

New Mexicans Reach Consensus on the Valle Vidal: Members of New Mexico’s Congressional Delegation Have Yet to Act.

Jim O’Donnell, Coalition for the Valle Vidal

I refuse to believe that we are as desperate as a nation that we are willing to drill every last nook and cranny of our last remaining wild lands for the last drop of oil or cubic foot of gas. I refuse to believe that we are defining the value of our lands by only what can be extracted from them. To me this is like valuing the worth of a human being only by what products of value can be rendered from flesh and bone.

- Alan Lackey, rancher and hunting guide;
former president of the Raton, New Mexico Chamber of Commerce;
co-founder of The Coalition for the Valle Vidal

Rarely, if ever, do New Mexicans reach consensus on land use issues. However, consensus is exactly what has happened when it comes to the proposed drilling in the Valle Vidal and the two Valle Vidal protection acts before Congress.

To date, sixteen New Mexico communities have passed resolutions opposing coalbed methane drilling in the Valle Vidal and calling for permanent protection. Several more are considering similar resolutions. Over the past two years, more than 70,000 people from all walks of life and geographies have written to the Forest Service with the same message. During the three-month scoping period in the summer of 2005 alone, 54,028 people wrote to the Forest Service regarding the Valle Vidal. Of all those letters, only nine people favored drilling – and one of those has since changed his mind!!

To sum that up, 99.98% of comments received by the forest service thus far have demanded permanent protection for the Valle Vidal! We have no doubt that this consensus will again be demonstrated in the upcoming draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) comment period (slated to begin sometime in July, 2006).

Besides being a culturally treasured landscape and vital ecological corridor, recreation in the Valle Vidal is a significant portion of the economy of the communities of northern New Mexico. Our community leaders are keenly aware of this fact and don’t appreciate people in Washington, DC and Houston, Texas toying

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The Unspeakable Threat to New Mexico’s Future Drinking Water

Or, In New Mexico Water Politics, The Thousand-Pound Gorilla and The Elephant-In-The-Living-Room Are Related

The Elephant that nobody wants to talk about is the pollution legacy of the Manhattan Project that now threatens the Río Grande and Santa Fe’s regional aquifer.

The thousand pound Gorilla is the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

Los Alamos National Laboratory has discharged wastewater into area canyons since 1943. **From 1943 to 1964, over two million gallons of untreated radioactive liquid waste was dumped in the Pueblo Canyon system – leaving behind a plutonium legacy of major proportions.** For more than 60 years, radioactive and other toxic pollutants have been filtering their way through surface and ground water systems. These discharges have contaminated the shallow alluvial, intermediate, and deep ground-water systems.

The plume of contaminants — including nitrates, fluoride, chromium (the same carcinogenic compound featured in the *Erin Brockovich* movie), perchlorate (a chlorine based chemical linked to thyroid dysfunction), high explosives, and radioactive elements — is migrating to the river and the regional aquifer, a source of Santa Fe’s drinking water. Many of these pollutants have

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Amigos Bravos 2006 Raffle for the Río
Win An Acre of Land in Beautiful Northern New Mexico
Drawing on Wednesday, July 19, on KTAO 101.9 FM
—see ticket coupon on page 4—

Welcome to Community Outreach Coordinator, Nicole Marcos



The newest member of the staff is Nicole Marcus of Taos Pueblo. Nicole assumed her responsibilities in April of this year. She is in charge of planning and coordinating outreach activities and events, assisting project staff in planning community meetings, and cultivating an active and engaged business membership base. Nicole is also providing database support to Database and Membership Coordinator, Linda Gomez while assuming office management tasks, when necessary. Nicole brings to Amigos Bravos her past experience in administration for Taos Pueblo Tribal Government, and as a sales associate for a prominent Taos gallery. Nicole is the daughter of internationally recognized potter, Angie Yazzie, as well as Michael Marcus, also a potter. About herself, Nicole says, "I am 25 years old and the single mother of a son, Dillon. I graduated from Taos High in 1999, and went on to obtain an Associate Degree in Business Administration, with an emphasis in Tribal Management, from Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. I completed an Associate of Arts in the fall of 2003 and was accepted to the university's four year Graduate Tribal Management Program. I have achieved three years toward a Bachelor of Arts degree and am also pursuing another life goal of mine: parenthood. I appreciate a chance to

