



# Get A GRIP

TEN YEARS OF PROMOTING  
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES  
BY PROTECTING  
OUR ENVIRONMENT

► Responsible Mining ► Healthy Rivers ► Community Planning ► Aquifer Protection ► Environmental Health ► Sustainability



## NMED RELEASES RECORD OF DECISION FOR HURLEY SOILS CLEAN-UP

**Sally Smith, Director of Responsible Mining Program**

A draft Record of Decision (ROD) has been written by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) regarding remediation completed this summer in the town of Hurley. Out of 670 Hurley properties sampled, 523 were found to be contaminated with copper in excess of 5,000 parts per million, and in some cases with other metals. It has been almost 14 years since an agreement between the state and Chino Mines was signed to investigate and to clean up potentially dangerous "historic contamination" which occurred prior to 1970 in Hurley as well as an estimated 50 square miles in and around the Chino Mine.

GRIP has been involved from the beginning of this process attending monthly citizen meetings of a mandated advisory Community Work Group that has endeavored to stay abreast of the many technical documents generated.

In 2005 GRIP and concerned individuals protested a NMED policy decision to raise its own recommended Remedial Action Criteria (RAC) of 2,000 ppm for the

*"Incidental ingestion of copper was determined to be the major source of contamination in a Human Health Risk Assessment which found children to be most at risk due to direct contact while playing and hand-to-mouth contact with metals in soils."*

level of copper which if exceeded would require removal from soils. The RAC, through negotiation with Chino Mines, was raised to 3,100 ppm later in the same year, and after a dispute resolution process, to the final and less protective 5,000 ppm.

Since the early 1900s dumping, crushing, milling, and smelting of raw ores occurred in the town of Hurley, with nearby tailings piles and smelter emissions adding to the deposition of copper and other metals in Hurley and surrounding soils.

SEE HURLEY SOILS CLEANUP ON PAGE 9

## FINANCIAL CRISIS IMPACTS OUTLOOK FOR MINING PROJECTS

**Allyson Siwik, GRIP Executive Director**

Concerns about a growing global recession have brought down copper prices — and the share price of mining giant Freeport-McMoRan with them. By press time copper had hit a three-year trading low of \$1.84 per pound. Shares of Freeport-McMoRan had closed at a four-year low of \$32.81 per share, down over 70% from the stock's 52-week high of \$127.24. According to some industry analysts, commodities markets are expected to remain highly volatile and uncertain in the short-term.

Freeport-McMoRan reported a 33% drop in profits in its third quarter earnings report and noted that "future capital spending plans are being reviewed in response to the impact of recent changes in global economic conditions on commodities prices." According to news reports, expansion projects at the company's Arizona operations in Sierrita, Bagdad, and Miami now will be delayed, saving \$370 million in capital costs. In conversations with company officials in Grant County, GRIP was told that mining projects and reclamation work at Freeport's Chino-Cobre and Tyrone mines are still moving forward, although at a slower pace and effort is being spent on identifying cost-cutting measures. Diesel fuel costs have dropped recently, easing some impacts on the cost of mining. Officials stated that the company is still hiring, however it is also assessing probable scenarios for the future that depend on varying market conditions.

As we reported in our summer issue, high copper prices forced a shift from using Chino's Lee Hill Pit as a leach operation to mining valuable ore. But the current financial crisis has demonstrated that mining operations may change quickly in response to global market shifts. GRIP continues to monitor activities at area mines and will stay on top of changes as they occur.

# GILA RESOURCES INFORMATION PROJECT

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GRIP@gilaresources.info  
www.gilaresources.info

## Mission Statement

Recognizing that human and environmental systems are inseparable and interdependent, Gila Resources Information Project pursues two goals: to protect and nurture human communities by safeguarding the natural resources that sustain us all; and to safeguard natural resources by facilitating informed public participation in resource use decisions.

## Board of Directors

**Sally Smith**, President  
**Jesse Franklin-Owens**, Vice-President  
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GRIP was founded in 1997. It is supported by foundation grants and individual donations. Special gratitude for ongoing support is owed to the McCune Charitable Foundation of Santa Fe.

To become a member and receive a copy of Get A GRIP, a minimum donation of \$10.00 is appreciated. GRIP is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization; your contribution is tax-deductible.

Your privacy is important to us. GRIP will never share your name or personal information without your consent.



