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ADEQ Awards \$412,000 Water Quality Improvement Grant to Arizona Game and Fish Department

Eligible projects will protect and restore water quality, grass and rangeland health and wildlife habitats in Arizona.

PHOENIX (Dec. 28, 2015) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) officials announced today a \$412,000 Water Quality Improvement Grant to the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) to improve water quality in the San Pedro River, Little Colorado River and Oak Creek. AZGFD will provide more than \$274,000 in matching funds.

ADEQ's first formal agreement committing funds from both partnering agencies to specific projects in shared priority areas will also further the goals of multiple state and federal initiatives. Eligible projects will protect and restore water quality, grass and rangeland health and wildlife habitats in priority areas identified by ADEQ and AZGFD in the state Nonpoint Source Management Plan and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Regional Conservation Partnership Program and National Water Quality Initiative.

“We think this will be a great framework for broadening our audience and customer base, and also for potentially implementing projects at low or no cost to landowners beyond maintenance requirements,” said ADEQ Water Quality Division Director Trevor Baggiore.

Leveraging resources across state and federal partners will result in the reduction of impairment-causing pollutants, improvement of grassland habitat for wildlife, improved grazing practices.

Baggiore added, “Teaming up with AZGFD's Landowner Relations Program, which has a longstanding, strong local presence and ties to rural water management areas, will strengthen ADEQ's ability to partner with rural landowners in identifying priority on-the-ground projects.”

“Many of ADEQ's water quality improvement goals dovetail nicely with grassland, rangeland and habitat improvement goals we share with ranchers and other partnering agencies,” said Wade Zarlingo, AZGFD Landowner Relations Program Coordinator.

ADEQ will evaluate the effectiveness of these projects for improving water quality. Matching funds for projects will be provided by a combination of AZGFD state funding, landowner contributions, in-kind services, and Arizona Department of Agriculture Livestock Crop Conservation Grant Program.

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ADEQ Awards \$412,000 Grant to AZGFD (cont.)

Background

ADEQ's Water Quality Improvement Grant program (WQIG) is funded through a partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Water Act. Since it began in 2000, our WQIG program has funded more than 150 projects reducing polluted runoff from many different sources throughout the state and had a significant impact on improving the health of our waterways. For more information about the program, visit <http://www.azdeq.gov/wqig> or contact ADEQ Grant and Watershed Coordinator Samuel "Jake" Breedlove at sb12@azdeq.gov or (602) 771-4243.

Additional Resources

- AZGFD:
<https://azgfdportal.az.gov/Agency>
<https://azgfdportal.az.gov/Wildlife/Landowners>
- ADEQ Nonpoint Source Management Plan:
http://www.azdeq.gov/envIRON/water/watershed/download/NPS_5yr_Plan_final.pdf
- USDA:
Regional Conservation Partnership Program
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/az/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>
National Water Quality Initiative
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=stelprdb1047761>

About ADEQ

Established by the Arizona Legislature under the Environmental Quality Act of 1986, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is the state agency for protecting and enhancing public health and the environment of Arizona.

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