

From the Director

A time of change at GRIP

Sally Smith, who devoted years to the tasks of understanding Grant County's mines, educating her fellow residents, and demanding accountability from both government and industry, has retired from her position as director of GRIP's Responsible Mining Program. She plans to spend more time traveling, enjoying her grandson Huckleberry, and putting her amazing green thumb to work creating and maintaining gardens across the western United States.

"Well deserved" does not begin to describe Sally's decision to take more time for herself. Her home office was filled with boxes of documents and three-inch-thick binders that she was probably one of only two people in Grant County to have read. The piles of paper on her desk often obscured the sign she had tacked to a shelf to remind herself that the world's problems were not hers to solve: "You do not *have* to do this."

We thank Sally for her commitment and dedication to the well being of our community, the inspiration that she has provided us to continue her efforts, and the beautiful spirit she brought to even the dullest permit hearing.

Sally is already sorely missed here in the office, where now it is *our* in-box that is filling with correspondence about mine permits and violations and studies. Fortunately, we can look forward to her continued patience, determination, and clear vision as GRIP's President, and she promises to help out with other tasks as her busy retirement schedule allows.

Sally's mining-project responsibilities fall to me, perhaps as poetic justice for the one-year leave of absence I was fortunate enough to be able to take starting last June. My family and I had a wonderful time traveling throughout Mexico and residing for seven months in San Cristóbal, Chiapas. We have returned with renewed energy and a redoubled appreciation for our adopted home in Grant County.

We certainly returned with a redoubled appreciation of Allyson Siwik, who filled in as GRIP's director while I was away, working her way out of a few inherited messes and stepping confidently into the on-the-edge world of nonprofit management. Without her highly capable work, I would never have been able to let go as completely as I did. Allyson will continue with GRIP as our point person on protecting the Gila River basin from mindless water development, on advocating a sustainable, community-centered approach to economic development, and on the related task of advocating community-based planning to enhance our quality of life.

GRIP's board of directors has also changed, with the addition of two members. Author, bookseller, and outdoorsman *par excellence* Dutch Salmon, whom we have courted for years, found Allyson's invitation irresistible, especially since they have worked very closely as principals in the Gila Conservation Coalition. The second new member, David Rose, is a relative newcomer to the area, but is a veteran of one of the country's longest-running legal battles with a mine proposal. David and his wife hail from Crested Butte, Colorado, where Phelps Dodge recently completed a patent application that gave it 155 acres of land on nearby Mount

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Sally Smith relaxes in one of her beloved gardens

Dilution derailed for time being

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beneficial use of Chino's Water Rights in furtherance of the mining and industrial purposes currently permitted by the State Engineer."

The mine will generate millions of gallons of polluted water every day for centuries after closure. PD wants to remove most of the metals, neutralize the acidity, and then deal with excess manganese and a very large exceedance of sulfates and total dissolved solids through dilution.

But in a brief reply to PD, the State Engineer's office wrote that "the proposed commingling is not authorized under Chino Mine Company's existing permits." This decision means PD will have to obtain a permit to change the purpose or place of use of its water before it can implement this plan. It must apply for this permit by September 21, and GRIP and other interested parties will have another chance to argue that dilution must not be considered a "beneficial use" of water rights. If again the State Engineer rules against PD, the company would be required to develop and obtain approval of an amendment to its closure plan that does not involve dilution.

Activism can be fun!

Here's a chance to congratulate our government on decision well made, as well as to remind the State Engineer that we'll be watching his decision when PD comes back with a permit change request. Please send a brief note to the State Engineer noting your pleasure with his office's finding and expressing your hope that when PD returns with a new petition the agency will agree that dilution is not the solution to pollution. Here's his contact information:

John R. D'Antonio, State Engineer

Bataan Memorial Bldg, Rm. 102

Santa Fe, NM 87504-5102

John.D'Antonio@state.nm.us

(505) 827-6120 phone

(505) 827-6682 fax