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Community Members Successful in Getting More Protection for the Río Hondo

Following a prolonged effort on the part of downstream communities, the final discharge permit for the Village of Taos Ski Valley's wastewater treatment plant now has much stricter limits on pollution entering the Río Hondo.

"This is a substantial victory in the permitting process," said Rachel Conn, Clean Water Circuit Rider with Amigos Bravos. "To get this much reduction in allowable pollutant loading is a tribute to the passion and dedication of these communities."

Amigos Bravos, Taos Pueblo, The Arroyo Hondo Community Association, and many concerned citizens of the Río Hondo watershed have been tracking recent impacts from development on the Río Hondo. A new draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit was issued early in September 2005 for discharges from the Village of Taos Ski Valley's wastewater treatment plant into the Río Hondo. NPDES permits, issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), set limits on the amount of pollutants such as fecal coliform, nitrogen, and phosphorus that is allowed to be discharged into rivers and waterways. Many community members, including Amigos Bravos, submitted detailed comments on the draft permit and testified at an October 6th public hearing held here in Taos. In the final permit, released by the EPA in March, phosphorus limits have been reduced by half, and, in some sections of the permit, total nitrogen limits have been reduced by 75% from the limits proposed in the draft permit. The new permit went into effect on April 1, 2006. ❖

Statement from Robert Gomez, Director, Taos Pueblo Office of Environmental Protection

Our concerns regard the overall growth of the VTSV and its impacts on the Pueblo's interests, including water quality in the Rio Hondo. We are fully cognizant of the issues with the current wastewater treatment plant and as it relates to maintaining and improvement of water quality in the Rio Hondo. The issues are larger than removing nutrients and bacteria from wastewater; significant impacts to the river occur from construction sites, road grading practices, parking lots, stormwater runoff, and recreation.

We are concerned the TMDL being promulgated by NMED is so limited in its scope it does not promote reasonable management practices for nonpoint source pollution control. Numerous anthropogenic sources of pollution exist in the upper watershed and the TMDL New Mexico is promulgating relies on dilution to achieve water quality goals, this approach is simply flawed. The TMDL does not mention or take into account, the health or density of native vegetation, frequency and intensity of storm events, compacted soils on the banks and in parking lots, and many other factors including steepness of slopes (which the TSV is famous for) which are not apparent in the desktop modeling exercise and literature review used to develop the TMDL. We encourage the Village of TSV, New Mexico, and the United States to use a more holistic approach to assess impacts and consequences which are virtually ignored in the assessment documents.

LANL Needs to Be Accountable

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already affected municipal drinking water wells that supply Los Alamos and White Rock, and several springs along the west side of the Río Grande.

PCBs (carcinogenic industrial products banned in 1977) are a major concern in Pueblo and Sandia Canyons, and residue from high explosive tests – including high levels of mercury and lead – are a major concern in Water Canyon. In February of this year, the New Mexico Environment Department issued its first ever “do not eat” fish advisory on the Río Grande in the vicinity of LANL for PCB contamination. In fact, PCB’s have been found in LANL soils and surface waters at levels as much as 25,000 times higher than what the State considers safe for human health.

The pollution we know about at this time represents just the tip of the iceberg. The grim potentialities become ever more horrific as reports of new contaminant levels are released every few months. If it has taken sixty years for this lethal pollution to reach the river, we can only expect the level of toxins to increase – and this is occurring at a time when all of the major metropolitan areas downstream from LANL, including the City of Albuquerque, are looking at the Río Grande as a source of drinking water.

