



PROTECT OUR WATER

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Our Water Future: The Time for Regional Cooperation is NOW

The Citizens Water Advocacy Group asks that elected officials in the Prescott Active Management Area (PrAMA) create a Regional Water Management Authority. The first task of the authority should be to fully analyze and compare all potential solutions to achieve a sustainable water future for the PrAMA.

Arizona groundwater management has failed in the Prescott Active Management Area, named by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) as the worst performing AMA in the state. Groundwater overdrafts continue to reduce groundwater levels, Del Rio Springs is nearly dry, the base flow of the Verde River is declining, and domestic wells are failing on the edges of the aquifer. ADWR tells us that they are not responsible for the solution - ***the solution is up to us.***

Although the cities in the AMA share a common water resource, they continue to compete for more water to facilitate growth. Instead, cities and the county should begin to work together on regional water planning. Regional planning and management of water resources is the best strategy to preserve a shared water resource and assure long-term quality of life for all current and future citizens. The planning process should include broad stakeholder/citizen participation, have adequate funding, produce a forward-looking plan with scheduled reassessments, and use adaptive management strategies.

A regional water resource management plan should be based on a scientific evaluation and comparison of all available alternatives to assure an economical and sustainable water supply. At this date, no comprehensive study exists. Some prior studies have focused on a single centralized infrastructure solution (e.g., pipelines) while ignoring and failing to evaluate other potential alternative solutions. We do not expect to find a single solution, and a comprehensive study will help identify the optimal combination of solutions.

The following potential solutions deserve rigorous analysis and comparison of their economic, ecological, and social impacts. To learn more about these potential solutions, see cwagaz.org

- **Regional water conservation program:** includes a) performance goals, b) more stringent requirements for new construction, c) substantial incentives to upgrade existing uses, d) strong landscape water restrictions for new construction, and e) escalating water rates for higher consumption.
- **Reuse:** a) graywater, b) advanced water purification, and c) indirect potable reuse.
- **Stormwater collection for recharge:** a) on-site collection and use of rainwater, b) regional infrastructure to collect stormwater for recharge or direct reuse.
- **Domestic Well Conservation:** incentive programs dedicated to reducing water use by existing domestic (exempt) wells.
- **Alternative water for new development:** a) offset programs requiring developers to finance water conservation to compensate for their increased water use, or b) construction of new homes designed for net-zero groundwater use.
- **Regulatory Barriers:** Identify and correct regulatory barriers to more efficient water use.
- **Efficient Septic systems:** reduce consumptive use and increase wastewater recovery.
- **Land Use:** a) Conservation zoning overlay for areas with sensitive water resources, b) strengthening ordinances and building code requirements for indoor and outdoor water use.
- **Importing water:** Possible sources include Colorado River, Big Chino, and desalination of ocean water or brackish groundwater.