

# River Protection Workgroup



Involving the public in protecting the natural values of selected streams while allowing water development to continue

## River Protection Workgroup Information Sheet

Vallecito Creek and Pine River (Version: 7/5/11)

<http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/riverprotection>

This *Initial Information Sheet* was prepared to inform participants involved in the Vallecito and Pine River Workgroup. This version can be updated and changed as the Workgroup proceeds and as new information is made available or requested. Please refer to the Glossary of Terms and the Glossary of Agencies handouts for clarification on any words used or entities mentioned (documents available at the meetings and on the Web site).

**Area of Focus:** The area of focus includes the watersheds of Vallecito Creek and the Los Pinos River upstream of the USFS boundary with private land. The area drained by Vallecito Creek at the USFS boundary falls mainly in La Plata and San Juan Counties, but also includes portions of Hinsdale County. The area drained by Vallecito Creek includes no private land. The area drained by the Los Pinos River at the USFS boundary falls mainly in Hinsdale County but does include small portions of La Plata and San Juan Counties. This area includes no private land. Please refer to the last page of this document for a map.

The San Juan Public Lands Draft Land Use Plan (2007), found Vallecito Creek and the Los Pinos River (and 6 tributaries), upstream of the USFS boundary, to be “eligible” for Wild and Scenic Rivers (“WSR”) designation. In addition, the Los Pinos and 6 tributaries upstream of the USFS boundary were found to be “preliminarily suitable” (Draft Land Use Plan 2007). Read on for more information.

### **Values (in alphabetical order):**

***Economic:*** Livestock grazing; agricultural, domestic and municipal water supplies; outfitting businesses (water-related, dude ranches, hunting, fishing, etc.); and a regional public access and recreation attraction.

***Fish:*** Fish species in the Los Pinos River and Vallecito Creek drainages (above the point where the rivers cross the USFS boundary) include but are not limited to Colorado cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, brook trout, brown trout, various subspecies of cutthroat trout, and Emerald lake rainbow trout. Emerald Lake rainbow trout are a rainbow and cutthroat hybrid from late 1880s stocking: a unique strain of fish. The Emerald Lakes were barren of fish until fish were brought up from the Los Pinos River, where there was a hatchery operation, in the late 1880s. Gunnison

River rainbow trout were stocked one time in the early 1890s and the result has been a hybridized “cutbow”: the Emerald Lakes rainbow trout. Yellowstone cutthroat trout were stocked by air one time in 1954 (4000 fingerlings), and genetic tests suggest that that single stocking introduced Yellowstone genetics into the hybridized population. Yellowstone cutthroats are a more lake adapted sub-species of cutthroat trout.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (“CDOW”) applies standard fishing regulations to all waters in the two drainages, except the following:

- Emerald Lakes (Big and Little): artificial flies and lures only, bag and possession limit and maximum size for trout is two fish, 14 inches long; fishing is prohibited Jan.1 – July 15 in the Lake Creek inlet for ½ mile above Big Emerald Lake.
- Los Pinos River (headwaters to USFS southern Weminuche Wilderness boundary): flies and lures only, 2 fish limit.
- Vallecito Creek (headwaters to southern boundary of Weminuche Wilderness): flies and lures only, 2 fish limit.

All streams located in the Vallecito and Los Pinos drainages within the Weminuche Wilderness capable of supporting trout are wild trout streams (i.e., no stocking occurs). There are no Conservation Populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout in these drainages. A Conservation Population of cutthroat trout is defined as being 90% or more genetically pure. Colorado cutthroat trout have been introduced to the previously barren Sierra Vandera Creek drainage, with success as yet unknown. If successful, it will be a Conservation Population. Most headwater lakes have been stocked by air with CRCT since 2005. Because there is little to no reproduction in these cold high elevation lakes, CRCT will eventually be the only fish in the lakes.

**Flora:** The USFS Region 2 Forester identifies a list of Sensitive Species of animals and plants (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/projects/scp/sensitivespecies/>) for which population viability is a concern, based on significant current or predicted downward trends in populations and/or habitat. See the handout entitled: Checklist of sensitive plant species known to occur, or with potential to occur, in the Vallecito Creek and Los Pinos River drainages above the San Juan National Forest boundary. There are no known occurrences of plant species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

**Geology:** The geology of the Area illustrates a broad span of earth’s geologic history and contributes to the dramatic scenic values of the two drainages. There are essentially three distinct layers of volcanic activity, each representing large spans of time, overlaying even more ancient sedimentary rocks. Some of the geologic formations include the Pine River Batholith granitic formation, the Rio Grande Pyramid which is part of the Rio Grande Volcanic Flow, and the San Juan Dome.

