

ADEQ Awards \$1.2 Million for Water Quality Improvement Projects

PHOENIX (Dec. 30, 2002) -- The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality today awarded \$1.2 million to fund 10 projects statewide as part of its efforts to improve water quality and watershed conditions.

The funds, which are provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Water Act, will assist recipients with "on-the-ground" implementation projects that protect or improve water quality by controlling non-point source pollution.

Non-point source pollution is the nation's largest source of water quality problems. It occurs when rainfall, melting snow, or irrigation runoff picks up pollutants and deposits them in rivers, lakes, coastal waters or other ground water sources. Agriculture, forestry, grazing, septic systems, recreational boating, urban runoff and construction all contribute to this problem.

In the past two and one half years, ADEQ's Water Quality Improvement Grant Program has provided more than \$5.4 million to both public and private entities to improve water quality in Arizona.

"The Water Quality Improvement Grant Program provides funding at the local level to implement creative approaches to improve watersheds," said Karen Smith, director of ADEQ's Water Quality Division. "Through federal, state and local partnerships, we are improving watersheds and ensuring their integrity for future generations."

The 10 projects, listed by county, receiving grant awards are:

Apache County

James W. Crosswhite

EC Bar Ranch Turbidity Reduction Project - \$31,440

The primary goal of the project is to preserve, protect and enhance water quality by minimizing impacts of turbidity pollution discharged to surface and groundwater from nonpoint sources along a 2.5-mile section of Nutrioso Creek. The project includes relocating riparian fencing, installing elk proof fencing, performing vegetative monitoring and conducting public education and outreach.

Cochise County

San Pedro National Resource Conservation District

St. David Community River Cleanup - \$30,513

This project will allow community partners who are concerned about the impact of heavy trash dumping in the San Pedro River to cleanup a section north of the National Conservation Area and raise awareness of the problem through a public education and outreach effort.

The Nature Conservancy of Arizona

3 Links Farm Riparian Habitat Restoration - \$137,896

This project will create and fence a riparian management zone to protect and enhance habitat and water

quality conditions on the 3 Links Farm, San Pedro River.

Graham County

Coronado RC&D

Vegetative Rehabilitation to Control Runoff and Sediment from Frye Mesa - \$171,500

Sweet Resin Bush, a noxious weed introduced to the area is destroying vegetation cover on 1,500 acres of Frye Mesa leading to increased erosion and sediment discharge. This project will restore native vegetation to the area to reduce runoff and improve water quality.

Greenlee County

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

Hell's Hole Spring Developments - \$21,316

The goal of the project is to expand capacity, improve water quality, and improve the wetlands associated with Yellow Bull, Upper Linden, Coyote, and Miner Springs.

Maricopa County

Universal Entech, LLC

Algal Bioreactor Filtration System for Removal of Nutrient Contamination - \$168,685

This demonstration project will use an algal-based biological filtration technology to treat agricultural runoff waters from irrigation drainage ditches prior to entering the Gila River. The goal is to reduce nutrient contamination and raise dissolved oxygen levels in the Gila River, from its confluence with the Salt River to Painted Rock Reservoir.

Navajo County

Arizona Community Tree Council

Trees for the Rim - \$413,640

This project will provide trees and other vegetation, at no cost, to those private property owners whose trees and landscape plants were destroyed during the Rodeo-Chediski fire, June 2002, as a means of restoring area vegetation and preventing future runoff pollution.

Santa Cruz County

Montessori De Santa Cruz Charter School

Santa Cruz River Riparian Revegetation Plan - \$36,644

This project will enable Friends of the Santa Cruz River, the Montessori de Santa Cruz Charter School, and the Tumacacori National Historical Park Service to improve water quality along the Santa Cruz River by repairing riparian habitat, providing student training and monitoring and conducting community education and outreach.

Yavapai County

Maughan Ranches

Upper Hassayampa River Watershed Restoration - \$39,900

Wagoner & Crooks-Maverick Allotments

The project will improve the surface flow and water quality of approximately seven miles of the Hassayampa River from Milk Creek to the boundary of the Hassayampa River Canyon Wilderness Area. By increasing the ability to manage livestock movements, the project will reestablish a homogeneous vegetation cover across the landscape, and restore soil conditions on significant national forest grazing allotments. Buffers of enhanced grass and shrub cover will trap sediment that contribute to chemical pollution and turbidity in the Hassayampa.

M Diamond Management, LLC

M Diamond West Clear Creek Proposal - \$119,100

This project will reduce runoff pollution on the rangeland adjacent West Clear Creek by installing fences, a corral and an alternative water system as part of an overall rotational grazing management plan.