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ADEQ Director Owens Announces \$12,880 Water Quality Improvement Grant to Protect Gila River in Graham County

PHOENIX (July 3, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Steve Owens today announced that the department has awarded a \$12,880 water quality improvement grant to the Gila Valley Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) in Graham County to protect water quality in the river by reducing soil erosion and runoff.

“The Gila River is one of the most important water resources in our state,” Director Owens said. “These funds will help protect the Gila River and educate those living in the Gila River Valley about healthy watersheds. We are very pleased to support this extremely important local effort.”

The NRCD will use the grant to plant vegetative buffer strips along the Gila River to reduce sediment discharge, nutrient and pesticide runoff and excess organic input into the Gila River. The NRCD also will spend some of the funds to educate the public about best management practices on crop lands to minimize erosion and runoff.

The grant also will be used to design and implement various classroom projects and hands-on workshops about steps being taken to decrease irrigation runoff.

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