



Get A GRIP

The Newsletter of the Gila Resources Information Project

PROMOTING
HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES
BY PROTECTING
OUR ENVIRONMENT
SINCE 1998

WINTER 2025-2026

STAND UP FOR OUR HOME!

Protect the Gila National Forest From Ivanhoe Electric Exploration



From the top of Twin Sisters. Photo: Dennis O'Keefe

U.S.-based mineral exploration company Ivanhoe Electric has plans for a massive new mining exploration project on the Gila National Forest. In 2024, the company staked 642 lode claims covering 13,264 acres of Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and private land encircling the community of Pinos Altos, located 8 miles north of Silver City and considered the “gateway” to the Gila National Forest and Gila Wilderness. Exploration activities could impact the forest’s natural resources and wildlife, recreational opportunities, property values of homes located adjacent to the Gila National Forest, and the local economy.

The lode claims were staked and recorded in November 2024 with the Grant County Clerk’s Office and the BLM by Pinos Altos Exploration LLC, a subsidiary of Ivanhoe Electric. BLM has since declared seven of these claims null and void because they were staked on private land and all claims were improperly staked under state and federal mining law, creating public confusion and undermining confidence in the process. When a company disregards basic legal requirements from the outset,

it raises serious concerns about the integrity of the permitting process and whether it can be trusted to follow the law going forward.

In May 2024, Ivanhoe announced that it had joined an “exploration alliance” with the Australian multinational mining company BHP to “accelerate the search for copper and other...minerals” in the U.S., focusing initially in Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. According to an Ivanhoe press release, “over 110 square kilometers of unpatented mining claims have been staked across Arizona and New Mexico.” The second “joint venture” phase of the alliance will “further explore and evaluate the exploration results to assess its technical and economic merit, and if agreed upon, to develop and operate a mine and associated infrastructure.”

Alarming, other companies are in the process of staking potentially hundreds of claims on Gila National Forest land north of Silver City, including Kennecott Exploration, the exploration arm of global mining giant Rio Tinto, and Nevada-based Celatus Copper USA. Corporations are rapidly laying claim to subsurface minerals in other areas

around the state, such as the Pecos.

Mineral exploration and industrial-scale mining are not appropriate in the Gila National Forest north of Silver City. This unique area is critically important to our region’s rich biological diversity, cultural heritage, outdoor recreation, and tourism. This proposal could impact two Inventoried Roadless Areas that protect wildlife habitat and the quality of recreation experiences. As the gateway to the Gila National Forest, Gila Cliff Dwellings, and Gila Wilderness – the nation’s first Wilderness Area, mineral exploration and mining in this area would significantly impact Grant County’s economy and quality of life.

GRIP spearheaded a comment letter to the Gila National Forest outlining a long list of concerns with the negative impacts of the exploration proposal. Fourteen organizations signed onto the letter that also requested the Gila National Forest carry out public notice, public review and public comment on the proposal and that they assess and consider the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the mineral exploration in its decision making.

As of press time 2080 people have signed a petition to the Forest Service telling them that mining exploration and industrial-scale mining do not belong in the Gila National Forest and to provide public notice and comment on any exploration proposal.

SIGN THE PETITION TODAY!

Stand up for our home

Tell the U.S. Forest Service that mineral exploration and industrial-scale mining do not belong in the Gila National Forest due to the negative impacts to the forest, wildlife, water supplies, recreational opportunities, and the local economy. Demand public notice and public comment on Ivanhoe Electric's exploration proposal.



SIGN NOW

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

GRIP Awarded Nonprofit of the Year by the Silver City/Grant County Chamber of Commerce



GRIP board, staff, and partners accepted the Community Stewardship Nonprofit of the Year Award at the Grant County Conference Center in November.

As we reflect on the past year, we are honored to share that the Silver City/Grant County Chamber of Commerce recognized GRIP with the Community Stewardship Nonprofit of the Year Award. This distinction is deeply meaningful. Not only because it is an acknowledgement of the work we do every

day, but because it represents the collective effort supporting it. Your generosity, the time you dedicate to volunteering, and your commitment to our mission made this achievement possible. Thank you!

Together with supporters, funders, community partners and volunteers, we’ve taken on some of the most pressing challenges facing our land, air, and water resources. Because of your support, we’ve reduced wildfire risk along our riparian corridors, protected Silver City’s sewer infrastructure, expanded community forestry initiatives to cool neighborhoods throughout southwest New Mexico, restored and protected habitat along our streams and springs, removed nearly 4 tons of litter from our roads and waterways, and provided residents with timely air quality data during wildfire season. These are real improvements to community and ecological health, climate resilience, and quality of life, made possible by you.

