

Get A GRIP

TEN YEARS OF PROMOTING
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
BY PROTECTING
OUR ENVIRONMENT

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

GRIP TURNS TEN!

Allyson Siwik,
GRIP Executive Director

Anniversaries are an opportunity for us to reflect on another year gone by – the good times and the bad, successes and disappointments – and to renew commitments and revisit hopes for the future. As we celebrate GRIP's 10-year anniversary, our board has completed its "10-year review" and developed a vision for the organization's future.

We are proud of our accomplishments in holding Phelps Dodge accountable for the clean-up of environmental contamination caused by its mining activities. Now a subsidiary of the largest copper company in the world, Phoenix-based Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc, the company has vast financial and legal resources at hand to roll back environmental regulations or appeal *ad infinitum* environmental permits relieving it of environmental protection requirements. Over the past decade, GRIP has been there to stand up for our community and

environmental health. By necessity, GRIP operates strategically and fights the big precedent-setting legal wars, while not engaging in some of the smaller battles. GRIP also leverages resources with its partners around the state, joining forces to defend the state Mining Act and other environmental laws from relentless industry attacks each legislative session. It continues to require constant monitoring to ensure that environmental laws are complied with at the Grant County mines. We believe this benefits the health of all the families in our communities.

GRIP is also pleased to have been able to branch out from our mining activist beginnings into other areas important to our region's quality of life, such as the following:

- ♦ **Aquifer Protection** - Wasteful mining practices, a lack of water conservation efforts, and poorly regulated growth threaten the sustainability of the Mimbres Basin and Upper Gila Basin aquifers. Living on the edge of the Chihuahuan Desert, we cannot afford such a casual attitude toward groundwater. GRIP participates in regional water planning

SEE GRIP TURNS TEN ON PAGE 3

GRIP 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Help us celebrate a decade of protecting our land, air and water!

SATURDAY, APRIL 26

3 PM – 7 PM

THE HUB

DOWNTOWN SILVER CITY

with music by
Trio Los Guapos
Edie & the Silver Blue Notes

Come dressed as your favorite
animal or native plant.

FREE and fun
for the whole family!

Food and refreshments
Eco-piñata
Eco-Time Capsule

A GRIP RETROSPECTIVE

Harry Browne, GRIP founder,
former Executive Director

Ten years ago, Al Gore was Vice President and George W. Bush ran a baseball team in Texas. The Pentium II computer processor was state-of-the-art, and a one megabyte download took about an hour for most of us. Global Warming was disputed, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had not yet been established, and a Nobel Prize for *An Inconvenient Truth*-guru Al Gore seemed less than likely.

Here in Grant County, the Corner Café was a downtown institution, Penny Park was only a glimmer in Janet Hammel's mind,

the Big Ditch and La Capilla were uninviting at best, and Mexican Gray Wolves were just beginning to be introduced in the wild. Economically, Bullard Street was a low-rent district with little active investment (although the Gila and El Sol Theaters showed movies!). The Chino, Tyrone, and Cobre mines were preparing for large-scale layoffs as the price of copper neared a 60-year low. And there was no indication that Phelps Dodge (PD), the mining company that ran the mines, would get serious about its cleanup and reclamation obligations under the New Mexico Mining Act any time soon.

In the spring of 1997, a small group of committed citizens began meeting to discuss what could be done about this last problem. The odds seemed daunting.

Phelps Dodge and the New Mexico Mining Association were powerful forces in the state legislature and with then-Governor Gary Johnson. Weakening of the Mining Act or the Water Quality Act, key legislation which protect citizens from the environmental consequences of irresponsible corporate behavior, seemed possible. Federal agencies could offer little help, since hard rock mining is regulated by the states and since the 1872 Mining Law (still going strong after all these years!) mandates federal land managers to make public land easily accessible to mine operators. The Superfund program was under-funded, over-bureaucratic, and rendered irrelevant at Chino by a 1995 agreement between the Environment

SEE RETROSPECTIVE ON PAGE 4

GILA RESOURCES INFORMATION PROJECT

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GRIP@gilaresources.info
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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
Harry Browne, Secretary/Treasurer
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M.H. "Dutch" Salmon

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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.

A PERSONAL APPRECIATION TO GRIP'S SUPPORTERS

From Sally Smith, GRIP Board President

The past ten years of GRIP work would not have been possible without the support of many, many fine people in our community. GRIP has so many behind-the-scenes supporters that we depend on and greatly appreciate.

You are the people who have so generously given us your thanks, ideas and concerns over the years, your pats on the back, the many volunteer hours, and your donations. Without all that support we simply would not have been able to become the community environmental watchdogs that we have, or to voice our concerns locally, statewide, and nationally, and bring folks together to share ideas and visions.

We've never doubted the importance of our work because you supporters have continued, over the years, to remind us that you count on GRIP to keep abreast of the issues and to speak up for the health of the community and the environment. We've done our best with our limited budget and small staff, and your support and inspiration are what make it all happen.

When GRIP began 10 years ago, public involvement in community environmental issues was challenging, often unwelcome, and occasionally even threatening. Given the kind of work we do, opponents, critics, skeptics and others who doubt the possibility of change come with the territory. Thankfully, over the last ten years there has been a great leap of interest and increased consciousness about the value of environmental protection and quality of life. The community in our area has evolved and become vibrantly vocal, consciously concerned, proactive, and empowered. We have matured as a community.

We all know there is still plenty to do! We have an obligation to be watchful and wise, and to assist in fostering education of our neighbors and ourselves concerning sustainability, resource protection, health, and overall quality of life.

There are vitally important decisions to be made concerning protection and conservation of ground and surface water quality. Increasingly crucial dialogue and planning are needed in terms of managing growth and transportation. We also have the very important task of continuing to monitor and influence effective operational and closure permitting activities for local mines. And, it is inevitable that other environmental impacts will emerge as our area grows and changes.

With your continued support we plan to be active in investigating, informing, and speaking to such issues.

