



Protecting Rural Arizona's Groundwater

The Water for Arizona Coalition (WAC) shares the desire of Greater Arizonans to protect and steward groundwater as a valuable asset for future generations. Our Coalition believes that local Arizona communities are positioned to adopt, and implement with the assistance of the Arizona Department of Water Resources, locally tailored solutions to sustainably manage their water resources. Local residents know best the conditions in their communities, and need the tools to assess and manage their groundwater in a way that slows or stops depletion and supports conservation, business, and human needs. Approximately 40% of Arizona's water supply comes from groundwater and certain areas in our state rely solely on groundwater. Groundwater serves as the primary water supply supporting year-round and seasonal flow for many of the state's rivers and streams. Without a stable source of water, economies in Greater Arizona will wither.

While much attention has been paid to water supply and demand on the Colorado River, groundwater pumping in Greater Arizona remains open to all. This means that about 40% of the Colorado River Basin's landmass, nearly all of which is in Arizona, has essentially no groundwater regulations and few options are even available to communities that wish to manage their supplies. Over 80% of Arizona's land area, inhabited by about 1.5 million people, lies outside of the state's Active Management Areas (AMAs), where no state-issued water right or permit is required to pump groundwater. Outside of these regulated areas, users can generally pump groundwater even if it dries up neighboring wells, depletes flows to rivers or streams, or lowers the water table that is available for all residents.

In some areas of the state the over-pumping of groundwater has led to rapid declines in the water table. *For example, a rapid influx of out-of-state farming interests threatens to deplete one major aquifer in Mohave County in less than 60 years.* Obviously, such rapid drawdowns in the water table are not sustainable.

With these challenges in mind, WAC supports reasonable policy solutions:

- Guided by local Arizona communities
- That adopt and implement solutions crafted at the local level, with support from the state
- Which slow or stop groundwater depletion
- Which sustain conservation, business, and human needs for future generations

Reasonable policy solutions *adapted to local conditions* can secure groundwater supplies, protect Rural Arizona's heritage, and ensure its economic future.

The Water for Arizona Coalition is comprised of Arizonans who support policies and innovative practices to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state's needs. Collectively, we have over 60,000 Arizona members, as well as hundreds of hunter, angler, business, and outdoor recreation partners around the state. Learn more at: <https://www.waterforarizona.com>.