## GRIP RECEIVES PNM ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT

*Upgrades Will Save Money & Reduce  
Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

## Richard Mahler

GRIP is pleased to have received a \$2500 "Reduce Your Use" grant from the PNM (Public Service Company of New Mexico) Resources Foundation for the purpose of improving energy efficiency in its office and promoting energy conservation among area residents. Through this funding, GRIP is replacing incandescent lighting with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), phasing out its old copy machine and computer printer in favor of an Energy Star-rated combination copier-printer, and upgrading its heating-cooling thermostat to a programmable unit.

GRIP consulted "Make the Switch" pages of the Environmental Defense Fund's website ([www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org)) in identifying available CFLs and projecting the impact of their use. By replacing a total of 16 incandescent bulbs, GRIP estimates that over the life of the CFLs it will save \$558.55 and prevent 13,325 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. GRIP used the "Energy Star" website ([www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)), maintained by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy, to evaluate programmable thermostats and copier-printers. Based on EPA estimates, programmable thermostats can save about \$180 annually on typical energy bills, while energy-efficient appliances generally reduce consumption of electricity and other resources by 10 to 40 percent when compared with older models. By reducing unnecessary use, emissions of greenhouse gases are also lowered.

*By replacing a total of 16 incandescent bulbs, GRIP estimates that over the life of the CFLs it will save \$558.55 and prevent 13,325 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere.*

Some grant funds will be used to develop and distribute outreach information on office and home energy efficiency to GRIP members and the community at large. GRIP will also incorporate such material into the Sustainability Education Guide it is preparing in cooperation with the Town of Silver City's Climate Protection Agreement Citizens' Advisory Committee, which advocates measures aimed at achieving a 15 percent reduction in Silver City's greenhouse gas emissions by 2012. Also supported by a grant from the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, the new publication will provide businesses and residents with resources and information on how to reduce their energy consumption. The guide will offer answers to frequently asked questions, tips for homeowners, and contact specifics on a variety of topics. Information also will be disseminated at health fairs and other public events, with special emphasis on weatherization and other strategies accessible to low-income residents. GRIP plans to conduct an on-line survey to document actions taken as a result of these efforts. The Sustainability Guide will be available summer 2009.

GRIP'S LIVING GREEN SERIES PRESENTS

# HYBRID HOUSES:

## TOP TEN STRATEGIES FOR ENERGY-SAVING BUILDINGS



**With Catherine Wanek,  
author and consultant on environmentally  
sustainable building practices**

**Presentation: Friday, November 7, 2008; 7:00 pm  
Silco Theater, downtown Silver City  
\$5 donation appreciated**

Here is a rare chance to learn how an Earth-friendly "home of the future" can be built today. Builders Without Borders co-director Catherine Wanek will offer a visual tour of a wide variety of contemporary homes designed to reduce energy use and carbon emissions. Her examples include an Earthship in northern New Mexico; an urban remodel in Takoma Park, MD; a solar-powered community in Arizona; a model for rebuilding in Louisiana; a wind and solar ranch in Kansas; a straw-bale "passive house" in the Swiss Alps; and an award-winning housing development in China. These innovative "hybrids" provide a vision of a sustainability that is attainable now. The presenter is author-photographer of *The New Strawbale Home* and co-founder of a network of ecological builders dedicated to providing education and hands-on help to people and communities desiring to build affordable homes. Wanek has contributed articles and photographs to *Su Casa*, *Communities* and *Mother Earth News* magazines.

The former editor and publisher of *The Last Straw Journal*, Wanek is also a filmmaker whose Black Range Films has produced the *Building With Straw* video series. Her other productions include *Urban Permaculture*, *Build It With Rastra*, and *The Straw Bale Solution*. She and her husband, Pete Fust, are owners of the Black Range Lodge, a historic bed-and-breakfast inn in Kingston, NM, about 30 miles east of Silver City. They are developing it as a center for ecological building and permaculture. From 1998 to 2003, Wanek managed and edited *The Last Straw Journal*, the international journal of straw bale and natural building. She lectures widely on the subject of straw-bale construction and other forms of natural homebuilding. Learn more about her work at [www.builderswithoutborders.org](http://www.builderswithoutborders.org).

