

## WATER SUSTAINABILITY

by William Crosby, presented to the Tucson/Pima County Water Infrastructure, Supply and Planning Study, 10-29-2008

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Sustainability means living within our means, by not overusing our natural resources which we preserve for future generations. For me, at this time, sustainability means being able to at least maintain life as we know it in the Tucson basin. It means being able to maintain the purpose and requirements of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, designed in a large collective group, agreed upon by consensus, and implemented to protect the designated areas and resources as we know them now, into the future.

Sustainability is particularly critical at this time. Tucson is at the end of the line for our most capable supply of water, the CAP. We no longer think of the Central Well Field capacity as a primary resource, because unmanaged growth overused this resource at least twenty years ago. The business of growth has plundered the landscape. The challenging and uncertain resources of the CAP are now more than a backup.

For years we have become accustomed to thinking of our water supply coming from distant sources, breeding a complacency of endless growth that hungers for more yet unrealistic and questionable resources.

It is critical to know the water use requirements of all the water providers and private wells in the Tucson basin so that this can be guaranteed for maintenance of our needs, in a transparent and responsible manner. All stakeholders must be represented.

For twenty years we have experienced extremes in drought and precipitation. For example, in a normal year the Tanque Verde Creek at Wentworth Road has two winter and three summer floods. In 2007, there was not a single flood. And in 2008 the monsoon rains were abnormally high at 12.7 inches. Granted, this is from personal measurement and observation, however, the severe fluctuation of rainfall can not be ignored. Recharge to the aquifers has diminished exponentially so that we now look at rainfall as a supplement to the CAP supplement.

Reclaimed water serves large turf projects. Water harvesting is a needed and obvious tool, now heralded as a requirement in new housing and business development. Perhaps, in the face of the Great Enigma facing humanity - Climate Change, we can consider reform of Arizona Water Law, linking growth to sustainable water supplies.

Historically, organized societies and civilizations survived due to the wisdom of the realization of their vital resources. And when their planning failed, their civil foundation died.

This committee, and this effort, have the potential of ensuring the future of Tucson, to nurture and preserve the extraordinary beauty of this place.

Thank you.