Critical Role of the Arizona Water Protection Fund in the Upper Gila Watershed

AWPF helps to protect our state’s water supply and enhances Arizona’s sustainability. Established by the Legislature in 1994 to provide funding for protecting our state’s rivers, streams and associated riparian habitats. It is the ONLY dedicated funding source to maintain and restore these unique and vital riparian resources.

Our state has benefited greatly through improvements in water quality and quantity, in-stream flows, biodiversity, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, flood control and overall watershed health. Through project implementation, jobs are created and revenue streams in local economies increase.

Current Projects in the Upper Gila Watershed

Restoration of the Gila River at Apache Grove (map #164) - $744,747.00
Larry Barney
Proper stream geomorphology/channel characteristics will be restored along 1.6 miles of the Gila River on 200 acres near Duncan by allowing the main channel to reattach to its former floodplain. Objectives of the project include restoring natural floodplain function by removing an existing partially breached levee, reducing the risks of lateral erosion and land loss, managing salt cress, improving riparian habitats and stream function. This project includes mechanically excavating 3,000 feet of earthen levee and returning the ground to natural grade to restore natural flooding to the floodplain. A series of overbank hedgerows will be designed and planted in the applicant’s agricultural fields and designed to allow for efficient harvesting of crops. Other practices include implementation of bank stabilization measures, invasive vegetation species management, native vegetation revegetation, monitoring, fencing, and development of a public outreach plan.

Gila River Water Conservation Education Program (map #175) - $149,612.80
Gila Watershed Partnership
The purpose of this project is to reduce per capita per day consumption of water throughout the Upper Gila Watershed. An intense water education program will be implemented in Graham and Greenlee Counties and will include a media campaign, school education program, home and business water audit program, and educational programs at major community events.

Invasive Weed Control - Gila River Corridor, Greene County (map #183) - $201,995.96
Coronado Resource Conservation and Development Area
The purpose of this project is to reduce E. coli levels in the San Francisco River. The grantee will accomplish this goal by excluding livestock access to the San Francisco River. This will require the installation of an off-channel water source for the Kaler’s livestock. Specifically, funding will be used to install a solar well, a water storage tank and water trough to meet the objectives.

Eagle Creek Riparian Protection Project (map #185) - $35,356.00
National Wild Turkey Federation
The purpose of this project is to protect and enhance the remaining riparian habitat at the Eagle Creek Ranch. The project includes mechanical excavation of the creek, improving channel characteristics of the drainage, implementation of bank stabilization measures, invasive vegetation species management, native vegetation revegetation, monitoring, fencing, and development of a public outreach plan.

Eagle Creek Riparian Restoration at Fillman Crossing (map #194) - $265,778.00
Jeanette Fillman and Howard Fillman
This project will reduce downstream sedimentation and turbidity, and protect and enhance habitat for federally listed species by armoring a flood-prone road crossing located on the applicant’s private property in Greene County. Rock rip-rap aggregate, geo-textile fabric, and gravel surfacing will be installed and compacted across the stream channel.

Double Circle Ranch Erosion Control Project Phase II (map #180) - $36,866.00
White Javelina
This project is designed to reduce sediment load to the watershed by constructing small rock dams, media lunes, splash arrows, and armoring in eroding gullies to catch silt and soil. Native on-site seeds are used in and around these structures. Post-project monitoring and stream channel measurements will be employed to document the effectiveness of the erosion control practices.

Invasive Weed Control - Gila River Corridor, Greenlee County (map #183) - $372,579.00
National Wild Turkey Federation
The purpose of this project is to improve water quality, riparian vegetation, wildlife nesting and forage habitat, and threatened, endangered and sensitive species habitats on eight riparian sites on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. The project includes forest thinning, constructing fence enclosures, spring box restoration, and creek crossing modifications working in coordination with the Forest Service’s Alpine Ranger District.

Eagle Creek Riparian Protection Project (map #187) - $126,741.11
Larry Ely
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Protect the fund that protects our state’s waters

In 2011, the Legislature voted to permanently eliminate general fund appropriations for the program. Without funding, AWPF cannot fund new projects. Worse yet, the Arizona Department of Water Resources will not have adequate funding to continue managing the 27 multi-year projects that are currently underway. These budget cuts could derail years of progress in water restoration, and losing these valuable riparian areas means a permanent loss of Arizona’s biodiversity. Act Now - Contact your state legislators to protect the state’s water supply and sustainability goals. For more information, visit www.awpf.gov/savethefund.