This award affirms what we’ve always known: when people come together to protect our home, we can achieve positive results for community health and the environment. It’s a reminder that the work ahead will be built on the same foundation of shared commitment that has supported GRIP’s work for nearly three decades.

With your continued support, we are ready to tackle a full slate of challenges in 2026. Turn the page to check out some of the priority projects we’ll be working on.



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INFORMATION PROJECT**
Promoting Healthy Communities by
Protecting Our Environment Since 1998

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Scott Zager, GIS Specialist/Ecologist

CONTACT

305A North Cooper St.
Silver City, NM 88061
575.538.8078 office/fax
grip@gilaresources.info

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- Ensure that our water, air, land and wildlife are protected from new mineral exploration and mining projects, including protecting the Gila National Forest from the Ivanhoe Electric mineral exploration, defend domestic water rights and springs from the proposed Emma Pit at the Tyrone Mine, and safeguarding groundwater quality and water supplies from NM Copper Corporation's attempt to reopen the Copper Flat Mine outside of Hillsboro.
- Deploy additional air quality sensors to provide real-time air quality data to the Grant County community through Grant County AIR-WISE (air-wise.org)
- Install irrigation systems, plant trees and construct green stormwater infrastructure to build climate resilience in southwest New Mexico communities as part of the Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network project (swnmforestry.org).
- Complete stream and spring restoration projects to protect riparian ecosystems and wildlife and build climate resilience.
- Coordinate the 5th annual Nature Discovery Summer Camp to provide outdoor experiences and environmental education for local 4th - 6th graders.

We're also looking forward to providing you with exciting opportunities to volunteer on stream restoration and tree planting projects, learn about tree care and maintenance through Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network workshops and networking events, participate in ecological monitoring with the Silver City Watershed Keepers, and join us for a series of educational hikes.

Join our email list, follow us on social media, or check out our website to stay connected to the latest information and opportunities.

Thank you for your continued support!

Stewardship in Action on San Vicente Creek

Community partners and volunteers celebrate efforts to protect water quality, wildlife, and community infrastructure



GRIP brought community partners and volunteers together to celebrate the San Vicente Creek River Stewardship Project and to recognize all of the individuals who contributed to the project. Project t-shirts were made to commemorate the 3-year project.

In October, GRIP and its partners and volunteers celebrated completion of the San Vicente Creek River Stewardship Project with a recognition ceremony and hike.

The 3-year project funded by the NM Environment Department's River Stewardship Program restored riparian habitat by removing 300+ tons of non-native, invasive trees from 55 acres that also reduced riparian fire risk and planted 800 native trees and shrubs to enhance wildlife habitat.

The project also improved water quality by protecting the Town of Silver City's main sewer line from erosion and building 75 water harvesting features to slow stormwater, reduce erosion, prevent sediment from entering creeks, and recharge groundwater.

This work is also protecting the creek through 1000+ plantings of native willows and cottonwoods to stabilize stream banks and induce meandering,

and through 3 grade control structures built to restore natural stream flow.

The celebration recognized the invaluable work of project partners, private landowners, and volunteers that made the project a success, including New Mexico Environment Department, Town of Silver City, Grant County, Silver Consolidated Schools, Gila Resources Information Project, Stream Dynamics, Southwest Tree Solutions, Gila WoodNet, Silver City Watershed Keepers, Silver City Trails and Open Space Advisory Committee, Lone Mountain Natives, swmACT, Aldo Leopold Charter School Youth Conservation Corps, and Upper Gila Watershed Alliance's New Earth Project.

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Growing a Healthy Urban Forest Across Southwest New Mexico

Building Climate-Ready Community Forests Through Local Partnerships and Capacity Building



Snapshots of community forestry projects throughout southwest NM.

GRIP and its partners in the Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network (SWN-MCFN) are celebrating a strong second year of their USDA-funded effort to grow healthier, more resilient communities across southwest New Mexico through local partnerships, tree planting, and community forestry technical assistance.

Over the past year, the Network worked hand-in-hand with local governments and residents to develop Community Forest Management Plans for Santa Clara, Bayard, Hurley, Lordsburg, and Silver City, with a draft plan nearing completion for Deming. Developed by GRIP's contractor Integrated Biological Solutions, these plans were shaped by community engagement, local priorities, and on-the-ground data such as tree canopy cover, urban heat mapping, green stormwater infrastructure opportunity assessments, and tree health evaluations. The plans were formally adopted by town councils, marking an important step toward long-term urban forest stewardship.

Each plan provides communities with a shared roadmap for the future with clear goals, strategies, and action steps they can take with project partners to increase their tree canopy, improve shade and

cooling, manage stormwater, and care for existing trees. A prioritized list of projects was also developed for every community, informed by municipal staff, mayors and councils, and direct feedback from residents. Final plans for Silver City, Lordsburg, Santa Clara, Hurley, and Bayard are now publicly available on the Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network website (swnmforestry.org).