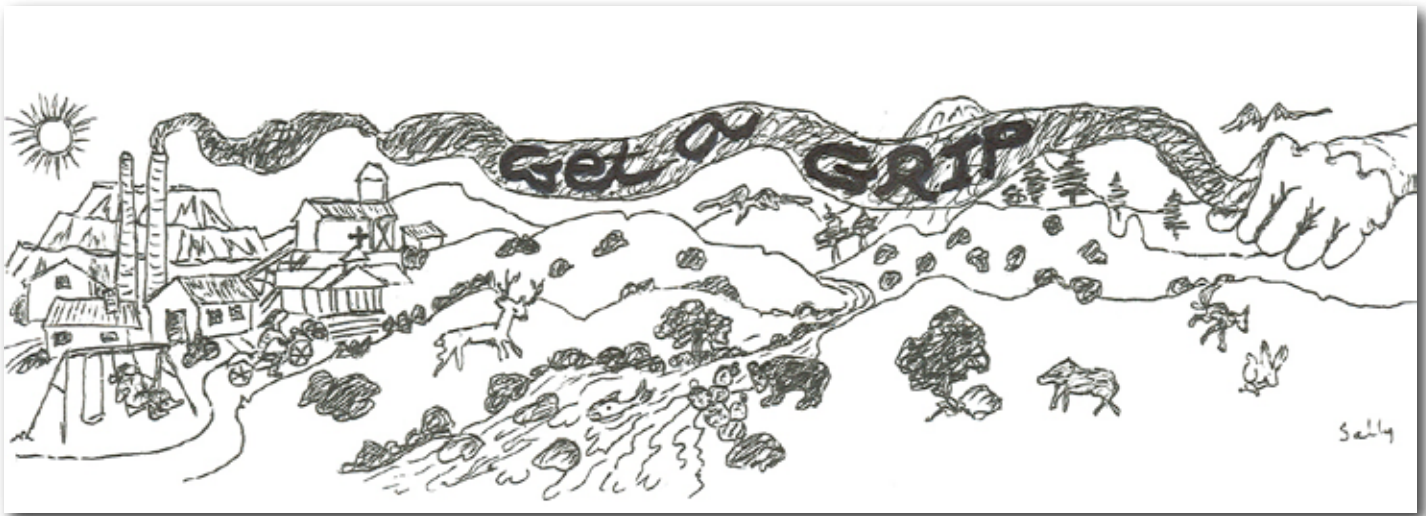
We have only to look at our beautiful and bountiful natural surroundings as well as the kindness, thoughtfulness, and love of those we trust as friends, neighbors and co-workers, to realize just how blessed we are to live here. To live in this place, at this time, even with all our many concerns and dissatisfactions.

Thank you each and every one so much for supporting GRIP, and thank you for your efforts in making your community a safer, more sustainable, more successful, happier, nurturing place to live.



KUDOS GO OUT TO.....

Dutch Salmon, GRIP board member and Gila Conservation Coalition chairman, who was reappointed by Governor Bill Richardson to the New Mexico Game Commission for a second four year term. During Dutch's first term, he was asked by the governor to serve on a wolf task force made up of ranchers, environmentalists, and federal and state agencies in an attempt to find an accommodation for the Mexican wolf in the southwest. He promoted the return of the river otter in New Mexico and specifically to the Gila River. Dutch has also been active in the Gila trout restoration program which led to the down listing of the Gila trout from endangered to threatened. Limited Gila trout fishing is now legally possible on certain streams in the Gila National Forest. Congratulations, Dutch!



GRIP TURNS TEN (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and watershed protection efforts.

- ◆ **Healthy Rivers** - Self-serving water development interests are aiming to double the amount of water diverted from the Gila and San Francisco rivers to feed exaggerated growth projections. But there are cost-effective alternatives for meeting future water needs without draining the Gila River. Worse than wasteful, a diversion project would likely do substantial damage to the unique Gila River ecosystem, which harbors endangered birds and fish. GRIP is a key member of the Gila Conservation Coalition, providing office space, staff, fiscal support, and coordination of key river projects.

- ◆ **Sustainability** - What can we do as individuals to reduce our "ecological footprint" for the benefit of the global as well as local environment? Now in its second year, GRIP's Living Green series provides our community with programs about how we can reduce our impact on the planet and live more sustainably.

Our area faces critical environmental challenges over the next decade and GRIP envisions itself as a community leader in helping to address those issues.

- ◆ **Water management** is one of the biggest problems we face. By 2014, the region will need to decide how it intends to meet its water supply needs under the Arizona Water Settlements Act. At issue is whether we will spend over \$300 million to divert Gila River water and sacrifice the health of the last free-flowing river in the state or if we will spend 16 times less to meet our water needs through cost-effective options like municipal and agricultural conservation or acquiring additional water rights and drilling new wells. Along with the Gila Conservation Coalition, GRIP will continue to promote a common-sense approach to water management that meets our region's future water needs while

also protecting the Gila. A second issue to be decided here in Grant County is whether or not the state will allow Phelps Dodge to waste almost 9,000 acre-feet per year of clean ground water (3 times the amount of water that Silver City uses every year) to dilute its mine effluent to water quality standards rather than spend money on a water treatment system. GRIP's appeal of the Chino closure permit that currently allows "dilution" still has not been resolved. GRIP will continue to oppose the Chino closure permit and advocate for technologically feasible water treatment that would eliminate the use of dilution water, conserving enormous amounts of groundwater for future use.

- ◆ In the face of rising energy costs, global climate change and population growth, effective **community planning** that anticipates growth and future needs while discouraging sprawl and fosters efficient use of resources will be critical to the long-term sustainability of our region. Transportation planning to mitigate effects of sprawling development, promotion of in-fill and high density development (which are two cost-effective strategies for preventing sprawl development), preservation of open space, and protection of groundwater recharge areas are all critical issues that we must confront if we are to maintain and enhance our area's quality of life. GRIP will continue to be an advocate for implementation of smart growth principles that support a stable economy and clean environment. We will also provide more hands-on educational opportunities to learn useful skills and build a sustainable community. We will strive to engage youth in all we do, as they are the next generation of community leaders.

- ◆ With high commodities prices, the pressure to expand copper mining in our region will only increase. **Responsible**

mining practices at Grant County mines will be critical to the protection of our land and our water and air quality. GRIP will continue its work to ensure that mine operators here in Grant County comply with state and federal environmental laws that protect public health.

We are so grateful to all of you who have supported our efforts to promote community health by protecting our environment here in southwestern New Mexico. To thank the community for a successful first decade, we hope you'll join us on April 26 at The Hub for GRIP's 10-year anniversary bash. Come dressed as your favorite animal or native plant and dance to the Latin rhythms of Trio Los Guapos from Las Cruces and the rhythm and blues sounds of Silver City's hottest new band, Edie and the Silver Blue Notes.

Here's to another successful 10 years of clean air and water, and a high quality of

**SUPPORT
THE GILA RESOURCES
INFORMATION PROJECT
TODAY!**

Your financial contribution will help us continue our decade-long effort to protect our land, air and water for you and our children!

A donation envelope is enclosed in this newsletter for your convenience. You also may visit us at www.gilaresources.info and make a secure web donation.



Department and the mine. Locally, the company's economic importance influenced not only political leaders but retailers, civic organizations, newspapers and broadcasters, and ranchers. An organized effort to force PD to deal with its messes was likely to run into strong local opposition. But such an effort was crucial for the health of the community.

