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updated May 22, 2007

History

The Arizona Legislature created the Department of Water Resources when it enacted the landmark 1980 Groundwater Management Code. Lawmakers charged the Department with securing long-term water supplies for communities within the State of Arizona. The principal duties include:

- Implementing the Groundwater Management Code
- Registering all surface water and groundwater rights
- Supporting the adjudication of water rights within the state
- Ensuring the safety of non-federal dams
- Assisting local entities to manage floodplains
- Providing technical assistance to the state's water users and
- Representing Arizona in interstate water discussions.

ADWR manages the state's most precious resource. Our mission extends from licensing well drillers, and developing mandatory conservation requirements for all water use sectors to protecting the state's Colorado River allocation and facilitating Indian water rights negotiations among tribal representatives, local interests, federal and state officials and members of Congress.

This wide range of responsibilities, in combination with the evolving and complex nature of the legal and political arena in which water management is conducted, has created a challenging environment for ADWR. Throughout its history, the agency has been quick to respond to changing conditions, to identify key strategic moves to protect the state's interests, and to respond to legislative directives.

The Legislature enacted the groundwater code to relieve the problem of groundwater overdraft in parts of Arizona that were designated Active Management Areas. ADWR's groundwater management structure within the AMAs has received national and international acclaim. In more recent times, additional praise has been focused on ADWR's leadership in underground storage and recovery (recharge) programs, the establishment of the Arizona Water Bank, and the Assured Water Supply Program that requires proof of a 100-year water supply before a subdivision plat within an AMA may be approved.

The primary mission of ADWR is to ensure an adequate quantity of water of adequate quality for Arizona's future. Challenges to providing a sustainable water supply are numerous. By 2025, when the Code requires key management goals to be met, the projected population of the state will exceed six million within the AMAs and 1.8 million in the rest of the state. Viewed in a different way – Arizona's population in 2025 will have nearly tripled since passage of the groundwater code.

Competition for water throughout the Southwest continues to increase as neighboring

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states experience similar rates of growth; Arizona must continue to be vigilant to protect its water rights, particularly its rights to Colorado River water.

The water needs of Arizona's rural areas are becoming urgent since few renewable supply options exist. State leaders recognize the threat posed by persistent drought and have taken steps to promote conservation and development, where possible, of alternative water sources.

Still, drought will continue as a key concern in this desert state. With the likelihood of increased climatic variability, floodplain management and dam safety activities may become even more critical than they are today.

Substantial progress has been made within central Arizona in moving toward a sustainable water future, particularly in transitioning the urban demand from a primarily non-renewable groundwater-based supply to increasing dependence on surface water and effluent.

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Effective November 28th, 2005, [our location](#) &
[Driving Directions](#) to ADWR
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