A key part of this work has been preparing communities for climate change. The Network created Climate Ready Tree Lists for each municipality, helping ensure that trees planted today will survive and thrive in the hotter, drier conditions of the future.

On the ground, the project continues to deliver visible results. Tree planting, maintenance, and irrigation planning took place across the region, with 140 trees planted and 620 trees maintained.

Additional funding has been secured to install irrigation systems at six locations during 2026-2027, with more funding applications underway. Nearly 150 high school students participated in tree planting activities, helping build both community pride and the next generation of environmental stewards.

Spring and fall planting efforts brought new trees to Silver City, Santa Clara, Bayard, and Hurley. In Santa Clara, students from Aldo Leopold Charter School's Youth Conservation Corps helped plant trees and build water-smart crevice gardens, stormwater harvesting basins, and understory plantings. Students also learned about career pathways in arboriculture through WNMU's tree worker certificate program. YCC students also helped plant 28 trees at the new Silver City Rec Center, while Cobre High School students helped plant trees at the Bayard Community Center Park.

Southwest Tree Solutions removed more than 400 dead or invasive trees, primarily Siberian elm and Tree of Heaven, improving ecosystem health and long-term forest resilience. More than 200 trees were safety-pruned across multiple communities and hands-on pruning workshops built skills among 24 municipal staff.

Through planning, technical assistance, youth engagement, and on-the-ground work, the Southwest New Mexico Community Forestry Network is not just planting trees, but growing local capacity, resilience, and a shared commitment to caring for community forests for generations to come.

Pick It Up - Toss No Mas Cleans Up!

Our community continues to mobilize to keep Silver City clean and beautiful

Alesia Hallmark,

Silver City Watershed Keepers Coordinator

We coordinated 10 cleanups in 2025 and 199 volunteers helped collect nearly 4 tons of litter from Silver City roads, trails, neighborhoods, and waterways. Our volunteers ranged from long-time residents to couples who had just moved to our area that month, from 8 to 86 years old, and from solo volunteers to large groups. We're grateful to all the volunteers that drive the success of this program, including the organizations and teams like Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club of Silver City, Supporting People in Need, Daughters of the American Revolution Jacob Bennett Chapter, Community Youth Building, San Vicente Consortium, Trails and Open Space Advisory Committee, Bridge to Ridge) that show up for added impact.

We were also able to work with the Town and State to advocate for further infrastructure protections and beautification projects. In February, we attended Breaking Bad Habits Day at the Capitol where we learned about the increasing amounts of litter, dump sites, and graffiti that are burdening communities across our state and our country. As part of the inaugural Breaking Bad Habits cohort, we are setting an example and taking a stand: we care about the health of our environment and the

beauty of our towns. In October, we worked with SkyWest Media and the Town of Silver City's Utility Department on a short video about the improper disposal of oft-overlooked waste: oils and trash thrown into drains. Improper waste disposal in our Town's drains costs valuable time and taxpayer money to clean blockages, built-up oil, and other debris out of our public sewer lines. Blockages lead to sanitary sewer overflows that can pollute our soils and waterways like San Vicente Creek and cause major health risks, especially for children and pets. Thank you to Silver City's Utility Department staff for all they do to protect our water supply! And remember: don't flush any products except toilet paper down your toilet (NO sanitary items, NO "flushable" wipes) and don't pour oil down your sink.

In November, we were happy to honor our program's founder, Mayor Ken Ladner. Mayor Ladner has served his community for 10 years as our town's mayor, during which time he spearheaded efforts to beautify and protect Silver City. In 2018, Mayor Ladner founded our program and has remained a steadfast champion for litter prevention and one of our most dedicated volunteers, participating in nearly every cleanup, encouraging business owners to commit to keeping their properties litter-free, and recruiting local organizations to participate in the program.



Thank you to Mayor Ken Ladner for being a champion for litter prevention!

Thank you to the Town of Silver City, New Mexico Clean and Beautiful, and the Lineberry Foundation for generous support. These funding sources and partnerships will continue through 2026.

You can join our cleanups on the third Saturday of every month, starting February 2026. Visit silvercitytossnomas.org for more information.

Water Rights Transfer for Copper Flat Mine Reopening Denied by State Engineer

Copper Flat tag line: State Engineer Rejects Water Rights Transfer for Copper Flat Mine, Citing Harm to Downstream Water Rights Holders, Interstate Compact Obligations, and Climate-Driven Water Scarcity



Courtesy Percha-Animas Watershed Association

The State Engineer issued her decision last year denying Tulla Resources' application to transfer water rights needed to reopen the Copper Flat Mine near Hillsboro in southern New Mexico.