Mining's health and environmental impacts were not the only issues we, the founders of GRIP, wanted to address. Forest health, watershed restoration, unconstrained sprawl (which is becoming a more important issue every year), un-enforced town zoning, and the quality and quantity of Gila and Mimbres river water were also on the list. Mining seemed to us both the highest priority and the issue least likely to be addressed by other groups, but we also wanted to create an organization open to the energies of others who wanted to pursue other aspects of environmental health.

With crucial support from a core group of family and friends, we rented a small artist's studio overlooking Bullard Street, borrowed office equipment, landed a Department of Health mini-grant that paid for half of a copy machine, and started accumulating enormous volumes of paper regarding the environmental impacts of mining, how the industry was regulated, and what it would take to reclaim (that is, "clean up and restore to a post-mining land use") Grant County's mines properly. In March of 1998, the Gila Resources Information Project (GRIP) received its non-profit status.

Fortunately, GRIP was far from being the only mining activist group in the American Southwest. With six other environmental organizations, we founded the New Mexico Mining Act Network to coordinate political, legal, technical, and fundraising strategies. And we joined dozens of groups in the United States and Canada as founding members of the Western Mining Action Network. Between these two networks, we were able to identify expert technical and legal assistance and much of the funding needed to pay for it.

Ten years later, it seems appropriate to review what we feel are GRIP's most significant achievements so far:

- ♦ Our primary goal of **seeing closure and reclamation plans in place** at the Chino, Cobre, and Tyrone mines here in Grant County, New Mexico, has been accomplished. Although it is easy for us to identify weaknesses in these plans and in the \$550 million in financial instruments that ensure the work can be done even if the mines go out of business, a comparison to

what is in place at other U.S. hardrock mines reminds us that, overall, these plans represent an important victory for future generations of Grant County residents. These plans will protect our surface and groundwater and air quality over the long term.

- ♦ **Strengthening Financial Assurance.** Under the NM Mining Act, mining companies are required to file financial assurance (e.g., cash, bond, collateral) in an amount equal to the total costs of reclamation. As PD's mines conduct reclamation, corresponding portions of the financial assurance it has posted are returned to it. GRIP has been successful in urging the state regulatory agencies to reduce only the portion of the financial assurance that is in the form of a parent company guarantee which amounts to a mere IOU. This is the weakest part of the financial assurance package, especially now that PD has been bought by Freeport-McMoRan, and a shuffling of assets is more of a possibility.

- ♦ **Defending the New Mexico Mining Act itself – as well as the state's Water Quality Act.** This became an important and successful part of GRIP's work. Phelps Dodge and the industry group known as the New Mexico Mining Association attempted on numerous occasions (and in sometimes creative ways) to weaken these laws. One proposal sponsored by local legislators would even have declared that permitted mining areas were exempt from water quality regulations. Thanks to the coordinated work of GRIP and environmental groups statewide, none of these industry efforts has succeeded.

- ♦ **Raising awareness locally of mining's environmental impacts.** We believe that the link between irresponsible mining and groundwater contamination and depletion is better understood among county leaders and residents than it was ten years ago.

- ♦ **Creating jobs through mine reclamation.** By winning strong reclamation and financial assurance requirements, we helped create a viable financial incentive for the major regional mining company to reclaim inactive areas sooner rather than later (or not at all). With copper prices soaring, Phelps Dodge and its new owner, Freeport-McMoRan, have cut their 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 1990s, contributing dust to the air and killing birds with acidic pond water.

- ♦ **Facilitating the work of other**

SEE RETROSPECTIVE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

A GRIP MINING RETROSPECTIVE:

From Reclamation Plans
to the Courts...And
everything in between

**FRIDAY, MAY 2, 2008;
7PM**

**SILCO THEATRE,
DOWNTOWN SILVER CITY**

Join GRIP and its legal and technical team for a brief history of the environmental challenges at Grant County copper mines and the reclamation plans and court battles that will determine how these operations get cleaned up and reclaimed.

PRESENTATIONS BY:

HARRY BROWNE,
GRIP founder and
first executive director

JIM KUIPERS,
Kuipers and Associates

DOUG WOLF
Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse,
Endreson & Perry, LLP

BRUCE FREDERICK
New Mexico Environmental
Law Center.

Get a bird's eye view of Phelps Dodge's mine reclamation work here at the Grant County mines. Learn more about the environmental issues that lie ahead for Grant County mines.

"MILKY RAIN" PHENOMENON DEEMED NOT A THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

UTEP scientists and New Mexico Environment Department believe playa dust most likely to blame

What were you doing on the afternoon of January 7? If you were like most people in Grant County, you were scratching your head trying to figure out what the milky substance was in the precipitation that fell throughout the area that afternoon and early evening, covering cars with a chalky white powder and leaving a splattered white residue on windows throughout the county. Speculation ranged from volcanic ash from an eruption in Russia to tailings dust from the Tyrone mine. Long-time residents couldn't remember this mystery rain ever occurring before.

GRIP received a number of calls from around the area that afternoon and along with other community members determined that the "milky rain" was observed as far west as Glenwood, as far north as the Gila Cliff Dwellings and as far east as the Mimbres Valley. The rain did not occur in Lordsburg, Deming, Columbus or south of the border and reports from south of the Tyrone mine site were inconsistent.

Two days after the event, Dr. Tom Gill, professor of geology at the University of Texas at El Paso, contacted GRIP through Rusty Dobkins of Gila to request samples of the rainwater. Dr. Gill and his research group, which includes scientists and students from

UTEP, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, New Mexico State University, and the National Weather Service, have been studying and tracking dust storms, sand storms, and related phenomena in southern New Mexico and West Texas for a number of years. In a January 9th, 2008 e-mail he relayed "We were tracking and monitoring a dust storm on Monday [January 7], and until we received these reports..., we were not aware that it was anything other than the "typical desert sandstorm" (no milky rain in El Paso or Las Cruces). However, these reports from SW New Mexico are unusual and to our knowledge unprecedented." Working along with Dobkins, GRIP was able to collect a number of samples of rainwater from throughout the area and send them off for analysis at UTEP, NM Tech and, through the NM Environment Department, to the State Lab in Albuquerque.

Scientists from UTEP think that it's possible that high winds in the area caused the dust to become air borne and perhaps the dust even seeded the clouds that produced the "milky rain."

NASA satellite imagery from January 7 shows a plume of dust coming off the Willcox Playa south of Willcox, Arizona and blowing towards the Silver City area.

Although not complete, chemical analysis of samples shows high concentrations of calcium, consistent with playa dust.

