

# **Position on a Mitigation Plan and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Big Chino Water Ranch Pipeline Project**



According to recent USGS reports, the first 24 miles of the Verde River rely almost entirely on the Big Chino aquifer for stream flow during the driest times of year. This Upper Verde River segment provides some of the best habitat for native fish recovery and is crucial to Arizona's Bald Eagle. The proposed pipeline project will threaten the upper segment of the river by drawing water from the Big Chino aquifer, eventually causing reductions in flow. A reduction in the volume of water in the Upper Verde would threaten the health of many native fish and wildlife species, diminish the recreational opportunities on the river, and reduce the availability of clean water in downstream communities and farms in the Verde Valley and in Phoenix.

The Citizens Water Advocacy Group (CWAG) asks that should Prescott and Prescott Valley determine to move forward with the Big Chino water project, they work in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that addresses not only the impacts to species located on the lands that the pipeline will cross, but also the species that rely on the flows of the Verde River and its associated riparian areas. A "No Action" alternative (no pumping by Prescott and Prescott Valley) should be included in this EIS, and all proposed alternatives should include comprehensive, clearly identified mitigation for impacts to Upper Verde River flows and its associated riparian habitat.

CWAG encourages its members and all other interested members of the public to go to the [savetheverde.org](http://savetheverde.org) Web site and send letters in support of mitigation and an EIS for the Big Chino Water Ranch Pipeline Project to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the mayors of Prescott and Prescott Valley, the Yavapai County Supervisors, Senator McCain, Representative Renzi and Governor Napolitano.

If we work together, we can keep the Verde River flowing. (BD – 8/06)

Reformatted 12-27-09