**Healthy Natural Landscape:** These two watersheds are valuable because they represent a diverse ecosystem that encompasses a diversity of life zones starting with ponderosa pine up to alpine. They are healthy and intact and provide wildlife movement corridors. Due to their overall “intactness”, as well as the presence of Wilderness within the drainages, they maintain a wild quality. The Weminuche Wilderness is the largest wilderness area in Colorado. The fact that the majority of both of these watersheds falls within designated wilderness is unusual and significant in Colorado.

**Recreation:** The area is part of a highly used regional recreation center in close proximity to Durango and other southwest Colorado communities. It is used for a variety of recreational activities including:

- Backcountry skiing
- Backpacking
- Camping
- Extreme kayaking
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Horseback riding and horse packing
- Hunting
- Mountaineering
- Rock-climbing

**Scenery:** The area is very beautiful.

**Terrestrial wildlife:** Some of the wildlife species common in the area include: elk, mule deer, big horn sheep, black bear, coyote, bobcat, mountain lion, beaver, and snowshoe hare. Mountain goats and moose also use the area. The USFS identifies a list of “Sensitive Species,” some of which are known or likely to occur in the area. In addition, the Colorado Division of Wildlife’s (CDOW) *State Wildlife Action Plan* identifies species most in need of pro-active conservation measures. The CDOW Plan identifies a 2-tiered list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need, with Tier I species having the most urgent need. A handout is available that provides more information on USFS, State and Federally listed species with potential to use the Area of Focus.

**USFS-Identified Outstandingly Remarkable Values or “ORVs”:** As part of its evaluation of rivers for Wild and Scenic River (WSR) eligibility, the USFS analyzes rivers for any river-related values that are unique, rare, or exemplary, and that are significant at a regional or national scale. These features are identified as “Outstandingly Remarkable Values.” The following box provides a description of the ORVs identified for Vallecito Creek and for the Los Pinos River and 6 tributaries based on the San Juan Public Lands Center’s - *2007 Draft Land Management Plan*:

<b>Vallecito Creek</b>	<b>Los Pinos River and 6 Tributaries (Lake Creek, Flint Creek, Sierra Vandera Creek, Snowslide Gulch, Rincon la Osa, Rincon la Vaca)</b>
<p><b>Scenery</b> The valley provides outstanding views of the stream in the impressive granite canyon, and the views of surrounding mountains.</p> <p><b>Recreation</b> The creek is popular with extreme kayakers due to its difficulty (Class 5+) and the sheer-walled granite canyon, which provides extremely narrow slots. It is recommended for expert kayakers only. It has crystal-clear water flowing through an incredible gorge with some of the highest-quality drops to be found. It is also nationally significant for whitewater recreation. It’s listing on American Whitewater’s national river inventory, while not sufficient by itself to be an ORV, supports the above analysis [DLMP Appendix D].</p>	<p><b>Scenery</b> The Los Pinos River corridor stands out as spectacular and distinctive. The peaks and granite ridge tops are focal points capping the deep canyons delineated by rock outcrops and precipitous vertical walls. Near the Continental Divide the granite landscape gives way to peaks surrounded by open alpine valleys and slopes. The corridor and valley support both coniferous and deciduous forests and shrub lands, giving way to dramatic displays of color in the fall. The upper valley is dotted with numerous lakes and ponds, and the waters running down valley rest in pools between series of cascades and vertical waterfalls [paraphrased from Los Pinos River – 3-4-89 Wild and Scenic Recommendation].</p>

# Land and Water Protections Currently in Place

**Roadless Area:** The majority of the Area of Focus lies within the Weminuche Wilderness. However, about 3100 acres of the “Weminuche Adjacent” 2006 Inventoried Roadless Area fall within the Area of Focus. The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (36 CFR 294) prohibits road construction and timber harvest, with limited exceptions, in Inventoried Roadless Areas. The 2001 rule is currently in litigation with different courts issuing conflicting decisions. It seems likely that some version of a roadless rule – although it is not clear which one (the Colorado Rule or the Federal Rule) – will be in place in the future, restricting road construction and timber-harvest.

**Wilderness:** The majority of the Vallecito Creek watershed (46,400 acres) and the entire Los Pinos River watershed (67,840 acres), where they cross the USFS boundary with private land, fall within the Weminuche Wilderness.