New Mexicans who grow crops or eat locally-grown foods irrigated with water from the Río Grande will be outraged, as well as frightened, once they grasp the looming threat to public health. Joining farmers, omnivores, and vegetarians will be the rest of us who are scheduled to become dependent on the Río Grande and regional aquifers below LANL for future drinking water (this means all residents of Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and all Pueblos and land grants located downstream from LANL).

The reason LANL is the Gorilla is that it boasts a 2.2 billion dollar budget and a secure position as the darling of our Congressional delegation. LANL provides jobs. Our congressional delegates manage to procure almost as much money (4.11 billion dollars) for the Department of Energy’s New Mexico facilities — which include LANL, Sandia National Laboratory, and the Waste Isolation Pilot Project — as for the State of New Mexico’s entire operating budget, (4.8 billion dollars). Moreover, with the highest concentration of PhDs and millionaires in the entire country, along with a small army of lawyers, LANL can throw its weight around and successfully squelch any effort by effected communities to hold it accountable for the threat it presently poses to New Mexico’s future water supply.

For the first time in its history, the New Mexico Environment Department recently proposed limits on LANL’s wastewater discharge permit. In response, LANL appealed the proposed terms with the intention of overriding Governor Richardson and the State’s authority. Unless there is major public outcry, the Gorilla will succeed.

Action must be taken now. LANL has the funds and the know-how to clean up its mess and do right by the people of its host state. Native New Mexicans, transplants, and visitors to New Mexico alike must join to protect the health of our people, our river, our wildlife, and the drinking water of future generations. We must insist on a thorough cleanup of the over 1,400 toxic dump sites.

We must recognize the Elephant-In- Our-Living-Room and hold the Gorilla accountable. ❖

Consensus on the Valle Vidal

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with our future.

Such clear consensus begs the question: why aren’t the Valle Vidal protection bills (HB 3817 and SB 1734) moving swiftly through Congress?

Representative Heather Wilson and Senator Pete V. Domenici have thus far refused to place their significant weight behind these bills. Both congressional members prefer to wait out the Forest Service process before making a decision. But for the people of north-central New Mexico, waiting is not an option. We need permanent protection now.

The Forest Service process has already stacked the deck in favor of opening the Valle Vidal to industrialization by refusing to use its existing authority to temporarily protect the area (the Forest Service does not have the power to permanently protect the Valle Vidal) and by violating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) with regards to its segmented planning process. How can we bank on a secure, stable and prosperous future with our ecologically and economically vital landscapes on the line and threatened with industrialization? We can’t. Waiting is not an option. That is why our communities are demanding urgent passage of the Valle Vidal bills before Congress.

But until Representative Wilson and Senator Domenici co-sponsor and work with Representative Udall and Senator Bingaman to move these bills forward, they will languish in Congress. Already, Representative Udall’s bill has attracted national attention. Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) has decided to co-sponsor the bill. Other prominent Republicans are considering doing the same. The fact is we cannot move these bills without the help of our elected representatives. We need their help. ❖

Please, TAKE ACTION TODAY and *again* write to Representative Wilson and Senator Domenici urging them to co-sponsor and help to swiftly pass both the **Valle Vidal Protection Act (HB 3817)** and the **Valle Vidal Preservation Act (SB 1734)**.

Senator Pete Domenici
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Heather Wilson
20 First Plaza NW, Suite 603
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Welcome to Database and Membership Coordinator Linda Gomez!

The new Database and Membership Coordinator, Linda Gomez, is responsible for cultivating, assessing, and managing an active and engaged membership base, maintaining accurate membership and financial records, and assisting the Community Outreach Coordinator in planning and coordinating outreach activities and events. Linda brings a wealth of advocacy experience to Amigos Bravos, including activism within the American Indian Movement (AIM), five years employment as Legal Assistant and Office Manager for the Western Environmental Law Center (Taos), and advocacy work as the Program Manager for all Native American Programs in the Taos Municipal Schools, over an additional five year span. She was a political science major at UCLA and received a Legal Assistance Training Certificate from TVI at the University of New Mexico.



