

GET A GRIP



Photo: Dennis O'Keefe

LOOKING BACK ON 20 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

Sally Smith, GRIP President

As I think about GRIP's accomplishments over the past two decades, my thoughts keep returning to Margaret Mead's sage advice to "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Twenty years ago, Phelps Dodge (PD) needed to get its three copper mines permitted under the new state Mining Act. At that time, public involvement in community environmental issues was challenging, often unwelcome, and sometimes threatening. Some of us were concerned that without a strong community voice, the powerful PD would be able to walk away from its responsibility to clean up its Chino, Cobre and Tyrone mines, leaving our community with contaminated water and environment and no financial resources to clean up the mess.

Creating GRIP, a small group of us -

Harry Browne, CarolBeth Elliott, Michael Berman and I - stepped up to organize our community as a counter to PD. We had overwhelming community support at the 2001 permit hearings for our \$1.3 billion cleanup and reclamation plan, developed by GRIP consultant Jim Kuipers. Phelps Dodge proposed a meager \$100 million in reclamation that would not have adequately protected our groundwater, environment and wildlife at mine closure. The permits approved by the state included \$550 million in reclamation, more than five times the value of reclamation in PD's closure/closeout plan (see pages 6 and 7 for highlights from 20 years of advocacy on responsible mining).

Over the years, GRIP has played a leadership role in rapid response to emerging environmental and conservation issues. We led the effort in 2003 to resurrect the Gila Conservation Coalition (GCC) when the AZ Water Settlements Act

was being negotiated, and it was clear that we needed a coordinated effort to protect the Gila River from a major water development project. Fifteen years later, we may be close to the end of the diversion project (see page 9 for the latest).

Along with our GCC partners and volunteers, we've been coordinating efforts to oppose the recent Holloman Air Force Base proposal to create a harmful Military Operations Area over the Gila (see page 11 for more details).

Thank you for stepping up and joining GRIP in our efforts to protect our community's health and environment. Your commitment to our work over the past 20 years has made a tremendous difference in making our corner of the world a better place. We are forever grateful. ❖