**Wild and Scenic Suitability:** The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 directed the US Department of Agriculture and the US Department of Interior to evaluate selected rivers for potential addition to the W&S Rivers System. In 1979, one such suitability study was completed for the Los Pinos River and tributaries, and recommended designation for these segments. The Los Pinos River and 6 tributaries were re-evaluated in 1989, with no changes made. In order to manage this “suitable” river for its potential inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System, the USFS uses existing authorities to protect the Los Pinos River’s free-flowing character, water quality, ORVs and recommended classification as Wild. According to the San Juan Public Lands 2007 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (p.3.549): “A finding of suitability does not create a water right. A water resource project proposed on a suitable river will be analyzed as to its effect on a river’s free-flow, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values, with adverse effects prevented to the extent of existing agency authorities (such as special-use authority) and subject to valid existing rights. Projects on a suitable river may be subject to more intense analysis and additional mitigation, compared to rivers not eligible or suitable.”

See page 10 for information on the currently proposed suitability under the San Juan Public Lands 2007 Draft Land Management Plan.

**USFS management:** The entire focus area is managed by the USFS. The box on the next page provides more information:

<b>Vallecito Creek (above the USFS boundary)</b>	<b>Los Pinos River (above the USFS boundary)</b>
<p>The San Juan Public Lands Center's - 2007 <i>Draft Land Management Plan</i> allocates the entire watershed to Management Area (MA)1W, "Natural Processes Dominate: Designated Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas and Piedra Area", other than a small area in the southeastern portion of the drainage on the west flank of Middle Mountain. This area falls outside of the Weminche Wilderness Area and the Draft Plan allocates it partly to MA 3 "Natural Landscape with Limited Management," (portions of the "Weminuche Adjacent Inventoried Roadless Area"), and partly to MA 5 "Active Management". The MA 5 portion is mapped as suitable for cattle and sheep grazing, as well as timber harvest and some motorized recreation. Under current management this area outside of the Weminuche Wilderness is all allocated to MA 5 "Active Management".</p> <p>Overall, the majority of the area would continue to be managed similarly to how it has been in the past if the <i>Draft Plan's</i> recommendations are made final.</p>	<p>The San Juan Public Lands Center's - 2007 <i>Draft Land Management Plan</i> allocates all of the area in the Los Pinos River drainage to Management Area (MA)1W, "Natural Processes Dominate: Designated Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas and Piedra Area."</p> <p>The area would continue to be managed similarly to how it has been in the past if the Draft Plan's recommendations are made final.</p>

***In-Stream Flows and Minimum Lake Levels:*** An In-Stream Flow is an in-channel appropriation of non-consumptive water between two specific points and is appropriated by the Colorado Water Conservation Board for the purpose of protecting the natural environment to a reasonable degree. A Minimum Lake Level is a non-consumptive, in-lake use of water made exclusively by the Colorado Water Conservation Board for minimum levels in natural lakes in order to preserve or improve the natural environment to a reasonable degree. Both in-stream flow and natural lake level rights are administered within the State's water right priority system.

Vallecito Creek Drainage above USFS boundary

*In-stream Flows:* There are no in-stream flow appropriations within the Vallecito Creek watershed.

*Minimum Lake Levels:*

<b>Lake Name</b>	<b>Case No.</b>	<b>Level (Acre-feet)</b>	<b>Appropriation Date</b>
Donut Lake	W-1777-77	7	3/9/1977
Hazel Lake	W-1538-76	225	5/12/1976
Irving Lake	W=1537-76	87	5/12/1976
South Leviathan Lake	W-1781-77	225	3/9/1977

<b>Lake Name</b>	<b>Case No.</b>	<b>Level (Acre-feet)</b>	<b>Appropriation Date</b>
Lower Leviathan Lake	W-1780-77	4	3/9/1977
Lower Sunlight Lake	W-1504-76	536	5/12/1976
Mystery Lake	W-1784-77	215	3/9/1977
North Leviathan Lake	W-1782-77	108	3/9/1977
Sunlight Pothole #1 Lake	W-1507-76	29	5/12/1976
Sunlight Pothole #2 Lake	W-1508-76	28	5/12/1976
Trinity Lake (aka Upper Storm King)	W-1786-77	1040	3/9/1977
Upper Sunlight Lake	W-1505-76	503	5/12/1976
Vallecito Lake	W-1515-76	595	5/12/1976

