

ADWR Douglas AMA Group:

Suggested addition to the Initial Draft Goal:

The management goal of the Douglas AMA is to support the *historic agriculture and* general economy and welfare of *rural agriculture* communities in the basin by attempting to reduce the rate of aquifer depletion by 2035 and by further attempting to reduce the rate of aquifer depletion every 10 years thereafter.

Background:

The Douglas Basin is a historic agriculture farming and ranching community. We need to keep the agriculture economy alive and that requires the use of groundwater.

Historically the economy of the Douglas Groundwater Basin was mining, agriculture farming and ranching. Mining has stopped and agriculture continues. This area was designated as a critical groundwater basin in 1965 and a Irrigation Non-Expansion Area (INA) in 1980. The former INA limited the use of groundwater for irrigation to what had been legally irrigated before 1980. This was to help control the use of groundwater by preventing any additional irrigation on 2.0 acres or more. There are a few properties that are illegally applying groundwater to new cultivated land that is over 2.0 acres. That use should be stopped.

Some of the land that was irrigated in the 80's and 90's stopped irrigation but have been put back into production in the last 5 to 10 years. There are other properties that have not been irrigated within the last 10 to 20 years and under the new AMA will not be irrigated. Thus the AMA has decreased the acreage that can now be legally irrigated just like the INA did in 1980. This will decrease the amount of groundwater that can legally be used under the AMA compared to what could have been used under the INA.

The old method of farming used flood irrigation and with efficient irrigation systems used today farming uses less water. Changing from flood irrigation to sprinklers can save over 1.5 acre-feet of water per acre per year. There is very little flood irrigation in the valley, most farmers use sprinklers or drip irrigation. Farmers DO NOT want to waste or use more water than what the crop needs. We produce crops that we can economically grow and harvest. Many of the farms produce forage crops for the meat, dairy and horse industry. There are pecan orchards that have been in production for over 50 years. These crops are what is economically viable for this area.

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