



Friends of the Wild Rivers

P.O. Box 238, Taos, NM 87571

Telephone: 505.758.3474

Fax: 505.758.7345

For Immediate Release
June 19, 2007

Contacts:

Rachel Conn, Amigos Bravos - 505-770-8327

Jim White, Centinel Bank - 505.758.6749

Eric Patterson, Sierra Club – 505-776-2833

River Cleanups a Huge Success

Taos, NM– As part of National River Cleanup Week 2007, local citizens banded together to tackle pollution in Taos area rios. Amigos Bravos - Friends of the Wild Rivers, a local river conservation organization coordinated with Centinel Bank Taos, The Rio Pueblo de Taos Watershed Group, The Bureau of Land Management, and Water Sentinels-Rios de Taos to conduct three stream cleanups between June 2 – June 14th.

“The June 9th cleanup on the Rio Fernando, that was sponsored and organized by Centinel Bank, was one of the most successful river cleanups I have ever seen in Taos,” said Rachel Conn, Clean Water Circuit Rider for Amigos Bravos. “ There were over 60 volunteers; over 100 bags of trash that filled up an industrial sized dumpster; and a whole pickup truck filled with cans and bottles to be recycled. We even pulled multiple tires and an old TV set out of the river!” added Conn.

Two of the three cleanups were trash cleanups- one on the Rio Pueblo de Taos and one on the Rio Fernando- and then the final cleanup on the Rio Grande near the Taos Junction Bridge focused on helping BLM with salt cedar (or Tamarisk) removal and control. Salt Cedar is an invasive plant species that invades and degrades riparian river corridors; drinks a lot of water; and turns the surrounding soil salty. Sections of the Rio Pueblo de Taos, Rio Fernando de Taos and the Rio Grande in the Taos area are all listed as impaired (polluted) by the New Mexico Environment Department.

“We hope to start the process of passing on the Rio Fernando to future generations of the people of Taos in better condition than we found it,” said Jim White, Credit Analyst with Centinel Bank of Taos. “I was impressed by the way the Taos community banded together to make the project work as well as it did,” added White.

“Our moto is to explore, enjoy and protect our environment and we would like to have our rivers clean so people can enjoy them,” said Eric Patterson, founding member of the Sierra Club’s Water Sentinels-Rios de Taos group, who helped sponsor all three of the cleanups.

“Amigos Bravos believes a healthy community starts with a healthy river,” said Conn.