

What is a Watershed and What Does the Gila Watershed Partnership Have to Do With It?

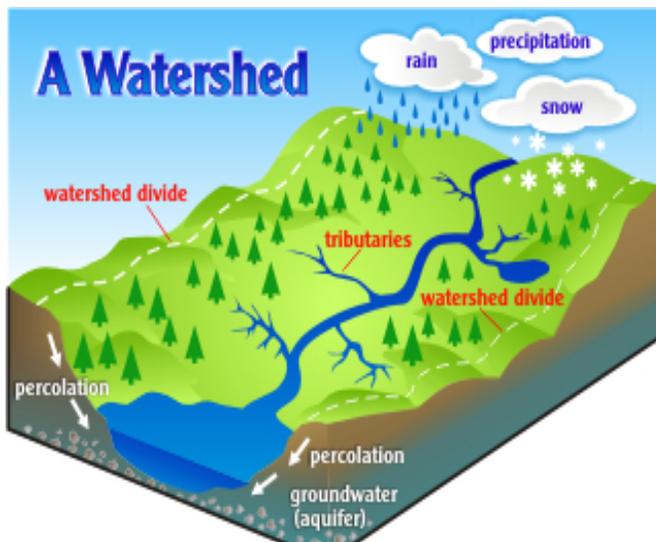
By Marguerite Rodriguez, Gila Watershed Partnership Project Coordinator

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that all drains into a common body of water. Water from snow and rain drain downhill, down mountains and valleys, into creeks and rivers, ponds and lakes, and even into the ground.

The watershed area where we live in Graham and Greenlee Counties is part of the Gila Watershed because our land area all drains into the Gila River.

All communities are dependent on water for survival, and perhaps even more so in our area because of our dry climate. Our beloved Gila River and all its beautiful tributaries, the San Simon, Bonita Creek, the San Francisco, and Eagle Creek, are true lifelines to our many communities. Our



A diagram of a watershed showing how water flows from the mountains through creeks and rivers to ponds and lakes and into the groundwater.



The Gila Box, an example of a healthy riparian area.

rivers give us essential household water and enjoyable recreation areas, but they also provide a living for countless farmers and ranchers, and wildlife as well. Our rivers are invaluable, and their health depends on the health of the watershed as a whole.

Because we are all neighbors in the same watershed, that makes us partners in water. We all are bound to sharing this precious resource and we therefore share equal responsibility to protect and conserve it.

What is a Healthy Watershed and What Can We Do to Help It?

Having a healthy watershed is about more than simply having clean water. It is also about making sure our rivers function well, maintaining wildlife habitats, maintaining beautiful and inviting river and lake recreation areas, and making sure we have water for farming, ranching and industry. Having a healthy watershed not only makes good ethical sense, it makes good business sense.

Doing all that we can to help our water situation in any way possible is our duty as citizens of this valley, especially in this time of drought and water restrictions.

So what can we do?

KEEP OUR WATERSHED HEALTHY!

- Conserve water...
 - take shorter showers
 - turn off water when not in use, inside and out
 - use low-water use appliances and fixtures
 - fix leaks
 - water less outside, and use low-water use plants in landscaping, and use mulch
 - use rain barrels to capture rain and use to water the garden
- Keep our rivers and groundwater clean...
 - don't put anything toxic, including medications, down the drain, bring outdated medications to your local pharmacy, police department, or a "Dump the Drugs" event
 - dispose of motor oils by recycling them at your local auto parts store
 - minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides
 - use non-toxic cleaning products
 - never dump anything in storm drains as these drain ultimately to our river
 - don't allow any fecal material (human or animal) to be left near banks of rivers and streams
- Don't litter...
 - litter ends up in sewers and eventually rivers and streams
 - place all trash in bags and in proper containers, at home and while recreating, especially near rivers and streams