## GREEN LIVING TIPS:

### A "DO IT YOURSELF" GUIDE TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. Weather-stripping around doors and windows, sealed holes around electrical outlets - Proper sealing can reduce overall home energy costs by 10 percent.
2. Energy-efficient refrigerator - Models built before 1993 often consume twice as much energy as new refrigerators, costing \$90 or more annually in additional energy costs. Check [www.energystar.com](http://www.energystar.com) to compare certified energy efficient models.
3. Computer programmed to shut down when not in use - May reduce consumption by 40 watts or more.
4. Cold-water vs. hot-water laundry washing - Saves \$30 to \$40 in energy costs each year.
5. Electronic ignition on gas range - Uses 40 percent less natural gas than a range with an always-on pilot light.
6. Insulated water heater - An insulating jacket around the heater can save more than \$30 a year in heat loss.
7. Compact fluorescent light bulbs - Use about 75 percent less energy and last six to ten times longer than standard incandescent bulbs Find an energy-saving bulb and calculate your energy and cost savings as well as CO2 emission reduction at the Environmental Defense Fund's "Make the Switch" web page, [www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org).
8. Low-flow shower head - Uses half as much water, typically, and saves as much as \$145 a year in energy costs.
9. Fix dripping faucets - A leak of only one drop per second can waste up to 1700 gallons a year, plus \$40 or more in energy costs if it is a hot-water leak.
10. Energy-efficient dishwasher - A new model typically saves \$25 in annual energy costs over an older version. Check [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) to find an energy-efficient model.

Sources: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov), [www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org)

## AWSA STAKEHOLDERS PROVIDE INPUT ON

# “DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS”

**Allyson Siwik,**  
**GRIP and Gila Conservation Coalition**  
**Executive Director**

What is your vision of a water future for Southwestern New Mexico? About 30 stakeholders from the area spent a beautiful Saturday morning at a recent workshop that solicited input on this key question. The meeting was held as part of the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA) water planning process, established to find consensus on utilizing the Act in a cost-effective manner in order to balance historical and future water demands against uncertain supply while simultaneously protecting the environment. The AWSA provides New Mexico with consumptive use of an additional 14,000 acre-feet of water per year from the Gila and San Francisco Rivers and a federal subsidy of \$66-million to meet water supply needs regardless of whether additional water is developed in the Upper Gila Basin.

A definition of Desired Future Conditions (DFC) is a first step in outlining planning objectives, strategies and alternatives for the Act's water planning process. It addresses, for instance, strategies that might be used to obtain a dependable supply of water that would meet the needs of various interests in the region. These might include conservation, groundwater management, water reuse ideas, and so on.

During the October 25 workshop, stakeholders representing municipal and state governments, businesses, irrigators, the conservation community and the general public were allotted five minutes each to present a DFC statement and supporting information. Not surprisingly, there was common ground among most stakeholders around the theme of ensuring a sustainable balance of water resources, with many

mentioning the need to do this in a cost-effective manner. Water conservation within the municipal, agricultural and industrial sectors also was highlighted as a critical need.

Allyson Siwik, speaking on behalf of GRIP and the Gila Conservation Coalition, said the groups envision communities working together to live within their means, balancing present and future human water use with the available supply and needs of the environment. She described a “water budget” — an inventory of supply and demand, combined with an understanding of the relationship between them — as one useful tool. She stressed that water needs of the environment, such as ecosystems associated with springs, streams and rivers, need to be factored into the equation. Siwik said balancing the regional water budget in a practical and cost-effective manner is vital, emphasizing that municipal and agricultural water conservation provides the greatest opportunity for cost-effectively increasing the available water supply.

As an example, Siwik noted a Town of Silver City estimate that conservation measures could reduce its total municipal water demand by 30 to 45%. (A Gila Conservation Coalition economic analysis has shown municipal conservation to be a more economical alternative than drilling new wells or a diversion project. See “Potential Economic Costs of a Gila River Diversion: Meeting Future Water Supply Needs in Silver City and the Central Mining District” at [www.gilaconservation.org/resources.shtml](http://www.gilaconservation.org/resources.shtml).) Silver City's Water Utilities Department already has reduced per-capita demand by fixing leaks, upgrading its distribution system, and implementing a pricing structure that charges more for increased water use.

Meanwhile, in the agricultural

sector, farmers in Luna County have made great progress over the past five years in reducing water use through implementation of drip irrigation. According to the SWNM Regional Water Plan, irrigated agriculture is the largest consumer of water in Luna County (95% of all withdrawals in 2000). Tom Bates, a spokesperson for the City of Deming, reported that local conversion from flood to drip irrigation is saving 30,000 acre-feet per year (afy), or roughly the same amount of water currently “mined” from the Mimbres Basin aquifer.