For details of GRIP's 20 years of advocacy, visit www.gilaresources.info



20 Years of Promoting Healthy Communities
by Protecting Our Environment

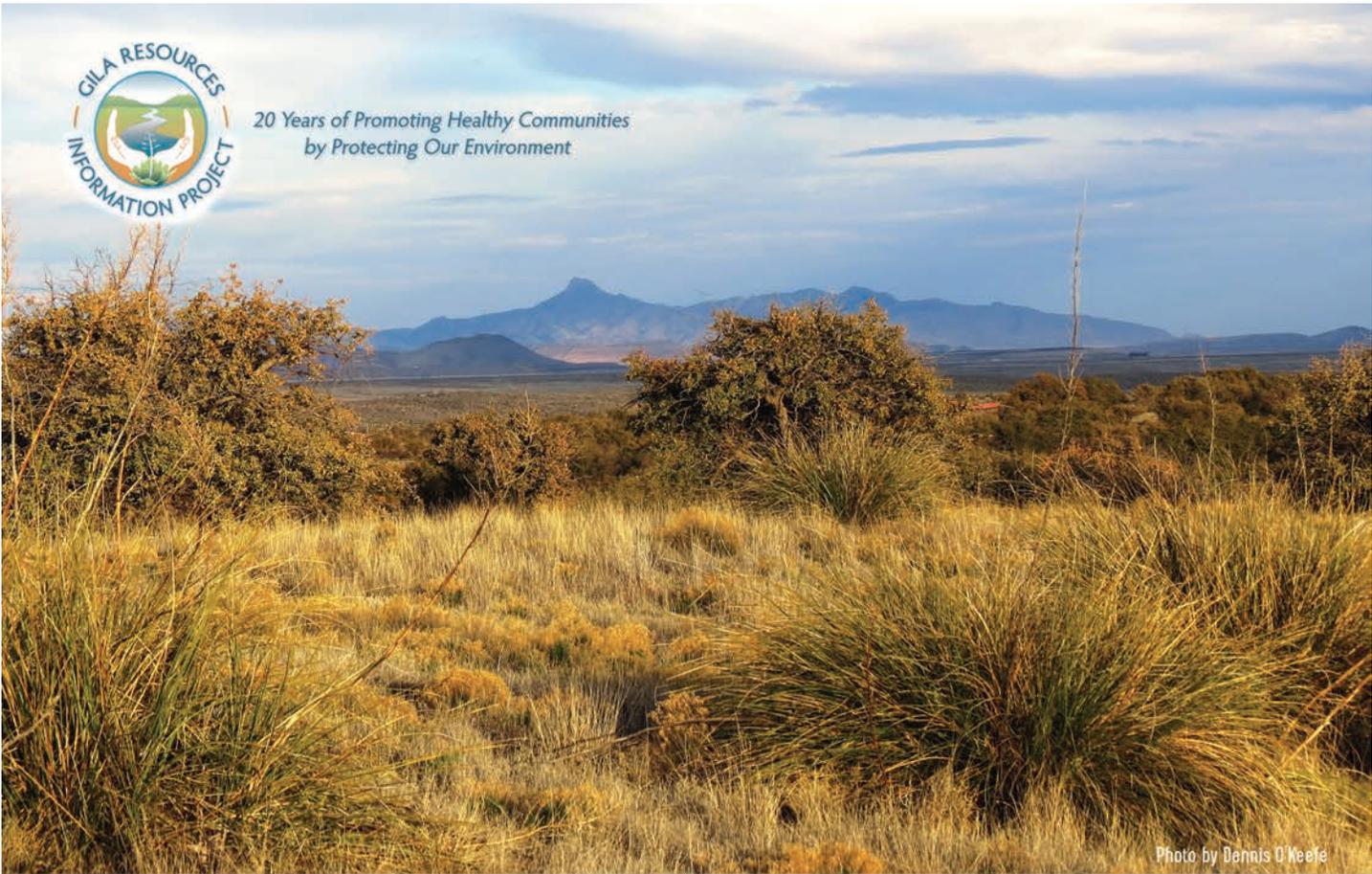


Photo by Dennis O'Keefe

GRIP's Mission

Gila Resources Information Project promotes community health by protecting our environment and natural resources in Southwest New Mexico.

Protect.

For 20 years, GRIP has worked to protect public health by ensuring responsible operation and reclamation of the region's mines; to foster sustainability and water security; and to save our special natural areas, such as the Gila River.

Advocate.

By bringing technical, policy and legal expertise to uphold safeguards of our water, air, land, and natural systems, GRIP defends human and ecological health.

Engage.

GRIP engages our community to take action to protect our environment, public health, and unique wild places through educational events and stewardship programs, such as the Silver City Watershed Keepers.



305A North Cooper St.
Silver City, NM 88061
www.gilaresources.info
grip@gilaresources.info

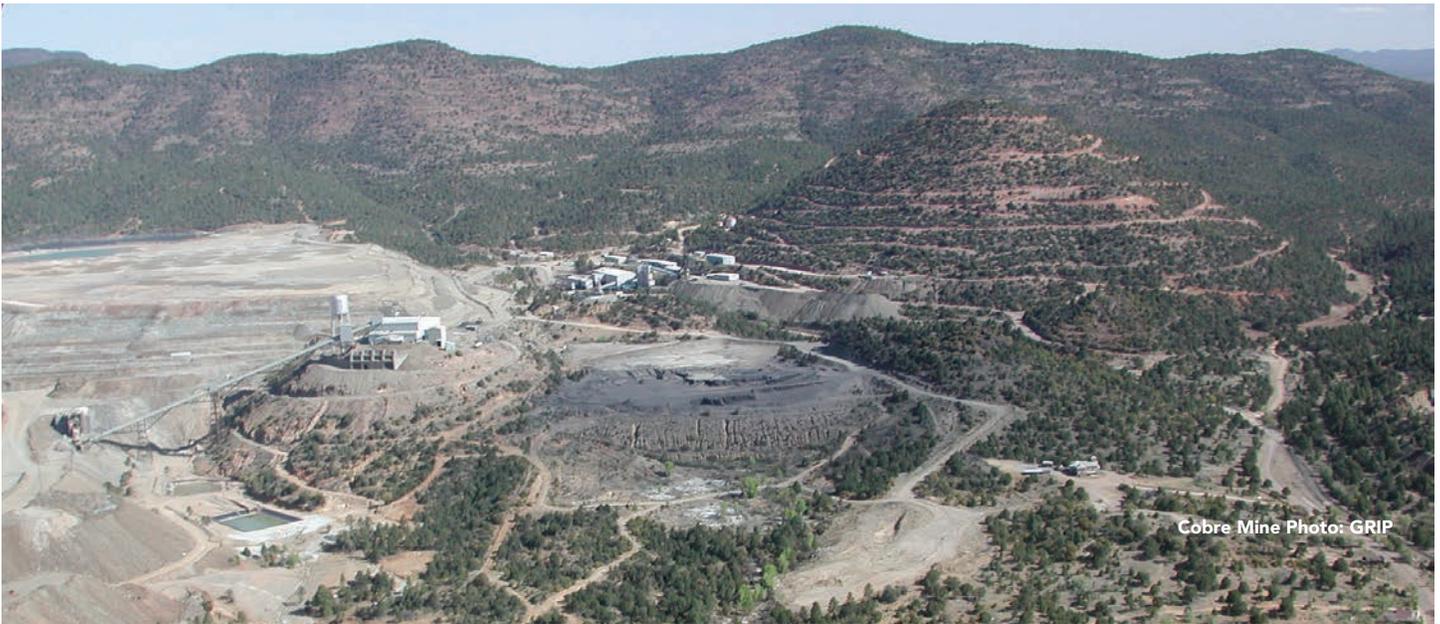


GRIP Staff

Allyson Siwik, Executive Director
Doyle Wrealli, Program Associate

GRIP Board of Directors

Sally Smith, President
Harry Browne, Treasurer/Secretary
Michael Berman
M.H. Dutch Salmon
David Rose
Eduardo Arguello



COBRE MINE RESUMES OPERATIONS AFTER 20 YEARS ON STANDBY

Allyson Siwik, Executive Director

Inactive since 1998, Freeport-McMoRan's Cobre Mine resumed operations in July after completion of the bridge and tunnel over Highway 152. Hanover Mountain will disappear from the landscape within 4 – 7 years as the company mines its ore and hauls it to Chino's Lampbright Stockpile for leaching using the new 3.6-mile haul road that connects the two mines. Freeport has now officially incorporated Cobre into the Chino Mine facility.