The State Engineer's decision to deny the water rights application was based upon the hearing examiner's findings of fact and conclusions of law that the application will impair existing surface and groundwater rights; that the applicant did not meet its burden of proof that it would be able to put the

water rights to beneficial use within the 10-year permit term; and that the application is detrimental to the public welfare of the state as it adversely affects New Mexico's Compact obligations with Texas.

The State Engineer also noted the effects of climate change on New Mexico's water resources. Quoting a 2006 Office of the State Engineer report, she stated, "New Mexico's water future will be determined by water demand and availability of our water resources, [and] climate change will likely

have a significant impact on both."

The Australian company Tulla Resources Group applied to transfer 2,400 acre-feet per year of groundwater rights on behalf of New Mexico Copper Corporation in order for it to build, operate, and reclaim the open-pit copper mine. Tulla Resources Group is the primary lender to New Mexico Copper Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Canadian corporation Themac Resources Group, which is itself owned by Tulla Resources Group.

Protestants Percha-Animas Watershed Association, Hillsboro Pitchfork Ranch LLC, Gila Resources Information Project, Ladder Ranch of the Turner Ranch Properties, and the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club argued that transferring these water rights would harm the water supplies that local communities depend on for household use, crop irrigation, businesses, livestock, and hunting operations.

The protestants also provided testimony that the water rights transfer would damage local waterways, such as the Rio Grande, Las Animas Creek, Percha Creek, and Caballo Reservoir, essential to people, wildlife, and native vegetation, harming riparian habitats that sustain unique Arizona sycamores and the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher.

In the wake of the State Engineer's decision, the NM Copper Corporation refiled a proposal to use filtered tailings rather than conventional wet tailings to reduce water use. This has essentially restarted the permitting processes with the Mining and Minerals Division, the NM Environment Department and the Office of the State Engineer. The biggest question is whether the company has sufficient water rights even with the use of filtered tailings. GRIP and its partners are responding by requesting a public hearing and hiring technical experts to evaluate the modified proposal.

Defending Our Water Resources:

Update on the Emma Expansion Water Rights Protest

GRIP's Water Rights Protest Argues Emma Pit Dewatering Will Harm Domestic Wells and Springs

GRIP's protest of Freeport-McMoRan's Emma Pit water rights application has now stretched on for more than three years before the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) Hearing Unit.

In 2021, Freeport-McMoRan filed an application for the Emma Expansion Project, a 337-acre open pit mining operation on the southeast side of the Tyrone Mine. The proposal includes excavating a 600-foot-deep open pit that would extend 200 feet below the water table, requiring continuous dewatering. When mining ends, the pit would fill with water, forming a toxic pit lake that exceeds state water quality standards — posing a long-term threat to wildlife.

In order to manage this pollution in perpetuity, Freeport initially proposed pumping 116 acre-feet of contaminated water annually and transferring it to the adjacent Tyrone Mine for re-use or for water treatment at closure.

Concerned about impacts to domestic wells and a local spring, GRIP and nearby well owners formally protested the application in 2022. GRIP's technical assessment concluded that dewatering would impair domestic wells — a finding later confirmed by the OSE Hydrology Bureau in 2023. State experts also validated concerns about impacts to a nearby spring. Based on these findings, the OSE Water Rights Bureau recommended denial of the application.

In 2024, Freeport attempted to salvage the project



Mining copper ore from the Chino pit. Photo: Julie Dermansky for Earthworks

by amending its application, claiming it would use only one-third of the originally proposed amount of water. However, the OSE Hydrology Bureau rejected this claim, concluding that domestic wells would still be affected.

Just days before the August 2025 OSE hearing, Freeport and the Office of the State Engineer introduced a last-minute "monitoring and mitigation plan," submitted as a condition of approval if the application were granted.

GRIP argued that this plan does not prevent

impairment of domestic wells and therefore fails to meet state law for water rights approval. The plan is also unfair to private well owners as it fails to prevent unlawful taking of people's water rights, and does not protect against harm to nearby springs. GRIP further argued that the application violates state water law, because it seeks insufficient water rights, which would lead to unlawful appropriation of both groundwater and surface water.

All parties have now submitted their final briefs. The case awaits a decision from the State Engineer.

New Mexico Responds to Federal Threats to Clean Water

New Mexico advocates and state leaders are strengthening state-level protections to safeguard rivers, streams, wetlands, and drinking water across the state.



The iconic Gila River would lose federal water quality protection under the Administration's proposed changes to the Clean Water Act. Photo: Gabriela O'Keefe

GRIP and its partners in the Protect NM Waters coalition are continuing the fight to protect clean water in New Mexico. The coalition is responding to federal rollbacks of the Clean Water Act while also supporting the state's effort to build a strong, state-level clean water protection program to safeguard New Mexico's rivers, streams, and wetlands.

