



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2013

CONTACT:
Michelle Moreno, ADWR
(480) 251-7621 mamoreno@azwater.gov
Bob Barrett, CAP
(623) 869-2135 rbarrett@cap-az.com

Arizona's Water: Thinking Ahead

The results of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study, completed in 2012, show significant water supply shortfalls within the Basin in the next 50 years.

As a result of the study, Central Arizona Project (CAP) collaborated with the Arizona Department of Water Resources, Arizona Municipal Water Users Association, Salt River Project, Agri-Business Council of Arizona and Southern Arizona Water Users Association to facilitate an assessment of what has already been accomplished within the CAP service area which includes more than 80 percent of Arizona's total population and more than 200,000 acres of irrigated agriculture. CAP uses 60 percent of Arizona's Colorado River water supply.

The assessment shows that Arizona leads the nation with rigorous water conservation and sustainability laws that protect Arizona water users and reduces reliance on the use of unsustainable groundwater supplies in the State's most heavily populated areas.

With its requirement of a 100-year renewable water supply for all new development, Arizona's comprehensive Groundwater Management Act, administered by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) also requires water conservation by municipal, industrial and agricultural water users.

"Arizona's 1980 Ground Water Management Act is known as one of the most robust water management laws in the United States," said Sandy Fabritz-Whitney, Director of ADWR. "Arizona is a leader in adopting innovative conservation, reuse and water banking programs. Because we live in the desert southwest Arizonans have always had to be proactive in our water management strategies."

Driven by a vision of what it takes to be sustainable, municipal water users have heavily invested in the implementation of water conservation strategies resulting in part from the adoption of the Groundwater Management Act. Municipalities' approach to water conservation has developed

into a multi-dimensional approach – combining technology, enhancing water quality and security and public outreach.

In the same region, agricultural users have invested more than \$750 million since 1980 to implement efficient irrigation technology and delivery systems. Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation & Drainage District General Manager Brian Betcher comments that agricultural users "...knew they were going to have to start doing some things to make their water go further...the Groundwater Management Act brought that into focus a little bit more precisely."

In the CAP service area agricultural conservation now exceeds the 80 percent efficiency target through lining canals, laser leveled fields, sprinkler systems, drip systems and automated and real-time delivery systems.

"We're working to develop programs where we might use Ag runoff water and/or brackish groundwater through various types of treatment including desalinization and looking at larger long-term projects that can contribute significant amounts of additional water to the Colorado," said CAP General Manager David Modeer.

Arizonans have also invested \$250 million to build underground storage facilities and have stored more than 3.2 million acre-feet of water to provide as back-up supplies to Arizona's municipal, industrial, and Native American water users in times of drought. Equally significant investments in underground water storage have also been made by water providers and private entities to store additional water supplies underground to reduce their vulnerability to shortages.

Water providers have also found ways to reuse their water supplies. More than 95 percent of treated wastewater generated in central and southern Arizona is used for beneficial purposes including agriculture, groundwater recharge, power generation, industrial uses, turf irrigation and other environmental purposes such as aquatic and riparian habitat.

Arizona's water management leaders are committed to continuing to be proactive in developing and enhancing conservation and reuse opportunities as well as exploring the development of new water supplies through augmentation and desalination.

Arizona recognizes its water supply future is linked to the Colorado River system. Therefore, Arizona is working with the other Basin States to not only address the long-term imbalances identified in the Basin Study, but also to meet the near-term risks posed by the on-going drought. The Basin States are committed to continuing on-going conservation programs, develop new programs to increase the water stored in Colorado River reservoirs, increase water use efficiency, and reduce losses in the Colorado River system as proactive measures to address the impacts of the drought. These cooperative efforts reflect the successful history of the States working together to create solutions for the Colorado River.

"I think in the end the states themselves realize that there is not a silver bullet to these issues," Modeer said. "We're going to need a comprehensive set of projects in order to really have a strong impact in balancing the deficit that we see going forward."

“Ultimately what happens is that you get to a point where you can do no more conservation,” Fabritz-Whitney said. “As Arizona’s water policy leaders, we must identify whether relying on local water supplies like reclaimed water use or sustainable groundwater use is to be the limit of Arizona’s development or, if we should explore new water supplies from outside of Arizona such as ocean desalination that has the potential to meet the water demands of multiple water users and secure our state’s economy and quality of life into the future. We should let these challenges inspire us to innovate and develop additional capabilities in water research and development, turning our vulnerability into strength.”

###