Los Pinos River Drainage above USFS boundary

*In-Stream Flows:*

<b>Stream Name</b>	<b>Case No.</b>	<b>Amounts (CFS)</b>	<b>Appropriation Date</b>
Los Pinos River	84CW283	32	7/13/1984

*Minimum Lake Levels:*

<b>Lake Name</b>	<b>Case No.</b>	<b>Level (Acre-feet)</b>	<b>Appropriation Date</b>
Emerald Lake Reservoir	W-1510-76	8532	5/12/1976
Half Moon Lake	W-1543-76	6	5/12/1976
Little Emerald Lake	W-1511-76	306	5/12/1976

Lake Name	Case No.	Level (Acre-feet)	Appropriation Date
Moon Lake	W-1513-76	108	5/12/1976
Annie Lake	W-1540-76	248	5/12/1976
Bettie Lake	W-1539-76	219	5/12/1976
Big Flint Lake	W-1512-76	855	5/12/1976
Divide Lake	W-1545-76	119	5/12/1976
Elk Lake	W-1547-76	108	5/12/1976
Granite Lake	W-1544-76	2016	5/12/1976
Little Flint Lake	W-1511-76	240	5/12/1976
Rock Lake	W-1514-76	2772	5/12/1976

## Important Water Information

### **Court Actions:**

**USFS Reserved Rights:** A case is pending (USFS Reserved Rights Application in Case W-1605-76B) that involves whether the USFS is entitled to water rights "reserved" as of the date Congress reserved land for the National Forest for fluvial geomorphological (stream-channel maintenance) purposes, and, if so, how much water per stream across USFS land. In short, this case relates to whether or not the USFS holds a Federally Reserved Water Right and, if so, its size. Negotiations to resolve the case have been limited since 2003.

**Municipal and other Consumptive Uses:** Vallecito Creek and the Los Pinos River are sources of water for numerous state adjudicated water rights located downstream of the USFS boundary, including but not limited to irrigation, domestic, stock, commercial, fish and municipal water for the communities of Bayfield and Ignacio.

**Potential for Additional Consumptive Uses:** There are no conditional water rights within either the Vallecito Creek or the Los Pinos River above the USFS boundary, therefore there is currently no potential for additional consumptive use within the Area of Focus. A presidential exemption would be needed for development of facilities within the wilderness boundary.

**Potential Water Diversion and Storage Locations: SWSI sites** — The State Water Supply Initiative ("SWSI") was a basin-by-basin study conducted by the Colorado Water Conservation Board to examine Colorado's water uses, water-supply needs, and future water-planning efforts. SWSI focused on using a common technical basis for identifying and quantifying water needs and issues. SWSI catalogued the specific projects, plans, and processes that local water suppliers have identified and are undertaking as components of their own water-supply planning efforts to meet the needs they themselves have identified. In addition, pursuant to House Bill 1117 and the Water for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act, the Southwest Water Roundtable is evaluating the consumptive and non-consumptive needs in the basin. For more information, go to: <http://cwcb.state.co.us/IWMD/> (then go to the SWSI I and SWSI II).

There are no SWSI identified sites within the Area of Focus.

**Stream-Flow Data:** Several U.S. Geological Survey gauges have been operated in the area. The chart below shows the gauge sites' number, name and dates of operation.

<u>Gauge Site Number</u>	<u>Site Name</u>	<u>Dates of Operation</u>
372754107275401	LOS PINOS RIVER AT WILDERNESS BNDRY NR BAYFIELD,CO	Active
372954107260001	LAKE CREEK NEAR BAYFIELD, CO	Active
372956107255401	LOS PINOS RIVER ABOVE LAKE CREEK NEAR BAYFIELD, CO	Active
373719107230501	UPPER GRIZZLY INFLOW	
09352500	LOS PINOS R BL SNOSLIDE CAN, NR WEMINUCHE PS, CO.	
09351000	PINE R-WEMINUCHE PASS D AT WEMINUCHE PASS, CO.	
372833107324600	VALLECITO CREEK AT CAMPGROUND, LA PLATA, CO	
09352900	VALLECITO CREEK NEAR BAYFIELD, CO.	Active
373034107320901	VALLECITO CREEK BELOW TAYLOR CREEK NR BAYFIELD, CO	Active
373100107315801	FIRST CREEK NEAR BAYFIELD, CO	Active
373219107312500	SECOND CREEK, LA PLATA, CO	
373423107311700	IRVING CREEK, LA PLATA CO	
373521107320200	JOHNSON CREEK, LA PLATA, CO	
373650107321400	ROELL CREEK, LA PLATA, CO	
373712107350100	UPPER GRIZZLY LAKE	
373800107322500	SUNLIGHT CREEK, LA PLATA, CO	
373740107344700	UPPER SUNLIGHT LAKE	
373740107344701	UPPER SUNLIGHT INFLOW	
373804107344300	LOWER SUNLIGHT LAKE	
373804107344301	LOWER SUNLIGHT INFLOW	
373835107320800	LEVIATHAN CREEK, SAN JUAN, CO	
373915107311200	ROCK CREEK, SAN JUAN CO	
374103107313400	NEBO CREEK,	
374105107314000	VALLECITO CREEK ABOVE NEBO	
374146107320400	VALLECITO LAKE OUTLET	