With the increase in mining activity at Chino and Cobre, local residents have been experiencing a range of negative impacts, including increased traffic and speeding from mine employees, significant fugitive dust from the haul road, building damage from blasting vibrations and increased noise, nuisance lighting, and odors.

Reopening the Cobre Mine has also affected the local community's cultural heritage. Hanover Mountain has been a sacred mountain to the local residents of Fierro. Pilgrimages to the top of the mountain were a part of local religious celebrations for decades. Landscape changes cause sadness and strong feelings of loss among community members. Additionally, structural damage continues to occur to St. Anthony's Church in Fierro from

blasting vibrations. Fortunately, Freeport is compensating the church for the repairs.

Freeport has also told the community that the Hanover Cemetery, located at the intersection of highways 152 and 356, is on its property and that it is likely to stop future burials, although visitations will continue. There are no current plans to move the cemetery, but the company has said that it may need to in the future.

Because the church and the Fierro and Hanover cemeteries are part of the community's cultural heritage, they have been the focus of local preservation efforts (see page 9 to find out more about the new documentary on Fierro).

GRIP advocates for community health and environmental protection

GRIP and its consultant, mining engineer Jim Kuipers, have been actively involved in review of and comment on the water quality discharge permits, Mining Act permit, closure/closeout plan and associated financial assurance for the Cobre mine. Our job has been to ensure that the permits comply with state regulations, to encourage use of Best Management

Practices, especially for materials handling and water management, and to push regulators to require adequate financial assurance to cover cleanup should Freeport go bankrupt. Additionally, as part of its Memorandum of Agreement with Freeport (see page 6, 7), GRIP is working with the company to identify measures to mitigate community impacts.

GRIP's advocacy pressured Freeport to initiate monthly community meet-ings in April to listen to community concerns and answer questions. The meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month from 4 – 6 pm at the Hanover Outpost.

Future expansion planned?

Company officials have said that recent exploration activities indicate potential for extensive ore bodies under Hanover and the Continental pit. Given the higher cost of production for the sulfide ore located at Chino, the Cobre/Continental Mine is the key to the long-term viability of Chino if Freeport can prove up the leachable oxide ore that is cheaper to process. Chino mine will be looking for new stockpile space and potentially moving Highway 152 if the new reserves are confirmed according to a Freeport official. ❖

INTRODUCING NEW GRIP STAFF



DOYNE WREALLI
Program Associate

Doyne brings more than 25 years of experience in soil and groundwater characterization and remediation and open-pit mining issues from the private sector. She is a native of the southwest and has called Silver City home for 20 years. In addition to coordinating events such as Earth Day, World Water Day, and the Wild & Scenic Film Fest, and helping out with the Gila River Festival, Doyne has been reviewing and commenting on draft water quality discharge permits and Chino AOC remediation plans. ❖

ANNA CANTRELL
Intern, Aldo Leopold Charter School

My internship for GRIP has given me some unique opportunities. I have had the chance to sit in on Earth Matters interviews with authors and journalists, as well as to tag along with professional photographer, Julie Dermansky, and see how a short film about mining issues is being made. As someone with an interest in writing and photography, this is a great way to get insight into what careers involving these interests can look like. Additionally, I am able to learn more about the type of issues that GRIP focuses on in our community, such as the impacts of mining or conserving and protecting the Gila River. I am getting an understanding of the importance of

watchdog groups such as GRIP as a sort of bridge between the mine and general public. This is done through helping to keep the general public educated and being a strong public voice in communicating with the mine. In terms of my role at GRIP, it can be a challenge to find ways to get youth involved in community issues, so I also hope to be able to contribute to GRIP as a youth voice and perspective. I am enjoying my semester working with such dedicated members of our community. ❖



GRIP CHALLENGES MARTINEZ ADMINISTRATION ROLLBACKS OF WATER QUALITY SAFEGUARDS

The New Mexico Environment Department proposed amendments to the state's water quality regulations that will weaken protections for our surface and groundwater and public notice and public participation provisions.

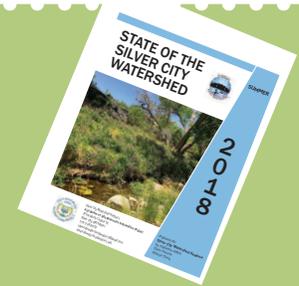
GRIP and Amigos Bravos, represented by the NM Environmental Law Center (NMELC), challenged these proposed changes in 2017.

As a parting gift to industry polluters, the Martinez Administration pushed through revisions to state water quality rules that GRIP and its partners oppose, such as permitting lifetime variances from water quality regulations that would allow industry

to pollute for the life of a facility rather than provide an incentive to reduce contamination.

