

A scenic view of a river flowing through a lush, green landscape. The river is in the foreground, reflecting the sky and the surrounding vegetation. The banks are covered in dense green trees and shrubs. In the background, there are mountains under a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission's Gila River Diversion Attempt #4

**Why you should tell Governor Martinez to
Stop it Now!**

September 4, 2014

What the ISC Wants

- A Gila River diversion would be a state-funded “bridge to nowhere,” another Spaceport with low or no benefits.
- This project will be massively expensive.
 - Few will benefit.
 - Many will pay.
- New Mexico taxpayers, endangered species, the wild Gila River, and those of us who want it to remain wild would suffer great harm.

What—New Mexico Unit of the Central Arizona Project

- Three historical planning failures
- Central Arizona Project authorized 1968
 - Hooker Dam—Upper Gila Box
 - Connor Dam—Middle Box
 - Mangas Creek—side canyon storage
- All failed due to cost, lack of need for water, endangered species concerns, and environmental impacts.

What—4th Attempt—New Mexico Unit of the Central Arizona Project

- Arizona Water Settlement Act—2004
 - \$66 million to meet any water supply demand in SW NM 4 County area
 - \$34 million only for construction of NM unit
 - Decision delegated to the Interstate Stream Commission before handing off to the feds
- Senator Domenici studiously did not say New Mexico needed to divert the Gila River
 - Three failed attempts

Who—ISC's Gila River Diversion Planning Process

- The ISC's planning process is the opposite of transparent—it is secretive, flawed, deceptive
- Started in 2004--Decision deadline end of 2014
 - Continue federal planning (yes or no) of the NM Unit of the CAP,
 - or
 - Spend the \$66 million—now grown to \$90 million—on non-diversion alternatives to sustainably meet water supply needs in Southwest New Mexico
- The big lie—ISC says full supplies for all uses, including more for the river

Why—Gila River Diversion Fatal Flaws

- Low or no yield of usable water
 - water supply shortfalls
 - very poor storage reservoir characteristics
- Extremely costly--Not financially feasible
- Construction would destroy and fragment habitat for seven endangered species
 - Birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles that survive because it hasn't been destroyed or fragmented
 - Mitigation habitat previously set aside would be destroyed

Why—No need for the water

- There are no direct beneficial uses proposed for the Gila River water except supplemental irrigation downstream from the Upper Gila Box
 - Freeport McMoRan Gold and Copper, Inc. owns most of the irrigated land that would get more water
 - Freeport McMoRan is using about half of its existing Gila River water rights
- Silver City doesn't want or need

Why—No need for the water

- Grant County's only use is a small recreational reservoir near Silver City
- Luna County and Deming say they want the water but haven't identified any direct uses
 - Project dumps water into the desert at Deming
- Chair of the Gila San Francisco Water Commission admitted, "There is potentially a need for the water."

Albuquerque Journal Aug 24, 2014

ISC's Rhetoric is Not Credible

- “We can’t let New Mexico’s water flow down to Arizona.”
- If it is New Mexico’s water, then why is New Mexico required to pay Reclamation to replace every drop that New Mexico diverts?
 - \$146 per acre-foot currently for this replacement
 - Colorado River (Central Arizona Project) water pumped from California border to SE Arizona

Upper Gila Box

from Turkey Creek (lower left) to Mogollon Creek (upper center)

