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ADEQ Director Owens Awards \$437,146 in Grants to Protect Granite Creek and Watson Lake in Yavapai County

PHOENIX (July 2, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens today announced that the department has awarded two grants totaling \$437,146 to fund water quality improvement projects to help protect Granite Creek and Watson Lake near Prescott in Yavapai County.

“These grants will fund projects to help protect some of the most important water resources in our state,” Director Owens said. “We are very pleased to support the great work being done to protect this critically important area. This is a priority for us.”

The Yavapai County Flood Control District is receiving \$369,271 for a project at Pioneer Park in Prescott to protect the site’s major unnamed watercourse, which flows into Granite Creek and ultimately into the Verde River in the Upper Verde Watershed.

This project will remove pollutants from the Pioneer Park watercourse and recharge the aquifer with clean water through best-management practices such as using forms of concrete that reduce stormwater runoff and building detention basins filled with vegetation to prevent erosion. The project also calls for public education and outreach, local partnerships and performance monitoring.

Pioneer Park, a 1,000-acre regional multiuse recreational complex, contributes to water pollution because of erosion caused by vehicles and hiking.

In addition, the Prescott Creeks Preservation Association, a local nonprofit group, is receiving \$67,875 for educational efforts to cut pollution to Granite Creek and Watson Lake. The association will use the funds to train volunteers on best-management practices to reduce pollution, and will design and build an interactive model of how watersheds drain, how pollution reaches the water, and how human behavior effects water quality.

In addition to the present awards, ADEQ previously provided nearly \$800,000 in grant money to protect and improve the Granite Creek Watershed and Watson Woods Riparian Preserve during 2006 and 2007 for water quality improvement and restoration.

“We are committed to protecting these very significant water resources,” Director Owens added.

The grants are funded with federal dollars provided to ADEQ under the Clean Water Act.