Due to our strong opposition, the NM Environment Department dropped its proposal for discharge permit "amendments" that would allow changes in requirements for monitoring, reporting, sampling and analysis, closure plan, containment system(s), pollution control unit(s) and sewerage system(s) requirements without public notice.

With approval of the amendments by the Water Quality Control Commission earlier this year, NMELC filed a Notice of Appeal with the NM Court of Appeals in September. ❖



FIRST ANNUAL STATE OF THE WATERSHED REPORT RELEASED BY WATERSHED KEEPERS

The Silver City Watershed Keepers (SCWK) released its first annual State of the Watershed Report intended to inform the public about current threats to our watershed and highlight efforts that steward our water resources and support the health of our riparian areas.

The report summarizes San Vicente Creek water quality data, outlines current threats to the Silver City watershed, and describes a selection of recent cleanup and restoration projects to improve watershed quality.

Hard copies of the report are available in the GRIP office and can be picked up at local coffee shops and Town of Silver City offices. Download a copy from the GRIP website at www.gilaresources.info.

Thank you to the Lineberry Foundation for its support of this project. ❖

Get A GRIP and become a member today!



Standing, L to R: Eduardo Arguello, Harry Browne, Michael Berman, Allyson Siwik, Doyme Wrealli
Seated, L to R: David Rose, Sally Smith, Dutch Salmon

Thank you

from the GRIP board
and staff for your
support over the past
20 years.

Happy Holidays and
Best Wishes for 2019!

RESPONSIBLE MINING PROGRAM UPDATE

In April, GRIP signed a **Memorandum of Agreement** with Freeport-McMoRan to resolve permitting issues related to reopening the Cobre Mine and the unacceptable delays in renewals for closure/closeout permits at all three of the company's Grant County mines. In addition to resolving our specific concerns with the water quality discharge permit for Cobre, GRIP and Freeport agreed to meet quarterly to address issues with permit applications early on before a permit

is drafted. We also agreed to confer on closure-closeout plans and reclamation cost estimates in order to more efficiently renew these outdated plans, permits and financial assurance. GRIP and Freeport will also develop a collaborative process to identify ways to mitigate mining impacts to communities.

Ten years overdue, GRIP has been reviewing and commenting on the **revised Chino Closure/Closeout Plan (CCP)** that outlines Freeport-McMoRan's plan for cleanup and reclamation of the Chino mine once it shuts down. GRIP's advocacy pressured the NM Environment Department to force the company

to release the updated plan and reclamation cost estimate using new requirements under the Copper Rule.

As a result of GRIP's MOA with the company and after leaning on state regulators, **the Chino closure/closeout plan, permit, and financial assurance are on track to be completed by the end of 2019.** GRIP mining consultant Jim Kuipers has facilitated a work group with company officials, MMD and NMED to resolve issues with reclamation cost estimation, ensuring that adequate financial assurance is in place as part of the permit renewal.

UK-based consultant Verisk Maple-

croft was in Grant County in September conducting a **Human Rights Impact Assessment of Freeport-McMoRan's New Mexico Operations** as part of the corporation's commitment to the United Nation's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. GRIP submitted comments to the evaluators and facilitated interviews with community members to ensure that the voices of the people most impacted by Freeport's operations were heard. The consultants will identify any problems with the company's management systems and recommend fixes to prevent negative impacts to employees, local

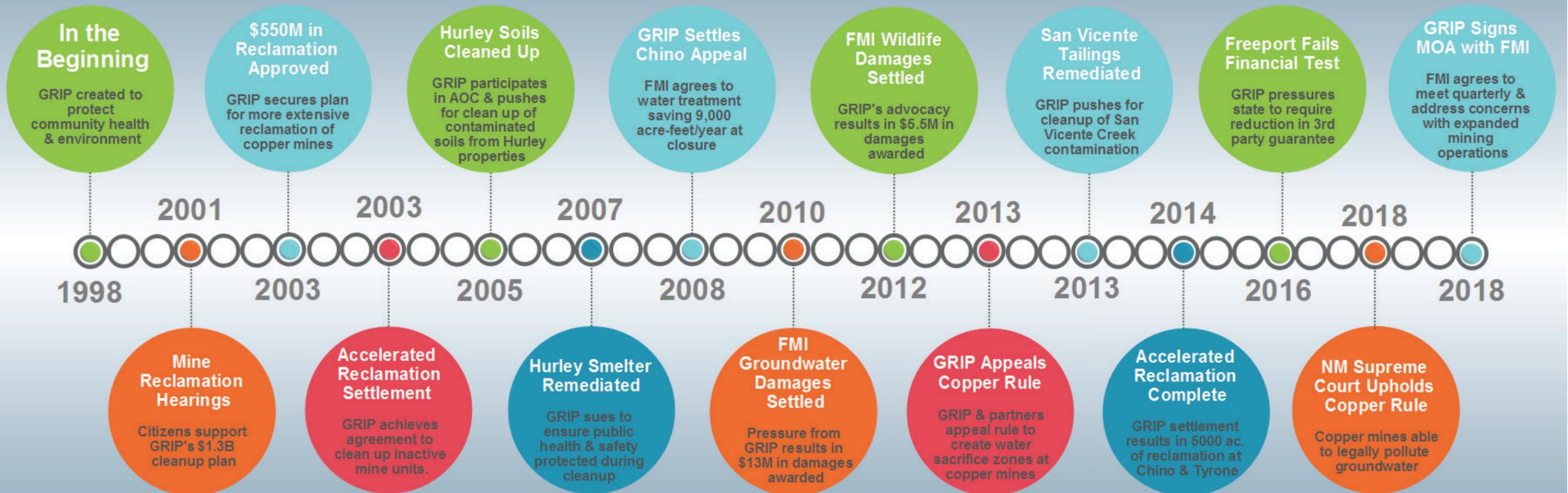
communities and the environment.