On November 17, 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced a proposed rule that would drastically reduce which waters are protected under the federal Clean Water Act. The proposal goes even further than the limitations created by the 2023 Sackett decision. If adopted, nearly every stream, river, and wetland in New Mexico would lose federal protection. These waters are essential to life across the state. They feed acequias and farms, sustain tribal communities, support wildlife, supply drinking water to cities and rural villages, and help drive local economies.

The rule would remove basic protections for any river or stream that does not flow year-round, affecting 96 percent of New Mexico's waters and about 60 percent nationwide.

Then, on January 13, 2026, the Environmental Protection Agency issued another rule that weakens the ability of state and tribal governments to use Section 401 of the Clean Water Act to protect water quality. An accompanying memorandum makes clear that the administration intends to restrict state

and tribal authority to determine how to protect their water quality. The consequences of this rule will be to ease limits on industrial pollution and further weaken safeguards for community water resources and ecosystems.

This is not the moment for the federal government to retreat from its responsibility to protect clean water. Clean water is our most vital resource. Federal leaders should be strengthening protections and working in partnership with states, not stepping back and putting communities, ecosystems, and drinking water supplies at risk.

Fortunately, New Mexico has taken important steps forward. In response to weakening federal protections, the state established a state-run clean water protection program last year. Members of the Protect NM Waters coalition served on the task force that helped develop the first draft of the rule and submitted public comments during the initial review process. GRIP coordinated comments on the draft rule focused on addressing the surface water quality impacts of hardrock mining.

The rule is now scheduled for a hearing before the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission from June 8 through June 18, and the public will have opportunities to provide testimony.

Stay tuned for updates on how to participate by signing up for our email list or following us on social media.

REPORT AN ENVIRONMENTAL SPILL OR ISSUE

New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)

866-428-6535

(24-hour reporting line)

How to Report an Environmental Concern

Online: www.env.nm.gov → General → Report an Environmental Issue or Incident

By phone: Call 866-428-6535

Please provide as much information as possible.

Information to Have Ready

- What is the problem?
- Where is the problem located?
- When did the problem occur?
- How long has the problem been ongoing?
- What materials or substances are involved?
- Approximately how much?
- Who is involved or responsible, if known?
- Have any actions already been taken?

Statewide Coalition Created to Address Mining Impacts and Policy Reform

NM Mining Watch will monitor mine permitting, exploration, operations and reclamation

In response to the increase in mineral exploration and mining activity across New Mexico, GRIP and its partners formed New Mexico Mining Watch (NMMW), a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to monitoring mining permitting, exploration, operations, reclamation, and remediation in New Mexico. The coalition also works to advance meaningful mining policy and regulatory reform rooted in shared values and a collective vision for protecting communities, land, and water. NMMW is guided by a Steering Committee made up of five community-centered organizations: Amigos Bravos, Southwest Research and Information Center (SRIC), Gila Resources Information Project (GRIP), Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE), and the New Mexico Environmental Law Center (NMELC).

Since its formation, the coalition has already achieved important early wins. NMMW successfully urged New Mexico Attorney General Raul Torrez to support the "Multi-State Guidance Affirming the Importance and Legality of Environmental Justice Initiatives," a significant act of resistance in the face of federal efforts to weaken environmental protections. By affirming the central role of environmental justice, this action strengthens the ability of communities and agencies across New Mexico to continue protecting air quality, culturally significant landscapes, and drinking water resources statewide.

NMMW has also mobilized opposition to the Mining Regulatory Clarity Act (H.R. 1366), legislation that would shift control of public lands toward the mining industry and increase risks to frontline communities, water supplies, and ecosystems. Although the bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives in December, all House members of New Mexico's congressional delegation voted against it. Its companion bill, S.544, is now awaiting consideration in the U.S. Senate, where continued public engagement will remain critical.

Thank You to Our Funders!

- NM Environment Department
- USDA Forest Service
- Mosaic Foundation
- Anthropocene Alliance
- Lineberry Foundation
- National Forest Foundation
- Town of Silver City
- New Mexico Clean and Beautiful
- NM Outdoor Equity Fund
- Martyn Pearson and Alex Olson Memorial Fund
- McCune Charitable Foundation
- E. A. Mellowes Foundation

Restoring Balance at Dorsey Spring

Riparian restoration effort aims to protect a rare spring-fed floodplain forest, strengthen stream and habitat resilience, and ensure future generations of native trees along Bear Creek

By **Scott Zager**, GRIP GIS Specialist/Plant Ecologist

Last summer, GRIP began an ecological restoration project at Dorsey Spring, a 32-acre floodplain forest along Bear Creek in a remote corner of the Gila National Forest. Tucked between rugged bluffs below LS Mesa, this special place lies miles from the nearest paved road and can only be reached by a long drive on a high-clearance two-track.

