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

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## **ADEQ Director Owens Announces Waste Cleanup from Illegal Border Crossings in Arivaca Area of Pima County**

PHOENIX (Dec. 1, 2008) -- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Steve Owens announced today that ADEQ will participate in a cleanup on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 6 and 7, near the community of Arivaca to remove waste discarded by undocumented migrants on trails in prime hunting habitat.

ADEQ is participating in the cleanup as part of its Undocumented Migrant (UDM) Waste Project, through the department's Office of Border Environmental Protection. The cleanup is being organized by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the organization Hunters Who Care. Trash will be picked up on the Marley Ranch, Rancho Seco and Sopori Ranch in Pima County during the two-day event near the Mexican border.

"The trashing of the desert by border crossers is a huge problem," Director Owens said. "We have been working with officials at the state, federal and local levels, as well as community groups, to develop a strategy for addressing this enormous issue and organizing cleanups of waste that has been left in the desert."

Two cleanups earlier this year organized by ADEQ in the Yuma area and along the Santa Cruz River north of Nogales produced about 100 tons of trash that was hauled out of sensitive riparian areas.

In addition to its UDM Waste Project, ADEQ has a broader, ongoing effort to address the overall problem of illegal dumping throughout Arizona. The agency has established a program to work with local officials to prevent illegal dumping and clean up illegal dump sites across the state.

"Dealing with the problem of illegal dumping is a priority," Owens said. "Illegal dumping poses a serious threat to public health and the environment, as well as to the well being of communities. We are committed to working with local leaders to address this major problem in our state."