The Town of Silver City's Community Development Director, Peter Russell, identified integration of the water distribution system between Silver City and the Mining District as a means of realizing efficiencies in management of the resource. But he described New Mexico's administrative Critical Block System as an impediment to effective water management, noting that mining giant Freeport-McMoRan owns 40,000 afy of water rights in the area whereas the municipalities of Silver City and the Mining District combined own just 6,000 afy. Ending the Critical Block System, Russell said, would allow rights to be transferred to municipalities where water is needed. Russell also speculated about the possibility that our area's water might be targeted for export once the mines cease operations, potentially threatening the water supplies of local communities.

Todd Schulke, speaking on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity and the Gila Conservation Coalition, stated his desire for protection of rivers in southwestern New Mexico. He outlined a vision for balancing agricultural use and environmental flows on the Gila River. Schulke described a ditch-head

SEE DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS ON PAGE 9

## CONTAMINATED SILVER CITY WATER TANK BACK ON LINE

Complaints by an alert Chihuahua Hill resident, a former chemist, prompted an August investigation by the Town of Silver City into suspected chemical contamination of one of the city's main water storage tanks. After confirming the presence of a toxic substance, the town's utilities department drained the tank and had it cleaned, then refilled and returned it to service. Residents were assured that the water was — and is — safe to drink.

According to newspaper and Internet reports, the Chihuahua Hill resident first noticed a strange smell in his tap water around August 13, detected mainly when he turned his faucets on each morning. The man suspected it came from toluene, a solvent commonly present in paints, nail polishes, glues, and gasoline. A sample was delivered August 18 to Silver City's water utility for volatile organic compound testing. In turning over the sample, the resident emphasized that he no longer detected a chemical odor in his water.

Results of the residence and water tank tests showed that while the samples contained nine volatile organic compounds, including five subject to government regulation, none were in concentrations above the maximum allowable contaminant level. The highest level was of methyl toluene (also called xylene), found at .0885 parts per million per liter at the cemetery tank and .021 ppm/l at the residence. The threshold for odor detection for xylene is 2.2 ppm/l and the maximum contaminant level is 10.0 ppm/l.

The Town of Silver City subsequently confirmed that a storage tank near the Cooper Street cemeteries was renovated last summer. This involved draining the tank's contents, sandblasting its interior, and relining the interior with epoxy-based paint. After 12 days of curing, the tank was washed out, disinfected, and refilled. After testing for bacteria and chlorine levels, the water was found acceptable. The tank was drained and refilled once again before going back into service.

News reports noted that chlorine would not solve a problem of toluene contamination and in fact could react with the compound to make it more toxic. Xylene has less density than water and is virtually insoluble. Since water was sampled from the bottom of the tank, it was speculated that there were greater concentrations atop the water, where the compound was "floating." The compound ordinarily evaporates into the atmosphere or is broken down by organisms, but the process slows in sealed environments. (Though not a carcinogen, xylene can impair the nervous system, liver, kidneys, and lungs.)

Following the discovery of its xylene contamination, the tank was drained and the contractor ordered to carry out a thorough cleaning of its interior. The tank was then refilled, its water tested, and placed back on line during September.

Calls from Get A GRIP seeking comment from the Town of Silver City utilities department were not returned.

## A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF MINE RECLAMATION



### ***GRIP Mining Photo Essay 2nd Installment***

As a follow-up to our last aerial photo-essay of PLS ponds at the Chino and Tyrone mines, we're sharing more images from our collection, available at [www.gilaresources.info](http://www.gilaresources.info). This time we're highlighting the progress made in reclaiming tailings piles at Freeport-McMoRan's Tyrone mine.

By winning strong reclamation and financial assurance requirements, GRIP helped create a viable financial incentive for Phelps-Dodge and its new owner, Freeport-McMoRan, to reclaim inactive mine areas sooner rather than later. With copper prices soaring, the company cut its taxes and reduced long-term environmental liabilities by employing dozens of workers to get several years ahead of schedule on reclamation. Some of the units being reclaimed have been inactive since the early 1990's, sending dust into the air and killing birds that happened to land in acidic pond water.