In a February 5 press release, the New Mexico Environment Department issued results of its chemical analysis of rain samples stating that "Results from three samples of rain that fell Jan. 7 in areas from Silver City to the Gila Cliff Dwellings — based on preliminary data — showed that most heavy metals were not detected or were found at levels below concern....NMED staff compared metal results from historic data collected in the early 1990's by NMED's Surface Water Bureau from playa lakes near Lordsburg to the recent milky rain event and found similar chemical signatures of metals. That comparison strengthens the suspicion that strong winds may have suspended sediment from upwind playa basins that could have mixed with precipitation and created the milky rain. However, regardless of the source, the metals measured from the samples were in a form and concentration that pose a minimal risk to the public."

As of press time, results of particulate air quality monitoring filters from January 7 were not available.

Visit www.gilaresources.info to view a NASA satellite image of dust plume.

GILA CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER NEEDS YOU!

Become a Volunteer with GCEC's Environmental Trunk Program

Maria Russell, AmeriCorps volunteer

Gila Conservation Education Center

A girl in the fourth grade has never seen a cocklebur before. She's amazed and delighted with the way it sticks to everything it touches. A third-grade boy in the front of the class has his hand straining above his head. He can't wait to tell me that the skull in my hands is a mountain lion's. A kindergartener earlier told me it looks like a dinosaur skull. It's not hard to get kids interested in science or in conservation. All they need is a chance.

The lesson plans for the Gila Conservation Education Center's trunks program are designed to stoke a student's natural sense of wonder about the world. The activities are fun and engaging as well as educational. The main goal is to get kids interested in spending time outside and learning about their environment. The challenge isn't getting them involved—

they're eager to ask questions, to tell their own stories, and to touch and smell and experiment. The challenge is in finding the time and resources to give these children the opportunities they deserve.

Trunk presentations are done by volunteers. These community members have generously donated their time, spending an hour teaching elementary students about water, archaeology, geology or a slew of other topics. Some volunteers are experts in their fields and have even put together the trunks and written the lesson plans. (All the presentations start by opening a camp truck in a classroom, and having the curious students wonder what will come out.) Some volunteers are simply interested in a particular subject that they have time to learn more about. Giving these presentations

is an opportunity to learn for the presenter as much as for the students. Some volunteers do 10 presentations in a year. Some do one. Some go in by themselves; some assist other experienced presenters. All of the volunteers are greatly appreciated by the teachers and by the children. They serve as teachers, as role models, and as connections to the community. They remind the kids that there are people in the community who care about education and about the environment. These volunteers are the key to the success of our community's conservation education projects.

For the 2007-2008 school year, the Gila Conservation Education Center's trunk program has over 200 requests for presentations in Grant County's elementary schools. If you are interested in being involved (we provide the trunks and the training), contact us at 388-8265, or email@gcecnm.org. It's that easy to help get our children outside, learning.

LIVING GREEN: LIVING SUSTAINABLY

Siri Khalsa, Living Green Coordinator

In response to a growing local interest in sustainable living, GRIP launched the "Living Green" series in 2007. The intention of this program is to bring to residents of southwestern New Mexico opportunities for learning about how to sustainably use the natural resources that we depend on.

Green building, alternative transportation, renewable energy, water conservation and sustainable food production are all viable solutions to current global and local environmental challenges.

Last year GRIP presented forums on bio-diesel fuel (which proved that sustainability can be fun too!), renewable wind and solar power, and how to look at ecological building from the perspective of locale and context. GRIP will continue to bring the experts and experimenters to our doorstep.

This year, the Living Green series will provide opportunities for getting your hands dirty. Our plan is to facilitate one of the tenets of 'education for sustainability', a growing, international movement which advocates group and individual empowerment through taking specific

action for one's future. It means that we are moving beyond the stage of gathering, hearing and seeing information, into the realm of building real and tangible local and personal alternatives. To that end, Living Green will coordinate a series of hands-on workshops with local growers, builders, and other experts.

The first of this year's Living Green series – Seeding Sustainable Dreams: Grassroots Gardening - will be held Saturday, March 15th.

Workshops will be held at various locations in Silver City throughout the day. All the activities will focus on gaining back the ability to 'grow our own.' For a small fee, participants will be able to choose up to four workshops they could attend.

Mark Cantrell's Natural Systems Landscaping will be held at the Butterfly Garden at Jose Barrios Elementary School. Marilynn Freeman will show you how to set up a "Square Foot Garden" similar to hers. Permaculture experts Terry Timme and Patricia Pawlicki are also offering their time and backyards. Patricia is going to focus on "Sheet Mulching" and "Small Scale Design", while Terry's renowned raised beds

and greenhouse are definitely worth a visit. Karen Danhauer and Patty McDonnell are excited to teach participants about seed starting. And of course, Anaia Song of High Desert Organic Gardeners (Hi-DOG) will present on creating soil and composting (see below for a full list of workshops).

As we all know, our lives in SW New Mexico are intricately intertwined with our most valuable resource - water. In June, Cheri Vogel of the New Mexico Water Conservation Program of the Office of the State Engineer will be with us to discuss water conservation techniques for both inside and outside of the home.

Keeping in natural step with the seasons, the plan for the GRIP Living Green's fall workshop program will surround sustainable building techniques.

The Living Green series is about working with the southwest New Mexico community to build a sustainable future. Call the GRIP office for more information and keep an eye out for flyers and email alerts.

Living Green Series presents:

SEEDING SUSTAINABLE DREAMS: GRASSROOTS GARDENING

March 15

Spend all day outside with local gardeners and permaculture experts in their gardens, learning new skills or improving old ones. Registration is necessary as most class sizes are limited to 10. Cost: \$8/per workshop, \$15/2, \$20/3 & \$25/4.

Visit www.gilaresources.info for complete workshop descriptions.

Workshop presentations include:

- ♦ **Planning and Starting a Food Garden: Feed the Soil & It Will Feed You.** Presented by Karen Danhauer and Patty McDonnell. 8:00 – 9:30 a.m., Karen Danhauer's backyard, 1002 Sotol Loop, Silver City.
- ♦ **Creating Soil and Composting.** Presented by Anaia Song and HI-DOG. 1919 N. Bartlett Street, Silver City.
- ♦ **Natural Systems Landscaping.** Presented by Mark Cantrell. 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, Butterfly Garden, Jose Barrios Elementary School, Little Walnut Road, Silver City.
- ♦ **Square-Foot Gardening.** 12:30 – 2:30 p.m., Home of Marilynn Freeman, 9 Wildwood Circle, Silver City. Class size limited to 10.
- ♦ **Year-round Backyard Gardening in Raised Beds and Cold Frames.** Presented by Dianna Wynn and Terry Timme. 3:00- 4:30 PM, 811 Oak St. Silver City. Class size limited to 10-12 participants
- ♦ **Introduction to Permaculture: Small Scale Design, Plant Stacking & Edge Effects, and Sheet Mulching.** Presented by Patricia Pawlicki of Hi-Desert Sustainable Living. 3-4 p.m. 401 W. Gordon Street, Silver City, Class size limited to 10.