State regulators held hearings this fall on the **Copper Flat Mine**, located near Hillsboro. New Mexico Copper Corporation applied for a groundwater discharge permit from the NM Environment Department and a mining permit from the NM Mining and Minerals Division. GRIP and other advocates argued that the permit applications lacked adequate financial assurance to cover cleanup and reclamation should the mine operator go bankrupt. At press time, decisions had yet to be made on the permits.

The New Mexico Supreme Court

upheld the **Copper Rule** in March, sanctioning groundwater sacrifice zones in contradiction of the state's Water Quality Act. The Supreme Court's decision brought to a close five years of appeals of the rule by GRIP, Amigos Bravos and Turner Ranch Properties as represented by the NM Environmental Law Center. The Court made clear that it was considering the Copper Rule on its face and not as it is applied in individual mine permits. We will continue to monitor how the NM Environment Department applies the rule to determine whether the Water Quality Act or other statutory provisions are violated. ❖

Highlights from 20 Years of Advocacy on Responsible Mining



Visit www.gilaresources.info for a full interactive timeline of GRIP's advocacy work

CHINO AOC: FREEPORT BEGINS CLEANUP OF HANOVER/WHITEWATER CREEK

Doyne Wrealli, Program Associate

Freeport-McMoRan (FMI) began interim cleanup of Hanover/

Whitewater Creek in late October as part of the 1994 Chino Administrative Order on Consent, a legally-binding agreement with NMED to remediate historical mine contamination caused by Chino Mine. GRIP has participated in the AOC's Community Work Group since its inception and advocates for timely cleanup that is protective of public health.

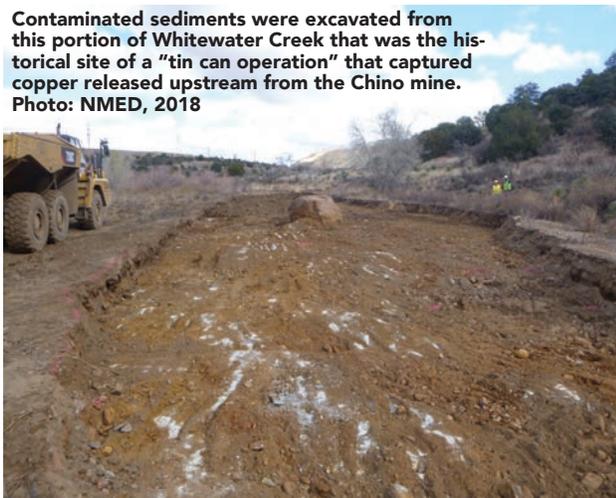
Beginning as early as 1948, Hanover and Whitewater creeks were contaminated by releases of acidic waters from the mine's former precipitation plant, seepage from old stockpiles, and by spills from the tailings pipeline. The streambeds were further degraded by so-called "Tin Can Operations," where individuals produced copper using tin cans and scrap metal in the contaminated flows of the creeks. Along with having a low pH (acidic), the soil and sediment of the creeks also have high concentrations of metals including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, iron, lead, manganese, and zinc.

The excavations will take place along the Hanover and Whitewater creek streambeds, and will begin on mine-owned land near Hanover and the intersection of highways 152 and 356, continue south through Bayard, roughly along highways 356 and 180, and then to Hurley. Trucks will haul contaminated materials on mine property for disposal on Chino Mine's West Stockpile. Water trucks will be used to suppress dust from excavation equipment and trucks using dirt roads to reach excavation areas. Fill material will be hauled on highways 180 and 356 to excavation sites. FMI's transportation plan precludes truck transport of fill material on municipal roadways during school drop-off/pickup.

There are 43 areas to be excavated

along the creeks, with an estimated 72,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediment to be removed.