Note: Stream-flow data for each of these gauges is available in a variety of formats on the U.S. Geological Survey Water Data Web site at: <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/>

**Water Rights:** The following chart shows water rights. There are no storage water rights within the Area of Focus. The only direct flow water rights are transbasin rights from the Los Pinos River to the Rio Grande River. *Please refer to the Glossary of Terms (handed out at the meetings and also on the Web site) to understand these various types of water rights).*

<b>TRANSBASIN DIRECT FLOW WATER RIGHTS</b>	Total # of Rights	Total CFS (Cubic feet per second)
<b>VALLECITO CREEK (above USFS boundary)</b>		
Absolute water rights	0	0
Conditional water rights	0	0
<b>LOS PINOS RIVER (above USFS boundary)</b>		
Absolute water rights	7	58
Conditional water rights	0	0

**Water Quality:** The Colorado Water Quality Control Commission is the agency responsible for developing specific state water-quality policies to implement the broader policies set forth by the Legislature in the Colorado Water Quality Control Act. The Commission adopts water-quality classifications and standards for surface and ground waters of the state, as well as regulations aimed at achieving compliance with those classifications and standards. There are various categories that apply to measuring water quality. Basic standards are the general water-quality standards that apply to all surface waters of the state. For more detail on water-quality standards, please refer to the handouts at the meeting and/or the State of Colorado’s Water Quality Control Division.

Above the Weminuche Wilderness boundary, all tributaries of Vallecito Creek and the Los Pinos River are officially designated as “Outstanding,” as are all streams in Colorado wilderness areas. The hard Pre-cambrian geology of the two watersheds contributes to the generally good water quality. There is one stream within the Vallecito Creek watershed that does have naturally high sulphate levels. There is a USGS national benchmark water quality station at the Vallecito Creek Gage, just inside the wilderness boundary. Between the wilderness boundary and Vallecito Reservoir on both Vallecito Creek and the Los Pinos River, the water quality is classified just as it is above the Wilderness Boundary: Cold Water Fishery 1, Recreation E, Water Supply and Agricultural (See WQTableValue Standards\_Vallecito\_Pine.pdf and WQStandards\_San Juan\_Dolores.pdf).

**2007 Draft Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Information:** Both Vallecito Creek and the Los Pinos River above the USFS boundary with private land were found to be “eligible” for Wild and Scenic Rivers (“WSR”) designation by the United States Forest Service (USFS) in the San Juan Public Lands 2007 Draft Land Management Plan. The Los Pinos River and 6 tributaries were found “preliminarily suitable.”

Stream	Eligible Segment	Classification	Length	ORVs	Eligible	Suitable
Vallecito Creek	Headwaters to USFS boundary with private land	Wild	16.59mi	Recreation and Scenery	Yes	No
Los Pinos River, above Vallecito Reservoir	Headwaters to USFS boundary with private land	Wild	21.89mi	Scenery	Yes	Yes

Stream	Eligible Segment	Classification	Length	ORVs	Eligible	Suitable
Lake Creek	Headwaters to confluence with Los Pinos River	Wild	8.05mi	Scenery	Yes	Yes
Flint Creek	Headwaters to confluence with Los Pinos River	Wild	7.03mi	Scenery	Yes	Yes
Sierra Vander a Creek	Headwaters to confluence with Los Pinos River	Wild	3.67mi	Scenery	Yes	Yes
Snowslide Gulch	Headwaters to confluence with Los Pinos River	Wild	3.51mi	Scenery	Yes	Yes
Rincon la Osa	Headwaters to confluence with Los Pinos River	Wild	5.69mi	Scenery	Yes	Yes
Rincon la Vaca	Headwaters to confluence with Los Pinos River	Wild	4.33mi	Scenery	Yes	Yes

Source: San Juan Public Lands Center, 2007 *Draft Land Management Plan*.