3RD ANNUAL PEAK OIL/CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

Conference featured local models of living green in changing times

The 3rd Annual Peak Oil/Climate Change Conference was held on February 2 in Silver City to a Silco Theatre full of energetic young people and enthusiastic individuals intent on learning about imaginative solutions to reducing energy use in the areas of transportation, housing and food. The day-long conference featured DVD presentations by nationally-recognized speakers on Peak Oil, alternative transportation, food sustainability, and housing retrofit. These national perspectives were complemented by presentations of local individuals who are real-life examples of how to make personal changes to reduce one's carbon footprint. Kids from Guadalupe Montessori School, Aldo Leopold High School, Meadowhawk Er Kinder and Down to Earth School made presentations on what their schools are doing to combat global warming. From recycling to growing their own food and bicycling to school, these kids impressed conference goers with their personal actions and commitment to doing their share. An update on Silver City's Climate Protection Agreement Citizen Advisory Committee was given by Mayor James Marshall. The evening closed with an informative (and somewhat alarming) presentation by Curt Smith on the ecological changes in Antarctica brought about by global warming.

In the next few issues of GetAGRIP, we will feature a brief excerpt from a few of the local presenters at the conference so that you may be inspired to look for ways that you might do things differently on behalf of our planet.

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BREAK THE CAR ADDICTION?

From 3rd Annual Peak Oil/Climate Change Conference Presentation

by Glenn Theron

To live car free in a culture based on the automobile is to engage in a revolutionary act. For many people in the developed world that we inhabit, living without a car is a result of poverty, considered a social stigma, and a sign that something is wrong.

I can't tell you the number of times that while on extended tours I have been approached by folks who see a middle-aged fellow traveling on a bicycle and automatically assume that I need assistance. Oft times it takes the form of unsolicited financial aid or pity.

"I saw you 10 miles down the road and thought, look at that poor guy." These and like conversations are ones that I've had in restaurants/stores, etc. But I am coming to see that this choice of mine is a means to live a much more sensible lifestyle and how to treat our home. Living with a car is the best way to commit easy, senseless, irreparable, long-term destruction there is.

This past weekend, a fellow bike tourist and I did an 80 mile or so ride looping from SC toward Deming and up Hwy 61 to 152 and the Mimbres Valley. Then up the hill, past the open-pit mine, and back to town. Our vehicles weighed one-fifth of the riders, rather than 20 times what we do. We did not emit to the atmosphere CO₂, which is the gas thought to be a primary contributor to global warming. Nor did we contribute other air pollutants which are the precursors of smog, known to damage the respiratory system and injure plant life. If you had been more than 20 feet or so from us as we rode along, you would not have heard the sound of the tires on the pavement and the occasional click of the derailleurs as we shifted gears as the terrain demanded. We could hear the motor vehicles from hundreds or even thousands of feet removed.

I would hazard the guess that none of the deceased animals that we passed along the way met their end from collisions with bikes. It is estimated that over 1 million creatures die daily from impact with motor vehicles! The American deaths in the Iraq war as of today (2/12/08) are 3960. Do you think that we would be engaged in that conflict if oil was not to be found in the region?

Why do I not have a vehicle at my disposal? In 2006, the last year for which statistics have been released, nearly 37,000 individuals perished on the roads of this country. That figure is in line with the data from the previous dozen years. All of us

know someone who has perished or been seriously injured in a motor vehicle accident. How much sorrow? What is the cost? Immeasurable...

I don't particularly like driving them or riding in them. I don't know how to fix them if they break, and I'm not interested to learn. I didn't like car down payments, car insurance payments, car gas payments, car breakdown payments and car break-in payment.

I reached a point where I realized I could get rid of my car, and I really wanted to. This path was very much in line with my values, and felt right.

Here is a list that someone posted on-line of what kept them from eliminating the privately owned vehicle from their life.

I was afraid I would lose my freedom. I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to cut loose and hit the open road. I was afraid that winter would be too harsh to get around without a car. I was afraid I would become a burden on my friends who had cars. I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to get my own groceries.

So I put off the decision, despite feeling it was what I wanted to do. But, this person eventually made the choice. I'd made it fine without my car.

I can pinpoint the first time my car failed to start and I got along fine without it. I can't recall the moment I knew I was comfortable with my decision. It's like trying to recall the moment relaxation begins. Sometimes there is an instant release, but more often then is only an awakening, with the realization that you've drifted to somewhere pleasant and have been there a while. That's what my transition was like.

When I awoke, a surprising transformation had happened. I found that my greatest fear, that of losing my freedom, was unfounded. Not only was it unfounded, it was completely wrong. Getting around under my own power provided a sense of freedom and control far greater than driving my car ever did. I felt alive and connected. When the weather changed, I noticed. I was- I am- making a difference. Each foot step or pedal stroke is my own power transforming time and space.

More than anything, going car-free has been an opening to understanding that this was only the beginning of difficult but worthwhile fears to face, and other potential rewards to follow.

I can only say amen to the above.

DIA DE LOS LOBOS

March 22, 2008; 2pm

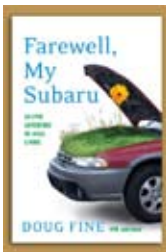
Silco Theatre

Silver City

Come celebrate 10 years of Mexican wolves back in the wild!

Wish Mike Sauber farewell!

For more information, contact Nancy Kaminski at: kaminskinancy@hotmail.com



FAREWELL MY SUBARU

with
Doug Fine
author and NPR contributor

Friday, May 9, 2008 at 7:00 pm
WNMU Global Resource Center
Auditorium

With the release of *Farewell, My Subaru*, local writer Doug Fine will be putting on a full-body reading and slide show illustrating the carbon neutral misadventures at his Mimbres Valley Funky Butte Ranch.

Fine promises you'll leave smiling, if only with relief that you've not suffered the near-electrocutions, coyote assaults and other humiliations he has in the course of getting oil out of his life.