Contaminated sediments were excavated from this portion of Whitewater Creek that was the historical site of a "tin can operation" that captured copper released upstream from the Chino mine. Photo: NMED, 2018



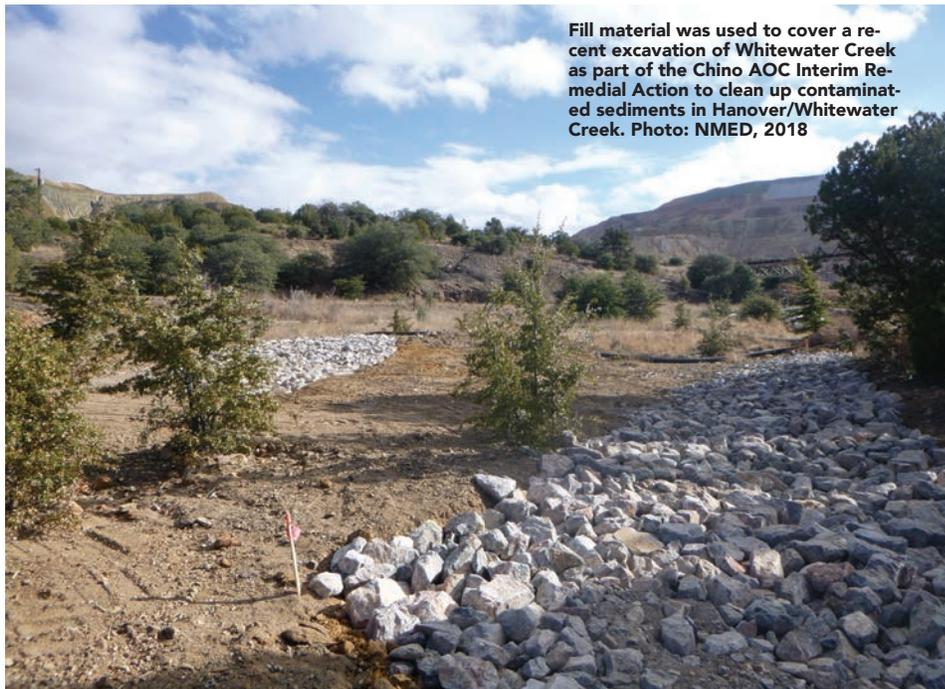
The work plan includes a procedure to create temporary stockpiles of the contaminated material adjacent to the creek on property owned by FMI, but where those stockpiles will be, and how long they will remain, will be

decided by the contractor and FMI personnel on site. Excavated areas of the streambed may receive backfill or bank armoring using rip-rap to stabilize stream banks from high water flows.

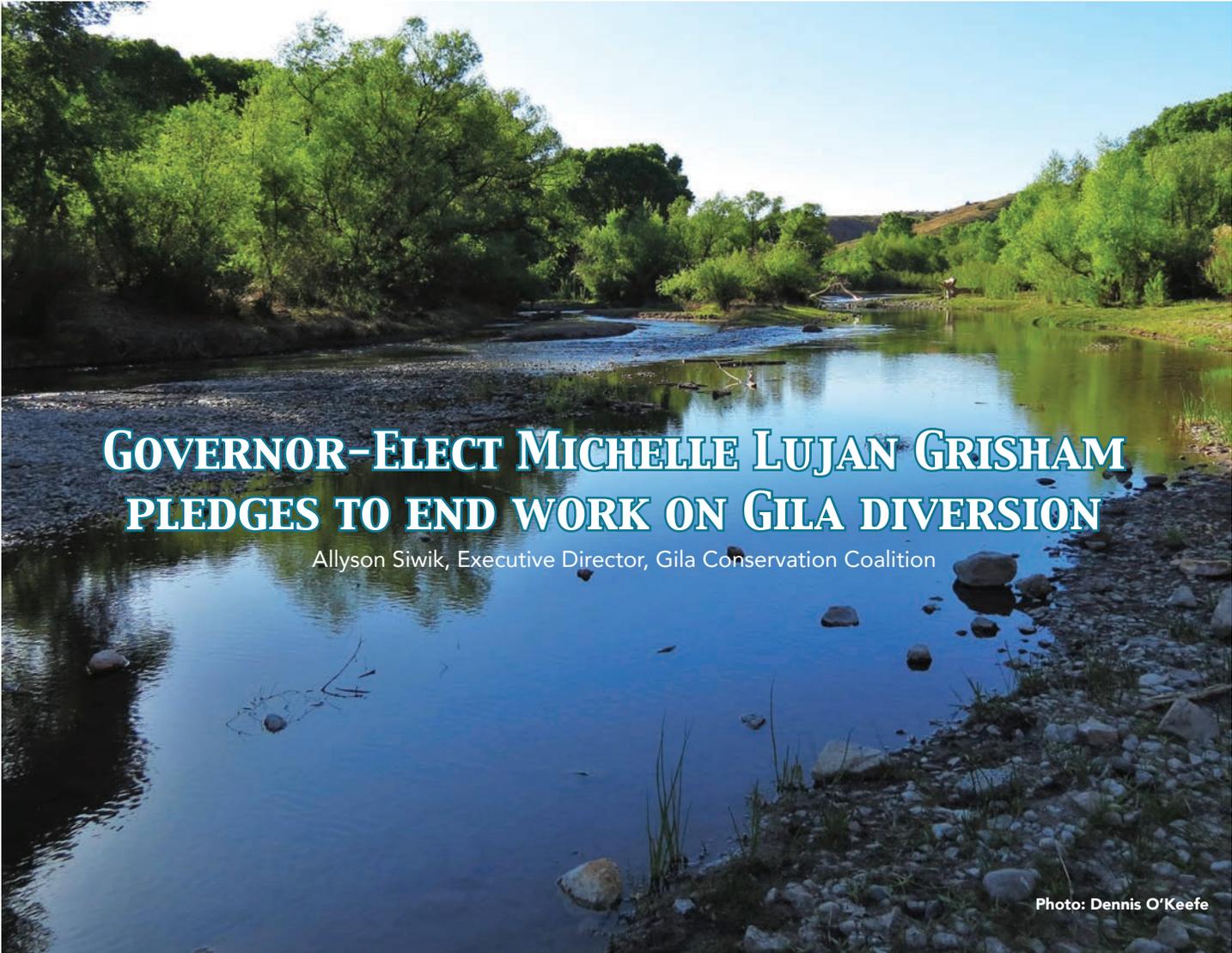
Completion of the creek cleanup is anticipated by end of March 2019.

