Wild Gila River Water Development Project Defeated
Wild and Scenic River bill now pending

Floating by 2014 proposed dam site in March 2020
New Mexico Public Stream Access Litigation

Barricade on Pecos River erected by absentee Texas oil man’s trust
My Motivation: Love for the Wild Gila River / Protect from Government Abuses and Lies

• Aldo Leopold in 1924 protected the headwaters of the Gila River as the USA’s first wilderness
• Backpacked the Gila Wilderness as a young man—1970s
  • Scary river crossings during spring floods
  • Decided to run the river
• Dozens of Gila Wilderness three-day canoe trips—early 1980s to date
• Wild Gila River advocate 2014 to date
• Gila Wild and Scenic River bill would protect permanently
Key Opposition Factors in Gila River Developers’ $16 Million Fail

- Political engagement and support
- Relentless use of public records and open government laws
- Bringing to light the real facts and science
- Effective communications
- Core team and engaged supporters
- Perseverance
Gila Success Lessons Learned

- Partners were essential
- Biggest hurdle was opponents seemingly limitless resources; perseverance was the solution
- What advice do you have for ACA members who want to become more involved in their local public policy issues?
  - Understand the relevant facts, science, and economics.
  - Access public records.
  - Find a good lawyer who wants to help.
Public Stream Access Legal Action

Partners and Lawyers Essential in Taking the Fight to the Rich Privatizers
Rich absentee landowners have subverted New Mexico’s constitutional public stream access rights

Four river segments listed in this 1983 State Parks Guidebook have privatized segments approved or have pending applications

NM Supreme Court accepted March 2020 Petition to Overturn State Game Commission Privatization Rule—case awaits court decision
Petitioners

https://www.adobewhitewater.org/stream-access
“New Mexico Paddlers Coalition”
Success Factors

- Partners with command of issues and supportive public policy positions
- Engaged national NGOs as participants and stakeholders
- Engaged coalition and grass roots supporters/stakeholders
- Effective communications—press and public
- Engaged politicians and officials
- Fundraising
- Good lawyers

Getting Started

- Get involved, do homework
- Seek allies
- Get organized
- Make a plan
- Get productive work done
- Adjust
- Repeat