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ADEQ Announces Work Completed on First State Superfund Site Outside Phoenix, Tonto and Cherry Site in Payson

PHOENIX (Feb. 28, 2014) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials announced today that the agency has completed cleanup work on its first state superfund site outside the Phoenix metropolitan area, the Tonto and Cherry site in Payson.

The site, bounded by West McKamey Street to the north, South Colcord Road to the east, South Meadow Street to the west and West Frontier Street to the south, was added to ADEQ's Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund (WQARF) registry in 2000 because of groundwater contamination from the former Grand Way Cleaners, which was located in the Bonanza Square shopping center in Payson.

Groundwater testing at the time found levels of tetrachloroethene (PCE) as much as 10 times the Arizona Water Quality Standards of 5 micrograms per liter and elevated levels of other organic contaminants like trichloroethylene (TCE), cis-1,2-dichloroethene and vinyl chloride.

The signing of the closeout record of decision makes the Tonto and Cherry site the second of ADEQ's 35 state superfund sites to be removed from the WQARF registry. The East Washington Fluff site in central Phoenix was the first cleanup completed in March 2013.

"This is a big day for ADEQ," said ADEQ Director Henry Darwin. "Our initial estimates were that the Tonto and Cherry site would be cleaned up by 2018 so it's very satisfying for the work to be completed and the site cleaned up four years ahead of schedule."

The site was placed on the WQARF registry after high levels of PCE were found in five private drinking wells near the site. No public drinking water wells were threatened by the contamination plume but ADEQ provided bottled drinking water to the private well owners until the PCE concentrations were below state water quality thresholds. All of the contaminants have been below the water quality exceedance levels in monitoring wells since 2006.

Those interested in the project can review the closeout record of decision at <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/waste/sps/download/state/eqr-14-01.pdf> or at the ADEQ records center in Phoenix at 1110 W. Washington Street.

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