Originally from Oklahoma, Linda Gomez is a member of the Cheyenne-Arapahoe Tribe, and is married to Daniel Gomez of Taos Pueblo, where she has resided for most of the past thirty years. She is the mother of four children (three boys and one girl), and seven grandchildren.

About her advocacy work, Linda says: "I think we are all put on this earth to do something, we each have a task to perform. I've always been an advocate for Native people and for the environment, focusing on one or the other at different times. During the nineties, when I worked at the Western Environmental Law Center, I felt I had found my purpose. Advocacy on behalf of young Indian people was my purpose when working for the Taos Municipal Schools. Then, when I was offered the position at Amigos Bravos, I felt I was being given a great opportunity to get back to environmental advocacy. I feel comfortable because I feel I am doing what I am meant to be doing. I am helping out a little.

My earliest realization that the environment needed to be protected came as a child watching planes fly overhead and spray pesticides on the fields around where we lived, then seeing all the trees in the little forest where we lived begin to die. I remember everyone saying we had to hurry inside to avoid the spray from the crop dusters. My family lives in a twelve acre forest surrounded by flat open fields because my family planted trees during the dust bowl to stop the blowing sand and dirt. Other people also built tree barriers to stop the dirt, but then they cut them down again. We kept our forest.

In Okalahoma, where my people live, the water continues to be polluted by pesticides and from industrial-size hog farms, as well as from containments leaking into the ground water from oil and gas wells. Those things are destroying the land and the water. When I was growing up, we drank all of our water from wells. Nobody can do that now. We have to haul our water.

Water is very important to Taos Pueblo, it is sacred. My husband and I had a choice of living with my people in Oklahoma

or at Taos Pueblo and we decided it was more important to stay with Taos Pueblo because their tradition is so strong and we want to help keep that tradition strong. I was totally awed that Taos Pueblo was able to fight for their Blue Lake. They were the first tribe to ever have anything returned from the United States government. They persevered and got their water and their sacred site back.

Amigos Bravos has done so much for the water and the rivers. We've followed what they've been doing, all along. We always wondered how we could help and working here now is giving me a chance to contribute in the effort to keep the waters clean and healthy. The tribal people are really grateful to Amigos Bravos, but they don't have a lot of money, and they don't always know how to help. I'm hoping maybe I can serve as a bridge between Native people and Amigos Bravos, help each of them to help each other." ❖

Amigos Bravos 2006 Raffle for the Río

- Yes! I want to win an acre of land in beautiful northern New Mexico**
- Please send me _____ raffle tickets @ \$25.00 each
- Please send 5 tickets @ the special price of \$100.00

Enclosed is my check for _____.

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Make checks payable to Amigos Bravos.
Mail to: Amigos Bravos, Box 238, Taos, NM 87571

Calendar of Events:

- June 13-19** (Tues.-Sun.) **Watershed and Restoration Structure Evaluation on Comanche Creek.** Sponsored by the Quivira Coalition, New Mexico Trout, Trout Unlimited and others. Call Jim O'Donnell at 505-758-3874.
- June 16-18** (Fri.-Sun.) **Upper Red River Watershed Volunteer Work Weekend** - finish riparian enclosure in Upper Bitter Creek drainage. Call Rachel Conn at 758-3874 for details.
- July 7-9** (Fri.-Sun.) **Comanche Creek Restoration Workshop** and work weekend with Bill Zeedyk. Sponsored by the Quivira Coalition, New Mexico Trout, Trout Unlimited and others. Register online at <http://www.quiviracoalition.org/events/index.php>.
- July 19** (Wednesday) **Amigos Bravos 11th Annual Raffle for the Río Drawing** , KTAO FM radio, 101.9
- Aug. 4-6** (Fri.- Sun.) **Upper Red River Watershed Volunteer Work Weekend** - lower Bitter Creek drainage.