Reclamation is very close to completion at the Tyrone tailings ponds and stockpiles no longer in use. Recontouring, covering, and much of the seeding of vegetation seeding of is now done. Most of the work, which requires huge machinery and creates many additional jobs, will come to a close at the end of this year. Some of the equipment purchased for this mammoth project is being moved to Chino for reclamation work that has begun on the older, retired tailings ponds. This work can be observed from Highway 180 southeast of Hurley.

GRIP will continue to participate with the state Environment Department and the Mining and Minerals Division in inspections of these clean-up operations in order to ensure compliance with approved reclamation plans before Freeport-McMoRan is released from associated financial assurance requirements.

# GILA RIVER FESTIVAL

## HIGHLIGHTS



Bigger and better than ever, the fourth annual Gila River Festival was held September 18-21 at a variety of locations in Silver City and the Cliff-Gila Valley. Glorious weather prevailed and participation was high. The theme of this year's four-day event, presented by the Gila Conservation Coalition with many co-sponsors, was honoring the river "as a source of inspiration." With this in mind, creative expression was highlighted through photography, writing, music, sketching, painting, performance, weaving, and rock art, among other multi-disciplinary activities. Lectures, workshops, hikes, birding, art exhibitions, and kayak trips also drew from a common touchstone: the free-flowing and beloved Gila.

The festival brought together scientists and artists, experts and laypersons, with scores of residents, businesses, schools, groups, volunteers, and visitors equally engaged. Highlights included the unveiling of a 75-foot-long mural on Yankee Street in Silver City and several photography workshops at the river taught by award-winning photographer (and GRIP board member) Michael Berman.

Each year this community-based celebration considers the river from a new perspective, while always emphasizing the interconnectedness of myriad forms of life through an undammed and perennial source of clean, fresh water. Mark your calendars for the fifth annual festival, to be held September 17-20, 2009. It will feature events honoring the centennial of conservationist Aldo Leopold's legacy in the Southwest. Those wishing to participate in planning for next year's Gila River Festival are invited to contact the Gila Conservation Coalition at 538-8078 or [info@gilaconservation.org](mailto:info@gilaconservation.org).



*Nia Spees stands beside the tile she made for the Gila River mural this past summer during the Mimbres Region Arts Council Youth Mural Camp. Photo credit: Nanda Currant*



*Participants in Sharman Apt Russell's nature writing workshop discussed the themes of American nature writing, as well as the role of nature writing in the 21st century. Participants spent time on their own creative work and were encouraged to consider how writing can enhance an appreciation of nature and influence beliefs and behavior. Photo credit: Nanda Currant*



*Mike Fugagli lead a hike at The Nature Conservancy's Gila River Farm during which participants learned about the history and future of restoration in the Cliff-Gila Valley. Photo credit: Nanda Currant*



*Participants on the Gila River Festival kayak trip paddled a 2-mile section of the Gila in the Cliff-Gila Valley, visiting recovering riparian areas and existing irrigation diversions. Photo credit: Donna Wells*

# RIVER OTTERS

## BACK IN NEW MEXICO



### Richard Mahler

Once relatively common in the Gila River watershed, river otters long ago became extirpated statewide as a result of habitat destruction, pollution, and trapping for their thick fur. The last known native New Mexico otter was killed in a beaver trap near Cliff in 1953. These semi-aquatic mammals, members of the weasel family, are the focus of a long-running reintroduction effort that seeks to return the species to its New Mexico home. (Otters were also once present in the middle and upper Rio Grande watershed, San Francisco River, Canadian River, and some smaller streams.)

Otter reintroduction was discussed in an October 23 presentation at Silver City's Silco Theater by Dutch Salmon of the Gila Conservation Coalition, Steve MacDonald of the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, and Rachel Conn of Amigos Bravos. They are part of an initiative whereby the U.S. Department of Agriculture and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish seek to replicate successful otter reintroduction in neighboring states. The effort involves a variety of concerned scientists, government agencies, and environmental organizations under an umbrella coalition called New Mexico Friends of River Otters. Amigos Bravos coordinated release of five Washington state otters on Taos Pueblo in mid-October. A second release involving more otters is planned for November on the upper Rio Grande. No date has been set for release of otters into the Gila, which was authorized in 2006. The government requirement of a biological

survey and shortage of available otters have been cited as reasons for the delayed reintroduction, likely to occur along a 42-mile stretch of the river between Grapevine Campground and Mogollon Creek. Carrying capacity of that section is said to be between 50 and 75 animals. (Evidence of wild otters in northern New Mexico was found near Navajo Lake in 2004, but it is believed these animals migrated from a reintroduced population in Colorado.)

