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ADEQ Announces \$455,895 Water Quality Improvement Grant to Restore Ecosystem Processes in Granite Creek

PHOENIX (April 25, 2013) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality announced today that a \$455,895 grant has been awarded to the group Prescott Creeks to restore ecosystem processes and create green infrastructure demonstration projects along Granite Creek in the Whipple Street and Cliff Rose areas of Prescott in Yavapai County.

The grant is one of four in Arizona this year administered by ADEQ’s water quality improvement grant (WQIG) program to address polluted runoff from many different sources. Granite Creek, from its headwaters to Watson Lake, is listed as impaired for *E. coli*, a bacterium that is an indicator of fecal pollution, and having insufficient oxygen levels in the water for a healthy aquatic environment.

The grant will fund the development of a series of “microbasins,” which contain rocks and a variety of native vegetation species, directing creek water through them. Those basins will allow pollutants to be absorbed and broken down through microbiological processes.

“These funds will help restore water quality in one of the key watersheds in the state north of Phoenix and assist the Prescott Creeks group in bringing back another important part of that riparian area to its natural state,” ADEQ Director Henry Darwin said. “Our program has funded more than 100 projects throughout the state and has had a significant impact on improving the health of our waterways.”

In 2007 and 2008, ADEQ provided just more than \$1 million in WQIG money to protect and restore Granite Creek and Watson Woods Riparian Preserve, a cottonwood/red willow forest area along Granite Creek. The earlier funding was used to enhance a stormwater runoff basin near the creek and Watson Woods, restore natural hydrologic processes in the riparian preserve, and provide public education regarding nonpoint source pollution in the Granite Creek/Watson Lake watershed.