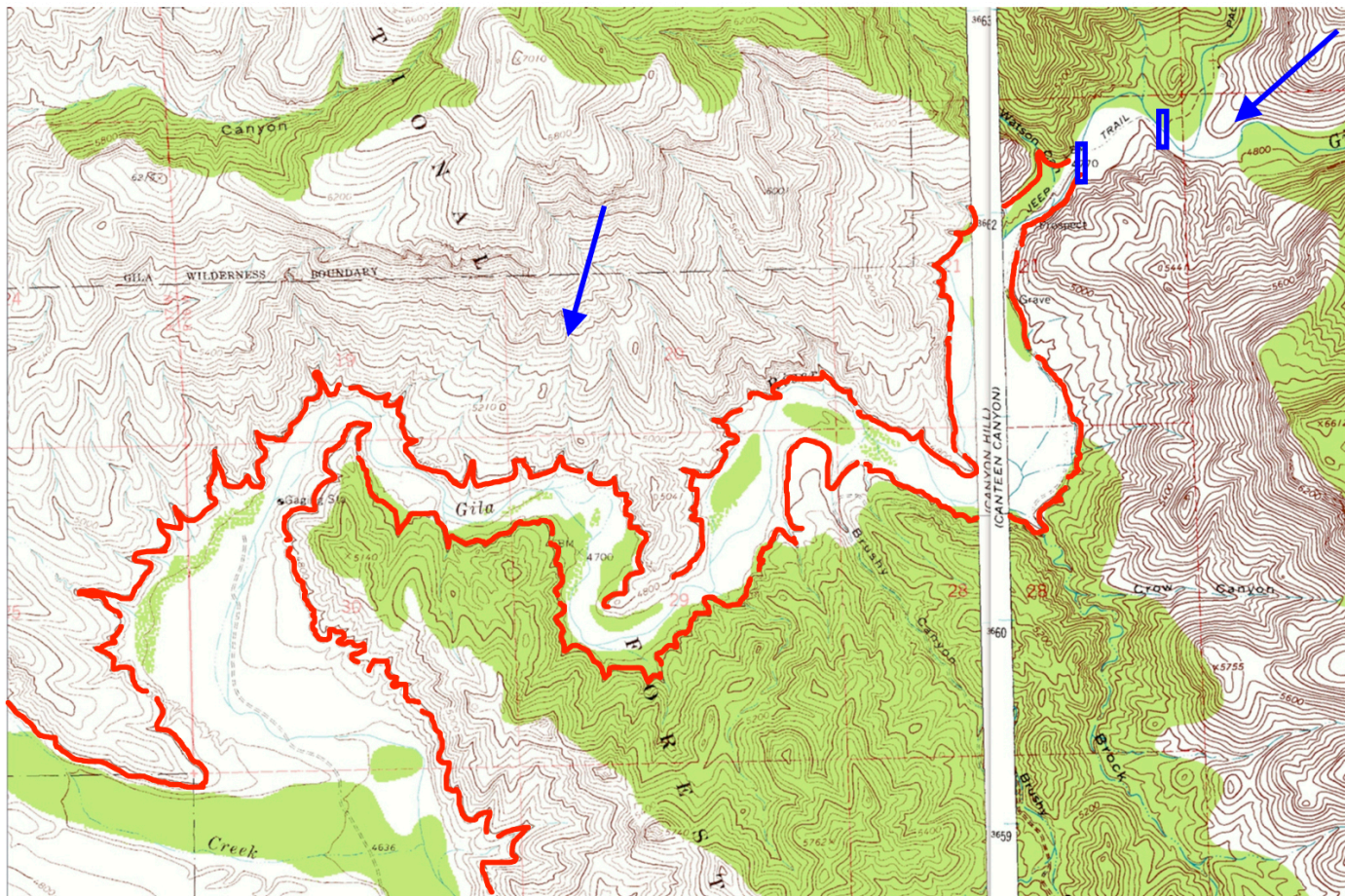


Route of Conveyance Canals in Upper Gila Box

Red lines are canal routes

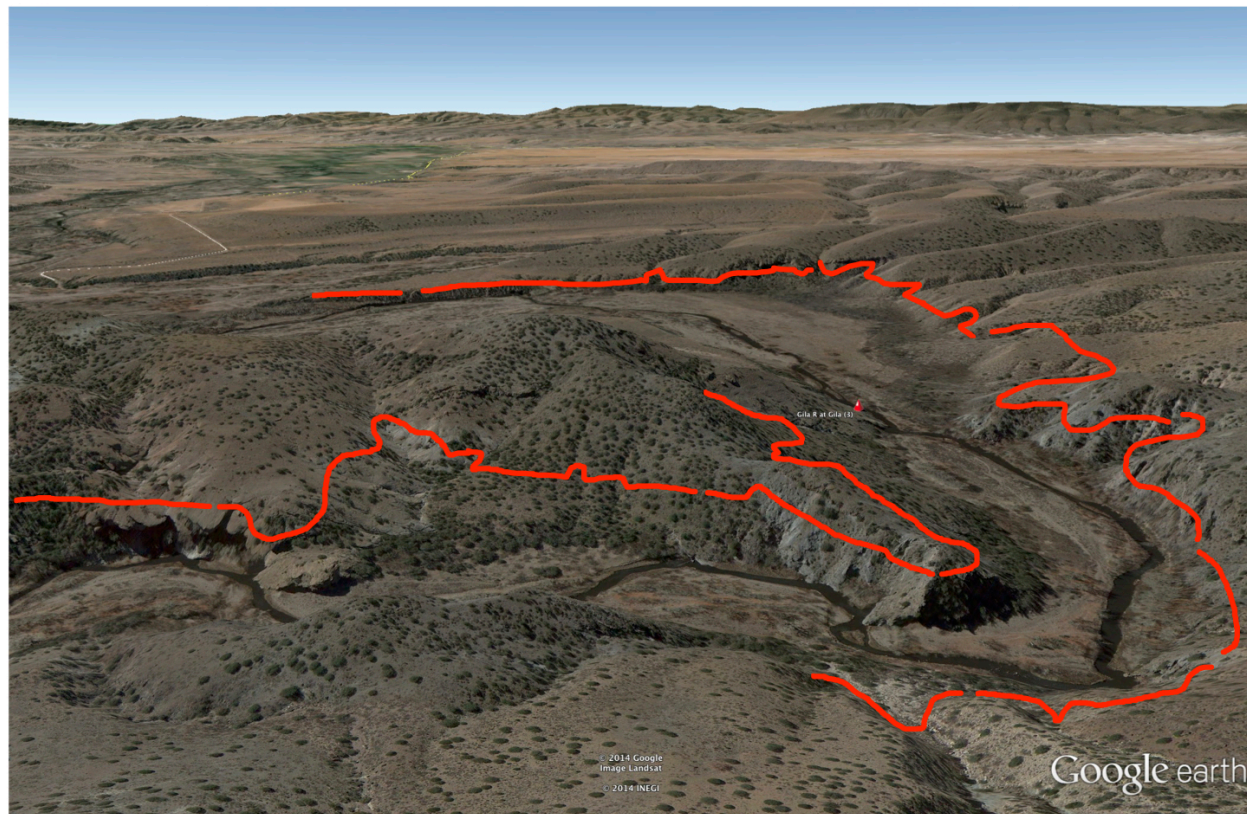
Blue rectangles are diversion dam alternate locations

Arrows show view directions for Google Earth views of Upper Gila Box and Gila River Loop



350 cfs conveyance canal

river left and river right in Gila Loop vicinity where canals would be about 100 feet vertical above the river, e.g., blasted into the canyon's rock walls



Effect of diversion on hydrograph

- NM can divert up to 350 cfs
- Mandatory bypass ranges from 75.5 cfs (December) to 442.5 cfs (summer)
- NM can divert 75% or 80% of flows above the bypass
- For example, at 500 cfs in December, January, and February above the diversion, the flow below the diversion would be 160, 166, and 210

Why—Non-Diversion Alternatives

- Silver City drinking water system regionalization to serve entire Silver City area
- Other drinking water system improvements throughout the 4 county area
- Non-potable wastewater reuse for irrigation
- Water conservation
- Agricultural water system improvements
- Watershed vegetation treatments also proposed

When—ISC Decision Process is Scheduled but Remains a Mystery

- August 26 meeting—Good attendance, much opposition, little opportunity to talk
- September 17 meeting
 - The Nature Conservancy Gila Flow Needs Assessment panel
 - Consultant presentations?
 - Technical critiques?
 - Location and agenda?
- October meeting?