Anyone interested in more information can access the actual Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 and its amendments by going to <http://www.rivers.gov/> and look under the Information Tab for “WSR Act”. This site also offers more user friendly summaries of the Act, under the Publications Tab, in “Technical Papers.”

**Note: The website is maintained by the interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Council. According to the website:** “The Council consists of representatives of the four wild and scenic rivers administering agencies—the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service. Other federal agencies with river interests have key contacts and participate in discussions affecting their interests. The public has an opportunity to provide input at all Council meetings; their support is crucial to the Council’s success.”

## Other Important Information

**Potential Conflicts:** To be discussed thoroughly in the Vallecito and Pine River Workgroup meetings and process.

**Air Quality:** According to the San Juan Public Lands 2007 Draft Land Management Plan, “the Weminuche Wilderness Class I Area has been recognized by Congress as being an “outstanding special area” – deserving the highest air-quality protection in the nation.” Under the Clean Air Act of 1963, as amended, Federal land managers are responsible for protecting the air quality related values within class I areas.

### **Reasonably Foreseeable Economic Development:**

**Logging** – There is very little land within the Area of Focus that is available for timber production due to wilderness designation. However, a small portion of the Vallecito Creek drainage above the USFS boundary, on the west flank of Middle Mountain, has been harvested in the past and remains suitable and available for timber production under the San Juan Public Lands Draft Land Management Plan, 2007.

**Oil, Gas, and Mineral development** – Designated wilderness areas are withdrawn from mineral entry, including oil and gas leasing. There are no privately owned patented mining claims and there are no unpatented mining claims within the Area of Focus. There is no oil and gas potential nor production within the Area of Focus.

**Private land development** – There is no private land within the Area of Focus. There is private land with some potential for new development downstream of the points where Vallecito Creek and the Los Pinos River cross the USFS boundary.

**Commercial outfitting** (fishing, hunting, horseback riding, mountaineering, climbing, kayaking etc.) – Commercial outfitters require a permit to operate on USFS lands. There are several active permits within the Area of Focus. There is potential for increasing the number of permitted outfitters.

**Livestock grazing** – Livestock owners require a permit to graze on public lands. There are active cattle allotments within the lower portion of the two watersheds; all sheep allotments are currently vacant due to proximity to the wild bighorn sheep population.

**Transportation:**

Los Pinos Watershed	Vallecito Creek Watershed
The entire watershed is located within the Weminuche Wilderness, therefore there are no roads. However, there are many trails along the mainstem and tributaries: over 53.8 miles within the river corridors evaluated for Wild and Scenic.	The entire watershed is located within the Weminuche Wilderness, therefore there are no roads. However, there are 17.6 miles of trail within the corridor evaluated for Wild and Scenic by the USFS.

**Weeds:** The San Juan National Forest’s Invasive Species Action Plan for FY2007-2009 identifies as priorities for treatment the following weed species that are known to occur in the vicinity of the Vallecito Creek and Los Pinos River watersheds: scentless chamomile, dames rocket, yellow toadflax, houndstongue, spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, oxeye daisy, hoary cress, Scotch thistle, musk thistle, bull thistle, Canada thistle. Weed infestations are largely focused along trails and roads.

**Wildfire:** Two recent wildfires - the 2002 Missionary Ridge Fire that burned 70,000 acres around Vallecito Reservoir, and the 2003 Bear Creek Fire that burned 1,500 acres in the upper Vallecito Creek watershed – significantly impacted water quality in the drainage in the years immediately following the fires.

**Map (see next page)**

*For more information, please contact:*

***[Bruce Whitehead, Southwestern Water Conservation District at 247-1302 or water@frontier.net](mailto:water@frontier.net)***

***[Dan Randolph, San Juan Citizens Alliance at 259-3583 x 1 or dan@sanjuancitizens.org](mailto:dan@sanjuancitizens.org)***

***Workgroup facilitator, Tami Graham at 970-759-9716 or email: [tamigraham11@gmail.com](mailto:tamigraham11@gmail.com)***

***Web site: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/riverprotection>***

RIVER PROTECTION WORKGROUP  
PINE RIVER & VALLECITO CREEK

