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## **ADEQ Director Owens Announces \$92,294 Water Quality Improvement Grant to Help Protect Eagle Creek Watershed in Greenlee County**

PHOENIX (July 23, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens announced today that a \$92,294 water quality improvement grant has been awarded to a group of Greenlee County ranchers who have been working to restore Eagle Creek Watershed.

The grant is the third phase of funding for the Coronado Resource Conservation and Development Council (CRCDC), a nonprofit organization that assists local communities to improve their use of natural resources.

"Protecting Eagle Creek is a very high priority," Director Owens said. "This is a great partnership among ranchers, concerned citizens and local officials, and we are pleased to continue to support this important effort."

Owens said that the CRCDC will use the funding to prevent erosion on 161,172 acres of grazing land located within the Eagle Creek Watershed and primarily leased by the ranchers from the U.S. Forest Service.

The CRCDC will work with local ranchers to install fences on the Double Circles Ranch, located near Morenci, as part of a rotational grazing system that will prevent soil runoff into Eagle Creek and exclude cattle from the creek and Sheep's Spring.

Last year, ADEQ awarded a \$95,100 grant to CRCDC for the second phase of the project. In 2006, ADEQ awarded a grant for \$360,930 to the Upper Eagle Creek Watershed Association for a variety of actions to prevent run-off into Eagle Creek, including fencing, alternative grazing practices and alternative water sources for livestock.

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