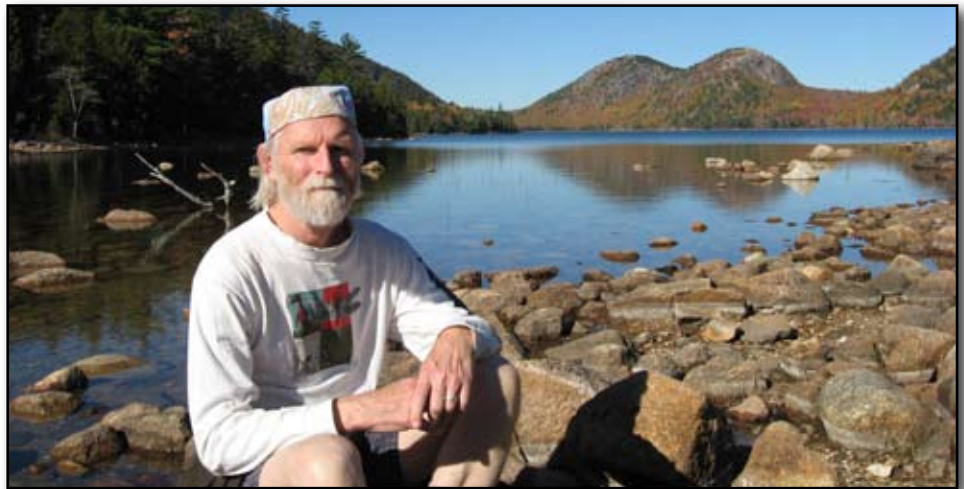
Included in the talk will be practical resources for regular Americans who want to live greener, and funny facts you never imagined about the clean, local life.

Suggested \$10 donation to benefit Gila Resources Information Project and the Gila Conservation Education Center For more info, visit www.gilaresources.info

MIKE SAUBER: HAIL AND FAREWELL!

M.H. Dutch Salmon

GRIP Board Member and Chair of the Gila Conservation Coalition



Mike Sauber enjoys his new "backyard" at Jordan Pond, Acadia National Park, Maine.

Best I recall, I met Mike because I needed someone to fix my truck. This would have been the early 1980s. A mutual friend, the late Bob Langsenkamp, had told me central Grant County was the "old hippie burial ground," and when I first saw Mike at his shop (we both lived in the Mimbres at the time) I thought, "Bob's right again; here's another one!" Looking like John Muir, but of placid rather than fiery demeanor, Mike proved a bundle of contradictions, with the trappings of a live-for-today lifestyle, but in reality, a careful and competent mechanic and a quiet but bulldog tenacity for the right cause. We soon both found one in the Gila River.

I fished. Mike was struck by the river's beauty. We both floated it, but neither one of us was going to let the State Engineer, the Bureau of Reclamation (BoR), or the local boosters sully our playground with Hooker Dam or Conner Dam or the Mangas Diversion. And so the redneck enviro and the hippie enviro started the Gila Conservation Coalition. And we started kicking butt. I got appointed to the Interstate Stream Commission, but Herbie Marsden and Jim Goodkind and especially Mike did all the dirty work: lobbying, organizing, letters to the editor, satirizing and making sense of the untenable economics of a boondoggle project. When the big public hearing came to Light Hall in 1986 the river's friends outnumbered the dam builders; a gut shot as it turned out. As one BoR engineer told me: "When a big federal water project can't get majority support in the town it's supposed to benefit, that project is in trouble."

Later, Mike would journey with me to a hearing at Glenwood Ranger Station where we achieved a partial closure to off-road vehicles (ORVs) in the San Francisco Canyon. Fearless, Mike the mechanic chastised the ORV clubs for abusing their vehicles in the river crossings (as well as the canyon itself) and for changing their oil on the beaches of what should have been a pristine wilderness.

For a time, we teamed with a strangely humorous and committed Oklahoma farmer named David Sheegog. The plan of the boosters was a road up the East Fork of the Gila River. This time it played out in the courts, the Forest Service, and the County Commission. The courts were no match for an East Fork landowner named Frank Werber. The Forest Service, shaken by Sheegog's downhome bombast, just used common sense on behalf of the resource. Mike and I both spoke the night the Commission wisely declined to take on the expense and liability of an East Fork road.

Mike drifted into a decades-long cause to rid the Diamond Bar Ranch of bad management. Bovine riparian concentrations were ruining a vast landscape and a number of stream courses. I don't have to tell you that his new group, "Gila Watch," won that one too.

He's been quieter of late, tending to a successful Gila Hike & Bike business, and now I hear he's moving to Maine. He'll be missed here and will no doubt be underestimated there, till they figure out this placid John Muir hides a bulldog tenacity for the right cause. Give 'em hell Mike, and thanks for the memories!

OCTOBER SPILL AT CHINO MINE CONTAMINATES

3 MILES OF LAMPBRIGHT DRAW TRIBUTARY

Company's plans not sufficient to prevent 1 million gallon spill of acid solution

From October 19 to October 22, an estimated 1 million gallons of highly acidic pregnant leach solution (PLS, copper and heavy metal-laden sulfuric acid solution) was released from the Northeast Lampbright Booster Sump at the eastern edge of the Chino mine and flowed across a road, into a previously uncontaminated storm water ditch and approximately 3 miles down a tributary to Lampbright Draw. Chino Mines Company's December 7, 2007 Corrective Action Plan states that mine staff inspected the area on October 18, but did not see any evidence of a flow. However, it was not until October 23 – 5 days later -- that the release was reported as discovered. According to the NM Environment Department, this was the third occurrence of a spill at the same sump in two years.

Once the spill was detected, Chino mines, a subsidiary of Phoenix-based Freeport-McMoRan, reported it to the NMED as required and initiated steps to stop the release of PLS and began clean up. Remedial action consisted of constructing check dams to prevent continued movement of contamination downstream in a rain

event and flushing of sediments with clean, potable water to remove metals, sulfate and total dissolved solids. The "flushing water" was captured in temporary basins and then pumped to a reservoir to be incorporated back into the copper leaching process.

The road that separates the clean storm water ditch from the PLS sump was also raised with fill to create an earthen barrier to prevent highly acidic process water from moving into the storm water ditch in case of another spill. Lack of sufficient containment was clearly a deficiency in the operational design of this process system that permitted PLS to flow freely off-site.

The risk of accidents is inherent to the mining industry. However, plans are put in place to prevent accidents, and prepare for and respond to them if they do happen. In the case of the October spill at the Chino Mine, mine staff did not comply with their own plans as PLS was allowed to flow for 5 days across a road and into a clean storm water ditch. It was irresponsible of Freeport-McMoRan to not have detected this spill earlier and prevent a small spill from becoming a much larger event resulting in

contamination of surface and groundwater within a previously uncontaminated tributary to Lampbright Draw.

