

NOTICE OF INITIATION OF DESIGNATION PROCEDURES / NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PROPOSED ACTIVE MANGEMENT AREA: WILLCOX GROUNDWATER BASIN

The Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources (“Director”), pursuant to Section 45-413 of the Arizona Revised Statutes (“A.R.S.”), hereby gives notice of the Director’s Order to initiate procedures to consider designating an active management area within the boundaries of the Willcox Groundwater Basin in Cochise and Graham Counties (“Proposed AMA”). A hearing will be held at the Willcox Community Center on Friday, November 22, 2024, beginning at 1:00 P.M. Additional information can be found below and on ADWR’s website at: <https://www.azwater.gov/find-info-on/how-do-i/willcox-groundwater-basin>

The Willcox Groundwater Basin is located generally in the northern Sulfur Springs Valley and is the entire surface watershed area that contributes to Willcox Playa plus the upper watersheds of Leslie Creek and Rucker Canyon that lie east of the Swisshelm Mountains in the Whitewater Draw watershed. The Willcox Groundwater Basin is located within both Cochise and Graham Counties. The area to be included in the Proposed AMA is depicted in a map following this notice.

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 23, 2024 – Pursuant to A.R.S. § 45-416, irrigation users may irrigate only those acres of land within the Proposed AMA which were irrigated at any time during the five years preceding the date of this notice (October 23, 2024). This limitation on the acres which may be irrigated shall continue in effect until the Director makes a final determination on the Proposed AMA. “Irrigate” is defined in A.R.S. § 45-402 and means to apply water to two or more acres of land to produce plants or parts of plants for sale or human consumption, or for use as feed for livestock, range livestock or poultry.

The Director may designate an area an active management area if the Director determines that any of the following apply (1) Active management practices are necessary to preserve the existing supply of groundwater for future needs; (2) Land subsidence or fissuring is endangering property or potential groundwater storage capacity; or (3) Use of groundwater is resulting in actual or threatened water quality issues.

Designation of an active management area imposes a prohibition on the irrigation of new acres within the active management area, with certain limited exceptions, and creates monitoring and reporting requirements for most persons withdrawing groundwater from a non-exempt well within the area. These limitations and requirements are designed to slow and/or mitigate groundwater depletion.

PUBLIC HEARING

At the public hearing, the Department of Water Resources will present factual data in support of the Proposed AMA and receive comments and evidence as to whether the Director should designate the Proposed AMA as an active management area. The hearing will be held at the following time and place:

In person:
Friday, November 22, 2024, beginning at 1:00 P.M.
Willcox Community Center
312 W. Stewart Street
Willcox, Arizona 85643

Virtually:
<https://adwr.info/WCXPM>

Any person may appear at the hearing, either in person or by representative, and submit oral or written comments and/or evidence for or against the Proposed AMA. Written comments not submitted at the hearing described

above must be received no later than 5:00 P.M. on November 22, 2024 by mail or hand-delivery. Electronic or faxed submissions must be submitted by midnight on November 22, 2024 to:

Sharon Scantlebury
Docket Supervisor
Arizona Department of Water Resources
1110 W. Washington, Suite 310
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 771-8686 (fax)
docketsupervisor@azwater.gov

In the event of any technical malfunction with the video teleconference system, the meeting will not be delayed or postponed. The public should consider this possibility in deciding whether to attend in person or by video conference.

If, because of a disability, you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this hearing, please contact Sharon Scantlebury with the Arizona Department of Water Resources at (602)771-8472 or sscantlebury@azwater.gov. Please make such requests as soon as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