In fall 2025, the Gila Watershed was especially breathtaking. From the hilltops, Bear Creek winds through a golden ribbon of Arizona sycamore, cottonwood, Gooddings willow, alder, and velvet ash, glowing against dark green scrub oak, piñon, and juniper. The cliffs rise steep and speckled, built from ancient stones fused together into towering bluffs, while pockets of loamy soil cradle the floodplain forest below.

Although Bear Creek often runs dry, Dorsey Spring brings life back to the valley. Cool, clear water emerges from bedrock aquifers, forming pools and riffles that provide habitat for the endangered loach minnow and Chiricahua leopard frog found only in this region of southwest New Mexico and southeast Arizona.

These species survive drought in spring-fed pools and spread during seasonal floods, making this place a vital refuge.

Yet the forest is aging. Beneath towering old sycamores and cottonwoods, there are very few young seedlings coming up to take their place. It's a beautiful but fragile community — more like a neighborhood of elders than a thriving, multi-



Arizona sycamore seedlings sprouted this past summer along Bear Creek below Dorsey Spring. Photo: Allyson Siwik

generational forest.

With funding from the NM Environment Department River Stewardship Program, GRIP is working to change that. In November GRIP's contractor Noland Tough Fence built a fence to protect 32 acres of Dorsey Spring and 0.7 miles of Bear Creek. This spring, we'll work with Stream Dynamics and volunteers to plant willows, sow seeds of native grasses, and build check dams to repair erosion. We'll evaluate the success of the

project by comparing our vegetation monitoring results before and after the fence and restoration work were completed.

By restoring native grasses, planting willows, protecting streambanks, and reducing erosion and herbivory, we aim to give this ecological gem a future. Our goal is simple: improve water quality, stabilize streambanks, and facilitate the ongoing recruitment and growth of new generations of trees that will keep Dorsey Spring and its riparian forest alive for decades to come.

Air Quality Monitoring Network Aids During Trout Fire

Real-time data helps protect community health during wildfire events and beyond



"WE LIKE TO PLAY IN HEALTHY AIR"
Annabella Maldonado
4th grade, Silver City

The Air Quality Index (AQI) indicates how many asthma- and allergy-inducing particulates are in the air.

Students contributed their art works to a 2026 calendar produced as part of Grant County AIR-WISE outreach and education events.

Alesia Hallmark,
Silver City Watershed Keepers Coordinator

The AIR-WISE network continued to expand in 2025 and was utilized during wildfire season, at outreach events, and in research.

This year, we deployed three additional PurpleAir sensors, expanding our coverage to 11 sites across Grant County, from the Cliff-Gila and Mimbres

valleys to Silver City, Hanover, Bayard, and Pinos Altos. The real-time data from these air quality sensors can be viewed at air-wise.org and map.purpleair.com. Our data are now being integrated into most weather apps and into the Weather-AQI layer on the Watch Duty app.

We also launched two high-volume PM2.5 monitors for a short-term study of fine particles. Using

HELP RESTORE OUR STREAMS

Volunteer with GRIP

Join us to help restore Dorsey Spring!

- Pole plant cottonwoods and willows
- Build check dams to stop erosion
- Reseed native grasses in the floodplain

To sign up, send an email to grip@gilaresources.info



this specialized filter technique, we captured very small, airborne particulates at two locations across several weeks and sent our samples in for laboratory analysis. We hope to share the results of this study in 2026. The AIR-WISE network proved essential during the Trout Fire, giving residents and first responders real-time air-quality data to protect their health and plan outdoor activities. GRIP staff also delivered air-quality health education to 42 students using data from the AIR-WISE network.

The AIR-WISE network was created through a partnership between GRIP, UNM's NM-INSPIRES program, Gila Tech LLC, and local partners. Visit air-wise.org for more information.

Growing the Next Generation of Watershed Stewards

Engaging youth, educators, volunteers, and partners through hands-on education, citizen science, and stewardship to protect Silver City's waterways



Kids in the 5th annual Nature Discovery Summer Camp discover local biodiversity and were empowered to steward their environment. Photo: Alesia Hallmark

Alesia Hallmark,
Silver City Watershed Keepers Coordinator

2025 has been a successful year for the Silver City Watershed Keepers program. Through education, advocacy, community engagement, and environmental monitoring, we have continued our mission of protecting the Silver City watershed and engaging our community better in understanding and caring for the waterways and landscapes that sustain us.