Amigos Bravos' Capital Reserve Fund was opened in March 1998 with a \$15,000 grant from the Ruth Mott Fund. Thanks to generous donations from Charmay B Allred, Rudolfo & Patricia Anaya, Ann G. Ash, Ezra Bayles, Jean Bergeron, Larry Bernard, John Blancy, Bolene Charitable Trust, Jay Bush & Peggy Rudberg, Doris Channell, Cid's Food Market, F. & E. Clem, John Clem, Dr. Karen Cohen and Robert Templeton, Virginia & William Cowles, Alice Dadian & Richard Bowditch, James Davidson, Marjorie F. Day, Robert & Clarice Day, Martha Dick, The Dobson House, Patrick Dunbar Antiques, Paul & Dawn Fleischer, Leo & Judy Follmar, Lisa Fox, Elizabeth Fuller, Percyne Gardner & Kim Kirkpatrick, Arifa Goodman, Lumina Greenway, Marian Gurewitz, William & Linda Hardy, Harriett & Wendell Harris, Madeleine Herrmann, John Hickerson, Hirschi Investments, Mark Holland, Douglas Jones, Llewellyn & Jean Jones, Anna Katherine, Barbara Kohl, Diane Konechney, Robert Lagasse, Douglas Large, Leroy & Shelby Leonard, Thomas Lincoln, Annette Lippincott & John Clark, Mario Manzo, Victor & Patricia Marsh, William & Mary Jane McCafferty, Carey Moore, Pat Munoz & Dorcas Adkins, Robert & Shirley Myers, Dwaine & Barbara Nelson, Claiborne & John O'Connor, Barbara Pearlman, Jeanell Pelsor, Jo Dell & Stanton Reed, Bill Reeves, Allen & Mary Anne Sanborn, Merry & John Schroeder, Jessica Schwarzenbach, William & Dudley Slade, Walter Sondheim, J. Thea Spaeth, Ruth & William Stamm, Canon Stevens, Richard Stibolt & Catherine Kingston, Ann Sudlow, Jacqueline Swap, Douglas & Jane Swift, Kenneth & Janet Taht, John Tapertek, Walter Teilmann, Gwen & Mike Tennison, Raymond Trompler & Helen Zagona, Deb Ungar, Meil & Emily Uptegrove, Mary Utsinger, Suzie Verkamp, Patti & Mark Veteto, Keith Woloshon & Katherine Nydes, Catherine Wright, and Ann & Chris Wyndham, we have added \$16,218 to the interest bearing account. Our goal is to have \$150,000 in the account by the end of 2007. Please consider making a contribution to the Capital Reserve Fund. ❖

Where There's a Will, There's a Way



*By including Amigos Bravos in your will...
...you could protect a river for years*

CONFIDENTIAL REPLY

To explore a bequest to Amigos Bravos, please complete this form and return it, marked confidential, to Brian Shields, Executive Director, Amigos Bravos.

- I have included Amigos Bravos in my will.
- Please send information on how to include Amigos Bravos in my will.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Telephone _____ Best time to call _____

Help us save the Río Grande Join Amigos Bravos!

- \$25 General Membership \$100 River Protector
 - \$35 River Steward \$125 Business Member
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 - \$75 River Advocate \$500 River Angel
- I want to make a donation to the **Amigos Bravos Capital Reserve Fund**

Amigos Bravos is a 501 (c)(3) organization.
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South Valley Youth Water Symposium

The Amigos Bravos South Valley Youth Water Symposium – coordinated by **Albuquerque Projects Director Lucy Sanchez** – offered an amazing day full



of wonder, creativity, and the expressive results of thoughtful student research. For the students of the South Valley, it proved an opportunity to bring forth what they know about the Río Grande in terms of geological as well as cultural realities. For Bosque School students, it

was an opportunity to demonstrate their wild-life and water monitoring capabilities. For the Amigos Bravos staff and attending teachers, it was an experience of hope and inspiration in regard to just how well the Río Grande will be tended in the hands of the upcoming generation. If the voices and energies of the young presenters are any indication, it will be very well tended, indeed.