The reintroduction plan is not without controversy: concern has been raised about the impact of otters on populations of native fish as well as the fact that those imported are not members of the original Southwestern subspecies, now extinct. On the other hand, their prey includes non-native fish, bullfrogs, and crayfish, all of which negatively impact native wildlife. The river otter is listed as endangered by New Mexico authorities, but is not classified as such in the U.S. as a whole, from which an estimated 50,000 are harvested for their fur each year.

Highly social and famously playful, otters feed on crayfish, insects, amphibians, birds, and fish. Adults typically weigh 20 to 30 pounds. A keystone species and valuable predator, otters are considered a sign of river community health inasmuch as they depend upon (and help maintain) a balanced ecosystem. They prefer locations with deep ponds, clean water, sufficient food, plenty of riverside trees, and freedom from disturbance. They use rivers and streams as travel corridors.

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**NOVEMBER 3 - ARIZONA WATER SETTLEMENTS ACT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE;** regular meeting - 10 am, Grant County Administration Building, Silver City.

**NOVEMBER 7 - HYBRID HOUSES: TOP TEN STRATEGIES FOR ENERGY-SAVING BUILDINGS;** presentation by Catherine Wanek, local author and director of Builders without Borders - 7 pm Silco Theater, Silver City.

**NOVEMBER 8 - ¡GILA LIBRE! NEW MEXICO'S LAST WILD RIVER AND FREE FLOW;** talks and book signings plus a walk along the Gila River with authors Dutch Salmon and Jan Haley - 11 am to 3 pm, Gila Cliff Dwellings Visitor Center.

**NOVEMBER 16 - ¡GILA LIBRE! NEW MEXICO'S LAST WILD RIVER;** book signing with author Dutch Salmon - 2 pm, Silver City Museum, Silver City.

**DECEMBER 6 - ARIZONA WATER SETTLEMENTS ACT STAKEHOLDERS GROUP;** regular quarterly meeting - 8:30 am to 1 pm, Grant County Administration Building, Silver City.

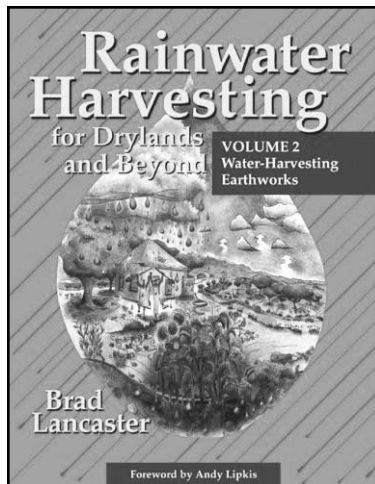
## ACTION ALERT

Send a message to NM Department of Game and Fish and encourage them to break the log jam on otter reintroduction to the Gila. NMDGF needs to complete a biological assessment and get the otter reintroduction approved for the Gila. Your comments can be addressed to:

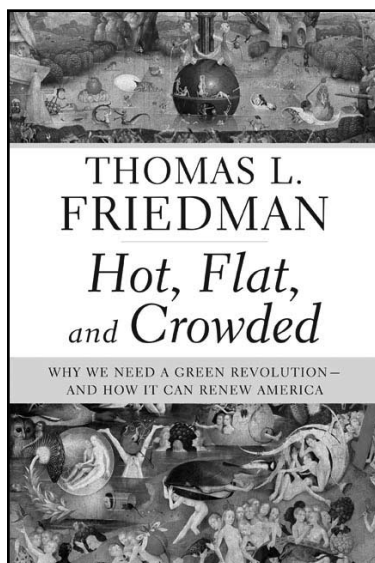
**Dr. Bruce Thompson, Director**  
New Mexico Department  
of Game and Fish  
P.O. Box 25112  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

## NEW TO THE GRIP LIBRARY

Available for short-term loan



**RAINWATER HARVESTING FOR DRYLANDS AND BEYOND, VOLUME 2: WATER-HARVESTING EARTHWORKS.** Written by Brad Lancaster; Rainsource Press, 2008. From [www.harvestingrainwater.com/books/volume2](http://www.harvestingrainwater.com/books/volume2): "Earthworks are one of the easiest, least expensive, and most effective ways of passively harvesting and conserving multiple sources of water in the soil. Associated vegetation then pumps the harvested water back out in the form of beauty, food, shelter, wildlife habitat, and passive heating and cooling strategies, while controlling erosion, increasing soil fertility, reducing downstream flooding, and improving water and air quality. *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond* Volume 2 shows you how to select, place, size, construct, and plant your chosen water-harvesting earthworks. It presents detailed how-to information and variations of a diverse array of earthworks, including chapters on mulch, vegetation, and grey-water recycling so you can customize the techniques to the unique requirements of your site."



