

Preface

Volume 8, the Active Management Area (AMA) Planning Area, is the eighth in a series of nine volumes that comprise the Arizona Water Atlas. The primary objectives in assembling the Atlas are to present an overview of water supply and demand conditions in Arizona, to provide water resource information for planning and resource development purposes and help to identify the needs of communities.

The Atlas divides Arizona into seven planning areas (Figure 8.0-1). There is a separate Atlas volume for each planning area, an introductory/executive summary volume and a resource evaluation volume that examines resource sustainability. “Planning areas” are an organizational concept that provide for a regional perspective on supply, demand and water resource issues. A complete discussion of Atlas organization, purpose and scope is found in Volume 1. Also included in Volume 1 is general background information for the state, a description of data sources and methods of analysis for the tables and maps presented in the Atlas, and appendices that provide information on water law, management and programs, and Indian water rights claims and settlements.

To the extent practical, the organization and content of this volume of the Atlas mirrors the six other planning areas. However, readers should be aware that the overall scope of this document differs in some important ways.

Five AMAs have been designated in the state as requiring specific, mandatory management practices to preserve and protect groundwater supplies for the future. Four AMAs - Phoenix, Pinal, Prescott and Tucson - were established in 1980 upon enactment of the Groundwater Code (Code) (A.R.S. §§ 45-401 et seq.). In 1994, the Arizona legislature established the Santa Cruz AMA, which had previously been the southeast portion of the Tucson AMA. This legislation recognized the international water management issues facing this area, and that its hydrology required coordinated management of surface water and groundwater.

The AMAs include most of the state’s largest urbanized areas, and water use is subject to an extensive regulatory framework. As a result, water supply and demand data within AMAs is often more detailed and comprehensive than outside the AMAs, and unique legal and regulatory complexities exist. By adhering to the standardized Atlas format, Volume 8 provides an important overview of the AMAs and allows for direct comparison with the rest of the state. However, this volume does not include extensive data analysis and is not an exhaustive compilation of information relevant to the AMAs.

This volume of the Atlas is the first document of a larger AMA planning effort that includes an AMA Assessment and Fourth Management Plan for each AMA. The AMA Assessment includes a compilation of historic data, including detailed water budgets; future scenario development; and obstacles to achieving safe-yield, notably issues related to achievement of the statutory management goals for each AMA. The AMA Assessment is intended to provide an analytical foundation for the development and promulgation of Fourth Management Plans (A.R.S. §§ 45-561 et seq.). The management plans include mandatory regulatory provisions that apply to each water use sector within an AMA. These provisions do not apply to tribal users.

More detailed data for the AMAs are also available by contacting the Arizona Department of Water Resources (Department).