The Symposium opened with Executive Director Brian Shields asking the student audience where they thought the name Amigos Bravos came from. Erica Terrazas of Rio Grande High, answered: “*RIO BRAVO!*”. And when Shields asked, “What does *bravo* mean?”, Erica’s classmate, Nancy Ledezma called out, “BRAVE!”

“Your grandparents could drink from the Río Grande,” responded Shields. “We could do that at one time, we can do that again. We have to believe in that miracle. At Taos Pueblo, where Nicole Marcos lives, they can still do that because they take care of their watershed.”

“You are the future of the Río Grande. The Río Grande is dependent on the values that you hold; your vision is what the Rio Grande will become. This is an opportunity to learn from each other and to begin to talk about how we can – together — change the fate of the river for the good. I’m hoping that in this sharing we’ll determine what the biggest issues are for the Río Grande, in your minds, and come up with a plan to take action on those issues.”

Environmental Club students, Adalis Sifuentes, Marco Maldonado, and Eric Murphy from South Valley Academy gave a beautifully personalized account of their experience of the geology and history of the Rio Grande rift. Teacher Jenn Gables took the students on day trips north to Taos and the Rio Grande Gorge, then south through Bosque del Apache to Elephant Butte. During these road trips, students were able to make the connection between what they were reading in their textbooks and the actual landscape, while, at the same, time describing their experience of the landscape in their own writings.

Welcome to Nicole Marcos

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make a difference by working for Amigos Bravos. I want my son to be able to experience clean and plentiful water when he grows up and when he has kids. Our tribal elders describe the water in the rivers as our life-line. It is what has kept our tribe alive, and it is sacred to us.

Since I can remember I have felt compelled to contribute to the preservation of our land and water. When I was small -- my cousins and I used to play in the ditches on the Pueblo. We depended entirely on the Río Pueblo, which runs through the center of the village, for our drinking water. This also ties in to our spiritual practices. The river and the water from the river are an integral part of our traditional doings. Clean and plentiful water flowing into our lives directly from the river is not theoretical for me; it is a reality I am close to and grew up experiencing everyday.”

As for her work at Amigos Bravos, the new Coordinator says, “I’m always up for a new challenge and there is a lot of work to be done in the areas of outreach to the community and in upgrading and organizing the data base. I’m very excited about learning how to use the Clean Water Act, and gaining the ability to share that knowledge with others.

I’ve seen how the community responds to Amigos Bravos, how people applaud the work Amigos Bravos is doing and take the next step to donate time and money, I see, too, that taking care of the rivers is personal for them as it is for me because they live here, they grew up here, their kids live here, and through hard work and determination, Amigos Bravos has built a history of success stories that give people hope and courage.” ❖

A video of the landscape, taken by the students with a hand-held camera, served as visual grounding for the presentations. Adalis Sifuentes described the creation of the river gorge in terms of the ordinary experience of making a pie crust or tortilla. “If you stretch the tortilla out too thin, a hole will appear in the center. The same thing happened with the rift. It thinned out, then dropped down creating a hole which then filled with water, creating the river.” Marco Maldonado spoke about the bird sanctuaries of the Bosque del Apache, the lava dome of Socorro Peak, and desertification as a result of over-grazing practices in the past. Eric Murphy rounded out the presentation with a discussion of dinosaur mandibles, lava eruptions, and zebra teeth in the context of Elephant Butte volcano.

The students from Rio Grande High, taught and coordinated by John

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South Valley Youth Water Symposium -continued from page 6

Wright, launched their presentation on “Cultures & Traditions along the Río Grande” with a colorful and engaging video, arranged and magnificently produced by the students themselves. The video featured traditional and contemporary music of the Río Grande in the background while a river of images poured across the screen – images of the people, folklore, and historic traditions that have existed along the Río Grande, ending with the more destructive and divisive impacts of border patrol, and pollution of the water.