- Decision postponed until after the election at ISC's November meeting

Action--Tell the Governor, your legislators

“Don’t spend my taxes on Gila River diversions which are outrageously expensive and would benefit few at a cost to many--the cost of this valued and unique wild river and canyon.”

“Encourage the ISC to use the federal appropriation to fully fund non diversion alternatives, including improvements to drinking water systems, non-potable wastewater reuse for irrigation, water conservation, and improvements to existing ditches.”

“Discourage the ISC from wasting more of the federal funds...by continuing to plan the fatally flawed diversion.”

For More Information

Critique facts and details

- Norm Gaume's letters
 - Expert testimony to the Senate Conservation Committee, February 12, 2014
 - Expert testimony to the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, April 30, 2014
 - Letter to the Gila/San Francisco Water Commission, May 20, 2014
 - Letter to the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and the Bureau of Reclamation re Appraisal Report, July 25, 2014
- Gila Conservation Coalition comments re Appraisal Report, July 25, 2014
- Press
 - “Gila River Diversion Would Be A Costly Failure”, Sandra Postel, National Geographic Newswatch, May 14, 2014
 - “Divert and Conquer, NM's Plans to Divert the Gila River are Dubious and Damn Expensive”, Laura Paskus, Santa Fe Reporter, August 6, 2014
- Web sites
 - gilaconservation.org
 - nmawsa.org