



Management Plans - ADWR &lt;managementplans@azwater.gov&gt;

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## Draft Douglas AMA goal

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Although I don't live in the Douglas Basin, I have been very actively engaged in water issues in Arizona since 1995. I attended the public meeting held in Douglas on April 11, 2023.

I have to say that the draft management goal was beyond wimpy and verging on insulting, in my opinion. To only "attempt" to reduce the \*rate\* of depletion is to propose doing nothing to help sustain the aquifer, the people, or the economy. Even to achieve reducing the rate of depletion in actuality is of scant comfort, a scenario I am too familiar with in the Upper San Pedro Basin. Reducing the rate of depletion doesn't halt depletion, it just slows it down. The aquifer will continue to be depleted, just more slowly.

At the very least, the words "attempting to" should be eliminated. That would leave "reduce the rate of aquifer depletion", a goal that would at least be helpful. Stopping the aquifer depletion would be a more laudable goal. It would be a challenging goal, for sure. But shouldn't goals be at least a little bit lofty rather than something that can be achieved with minimal effort? For awhile, the phrase in the Upper San Pedro Basin was "Stop the Drop!". I thought it captured the concept of halting the drop in the water level rather well and I believe that stopping the decline of the water level in the Douglas Basin could be a laudable management goal.

Without actually halting the decline in the water level, or stopping the drop, the Douglas Basin will be facing an uncertain future. Slowing the rate (only) of decline will prolong the life of the aquifer for human utility but will eventually at some point in time not be enough. Predicting when the aquifer might be exhausted will be a challenge for modelers but why spend a lot of money on predicting that end? Instead, spend money on setting a goal for sustainability and the steps that will be needed to achieve that.

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“You have to be a payer to be a player.” – an Arizona water friend