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DATE: July 10, 2008

CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215

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## **ADEQ Director Owens Announces \$35,550 Grant to the Gila Watershed Partnership for Education Project in Upper Gila Watershed**

PHOENIX (July 10, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens today announced that the department has awarded a \$35,550 Water Quality Improvement Education Grant to the Gila Watershed Partnership of Safford to help improve water quality in the 7,354-square mile-watershed of the Upper Gila River.

The grant was awarded to the Gila Watershed Partnership to enhance the Master Watershed Steward Program, a collaboration between ADEQ and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension that offers more than 50 hours of coursework on basic watershed science.

“We have been working closely with the Gila Watershed Partnership for some time to develop innovative ways to help protect the Gila Watershed and educate people about what they can do to preserve our state’s precious water resources,” Director Owens said. “This is a great training program in a critical area of the Gila River.”

The class covers general information about what watersheds are and how they function, and is also targeted specifically to the Upper Gila Watershed. The stewards learn about hydrology, geology and soil types, Arizona’s climate, water quality and quantity, water management and mapping.

Some of the major pollutants in the watershed are nutrients, sediment, and E. coli bacteria. The classes will identify specific steps to clean up the impaired waters.

The grant is funded with federal dollars provided to ADEQ under the Clean Water Act.