



# Solutions to Southwestern New Mexico's Long-term Water Needs Under the AWSA

In 2004 Congress passed the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA) that authorized diversion of the Gila River if New Mexico agreed to buy water from Arizona to replace what we take out of the river. \$100 million (2004\$) has been made available through the AWSA. \$66 million of this is available to meet local water needs in southwest New Mexico without diverting the Gila River. A diversion project is expensive with costs now estimated at over \$1 billion (construction, OM&R, exchange costs), will yield little to no water, and will negatively impact the hydrology and ecology of the Gila River.

## \$66 million is available under the AWSA to meet local water needs in Southwest New Mexico

AWSA funds are available for Grant, Luna, Catron, and Hidalgo counties for meeting any water supply demand. There is no requirement that those funds be used for a Gila River diversion.

## Use of Gila River water is unnecessary

Local water plans demonstrate that with ongoing sustainable groundwater use and conservation the Mimbres Basin Aquifer contains enough water to supply Silver City, Deming and adjacent communities far into the future.

## Water needs can be met cost-effectively through non-diversion alternatives

Implementation of proven conservation and water efficiency measures can sharply reduce water use at a fraction of the cost of a Gila River diversion.

**Non-diversion alternatives can secure our water future without building a costly diversion project that will alter the Gila River forever. Common-sense conservation saves the taxpayer money and protects the Gila River for future generations.**

## The AWSA planning process is currently assessing the costs and benefits of non-diversion alternatives:

- **Municipal Water Conservation** measures reduce the demand for water and therefore minimize the need to develop new water supplies.
- **Agricultural Water Conservation** reduces agricultural water consumption through the installation of water-efficient technologies.
- **Effluent Reuse** is a widely used strategy for conserving water by applying treated effluent to irrigate public facilities, such as athletic fields, cemeteries and golf courses.
- **Sustainable Groundwater Management** balances groundwater use with groundwater recharge to ensure the long-term sustainability of our aquifer.
- **Watershed Restoration** consists of a variety of activities that can contribute to the health of a watershed, including protection or improvement of water quality, enhancing water supply, and/or enhancing ecosystems.