This year, we delivered environmental programming to over 400 students in Silver City, the Mining District, and Cliff/Gila. With the Frontier Food Hub's Journey Through the Food System program, we visited Hurley, San Lorenzo, Bayard, and Central elementary schools to teach students how water quality impacts our local food system and how we can balance the water needs of agriculture, home use, and our environment. At the Frontier Food Hub's Rooted and Rising Camp, we taught 6th-8th graders about food webs and how humans and our agricultural practices alter ecological connections. At La Plata Middle School's Earth Day celebration, we taught students about the habitats and diets of native Gila species. We also

worked with Youth Conservation Corps teams from Aldo Leopold Charter School to restore waterways and plant trees along San Vicente Creek and also discuss ecological monitoring techniques used in their capstone projects.

An educational program highlight was our 4th annual Nature Discovery Summer Camp. We hosted two week-long summer camps for 36 local 4th-6th graders. Campers spent 30 hours exploring the outdoors, from Big Ditch Park along San Vicente Creek and Bayard Public Library's outdoor garden to the Mogollon Box and Gila River Farm along the Gila River. Lessons were led by an outstanding team of environmental educators, including camp counselors, local youth aged 17-22, who grew their outdoor leadership skills by leading small groups and teaching their own lessons. Campers discovered local biodiversity, learned about the connections between land, water, wildlife, and people, and were empowered to steward their environment.

Our camp was all the more impactful as the Trout Fire burned during the camp. We adapted our plans, cancelling visits to the Mimbres Culture Heritage Site and Mimbres River, and had

meaningful conversations about air quality, the ecological impacts of wildfire, and risks of post-fire floods. Thank you to the Lineberry Foundation, UNM-INSPIRES program, Martyn Pearson and Alex Olson Memorial Fund, and the City of Bayard for the generous support of our 2025 camps. We are excited to share that we secured an Outdoor Equity Fund grant from the N.M. Economic Development Dept.'s Outdoor Recreation Division to help fund our 2026 camps!

We continued our ecological monitoring efforts and engaged our local community in citizen science projects and cleanup events. We monitored water quality along our urban waterways, Pinos Altos and San Vicente Creeks. Despite the regional drought, these riparian areas harbored populations of native fish, insects, birds, and mammals. We also hosted Silver City's first annual City Nature Challenge to engage the community in a county-wide biodiversity survey, documenting hundreds of species. With our Pick It Up - Toss No Más program, we removed nearly 4 tons of trash from Silver City's landscape.

Not to be underestimated, we also engaged with our community on nature hikes and at local events. We hiked San Vicente Creek on World Water Day and during GRIP's San Vicente Creek Restoration Celebration, as well as hiking Cherry Creek during Latino Conservation Week. We tabled at Continental Divide's Trail Day/Earth Day in Gough Park, for Latino Conservation Week at Bayard Public Library, at Mimbres Harvest Festival, and during the Tamal Fiesta, where we answered questions about air quality, point-sources of water pollution, the benefits of trees in our urban spaces, and education opportunities.

We look forward to continuing our work in 2026. We will be expanding our environmental education curriculum, collaborating with more local partners, restoring more habitat, and continuing to monitor and clean our local waterways. As always, we'll be spreading the love for the waterways that have shaped Silver City's history and will sustain our future.

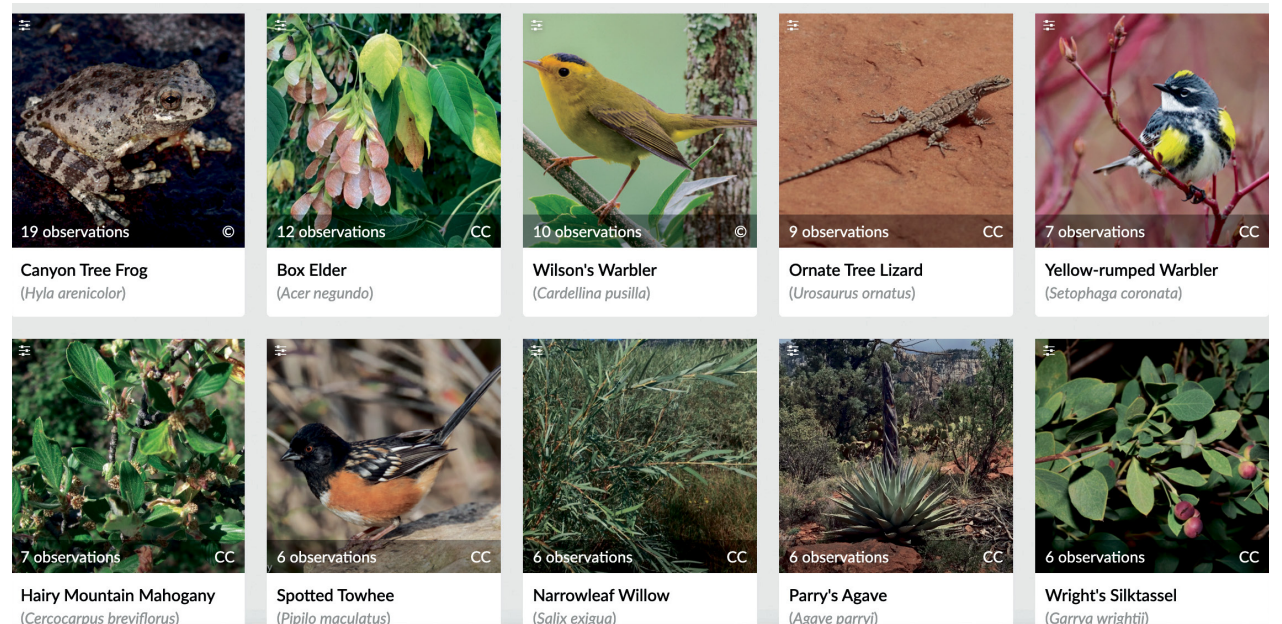
Silver City Contributes to Global Biodiversity Survey

