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**Another Way to Celebrate Earth Day:
City of Prescott Sued for Obstructing Public Information Requests on Verde River
Water Pipeline**

PRESCOTT, *Ariz.* — Today the [Center for Biological Diversity](#) sued the city of Prescott in Yavapai County for its failure to provide documents relating to the construction of a water pipeline that would deplete the [Verde River](#). Courts are being asked to intervene on Earth Day 2009 to force the city to disclose information that it's withheld despite repeated requests by the Center for Biological Diversity dating back to May 2008.

"A big part of protecting the environment is holding leadership's feet to the fire and keeping citizens informed about proposed actions. In this case, the city refuses to operate in a transparent manner as they move forward with their upper Verde River destroying pipeline," said Michelle Harrington, rivers conservation manager at the Center for Biological Diversity. "They have obstinately ignored our requests for public records pertaining to the Big Chino Water Ranch pipeline for nearly a year despite multiple letters, emails, phone calls, and face-to-face requests."

The Center made a request for records relating to the Big Chino Water Ranch pipeline on May 8, 2008. After multiple calls to arrange viewing of the documents, access to some of the records was finally granted in early October 2008. Among the documents missing were reports by the engineers preparing the plans for the water pipeline. No information has been provided to the Center to indicate why the reports have not been provided.

"If the city insists on taking actions that will impact the Verde River and downstream communities, it should at least have the integrity to share the details of those actions with the public," said Howard Shanker, attorney for the Center and former Arizona District 1 congressional candidate. "This suit is just the first step in holding the city accountable."

"Prescott's groundwater pumping and pipeline will eventually impact the flows of the upper Verde River — the Department of Water Resources concedes this," said Harrington. "Yet the city refuses to produce a comprehensive, scientifically verifiable mitigation plan to prevent or offset those impacts. Just as with public records, our requests for a mitigation plan continue to be stubbornly ignored."

The [Center for Biological Diversity](#) is a national nonprofit conservation organization with more than 220,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

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