Reports and work plans for the AOC remediation are available for public review at the Miller Library on the Western New Mexico University campus and at the Bayard Public Library. Copies are also available online at www.fcx.com/chino/.

Participation in oversight of the AOC process is open to the public at state-mandated Community Work Group meetings held quarterly at 7 p.m. at the Bayard Community Center. ❖



Fill material was used to cover a recent excavation of Whitewater Creek as part of the Chino AOC Interim Remedial Action to clean up contaminated sediments in Hanover/Whitewater Creek. Photo: NMED, 2018



GOVERNOR-ELECT MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM PLEDGES TO END WORK ON GILA DIVERSION

Allyson Siwik, Executive Director, Gila Conservation Coalition

Photo: Dennis O'Keefe

For the past eight years, Gila River diversion planning has moved full steam ahead under Governor Martinez. But the result of the 2018 gubernatorial election may grant New Mexico's last wild river a second chance.

In her plan for managing and conserving the state's water, Governor-Elect Michelle Lujan Grisham states that she will "end work on the Gila River Diversion Project," given that "there is little to show for the millions of dollars spent on staff, lawyers and studies" with only one year left to secure approval of the project under the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA). She goes on to say "we need to use the [AWSA] settlement money more efficiently on other projects that could help more of southwestern New Mexico." GCC looks forward to working with our new Governor to protect the wild Gila River.

Meanwhile, it's been a race against time for the NM CAP Entity, the local group charged with planning for and

construction of the Gila diversion project. The Entity has been trying to get through the environmental compliance process under the National Environmental Policy Act before the December 31, 2019 AWSA deadline, but still has no viable plan and little information on costs, yield of water, and who will actually use the water. The draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected early Spring of 2019, kicking off another round of public comment.

That all said, it's not over 'til it's over. GCC will keep pushing on all fronts to ensure that the wild Gila continues to run free. While we are optimistic that this long battle may be coming to an end, we will continue to need your strong support to make sure that our beloved river is protected forever.

In addition to serving as GRIP's Executive Director, Allyson Siwik also directs the Gila Conservation Coalition. GRIP is a partner in GCC and its fiscal agent. ❖

For the latest on the Gila River diversion issue, visit the Gila Conservation Coalition web-site at www.gilaconservation.org or at [Facebook.com/GilaConservationCoalition](https://www.facebook.com/GilaConservationCoalition).

SURVEY CONCLUDES CLIMATE CHANGE BIGGEST CONCERN OF LOCAL YOUTH

Anna Cantrell, GRIP Intern

Since the next generation will inherit a host of environmental issues, it is vital for today's youth to have some understanding of what they are faced with, and to have the opportunity and guidance to take action on their concerns. A survey conducted by the former GRIP intern and Aldo Leopold Charter School student, Kenya Leahy, in 2016 helps reveal what environmental issues are on the minds of youth in the Silver City community. It also provides a look at what ways youth are interested in getting involved with resolving these issues. The survey takes answers from both high school and middle school students with the majority of responses from Aldo Leopold Charter School students. It covers four environmentally-focused questions, allowing participants to choose the three answers they find most applicable.

The first question focuses on what environmental issues concern youth most. Over 50% of students identified climate change as one of their main concerns. It is no surprise that this is on the minds of youth, and it's certainly positive that they are aware of this issue. Another positive aspect to this is that a substantial amount of the responses chose issues of renewable energy. This shows that the youth surveyed are not just aware of the issue of climate change, but also have hopes for proactive solutions, such as developing renewable energy sources.

The second question focuses on how youth would like to get involved in environmental issues within their community. The most interest was expressed for participation in festivals and art projects. This is not surprising, as youth will have more interest in activities that they consider more fun. With this in mind, it is important to remember that this is not a negative thing. Some might see this as irritating, as youth being lazy and not wanting help unless something is fun. However, this is not true. Plenty of youth do want to be involved and

desire to help, but they are kids. It is simply in the nature of kids to want to have fun. Fun is an easier and more comfortable way for youth to approach and cultivate interest in what are truly intimidating issues.

The third question asked what the primary source of news and information is for the participants. Over 70% of responses selected on-line as a primary source for information. Because there were also those that chose specific social media websites as primary sources, it is likely that almost all of the youth in the survey get at least some of their information from an on-line source. This further confirms that in modern times one of the best ways to communicate and collaborate with youth is through social media.