In complex systems such as Grant County mining operations, there is ample opportunity for mishaps. Local mines have had many spills of PLS and process waters. This spill is another example of the importance of having comprehensive plans in place at the mines to protect our surface and ground water quality.

Strong enforcement action is necessary to ensure that Chino mine's operations and contingency plans are properly followed so that the public health and environment can be protected from mining activity.

The NM Environment Department is expected to issue an enforcement action regarding this spill shortly.

Local media coverage of the spill - two months after the fact - was inaccurate and from media accounts the Freeport-McMoRan spokesperson seemed to downplay the significance of this event.

NEW TO THE GRIP LIBRARY

Available for short-term loan

Thrillcraft: The Environmental Consequences of Motorized Recreation. Edited by George Wuerthner. Chelsea Green Publishing Company. 2007. "... explores the ecological, economic, political and cultural effects of this mounting crisis. Road-raging essays by scientists, economists, activists, social critics, and others outline the many ways thrillcraft attack and degrade our collective natural heritage. More than one hundred graphic photographs document how this motorized assault is destroying ecosystems from the Florida Everglades to the Alaskan tundra." Donated by local independent writer and radio producer, Richard Mahler, who contributed a chapter to the book entitled "The Human Cost of Silence Lost How a Noisy Environment Hurts Our Health." For a copy of the book, contact Mahler at rmahler@cruzio.com.

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle A Year of Food Life. Barbara Kingsolver with Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver. Harper Collins. 2007. "With characteristic poetry and pluck, Barbara Kingsolver and her family sweep readers along on their journey away from the industrial-food pipeline to a rural life in which they vow to buy only food raised in their own neighborhood, grow it themselves, or learn to live without it. Their good-humored search yields surprising discoveries about turkey sex life and overly zealous zucchini plants, en route to a food culture that's better for the neighborhood and also better on the table. Part memoir, part journalistic investigation, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* makes a passionate case for putting the kitchen back at the center of family life and diversified farmers at the center of the American diet." Anonymous donation.

America by Rivers. Tim Palmer. Island Press. 1996. "Palmer describes the rivers of America in all their remaining glory and tarnished beauty, as he presents a comprehensive tour of the whole of America's river systems....*America by Rivers* provides a new way of seeing our country, one that embraces the entire landscape and offers fresh avenues to adventure. It is compelling reading for anyone concerned about the health of our land and the future of our waterways." Donated by Sally Smith.

UPDATE: HOUSE PASSES MINING REFORM BILL

Senator Bingaman's Energy and Natural Resources Committee now working on Senate version

In November, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 244 to 166 in favor of HR2262, the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2007 sponsored by Representative Nick Rahall (D-WV) and Representative Jim Costa (D-CA). By reforming the outdated General Mining Law of 1872, this bill would protect public lands from irresponsible mining and safeguard critical drinking water supplies, fish and wildlife habitat and the health and wellbeing of our communities. (See Summer 2007 issue of GetAGRIP).

The 1872 Mining Law allows companies to buy valuable mineral bearing public lands for next to nothing -- \$5 an acre -- and take those minerals without paying the public any royalty. In New Mexico, more than 55,000 acres or 86 square miles of public lands have already been sold to private interests for either \$2.50 or \$5.00 per acre according to mining reform advocacy group, Earthworks. The law doesn't contain any environmental provisions and its legacy is hundreds of thousands of abandoned mines requiring an estimated \$32 - \$72 billion to clean up. Under the mining law, mining has been interpreted as trumping all other uses of public lands even if that mining would destroy special places or threaten valuable water supplies.

In response to HR2262's passage, Stephen D'Esposito, President of Earthworks, stated, "If this effort to reform the 1872 Mining Law is to succeed, leadership from the mining industry itself and from community and political leaders in western states is needed. Each of these states - from Washington to New Mexico - have been, and continue to be, adversely affected by this antiquated law and its lack of adequate protections for taxpayers and

the environment."

Here in Grant County, over 51,000 acres of public lands have been claimed, the majority by Phelps Dodge, subsidiary of mining giant Freeport-McMoRan. Under the 1872 Mining Law, public land managers, such as the Gila National Forest, find it difficult to deny a mining application on public land. HR2262 would give public land managers the ability to balance mining activity with other uses, such as recreation. Another key provision of HR2262 would establish an 8% royalty on the value of the minerals extracted (comparable to the 8% to 12.5% royalty paid by coal, oil and natural gas extractors) to fund clean up of abandoned hard rock mines on public lands. Statewide, there are between 10,000 and 20,000 abandoned mines that need to be reclaimed. Grant, McKinley and Sierra counties have the greatest number of abandoned mine sites in New Mexico.

Mining reform would have very tangible environmental benefits to our Grant County community. New Mexico's Senator Jeff Bingaman, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, is now working on a draft of the senate version of HR2262. At a recent senate committee hearing on mining reform, ranking member, New Mexico's Senator Pete Domenici, made it clear that he would support only a watered down version of mining reform. It is critical that mining communities such as ours let our New Mexico delegation know that we support mining reform. Please take action today on behalf of our local environment and quality of life.

Visit www.gilaresources.info for more information on 1872 mining reform.

TAKE ACTION TODAY!

Tell Senator Bingaman and Senator Domenici to support mining reform

Our senators from New Mexico are critical to passing REAL mining reform.

Industry lobbyists are urging our senators to vote against real reform of the antiquated 1872 mining law. Senators Bingaman and Domenici need to hear from Grant Countians who are bearing the cost of this outdated law.

Tell our senators to:

♦ **Permanently stop the sell-off of our public lands** where we hike, camp, hunt and fish. Instead we need a leasing system like the one used for oil drilling or coal mining on public lands, where the land title remains in public ownership, but responsible drilling and mining activities can take place.

♦ **Begin charging a fair fee for copper, gold, silver, uranium, and other hardrock minerals owned by the U.S. taxpayer.** Presently Congress is literally giving away taxpayer-owned minerals like copper to companies such as local mining giant, Freeport-McMoRan. By beginning to charge a fair fee for these hardrock minerals, we can start a clean-up fund to restore wildlife habitat and waters from historic and present-day mining activities.

♦ **Bring mining on public lands within "multiple-use" management.** Under the 1872 Mining Act, mining trumps all other uses of public lands. Public land managers find it hard to deny a mining claim even if it will ruin an important water source or is in an area where the recreational values are more important economically to local communities. Mining on public lands should be balanced with other important uses of our public lands.