**HOT, FLAT AND CROWDED WHY WE NEED A GREEN REVOLUTION AND HOW IT CAN RENEW AMERICA.** Written by Thomas L. Friedman; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. From book jacket: "Friedman explains how global warming, rapidly growing populations, and the astonishing expansion of the world's middle class through globalization have produced a planet that is 'hot, flat and crowded.' Already Earth is being affected in ways that threaten to make it dangerously unstable. In just a few years, it will be too late to fix things — unless the United States steps up now and takes the lead in a worldwide effort to replace our wasteful, inefficient energy practices with a strategy for clean energy, energy efficiency, and conservation that Friedman calls Code Green."

**WE ALL LIVE IN A WATERSHED: GETTING TO KNOW THE SILVER CITY WATERSHED.** With Dave Menzie, geologist with the Surface Water Quality Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department. Recorded presentation and hike, videotaped by Community Access Television of Silver City and available on DVD.



## AN EXCERPT FROM

### ¡GILA LIBRE!

By M. H. "Dutch" Salmon

**"The Gila is still allowed to pulse, slack, sigh, roar, and rejuvenate itself in ways we are just beginning to understand.** This is the last flow in New Mexico that can teach us what a natural river should look like; the watery source of [Aldo] Leopold's 'perfect norm.' ...

"I can only think: We don't deserve this. How can it still be here? But Geronimo left a legacy of resistance; the Mimbres a legacy of art; the mountain men a legacy of adventure and the spirit of the western myth; Leopold a legacy sprouting a legacy of conservation relevant well beyond wilderness and wild rivers. All were inspired by a free flow, a wild river, the headwaters of the Gila that continues to stand alone. The anomaly survives; the mysteries astound; the irony compounds. ¡El Gila Libre! Perhaps this most unlikely place for water will be the last to give it up."

## ¡GILA LIBRE!

Reviewed by  
Richard Mahler

Is anyone more qualified to recount the Gila River story than M.H. "Dutch" Salmon? If so, that person is unknown to me. Salmon's résumé includes service on the GRIP board of directors and a second-term state game commissioner as well as a founder of the Gila Conservation Coalition. An avid fisher and hunter as well as conservationist, he has written several books set in the Gila watershed and, with his wife Cherie, operates a bookstore/publishing company outside Silver City. Salmon's new 127-page work (University of New Mexico Press) is an eloquent summary of New Mexico's last free river, outlining its unique characteristics and diverse natural history as well as the author's personal relationship with this life-sustaining waterway. The text is illustrated with well-chosen maps, drawings and photos (many taken by Jan Haley) that enhance Salmon's lively text. ¡Gila Libre! puts particular emphasis on the many ways humans have left their imprint on the watershed's several million acres, from ancient Mogollon farmers and fierce Apache warriors to iconoclastic mountain men and cattle-herding ranchers. He outlines the landmark role played by pioneering ecologist Aldo Leopold in the preservation of Gila wilderness and offers realistic speculation on the river's future under growing pressures from those eager to divert its flow for urbanization and farming. For anyone with an interest in better understanding the fragile, complex landscape of southwestern New Mexico, Salmon's new book is an essential and delightful primer.

On Saturday, Nov. 8, from 11 am to 2 pm, Salmon will sign books in a joint celebration of the release of ¡Gila Libre! and Jan Haley's new book, *Free Flow*, held at the Gila River and sponsored by Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. The program, including a guided walk along the river, is free of charge. Dutch will also speak and sign books at the Silver City Museum at 2 p.m. on November 16.

*While GRIP was disappointed with the state's final RAC, the state assures that Chino Mine owners are responsible for addressing the level of health risk should concerns arise due to new science indicating additional risk from targeted metals.*

Incidental ingestion of copper was determined to be the major source of contamination in a Human Health Risk Assessment which found children to be most at risk due to direct contact while playing and hand-to-mouth contact with metals in soils.

