



CWAG 2015 CANDIDATE FORUM QUESTIONS

1. Living Within our Means

Since 1863, Prescott has repeatedly exhausted the water supply. Always, the solution has been to import additional water from “somewhere else.” Looking to the future, Prescott plans to once again import more water, this time from the Big Chino Valley, despite a price tag over \$200 million and likely harm to the Verde River. Although our area has been declared out of “safe yield” since 1999, the concept of “living within our means” has yet to be evaluated. Prescott has merely assumed that importation is the only solution without considering all the options available. The options yet to be evaluated include: aggressive water conservation, reuse of wastewater treated by advanced technologies, rainwater harvesting for homes, septic effluent recovery, stormwater recovery and recharge, developer-funded offset programs, water conservation programs for domestic wells, and developing a comprehensive plan to reach safe yield.

Q. 1: What are your thoughts on “Living Within Our Means?” as compared with importation?

Q. 2: Over a period of seven years the City, through its participation in the Water Advisory Committee (WAC), developed a number of alternatives for mitigating the predicted overdraft in 2050. The WAC was then disbanded without completing the project. Should the City build on the work of the WAC and initiate and fund a Prescott-specific comprehensive evaluation and comparison of all potential future water sources before proceeding with the Big Chino pipeline?

Q. 3: Should the City continue the current policy of using wastewater recharge credits to support groundwater pumping for new growth or should the recharge credits be dedicated to achieving safe yield?

2. Conservation

Conservation is often the least expensive way to stretch tight water supplies, particularly when compared to importation projects. Furthermore, conservation has been gaining greater acceptance by the public in recent years.

To date, conservation programs in the Prescott region have been moderately successful, based largely on tiered water rates, some monetary incentives, and voluntary efforts supported by information programs. Although Prescott has the best water conservation program in the PrAMA, it has achieved only a fraction of the potential savings. Truly effective conservation programs will probably require steeper tiered water rates, stronger incentives, and/or restricting codes and ordinances. In particular, there are no effective controls on water use outside the home for either new or existing construction.

Q. 1: If elected, how will you use your position as a council member to promote conservation practices?

Q. 2: What ideas do you have to foster greater outdoor conservation for existing buildings?

Q. 3: Should funding for conservation be increased? Why or why not?

Q. 4: Would you support landscape water conservation codes for new construction? Why or why not?

Q. 5: Should the City create with public input a long-range (5-10 year) water conservation plan? If so, what sorts of things would you include? If not, why not?

3. Verde River

The Verde River is a green artery pulsing through the heart of Arizona, a jewel of the Southwest, and the last surviving major perennial river in Arizona. The Verde sustains over 700 jobs and over \$100 million in economic value in the Verde Valley and contributes 40 percent of the Phoenix area's water supply. The Verde also provides recreational opportunities, and supports endangered species, native fish, and numerous birds, bats, mammals, and other wildlife and plants. The same forces that have dried up our other rivers – mainly groundwater pumping – threaten the Verde River.

Q. 1: If elected, what will you do to protect the Verde River?

4. Regional Cooperation

In the Prescott AMA, Prescott is the leader in water conservation programs. However, even with improved water conservation effectiveness, Prescott cannot – acting alone – protect the Verde River and our shared groundwater resource. Participation by other cities and Yavapai County is necessary.

Q. 1: How can Prescott encourage improved water conservation in the other PrAMA cities and Yavapai County?

Q. 2: What should Prescott do to establish more effective regional water resource planning to achieve a sustainable water supply and protect the Verde River?

5. Watson and Willow Lakes

Historically, CWAG has concentrated its efforts on assuring a sufficient quantity of water for our future. However, water quality is also of great concern to our community. The Arizona Dept. of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has issued a ruling establishing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) addressing nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) impairment for Watson Lake. The City voted earlier this year to appeal this ruling, but has not directed its consultant to proceed. We believe the City is currently in discussions with ADEQ to amend the conditions of the ruling.

Q. 1. Should the City spend additional funds on this appeal, or just start work on the cleanup? Why or why not?

Q. 2. Watson and Willow Lake are great recreational resources for residents and attract many out of town visitors. What is your vision for the future of Watson and Willow Lakes?