



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

**4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL VALLECITOS SUSTAINED YIELD UNIT CONFERENCE**

*Santa Fe, New Mexico*—Las Comunidades, in collaboration with the Forest Guild, is sponsoring the 4th Annual Sustained Yield Unit Conference, Saturday, June 7, 2008, 9 a.m.– 4 p.m. at the El Rito campus of Northern New Mexico College. This one-day conference is free and is open to residents of the communities the Vallecitos Sustained Yield Unit serves: Vallecitos, Canon Plaza, La Madera, La Petaca, Servilleta Plaza, El Rito, Ojo Caliente, Canjilon and Tres Piedras.

Everyone involved in the Sustained Yield Unit is invited to attend. This conference is designed to allow the attendees to use the best available information about the forest to prioritize which NEPA cleared areas will be treated by the Collaborative Forest Restoration Project.

“Although this conference will use cutting-edge technology and science, attendees won’t be overwhelmed with acronyms and jargon,” says Mike DeBonis, Southwest Region Director, Forest Guild. “The day will be inclusive and useful for all.”

This year's conference will focus on using information that has been gathered by geographical information system (GIS) to help decide what areas of the forest will be treated. As each data layer, such as vegetation type or fire risk is introduced, expert speakers will illustrate what is displayed and discuss what it means. This information will be combined according to priorities expressed by the participants to map out and plan activities for the Vallecitos Federal Sustained Yield Unit (VFSYU) Collaborative Forest Restoration project.

The VFSYU is a unique area of former Hispanic Land Grants currently managed by the Carson National Forest in north central New Mexico. Congress established the 73,400 acre unit in 1948, partially to correct past injustices between federal land management and local communities. Since its establishment, the majority of forest management of the Unit has favored large corporate industry over small-scale local enterprises. Since the mid-1990s, local business and communities have attempted, often against the odds, to develop wood- based businesses in the area.

Las Comunidades, a community group representing the resource-based land grant communities surrounding the Unit and the Vallecitos Mill, was awarded a four-year \$450,000 Collaborative Forest Restoration Program Grant in 2006 from the U.S. Forest Service which makes this conference possible. The grant was awarded to develop a sustainable ecologically minded business, educate local youth, restore fire-adapted forests, and engage in GIS planning in partnership with Northern Arizona University's Forest Ecosystem Restoration Analysis program.

The Forest Guild is a national organization of more than 600 foresters, allied professionals, and supporters who manage forestlands in the United States and Canada and advocate for ecologically sound forest practices. The mission of the Forest Guild is to practice and promote ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry—"excellent forestry"—as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. The Forest Guild maintains staff in New Mexico, Massachusetts, California, and Tennessee, and has volunteer coordinators in five other states.

[www.forestguild.org](http://www.forestguild.org)

**INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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