commodification issues |
|                               | • Link water quality to human health and economic development                   |
|                               | • Focus on land use, urban sprawl, and river corridor zoning                    |
|                               | • Establish Rio Pueblo de Taos watershed group and develop WRAS (under State section 319 grant) |
|                               | • Oppose coalbed methane extraction in the Valle Vidal                          |
|                               | • Provide leadership to the Coalition for the Valle Vidal                       |
|                               | • Review and comment on Forest Service Reasonable Forseeable Development Scenario (RFDS) |
|                               | • Develop alternative resource management plan for area                          |
|                               | • Defend state and federal environmental laws and promote environmentally-friendly legislation and regulations |
| Native Species Initiatives     | Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Recovery                                              |
|                               | • Represent environmental interests on the USFWS Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Recovery Team |
| River Otter Restoration       | • Coordinate and help lead a river otter restoration strategy for New Mexico    |
|                               | • Support Department of Game & Fish in conduct of feasibility study              |
|                               | • Restore river otters in the Rio Grande, San Francisco and/or Gila watersheds  |
## Goal #2 – HOLD POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Objectives/Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clean Rivers Initiative</strong></td>
<td><strong>Red River Campaign (Molycorp Watch)</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Stop acid mine drainage by requiring the resloping and revegetation of waste rock piles&lt;br&gt;• Stop contamination of the Red River through the NPDES and tailings (DP-933) discharge permits&lt;br&gt;• Re-negotiate the mine permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Rock Canyon Campaign (LANL Watch)</strong></td>
<td>• Collect data, develop long-term advocacy strategy, and identify funding mechanisms&lt;br&gt;• Assemble legal/technical/policy campaign team, develop media messages, and obtain standing&lt;br&gt;• Pursue legal/regulatory options to stop pollution from reaching the river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Red River Restoration — ORV Impact Reduction (under State 319 grant)</strong></td>
<td>• Initiate illegal ORV enforcement program in conjunction with US Forest Service&lt;br&gt;• Organize work teams to conduct on-the-ground restoration of impacted areas/illegal roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mining Reform Campaign</strong></td>
<td>• Provide leadership for the New Mexico Mining Act Network and the Mining Impacts Communications Alliance&lt;br&gt;• Assure enforcement of, and counter any attacks on, the New Mexico Mining Act (focus on financial assurance, reclamation issues)&lt;br&gt;• Develop and implement a strategic plan for reclaiming abandoned mines in New Mexico (hard rock, uranium, and sand and gravel)&lt;br&gt;• Develop, and advocate for, ‘bad actor’ provisions applicable to all state environmental permits&lt;br&gt;• Provide leadership for, and coordinate with, the Western Mining Reform Campaign&lt;br&gt;• Develop public/congressional support for reforming the 1872 mining laws&lt;br&gt;• Advocate for mining reform policies and legislation to stop mining in ecologically important and sacred sites&lt;br&gt;• Assist mine-affected communities with technical, research, and capacity-building needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal #3 – BUILD A RIVER PROTECTION MOVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Activities FY2005</th>
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</table>
| **Media and Communications Initiative (tell stories and dispel myths)** | • Develop clear and concise organizational and issue-specific messaging  
  • Strengthen local, and develop national, positive media presence  
  • Enhance real-time responsiveness to emerging issues and press inquiries  
  • Refine print and electronic means of capturing and promoting organization’s mission, work, and effectiveness |
| **Environmental Justice Initiative** |  
  • Par  
  • ticipate in coalitions linking river health and sustainability to human health and economic justice issues  
  • Provide political and technical assistance to EJ groups dealing with water quality issues  
  • Build relationships with marginalized groups and communities dealing with water pollution issues |
| **Diversity Initiative** |  
  • Produce presentations/workshops on river protection that resonate with a broad constituency  
  (chambers of commerce, civic clubs, land trusts, etc.)  
  • Work with land-based communities (pueblos, acequias, farmers, and land grants) to build on Somos Vecinos initiatives |
| **RIO (Recognize It’s Ours) Youth Initiative** |  
  • Build on the success of the RIO CD, mural, and performances to advocate for river conservation  
  • Provide educational and leadership training opportunities aimed at youth  
  • Provide opportunities for youth to participate in river conservation activities  
  • Lay the groundwork for a statewide Youth Symposium on Water and document youth perspectives |
What a thing it is to sit absolutely alone, in the forest, at night, cherished by this wonderful, unintelligible, perfectly innocent speech, the most comforting speech in the world, the talk that rain makes by itself all over the ridges, and the talk of the watercourses everywhere in the hollows! Nobody started it, nobody is going to stop it. It will talk as long as it wants, this rain. As long as it talks I am going to listen.

—Thomas Merton
H. R. 3817

One Hundred Ninth Congress
of the
United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the third day of January, two thousand and six

An Act

To withdraw the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest in New Mexico from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Valle Vidal Protection Act of 2005”.

SEC. 2. WITHDRAWAL OF VALLE VIDAL UNIT, CARSON NATIONAL FOREST, NEW MEXICO, FROM MINING LAWS.

(a) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest in New Mexico, which consists of 101,794 acres and is identified as Management Area 21 in the land and resource management plan for the Carson National Forest, is hereby withdrawn from—

(1) all forms of entry, appropriation, and disposal under the public land laws;

(2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

(3) operation of the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws and mineral materials laws.

(b) TREATMENT OF EXISTING RIGHTS.—The withdrawal required by subsection (a) is subject to valid existing rights. If these existing rights are relinquished or otherwise acquired by the United States at any time after the date of the enactment of this Act, the lands that were subject to the rights shall be immediately withdrawn as provided in subsection (a).

Speaker of the House of Representatives. PRO TEMPORE

Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate. PRO TEMPORE