



DATE: Jan. 27, 2014

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

ADEQ Announces \$165,998 Water Quality Improvement Grant to Continue Outreach, Cleanup Efforts in Oak Creek

PHOENIX (Jan. 27, 2014) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials announced today that a \$165,998 grant has been awarded to the Oak Creek Watershed Council for continued outreach efforts and cleanup events of the Creek Ambassadors program.

The grant is one of three awarded in Arizona this year, administered by ADEQ's water quality improvement grant program, to address polluted runoff from many different sources. Oak Creek, from its headwaters to its confluence with Spring Creek in Oak Creek Canyon, is impacted by *E. coli*, a bacterium that is an indicator of fecal pollution.

The Creek Ambassadors program and Oak Creek cleanup project conducted a very successful campaign north of Sedona near Highway 89A along Oak Creek last year in its first year, collecting nearly two tons of trash.

With continued funding this year, the ambassadors will work as two-person teams trained by the U.S. Forest Service to provide outreach about pollution control and other responsible recreation practices during the most popular tourist months.

Additionally, the grant will fund an education program designed for middle-school students about protecting the environment from animal waste. ADEQ funding last year is in being used to install 20 pet waste stations in the Oak Creek area.

"These funds will continue ADEQ and community efforts in helping to restore water quality in one of the most beautiful and heavily visited tourist areas in the state," ADEQ Director Henry Darwin said.