The 1980 Arizona Groundwater Act established the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR), to administer the state’s water laws and assure the state’s water future. It oversees Arizona’s five active water management areas and facilitates development of water management plans tailored to each area’s water supply needs.

**ARIZONA GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT**

The 1980 Arizona Groundwater Management Act is one of the most stringent groundwater management codes in the country. Its passage provided the authority to aggressively manage the state’s finite groundwater resources to support residents’ quality of life and the state’s growing economy. Areas with heavy reliance on groundwater were identified and designated as Active Management Areas (AMAs).

**Specifics of the Act for AMAs:**

- Established the Prescott AMA and a goal of reaching Safe-yield by 2025
- Mandates the use of management plans to assist in reaching Safe-yield
- Requires developers to demonstrate a 100-year assured water supply before lots may be sold
- Prohibits expansion of irrigated land supported by groundwater
- Established water-use reporting requirements for municipal, industrial and agricultural uses
- Provides incentives for water reuse and effluent recharge

**UPPER VERDE RIVER WATERSHED PROTECTION COALITION**

Established in 2006, the Coalition is a partnership between the local governments in the Prescott AMA, and includes the City of Prescott, Towns of Prescott Valley and Chino Valley, Yavapai County and Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe. Coalition is committed to protecting the Upper Verde River while balancing the reasonable water needs of residents who live and businesses that operate within watershed boundaries. Its members work to ensure water supply security by implementing projects throughout the Prescott AMA and Upper Verde River Watershed that improve watershed health, increase aquifer recharge and promote water conservation.

For detailed information, visit the coalition website at [www.yavapaiwatersmart.org](http://www.yavapaiwatersmart.org)

**GROUNDWATER USERS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

A governor-appointed council of local leaders and citizens with experience and interest in groundwater management provides advice and makes recommendations to ADWR on groundwater management programs, and policies that affect the Prescott AMA. The five-member Groundwater Users Advisory Council (GUAC) helped in developing the water management plan which guides the path to achieving Safe Yield in the Prescott AMA. Council members also make annual recommendations on use of the withdrawal fee – a local fee paid to ADWR based on the amount of groundwater withdrawn by non-exempt well owners, such as municipal water providers. The GUAC meets quarterly; meetings are open to the public, and dates and times are posted on the ADWR website.

For detailed information, visit the ADWR website at [www.azwater.gov](http://www.azwater.gov)
PRESCOTT ACTIVE MANAGEMENT AREA

Established by the 1980 Groundwater Management Act, the Prescott AMA encompasses 485 square miles in Yavapai County including the City of Prescott, Town of Prescott Valley, Yavapai-Prescott Indian Reservation, and portions of the Towns of Chino Valley, Dewey-Humboldt and unincorporated areas of Yavapai County.

The Prescott AMA management goal is to reach and thereafter maintain safe yield by the year 2025. Safe-yield is achieved when no more groundwater is being withdrawn than is being replaced annually. In 1999, the ADWR director declared the Prescott AMA to be out of safe yield. Since that time, Prescott AMA groundwater use has been trending towards safe yield.

ADWR collects and analyzes hydrologic data within the AMA to evaluate groundwater conditions and determine progress toward reaching safe-yield. Large water users, such as municipal water providers, submit annual water use reports to ADWR. The state agency also relies on a comprehensive groundwater monitoring network and a computer-assisted modeling program, manages a stream gauging network in partnership with the Yavapai County Flood Control District and the U.S. Geologic Survey.

PRESCOTT MANAGEMENT PLANS

Recognizing that water management is a long-term approach, the 1980 Groundwater Management Act authorized a series of five management plans be developed and implemented for the Prescott AMA between 1980 and 2025 to assist the AMA in achieving safe-yield. Management plans contain mandatory conservation programs for municipal, industrial and agricultural water users that progressively become more rigorous with each plan. The Prescott AMA adopted its 4th Management Plan in 2014, which will be in effect until the 5th Management Plan is adopted.

Plan elements include:

- Water conservation programs for large municipal providers (cities, towns, private water companies and irrigation districts). Water system losses are not to exceed 10% annually.
- Requirements that irrigated agriculture not be expanded beyond acreage irrigated during the late 1970s. Each farm was issued an Irrigation Grandfathered Right in the early 1980s and is assigned a maximum annual groundwater allotment or regulated through other administrative programs.
- Industrial users such as golf courses, dairies, mines, and power plants are required to meet annual conservation allotments, design limitations, or implementation of best management practices.

ASSURED WATER SUPPLY REQUIREMENTS

Developers in an AMA who subdivide land must prove to ADWR, among other criteria, that water is physically and legally available for 100 years. The Arizona Department of Real Estate will not allow the developer to sell lots without a 100-year assured water supply.