



7th Annual Gila River Festival September 15-18, 2011

April 19, 2011

Dear Friend,

The Gila River Festival has been called “the Southwest’s premier nature festival.” It’s getting better every year, as we improve the field trips and offer new and innovative events. Last year’s Festival was very successful, attracting about 1,500 participants.

Much of the credit goes to the generous support of people like you who understand the critical importance of the Gila River in sustaining the high quality of life we enjoy here in southwest New Mexico. In these tough economic times, we need strong local support more than ever to help us celebrate and protect the rich heritage of the Gila River, the last free-flowing river in New Mexico.

“*Viva El Rio Gila – Wild and Free!*” is the theme of the 2011 Gila River Festival. The untamed Gila River is one of the last of its kind in the Southwest. No large dams impede the natural flow of water that is critical to the health of this riparian jewel. Our decision about whether to divert the Gila for human use is a profoundly ethical one, with far-reaching ecological, economic and cultural implications.

The 7th annual Gila River Festival will examine what's at stake as southwestern New Mexico contemplates this choice. Our belief is that we can have water for people *and* for nature. The Festival will provide opportunities to learn more about common-sense solutions that work *with* the environment, saving us money and protecting the Gila at the same time. We’re offering tours and field trips that showcase diversion alternatives such as rainwater harvesting, water conservation, and drip irrigation. A workshop will teach participants how to capture rainwater at their own homes.

The Gila Conservation Coalition, Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, Gila Resources Information Project, Western Institute for Lifelong Learning and partnering organizations are busy organizing this year’s Festival. **What great events are returning?** Carrying on Festival tradition, we will offer guided hikes such as birding, natural history, riparian ecology, and more. Again this year, we’ll host the ever-popular Gila River kayak trip, and an environmental film festival, featuring films about the global threat to our rivers and the movement to dismantle outdated and harmful dams.

Silver City events include children’s activities at the library and a gallery tour and opening, featuring Gila River-inspired works by local artists. We anticipate a stellar presentation from keynote speaker Sandra Postel, National Geographic Society’s Freshwater Fellow. Postel, who has written extensively on water issues, appeared in Leonardo DiCaprio’s film *The 11th Hour*.

What's new this year? We're featuring a bus tour of potential diversion sites, and presentations on the ecological, economic and cultural impacts of dams, as well as viable alternatives. We're also organizing an invitational art show that will showcase the works of some of our area's most talented artists as they interpret the importance of a free-flowing river. And to keep you moving, we'll have stewardship projects at the river and in Silver City, and a Saturday evening dance under the stars.

As a sponsor of the Gila River Festival, **your name or that of your business will be heavily promoted** locally and regionally throughout New Mexico, Arizona, and west Texas. Promotional materials include print and radio advertising, posters, fliers, and a Festival brochure. We will distribute 3,000 brochures, assuring that you or your business will get plenty of exposure.

Friends of the Festival (\$100 contributors) will be featured in the Festival brochure. Sponsors of the Festival (\$250 contributors) will also be included in all Festival advertising, and Major Sponsors of the Festival (\$500 contributors) will receive prominent display of their name and logo on the Festival brochure, on advertising and at all Festival events. In addition, each Sponsor and Major Sponsor will receive a complimentary ticket to a Sunday brunch with State Land Commissioner Ray Powell. Please fill out the sponsorship form below and return it with your check to the Gila Conservation Coalition.

The sponsorship deadline for being included in promotional material is Friday, June 3.

I hope that you will join with other Gila River Festival sponsors as a Friend of the Festival, or become a Sponsor at a higher contribution level. On behalf of the festival organizers, I thank you for your continued support of the premier nature festival in the Southwest.

Sincerely,



Donna Stevens, Outreach Coordinator
Gila Conservation Coalition

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Yes, I would like to support the 7th Annual Gila River Festival! A check is enclosed for \$ _____

Please include me on the brochure and other promotional materials as:

Name, telephone number and/or email address:

Please make your check payable to GCC, and mail to:

Gila Conservation Coalition, 305A N. Cooper St., Silver City, NM 88061

For more information, call Allyson Siwik at (575) 538-8078 or email info@gilaconservation.org

PLEASE RESPOND BY JUNE 3 TO BE INCLUDED IN PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS.