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## **ADEQ Director Owens Announces \$260,000 Water Quality Improvement Grant to Protect Tonto Creek in Gila County**

PHOENIX (July 16, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens announced today that the department has awarded a \$260,000 Water Quality Improvement Grant to protect water quality in Tonto Creek in Gila County.

The grant will be used to install a new wastewater treatment system at the Tonto Rim Christian Camp to replace existing failed septic system drainage fields installed at the camp in the 1970s and 1980s. The new advanced sewage treatment system will reduce nitrogen content in the wastewater and use drip irrigation disposal methods that will reduce contamination in Tonto Creek.

A 2004 ADEQ study on the upper Tonto Creek and Christopher Creek area found that sewage from humans was one of the major contributors to pollution of the creeks. The current project will improve water quality by reducing pollutants entering the creeks.

“This is a very important project for protecting our precious mountain creeks and returning them to their natural pristine condition,” Director Owens said. “This is one of the most beautiful areas in Arizona, and this is one of the most important water systems in our state. This grant will help protect all of the running water flowing into the Salt River system.”

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