



DATE: Nov. 26, 2008

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ADEQ Report Says Tonto and Cherry Groundwater Cleanup In Payson Proceeding Successfully

PHOENIX (Nov. 26, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Steve Owens today released the department's formal Record of Decision (ROD) on the Tonto and Cherry Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund (WQARF) site in the Town of Payson.

The ROD, a report that documents the remedial action being taken to clean up the site, concludes that the cleanup is proceeding successfully and that ADEQ should continue to monitor the groundwater in the area until it is free of contamination.

"This report shows that what we have been doing in Payson is working well and that the groundwater is being cleaned up," Director Owens said.

The Tonto and Cherry WQARF site is bounded by Frontier Street to the south, Colcord Road to the east, Tonto Street to the west, and Cherry Street to the north.

The groundwater at the 10-acre site is contaminated with tetrachloroethene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE), carcinogens that reached the groundwater from a former dry-cleaning facility. The contamination was first discovered in the groundwater in the area in 1993. After conducting an extensive investigation into the contamination, ADEQ officially added the site to Arizona's WQARF list in 2000.

Monitored natural attenuation (MNA), which is the natural process of cleanup, was selected as the proposed remedy for the Tonto and Cherry site. MNA is currently occurring and contains, captures, and remediates the contaminant plume. MNA has already achieved cleanup of the site to concentrations below Arizona Water Quality Standards. ADEQ will continue to monitor the site to ensure that additional actions are not necessary.

The ROD estimates that completely cleaning up the groundwater in the area may take up to another nine years and could cost another \$212,000 more over that period. If so, the total cleanup costs for the Tonto and Cherry WQARF site could exceed \$800,000.