The cleanup was voluntary and there were nine owners of properties who either did not permit the NMED to test or to remediate their yards. This leaves the cleanup technically incomplete and triggers a mandatory five-year review to be completed indefinitely or until all yards are sampled and those with soils exceeding 5,000 ppm remediated.

Contaminated soils were removed and replaced with clean dirt and a choice of sod or gravel. Several owners allowed only partial cleanup. In general most homeowners seem to be pleased with the work.

The expedited Interim Remedial Action (IRA) took 16 months and an estimated \$12 million dollars. The draft ROD for the Hurley Soils Investigation Unit may

be read at the Bayard Public Library, Silver City Public Library, Western New Mexico University's Miller Library or at the New Mexico Environment Department Silver City office at 3082 32nd St. Bypass, Suite D.

This interim action is a bit unusual as far as Superfund projects are concerned, but was approved by the NMED to avoid the potential months or years of exposure time it might have taken to review and revise and approve a Feasibility Study and ROD before beginning a cleanup. NMED is confident the interim cleanup is protective and would have been the selected remedy if done in the usual order. A final ROD will be issued after consideration of public and agency comments.

While GRIP was disappointed with the state's final RAC, the state assures that Chino Mine owners are responsible for addressing the level of health risk should concerns arise due to new science indicating additional risk from targeted metals.

The Hurley ROD is the first of several to be issued. Other Investigation Units (IUs) in various stages of Superfund-style Ecological and Human Health Risk Assessment are: Hanover/Whitewater Creek from Highway 152 to the confluence of San Vicente Creek, the Smelter/Tailings Soils IU, Lampbright IU, and an overall Ecological IU. The CWG has been meeting for over ten years and GRIP continues its commitment to follow this long process to insure that remedies selected are comprehensive and protective of human and ecological health.

design that would keep water in the main channel of the Gila while delivering water to irrigators. During most years with low flows, all of the Gila is diverted into irrigation ditches, leaving the main channel dewatered for up to two miles. Re-engineering the ditch-heads, according to Schulke, would help maintain instream flow and riparian ecology.

Dutch Salmon, Gila Conservation Coalition chair, described a future that would include improved watershed health for the Gila, San Francisco and Mimbres watersheds, thereby providing healthier habitats, boosting wildlife resources and increasing recreation benefits. He stressed that the aura and mystique of the Gila as New Mexico's last wild river make it a unique recreational resource. He referred to a Department of Game and Fish estimate that wildlife resources yield \$1-billion to the state annually, with revenue from such "appreciative users" as birders accounting for half that total. Watershed improvement and Gila River protection, said Salmon, can play a key role in enhancing the region's rural economy.

Topper Thorpe, representing the Gila Basin Irrigation Commission, described his group's vision of a dependable, adequate water supply in the Gila River for irrigation, fire protection, recreation and the environment. He believed it was essential that the 14,000 acy of proscribed AWSA water be used. He said that, according to the Office of the State Engineer, irrigators lost water rights in the Gila and San Francisco Rivers as a result of the Arizona v. California adjudication in 1964 and argued that those water rights need to be restored to irrigators. An irrigator and Cliff resident, Mary Burton Riseley, took issue with this interpretation and asked that a legal analysis be done to verify its accuracy.

GRIP and its partners in the Gila Conservation Coalition will continue to participate as stakeholders in the AWSA planning process to ensure that the range of water supply and demand management alternatives are analyzed. We seek to see that the area's needs are met cost-effectively while also protecting the environment. One-page summaries of all Desired Future Condition statements will be posted on-line at [www.awsaplanning.com](http://www.awsaplanning.com). The next scheduled meeting of the Stakeholders Group will be Saturday, December 6, from 8:30 am to 1 pm at the Grant County Administration Building in Silver City.



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## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Interested in contributing to your community and helping local non-profit organizations?** The Gila Resources Information Project and Gila Conservation Coalition offer a number of volunteer opportunities for upcoming events as well as various administrative projects. For information, contact GRIP at 538.8078 or [grip@gilaresources.info](mailto:grip@gilaresources.info).

## INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE: BECOME A GRIP MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR GRIP MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

If you'd like to see responsible clean up of Grant County mines, protection of the Gila River, a clean environment for the health of our communities, and sustainable use of our water and other natural resources, please consider becoming a GRIP member or renew your membership!

We thank you for your support!