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Email form at <http://domenici.senate.gov/resources/contactform.cfm>



local residents and groups. GRIP has served as the fiscal agent for a forest health project, the community development effort called Hometown Initiative, and the Gila Conservation Coalition. We provided start-up staffing support to the Gila Conservation Education Center and Aldo Leopold High School, a public charter school which operates with a strong connection to the natural world. We wrote and administered a grant to strengthen the Community Work Group set up by an agreement between PD's Chino Mines and the New Mexico Environment Department. The Gila-Mimbres Community Radio effort was set in motion at an event organized by GRIP and periodically uses GRIP's office as a meeting space. And we provide regular support for community events such as the annual Peak Oil/Climate Change conference.

♦ **Establishing a statewide reputation as Grant County's go-to environmental group.** On a wide range of environmental issues, GRIP is frequently the first group contacted to provide information and local-level support to statewide initiatives.

♦ **Earning a "seat at the table" with PD and government agencies.** It is often most effective to raise questions and concerns about land-use decisions before project proposals are made public. Beginning in 2005, Phelps Dodge apparently reached a similar conclusion and invited GRIP to meet regularly to discuss the company's most environmentally sensitive projects. We are well aware of the danger of co-option and have made clear that our participation no more guarantees that we will support any given project than it means that PD will allow us to dictate the most responsible way to conduct its business. As long as we remain honest to our values, however, this kind of

pre-conflict communication is clearly the most efficient use of our limited resources.

♦ **Community building activities.**

We're very proud of the events we've been able to undertake or support. These include GRIP's 2020 Visions and Living Green series, the Peak Oil/Climate Change conferences, and the Gila River Festival.

After ten years of building and running an organization, unmet goals and ongoing weaknesses can be painful to acknowledge. It is important to do so, however, and in that spirit GRIP's board has identified the following:

♦ **Our local quality-of-life planning efforts are not as strong as we'd like.**

We have attempted to hire staff members with expertise in community planning and alternative economic development strategies, but we have been unable to raise the funding necessary to retain one promising hire or attract other high-caliber candidates. We have contributed to such efforts as Hometown Initiative and Successful Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (SEED) but saw both lose momentum. Overall, we are just as pessimistic now as we were ten years ago about the Grant County Commission's interest in guiding sustainable development rather than allowing narrow and short-term financial interests to make the decisions for all of us. (On the other hand, it must be noted that those established economic development groups have been greatly weakened by the process, and public awareness is rising: fewer and fewer people still measure progress only by jobs created and real estate converted to houses.)

♦ We have not focused on **local political leaders** as we had hoped to. We still envision creating a leadership report card to highlight the successes and failures of our elected officials in enhancing our quality of

life and our ability to live sustainably.

♦ Our **environmental justice** work has also lagged behind what we would like. Our society's continued discriminatory treatment of poor neighborhoods was evidenced clearly in the failure of state and local governments to ensure that PD's demolition of the Hurley stacks was done safely. Had those stacks been located in Indian Hills or Dos Griegos, standard measures such as dust suppression and airborne asbestos monitoring would surely have been required without GRIP having to file a request for a restraining order until they were in place. Although we are aware of this discrimination and have worked for a decade on issues directly affecting mining district residents (such as the Community Work Group, the Mining District Health Study, and blood-lead screening for children), we believe that among some segments of the community we are still perceived as a group whose motives are not necessarily understood. We aim to change that dramatically in our second decade.

This review of our successes and weaknesses provides both encouragement and a road map for improvement as we look forward to a second decade of promoting healthy communities by protecting our environment. We hope it also serves as a congratulatory pat on the back for all of you who have made it possible for GRIP to grow into a stable and vital part of the community. We are grateful for your support (keep it coming!), and we welcome all input about how we can build on the positive and address the negative as we realize our joint vision of a stronger and more sustainable Grant County.

BIGGEST BOONDOGGLE OF 2007: WHO REPRESENTS GRANT COUNTY IN A LEGAL DISPUTE?

In late 2007, Grant County hired the Albuquerque-based law firm Gallagher and Kennedy to provide legal advice to the county. The ethical problem is this is the same law firm that represents mining giant Freeport-McMoRan (parent company of subsidiary, Phelps Dodge) that owns three copper mines in the county. When asked at a recent meeting if this was a conflict of interest, a Gallagher and Kennedy attorney responded that Grant County and the company are "on the same page these days" and that the firm would abide by its professional "code of conduct." The attorney explained this meant that if there was ever an issue in which a conflict arose, the law firm would represent Freeport-McMoRan on the issue since it is a long-standing client. So where would this leave Grant County? That's right, without its legal representation. Moreover, everything the County invested in bringing Gallagher and Kennedy up to speed on issues would be wasted in such a dispute, and could possibly be used against it. Water rights, gross receipts, and rights of way are all examples in which the county's best interests may not be served by Freeport's law firm. The county should recruit and hire a new attorney to provide independent legal services and avoid the real or perceived conflict of interest represented by Gallagher and Kennedy. This is the best service our commissioners can provide our community members. Call your commissioner and let him or her know how you feel:

Commissioner District 1, Mary Ann Sedillo - 574-0021

Commissioner District 2, Jovita Gonzales - 574-0022

Commissioner District 3, Henry Torres - 574-0023

Gila Resources Information Project
305A North Cooper Street
Silver City, NM 88061

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2ND ANNUAL LOCAL SOLUTIONS CONFERENCE – March 8; 8:30 am – 6pm; Court Youth Center, 402 West Court, Las Cruces.
For more information, visit www.localsolutionslc.org

LIVING GREEN SEEDING SUSTAINABLE DREAMS: GRASSROOTS GARDENING – March 15
Spend all day outside with local gardeners and permaculture experts in their gardens, learning new skills or improving old ones.
See page 6 for a description of workshops or visit www.gilaresources.info for detailed descriptions.

DÍA DE LOS LOBOS – March 22; 2:00 pm ; Silco Theatre, Downtown Silver City.
Celebrate the tenth anniversary of the return of the Mexican wolf to the wild and a farewell for Mike Sauber. There will be wolf educational displays, wolf posters and bumper sticker giveaways in the lobby starting at 2 PM. A pot luck at 5 PM and speakers beginning at 6 PM.

EARTH DAY – April 19; 10 am – 4 pm Penny Park

GRIP 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION – April 26; 3:00 – 7:00pm at The Hub, 6th and Bullard, Downtown Silver City
with Trio Los Guapos and Edie and the Silver Blue Notes

GRIP RETROSPECTIVE MINING PRESENTATION – May 2; 7:00 pm; Silco Theatre

FAREWELL MY SUBARU – May 9; 7:00 pm ; Global Resources Center Auditorium
A hint of what's to come at the event is at Doug Fine's blog of carbon-neutral misadventures, at www.dougfine.com.

4TH ANNUAL GILA RIVER FESTIVAL – September 18 - 21