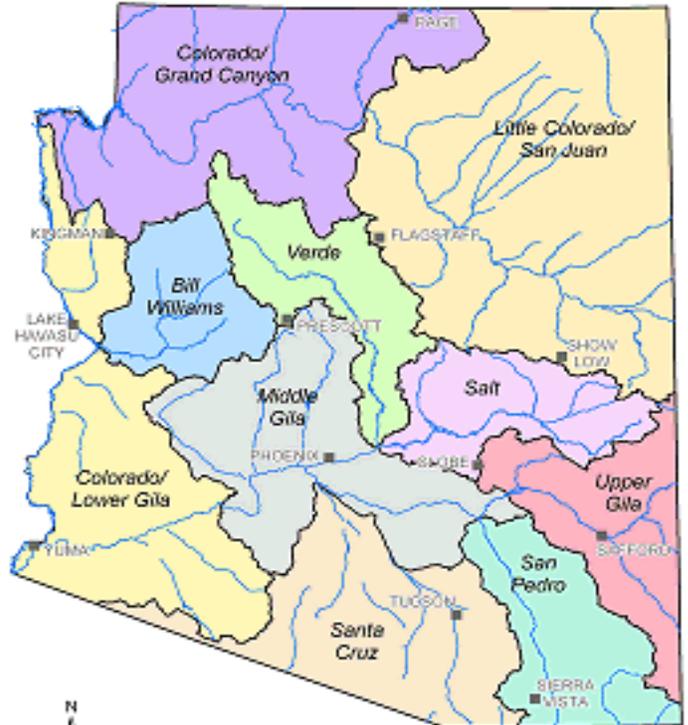
Who is the Gila Watershed Partnership?

We're all partners when it comes to our water. And while there are government agencies devoted to many other types of land management, there is no agency specifically devoted to watershed management and protection. While many of these agencies will fund grant projects towards that goal, they do not specifically seek out projects that are in need and implement them.

That's where the **Gila Watershed Partnership (GWP)** comes in. The GWP was founded over 20 years ago by a group of concerned citizens who recognized the need to protect and enhance our watershed. The GWP represents people who live in the Upper Gila Watershed of Arizona (see map), the area that drains into the upper portion of the Gila River in our state.

Since 1992 the **GWP has brought nearly \$6,000,000** in grants to projects that directly served Graham and Greenlee counties. And the number is climbing every year.

The GWP's partners include representatives from our towns, counties, local, state and federal agencies, plus a diverse group of individuals including average everyday people, farmers, ranchers, business owners, mining companies, and even scientific researchers.



The watersheds of Arizona. We are in the Upper Gila in pink.



Just a few of the Gila Watershed Partnership's many partners...

The GWP has the ability to bring together citizens, government, industry, and science to look at all sides of current issues ... and then finds the funds to solve the problems. It's a winning combination that adds up to success.

Past and current projects include working with private land owners to build wells for cattle, fixing levees for farmers,



The Gila Watershed Partnership founders – still involved and still caring about your water.

clean-up projects, water quality improvement projects, riparian restoration projects, erosion control projects, education projects, and youth engagement projects.

The Gila Watershed Partnership is still growing strong, and meets every second Wednesday of the month at 7 pm at the Graham County General Services Building.

Come and see what we are all about!

SAVE THE DATE! JUNE 1st, 2013

The **Gila Watershed Partnership** and the **City of Safford** are pleased to announce

A Water Festival to Raise Awareness about Water Conservation

When: Sat. June 1st, 2013 from 10 am to 4 pm

Where: Safford City Hall Lawn

The Water Festival will have food, entertainment, and kid's activities.

Upcoming Projects...

Applications submitted but not yet awarded...

