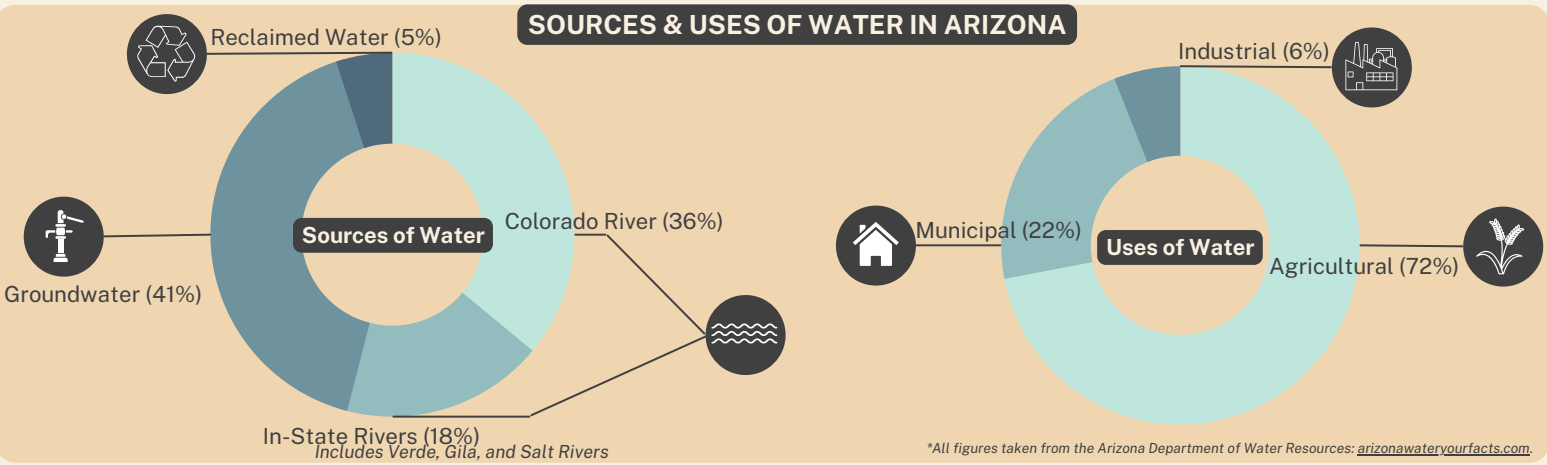
WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT

ARIZONA'S WATER CRISIS?

SOURCES & USES OF WATER IN ARIZONA



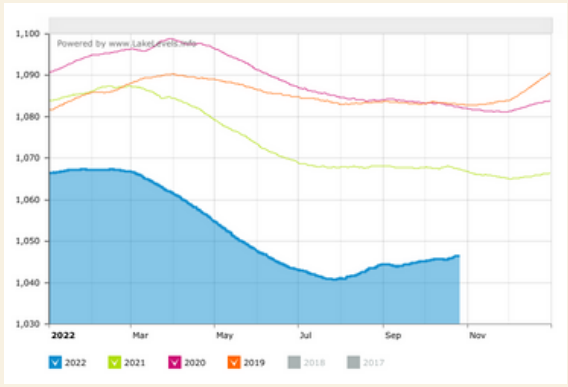
*All figures taken from the Arizona Department of Water Resources: arizonawateryourfacts.com.

Colorado River Shortage

Lake Mead and Lake Powell's **water levels have reached a record low** since they began filling in the 1930s and 1960s respectively. A Colorado River water shortage has been declared, resulting in substantial cuts to Arizona's water supply: 592,000 acre-feet, or 18% of its total allotment and 30% of the Central Arizona Project's supply. So far only agricultural producers have been affected, but cuts projected for 2023 may have **industrial and municipal impacts** as well.

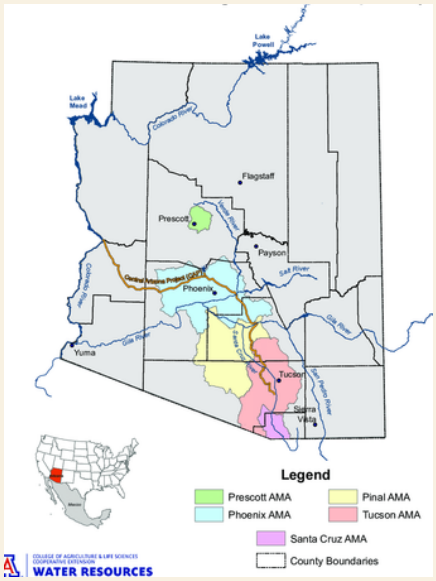
Climate Change

Rising global temperatures, exacerbated in the Colorado River basin, have **decreased the flow of the Colorado River by 20%** since 2000, and its flows are projected to decrease by another 10-40% by 2050. More intense and larger wildfires are more frequent, which increases erosion and introduces to the river large and unnatural amounts of sediments, threatening its health.



The graph below shows Lake Mead levels for the years 2019 (orange), 2020 (pink), 2021 (green), and 2022 (blue). As you can see, Lake Mead is at an **unprecedented low level**, and action is needed immediately. Click on the image to see the current water level in Lake Mead.

This map shows the Active Management Areas in Arizona. These areas are heavily dependent on groundwater, and so are subject to groundwater regulations. Outside of these zones, **groundwater goes unrestricted**, which is detrimental to the health of our water resources.



Endangerment to Other Local Rivers

Salt River

The Salt River, fed from snow melt in the mountains of northern Arizona, feeds into the Salt River Project (SRP), the main source of water for Phoenix. Rising temperatures and record drought **reduce recharge to aquifers and degrade rivers** that supply a growing population. Combined with weak water management policies, this river, an essential water resource, suffers severe stress.

Gila River

Overgrazing of cattle has severely **reduced or eliminated riverside vegetation**, causing increased erosion. In addition, the introduction of several invasive species have also hurt native species and the health of the river as a whole.

Verde and San Pedro Rivers

Over pumping of groundwater has **depleted the flow of the Verde River by half** in some parts, which feeds into the SRP. On the San Pedro River, Fort Huachuca's (an army installation near Sierra Vista) unrestricted groundwater pumping is the single greatest contributor to the demise of the San Pedro, dropping the water table that feeds the river **up to sixty feet** in some areas.*

Over pumping of Groundwater

Outdated state laws have severely and unsustainably overallocated groundwater resources, having caused aquifers to drop in many areas of the state. This is especially exacerbated outside of active management areas where there are no limits for groundwater pumping on private entities.

*To learn more about Fort Huachuca and its , please visit biologicaldiverisity.org,

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Support legislation that implements restrictions for groundwater pumping statewide by reducing agricultural water use by replacing low value, high water use crops with high value produce, and reforming the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District, which subsidizes developers and builders by permitting them to deplete one aquifer if they recharge a different aquifer.

2. Support legislation that promotes environmental water or "water for nature" by recognizing the connection between surface water and groundwater, and capping groundwater pumping in rural Arizona to protect springs and streams

3. Advocate for effective water policies and share water information through social media, posts, etc.

4. Vote for and lobby legislators who promise to work for stronger and more effective water sustainability policies

https://www.sierraclub.org/arizona