



DATE: June 17, 2009

CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215 (o);
(480)433-9551 (cell)

ADEQ Grants \$43,000 to Gila Watershed Partnership for New Well to Help Protect San Francisco River in Greenlee County

PHOENIX (June 17, 2009) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has awarded a \$42,750 Water Quality Improvement Grant to the Gila Watershed Partnership for a project to reduce waste from ranch animals in the San Francisco River.

The 100 cattle on the Kaler Ranch near Clifton have no source for drinking water except the river, which is being contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria left behind in animal waste. The ADEQ grant will fund the construction of the first of what ranch owner Dick Kaler hopes will ultimately be five wells to serve as a new water source for the cattle.

The Gila Watershed Partnership estimates that the first well will reduce waste from the Kaler Ranch cattle in the river by as much as 20 percent. The group expects that all five wells will keep all livestock at the ranch away from the river area.

The first well will be built on ranch property, and the others on public land managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management. The grant will be administered by the Gila Water Partnership. Kaler will act as site supervisor.

The first well is scheduled to be completed by March 2010. It will include a solar-powered pump, which is being funded by a \$50,000 grant from the Arizona Department of Agriculture's Livestock and Crop Conservation Program.

“ADEQ is pleased to fund this project, which will help to protect Arizona’s precious water resources,” said ADEQ Acting Director Patrick J. Cunningham. “We recognize that the owners of the ranch have the legal right to graze their cattle near the river, and we appreciate that they are teaming with ADEQ to correct a serious environmental problem.”

ADEQ’s Water Quality Improvement Grant program is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Water Act.