Upper Gila Water Supply Study

- from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- to identify water resources and water management strategies to meet future water supply needs in the communities of the Upper Gila River Watershed

Youth Pathway Project

- from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Great American Outdoors Grant
- to encourage careers in conservation and land management on public lands, through on-the-ground activities for school age kids high school through college

Clifton Restroom Facility

- from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)
- to provide much needed restroom facilities in the most popular recreation areas along the San Francisco River near Clifton, in order to reduce the amount of *E. coli* that gets into the river

Current Project Updates

Upper Gila Watershed Riparian Restoration Project

- will replace invasive tamarisk with native species to preserve natural habitats
- a Plant Propagation Manager has just been hired to run the Nursery and Greenhouse at Eastern Arizona College's Discovery Park
- the greenhouse is on order and should be constructed by the end of May
- funded by The Walton Family Foundation (WFF)

Master Watershed Steward Program

- educating the public on watershed and riparian issues specific to our watershed
- course in Graham County in final weeks, doing Google Maps research project finding undocumented sediment control structures, planned field trip next week
- Greenlee County course content being finalized, classes begin in June, publicity about classes beginning, open to teens and adults
- funded by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) in Graham County and by Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation in Greenlee County

Gila River Water Conservation Education Program – Water Counts

- educating our community on low-water usage in homes and business, including water audits to save water
- funded by the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF)

Graham County Fairgrounds Project

- recently purchased and installed low-water use toilets, urinals, faucets and sprinklers to reduce the amount of water consumed by the facility
- funded by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

... FOR MORE INFO

WWW.GILAWATERSHEDPARTNERSHIP.COM

Ely Fence Replacement

- will repair or replace fencing between the San Carlos Apache Reservation and the U.S. Forest to prevent livestock from entering Eagle Creek
- currently in negotiations between the allotment owner, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, and the U.S. Forest Service Clifton Ranger District, to determine final fence configuration
- funded by the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF)

Eagle Creek Riparian Restoration at Filleman Crossing Project

- will construct a river crossing in an area where the road washes out frequently, benefiting both residents and wildlife
- in permitting stage awaiting Section 7 Consultation
- funded by the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW)

Apache Grove Project

- removed levies in order to restore optimal river flow, control erosion, and manage invasive species, while preserving threatened agricultural land for the owner
- in continuous monitoring, need to replace regrowing invasives
- funded by the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW)

Friends of the Frisco

- educating the public about river related issues, and organizing clean-up events
- San Francisco River Festival and Community River Clean-up on Saturday, May 25th, in Clifton
- funded by Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc., Graham County United Way and other Greenlee County businesses

“Our environment, the world in which we live and work, is a mirror of our attitudes and expectations.”

Earl Nightingale



Calendar of Events

Wednesday, May 8th, 2013 at 7 pm at the GWP monthly meeting in the Graham County General Services Building - Carol Telles, a District Ranger for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Clifton Ranger District, will present “Archaeology in the Gila Watershed”.

Saturday, May 25th, 2013 - Friends of the Frisco event at the Clifton RV Park Ramada – 9 am–12 pm Community River Clean-Up, 12-1 pm free lunch for volunteers, 1 – 3 pm San Francisco River Festival

Saturday, June 1, 2013, 10 am – 4 pm The GWP and the City of Safford will be holding our first ever Water Festival at the Safford City Hall lawn.

Our partners include:

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| Arizona Department of Agriculture | Eastern Arizona College |
| Arizona Department of Environmental Quality | Farm Bureau |
| Arizona Department of Transportation | Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold Inc. |
| Arizona Game and Fish Department | Graham County |
| Arizona Geological Survey | Greenlee County |
| Arizona State Land Department | Gila Valley Irrigation District |
| Bureau of Land Management | Natural Resource Conservation Service |
| City of Safford | University of Arizona Cooperative Extension |
| Town of Thatcher | University of Arizona NEMO Project |
| Town of Pima | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Town of Clifton | U.S. Forest Service – Apache-Sitgreaves and Coronado Forests |
| Town of Duncan | U.S. Bureau of Reclamation |
| Gila Valley NRCD | And many community members |

Get involved in your watershed

For more information, contact Jan Holder at the Gila Watershed Partnership, 711 S. 14th Avenue, 85546, or email.gilawatershed@gmail.com
www.gilawatershedpartnership.com