Eric Marquez graciously served as master of ceremonies for the presentation and also spoke, with Antonio Vigil, on “Herbalism and Remedios of the Río Grande,” including, in general terms, descriptions of ritual healing ceremonies traditionally practiced by indigenous Native American and Hispanic cultures. Misty Vaquera discussed “The Muscial History of the Río Grande,” saying that the music of the early Spanish colonists was “necessary inspiration in the daily struggle for survival.” Jessica Ortiz and Karilee Murphy gave an animated description of the “Folklore and Tales of the Río Grande,” recounting stories and images of headless monsters, *el basilisco* (serpent/dragon), and *La Llorona*. The series of presentations ended with the sobering truths about the tragedies resulting from U.S. immigration policy in “Border Issues along the Río Bravo.” Connecting these deaths to issues beyond

economics, Nancy Ledezma and Erika Terrazas explained that, “Since 1820, Mexicans are known to be the largest immigration nationality in our history. More than one million arrived in the U.S. between 1900 and 1930. By 1920, the Río Grande valley was segregated and Mexicans have had to cross the Río Bravos to

get to the ‘Promised Land.’ But Mexicans feel like they shouldn’t have to do that. They’ve always lived on either side of the river, viewing it as a mystical god to be placated with prayers, respected, and held in awe.”

The venue for the Youth Water Symposium was generously provided by the Bosque School. Bosque School



Water sampling demonstration, students from the *Bosque School* (top) and *Río Grande High School*



John Wright’s students from *Río Grande High School*, l. to r.: Karilee Murphy, Jessica Ortiz, Antonio Vigil, Erika Terrazas, Nancy Ledezma, Eric Marquez, and Misty Vasquez



South Valley Academy Environmental Club members l. to r.: Marco Maldonado, Adalis Sifuentes, Jenn Gables (monitor), and Eric Murphy

their water sampling and monitoring procedures, wildlife tracking devices and routines, and a computerized test for determining each participant’s “ecological footprint”).

The day ended with students coming together to discuss how they might influence policy change in favor of protecting the river. The discussion heated up around the subject of bottled water versus tap water, with the general consensus that in some cases bottled water may be of higher quality than tap water, but that the long term direction must be on ensuring that clean and abundant tap water is available for everyone. With facilitation from students will make a presentation to the Albuquerque City Council regarding personal care products and pharmaceuticals currently impacting the health of the Río Grande. ❖



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the Wild
Rivers*

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Victory for Clean Water!

On May 21, the House voted to reverse an EPA guidance which stripped Clean Water Act protection from many of New Mexico's waters, especially closed basins and ephemeral waters. When the guidance was issued, Amigos Bravos collected in New Mexico almost 1,000 postcards in protest. Amigos Bravos has also been active in educating the public about the guidance's implications and urging and supporting the State to adopt a more comprehensive definition of *waters of the state* to ensure State protections to all New Mexico's waters. Amigos Bravos also signed onto letters to members of Congress in favor of the reversal. This is a huge victory! Thanks to all our members for your support and help in this effort. ❖

It won't be TV, iPod or any other electronic media, but *OTTERS FOREVER!* will be interactive. Here's how:

OTTERS FOREVER! is the musical written and composed by Amigos Bravos' puppet otter, Olivia – with assistance from Taos composer/playwright Joanne Forman, who was also a puppeteer for many years. The concert version of *OTTERS FOREVER!* will be presented at the Taos Public Library as part of the summer-long events program for children. Olivia will narrate and SOUNDSCAPES cellist Rebecca Caron and marimbist Tim Long will perform. After the music, the young audience will be invited to draw (paper and markers provided) their version of the story. Western Sky Cafe will present a show of the work later in the summer. Everyone is invited, even grownups – if they behave.

For dates and times, please contact Forman at 751-1102 or jofo@laplaza.org ❖

