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## **ADEQ Awards \$188,000 Watershed Improvement Plan Grant to Upper Gila Watershed Partnership in Greenlee County**

PHOENIX (May 11, 2009) -- The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is awarding a grant of \$188,436 to the Upper Gila Watershed Partnership of Arizona in Greenlee County to clean up the water in the San Francisco River and Blue River.

The grant will be used to plan and complete projects to reduce levels of *E. coli* bacteria in the rivers. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality lists these waters as "impaired," or seriously polluted, under the Clean Water Act.

The grant is being awarded under ADEQ's new Targeted Watershed Improvement Grant Program for projects where surface water cleanup is needed and where strong community support is anticipated for completing the project. The grant includes a one-year planning phase and cleanup projects to be implemented the following year.

"We are empowering local watershed groups. ADEQ will provide technical support, but these grants depend on the involvement of local volunteers to do the plan and implementation," ADEQ Acting Director Patrick J. Cunningham said.

The first step is to identify the sources of water pollution in the area.

"The volunteers will participate in a survey of the watershed to explore whether the sources of the bacteria are recreation, grazing or wastewater systems in the area," Cunningham said. "Eventually we hope to remove the San Francisco and Blue rivers from ADEQ's list of impaired waters."

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

For more information on the grant program, visit our Web page:

<http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/watershed/improvement.html#target> .