


# Hoy: Water security: are we there yet?

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Most of the critical questions about our future water security in the Prescott Active Management Area (PrAMA) have not been satisfactorily answered. And that means, no, we are definitely not “there” yet!

Recognizing that water is a limited resource, the Citizens Water Advocacy Group (CWAG) was founded in 2002 to promote a sustainable water future in the Upper Verde River Basin and the PrAMA by educating the public, encouraging citizen action and advocating for responsible governmental decision-making. Though area communities have become better informed and more involved these past 16 years, much more remains to be done.

Ten years ago, in a Courier column CWAG asked: “Are there economically viable, politically acceptable and environmentally safe solutions to our current and future water issues? What can we do to help reduce demand on our finite water resources?”

The first question remains largely unanswered. And while some PrAMA stakeholder communities, with Prescott leading the way, have done much to encourage conservation, current and past elected officials in Prescott, Prescott Valley, Chino Valley and Yavapai County have not adequately explained how they can continue to approve large subdivisions, adding thousands of new homes and residents to our region, while simultaneously complying with the state’s mandate that the PrAMA reach safe yield by 2025.

The 1980 Arizona Groundwater Management Act defines safe yield as a groundwater management goal which attempts to achieve and thereafter maintain a long-term balance between the amount of groundwater withdrawn in an active management area and the annual amount of natural and artificial recharge in the active management area.

In the Fourth Management Plan (2010-20) for the PrAMA (<https://new.azwater.gov/ama/management-plans>), the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) states: “For the Prescott AMA to achieve and maintain safe yield by 2025 and beyond, conservation, augmentation, and multiple other water management strategies are needed.” Seven potential components of that plan are listed on page 284. Only minimal progress has been made toward any of the solutions.

To ensure a sustainable water future, we must have the following:

- Concern for future generations.
- Officials demonstrating the necessary political will to confront water challenges without fear of blocking economic growth.

- Officials willing to consider limitations on population growth commensurate with the real impacts on groundwater supply and safe yield.
- Officials, developers and taxpayers willing to pay for new infrastructure to increase wastewater recharge and recovery, and for new surface water rights (if available).
- Science based solutions including recognizing the effects of climate change.
- Officials willing to adopt more stringent conservation measures.
- Officials willing to adopt a region-wide plan that will achieve a sustainable water future.
- Most critically, informed citizens who will advocate for all of the above.

Heading into our 17th year, CWAG's members will continue to discuss critical water issues with the public and governmental decision-makers, promote science-based solutions, and advocate for sound public policy.

Learn more about CWAG at [www.cwagaz.org](http://www.cwagaz.org). Please submit questions and comments to [info@cwagaz.org](mailto:info@cwagaz.org).

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