

Planning Forum Seeks to Learn from Others' Experiences

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Challis, on the north side of the proposed wilderness, has a very different character. By dint of location and lack of ski resort, it has retained the rougher, rural feel it has had as a mining town and trading post since 1876. Many residents want it to stay that way and have opposed the wilderness proposal. But the same anti-government stance that fuels this opposition undermines efforts to preserve the town's identity. Ex-West Coasters bought up houses during a mining downturn in the 1990s, and newcomers have continued to do so even as mining has restarted, tightening the housing market and changing the town, wilderness area or no. It's no Ketchum, but in a few years it

may well not be Challis, either.

Lee Nellis, now a colleague of Dr. Carter's at the Sonoran Institute, commented on Challis's situation ten years ago, when he worked as a planner in Idaho. "There's a key principle in this planning game," he told the *High Country News*. "No one learns anything from anyone else."

Of course, that's where GRIP's series of public forums comes in, as well as other efforts, such as the "Your Town" workshop held here in 2001. Nellis participated in that workshop, as did GRIP and 38 other groups and individuals. In the next issue of *Get A GRIP*, we'll take a look at what conclusions were reached at that workshop and at what other organizations are doing about economic development and planning for the future.

Don't miss these upcoming forums! All at 7pm in WNMU's Global Resource Center, 12th and Kentucky Streets.

April 11: Community Design for Active Living. Marni Ratzel, Boulder's Bikeability & Walkability Planner, will describe how towns can make life easier for human-powered travel and how this strengthens health and community.

April 25: Healthy Environment as Economic Asset, with Jennie Rice, Managing Director of ECONorthwest. How do we calculate the benefits of conservation in order to make sound decisions about natural resource uses?

May 18: Local Energy Sustainability, with Mark Sardella, founder of Local Energy in Santa Fe. One of the clearest examples of how environmental protection, urban planning, and economic development can work together is the sustainable use of local natural resources for energy.

June 6: From Plans to Action: a Community Discussion, facilitated by planner Joanne McEntire of Albuquerque.



Pittman Center sets the tone for what kind of development it wants

Gila Conservation Coalition Plans Festival for May 20-22

The Gila Conservation Coalition – comprising GRIP, the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, and the Center for Biological Diversity – will host the first annual Gila River Festival on May 20 – 22. The festival will be an opportunity to celebrate this unique resource, to raise awareness of the river's many values to the local area and the Southwest, and to educate the community about the ecology and natural and cultural history of the Gila River in New Mexico. The schedule of events follows:

Friday evening, May 20

Gila River Festival Invitational Art Show
Opening Reception
L&I Arts, Silver City

Saturday, May 21

Registration 8:00 am - Grant Co. Fairground
Events scheduled 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Grant County Fairground

Festival Registration; food vendors; sale of festival items; informational tables for groups, businesses, agencies; music; departure for Gila River Valley van tours.

Forest Service Mogollon Campground and Birding Area

Audubon birding events, Native Plant

Society hikes, tour of archaeological site; kid's activities.

Lichty Center

Bird banding; short talks throughout the day with experts on river ecology, Native American and early Hispanic history, river restoration; guided walks; kid's activities.

Saturday evening, May 21

Invited - Presentation by Greg McNamee, journalist, photographer and author of *Gila: The Life and Death of an American River*. Preceded by children's poetry reading and followed by reception and music.

Sunday morning, May 22

Audubon birding field trip to Redrock