The final question asked participants to consider the biggest environmental issues in their own community. This question allowed the participants to write in their own answers. Answers showing awareness of invasive plant species and diversion of the Gila River were good to see, as those are certainly prominent environmental issues within our community. These answers confirmed that there is awareness of these issues among much of the youth, but some of the other answers that stood out actually had less to do with issues ecological in nature, and more with social and community awareness in regards to these issues. These were answers such as "communicating about and solving issues" and "inclusion of all community members". These could indicate that some might feel that they do want to be involved, but do not know how, or perhaps feel excluded. They also may feel that there is a lack of communication within the community about these issues and how young people can help and become more involved.

Overall, youth do want to get involved; it is just necessary to find ways that will match their interests. ❖

FIERRO DOCUMENTARY
to be shown
January 18 & 19



The year was 1997. Hear the voices of the people from the mining town of Fierro who were concerned about the impacts from Cobre Mining Co.'s proposal to take down Hanover Mountain and expand the mine. Now more than ever, these community perspectives are important to listen to as Freeport-McMoRan has re-opened Cobre Mine after 20 years of dormancy.

SCREENINGS

Friday, January 18, 9am - 6pm
Bayard Public Library

Saturday, January 19, 6:30pm
Bayard Community Center

For more info, call GRIP at
575.538.8078

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!

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Photo: Allyson Siwik

POWER TO THE PEOPLE! COMMUNITY STANDS UP TO HOLLOMAN PROPOSAL

Allyson Siwik, Executive Director

The Holloman Air Force Base proposal to establish a new military training area over the Gila region has galvanized strong community opposition over the past year. Our elected officials are listening and have followed the public's lead with their expressions of opposition. But continued public pressure will be a crucial element in ensuring that the Air Force ultimately drops this harmful idea.

Holloman Proposal Threatens the Health of the Gila

As it plans to expand Special Use Airspace at Holloman, the Air Force is considering creation of a new Military Operations Area (MOA) for F-16 fighter jets over southwestern New Mexico. Potentially, 10,000 sorties a year — 30 a day — would fly over the Gila, with a thousand of those flights supersonic and a thousand at night. Many of the fighter jets will be flying very fast at very low altitudes. Others will drop flares and a radar-deflecting metal material called chaff from above 2,000 feet.

The proposal puts the health of the Gila National Forest, Gila and Aldo Wilderness Areas, and of nearby communities like Silver City at risk from extreme noise, wildfire, and environmental contamination. Our rural

economy, trying to wean itself off the boom and bust cycle of extractive industries, has relied on our natural amenities to attract tourism, outdoor recreation and retirees. This economic development strategy is severely threatened by Holloman's proposal.

The Gila is an inappropriate location for the Air Force's military training. Other locations, such as existing military installations, are available to Holloman that won't cause impacts to the nation's first Wilderness area and fragile local economies.

Opposition to the Holloman Proposal

The public was outraged upon the chance discovery in October 2017 that the Air Force did not hold a scoping meeting in Grant County, the area that would be most affected by the new "Lobo MOA." Our local and state elected officials complained to the Air Force about this unfair lack of public participation and Holloman was forced to meet with the community. Hundreds of people rallied and participated in two public meetings held by the Air Force in Silver City in November 2017 and in March 2018. More than 3,000 people signed a petition and/or submitted scoping comments opposing military training over the Gila, and more than 150 local

businesses signed a letter expressing opposition to the proposal.

Elected officials are paying close attention to the strong community opposition to Holloman's proposal. The Grant County Commission, Town of Silver City, State Senator Howie Morales and U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich have all made powerful statements against use of the Gila for F-16 training.

Continued Public Opposition is Critical to Defeating the Holloman Proposal

Your continued support is vital to our campaign to eliminate the Lobo MOA from consideration by the Air Force. GRIP and its partners in the Gila Conservation Coalition, along with community volunteers, are preparing for review of the draft Environmental Impact Statement expected to be released in late spring/early summer 2019. We'll help facilitate participation in meetings and submission of public comments, so stay tuned for our calls to action. As always, your financial contributions will help in this effort. Thank you for your continued support! ❖

For more information on the Holloman proposal, visit www.peacefulgilaskies.com



Gila Resources Information Project

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2019 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 9 - GRASSROOTS LOBBY TRAINING - 6:30 pm, WNMU Student Memorial Building, 3rd Floor Seminar Room. Join GRIP and the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter to learn how to be an effective citizen lobbyist in the 2019 legislative session.

JANUARY 15 – MARCH 16 – NEW MEXICO 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION – State Capitol, Santa Fe

JANUARY 29 – Clean Energy Day

JANUARY 30 – Grant County Day

FEBRUARY 13 – Lands, Water and Wildlife Day

JANUARY 19 - FIERRO DOCUMENTARY FILM - 6:30 pm, Bayard Community Center.

MARCH 22 - WORLD WATER DAY

APRIL 20 - EARTH DAY IN GOUGH PARK

JUNE 2019 - WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 19 – 22 - 15TH ANNUAL GILA RIVER FESTIVAL - For more information or to volunteer, visit www.gilariverfestival.org