Local observations achieve global impact as part of inaugural event

Alesia Hallmark,
Silver City Watershed Keepers Coordinator

The 10th annual City Nature Challenge (CNC), held in April 2025, brought together tens of thousands of people across the globe to document biodiversity in/near urban ecosystems and connect people with the nature in their own backyards. In just four days, 102,945 participants from 690 cities in 51 countries recorded an astounding 3,310,131 observations of 73,765 species, including thousands of threatened species. This was the largest CNC to date and a major citizen science contribution to biodiversity databases.

The Silver City Watershed Keepers program was proud to coordinate Silver City's inaugural City Nature Challenge, an event that supports our mission of protecting and monitoring the ecological health of our watershed. From April 25-28, 2025, participants explored backyards, trails, riparian corridors, and urban greenspaces across the county. 33 local citizen scientists submitted observations to the iNaturalist platform, 30 people attended hikes that we hosted, and 149 iNaturalist users helped identify species. In total, we uploaded 855 observations of 379 unique species, ranking us #13 in the world among CNC regions of our population size. CNC observations will help us understand which species are present in our watershed, develop restoration and management plans, and provide place-based education. For a first-year effort, our



30 people participated in the City Nature Challenge, documenting the flora and fauna along San Vicente Creek, Cherry Creek, Boston Hill, and Silva Creek Botanical Garden. These are the top 10 observations for Silver City/Grant County. Photo: iNaturalist

impressive results reflect both our community's love of nature and the rich biodiversity of our region.

This event was about more than data—it was about connection. Participants gained a deeper appreciation for Grant County's landscapes and biodiversity, experiencing the curiosity and joy that drive environmental stewardship. Local organizations shared their time and expertise to lead CNC hikes, support iNaturalist observations, and guide participants to biodiversity hotspots.

Looking ahead to CNC 2026, we will expand partnerships and co-organize the event with the Bird Alliance of Southwest NM and the Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy. CNC 2026 will take place April 24-27. We hope you'll join us and continue using iNaturalist to record the plants, animals, and fungi you see year-round—every observation strengthening our understanding of the natural world and our community.



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Gila Resources Information Project
2025 IMPACT REPORT

Thank you to our supporters, partners, and volunteers for another successful year of protecting community health and our environment!

Impact Snapshot	5 community forest management plans adopted	620 youth engaged across all programs	7,570 pounds of litter collected
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To read the full report, visit:
WWW.GILARESOURCES.INFO




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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NM Legislative Session (30 Days)
January 20 - February 19, 2026
More information: nmlegis.gov

Pick It Up-Toss No Mas Cleanups
Third Saturday of the month | 9 am - noon
Gila Community Foundation Parking Lot
Upcoming dates:
February 21, March 21, April 18, May 9, June 20,
July 18, August 15, September 18, October 17,
November 21

World Water Day
March 22
silvercitywatershedkeepers.org

Earth Day Events

Earth Day Tree Planting and Tree Giveaway
Silver City | Saturday, April 18
Deming | Saturday, April 25
swnmforestry.org

Earth Day Cleanup
Saturday, April 18, 9 am - noon
Gila Community Fdn Parking Lot
silvercitytossnomas.org

Continental Divide Trail Days
Gough Park | Saturday, April 25, 2026
More info: cdtcoalition.org/trail-days

City Nature Challenge 2026
April 24-27, 2026
Sign up at: silvercitywatershedkeepers.org

5th Annual Nature Discovery Summer Camp
For 4th-6th graders
Silver City - June 1-5 and June 8-12
Bayard - June 15-19
More info and registration coming soon at:
silvercitywatershedkeepers.org

Water Quality Control Commission
Hearing on Surface Water Quality Permitting Rule
June 8 - 18, 2026