Water Smart™

Welcome! This is a **WaterSmart** "***Drop by Drop***" factsheet; the new water education program sponsored by the City of Prescott. Each month learn more about Prescott's water resources. From history to infrastructure, together we'll discuss Prescott water one drop at a time!

WaterSmart Factsheet Summary:

- *The City of Prescott follows State law, new and existing subdivisions have an Assured Water Supply [A.R.S. § 45-576]*
- *The City's Decision and Order of Assured Water Supply consists of Groundwater and Renewable Water (alternative supply) [Decision and Order No. 86-401501.0001]*
- *For the City to approve a new subdivision, a 100-year supply of water must be available [PCC 7.4.8 F. and G.]*

Introduction

Development is the growth or advancement of a community. Community development is a process where community members take collective action to achieve that advancement. The well-being of a community depends upon economic, social, environmental, and cultural factors. Water is a fundamental necessity for community development.

What is an Assured Water Supply (AWS)?

Prior to 1998, all subdivisions (residential or commercial development of six lots or more) and existing commercial services (e.g. service providers, hospitals, grocery stores, and schools) relied upon groundwater supplies. In 1998, the Prescott Active Management Area (PrAMA) was declared out of safe-yield, meaning more groundwater was being pumped than was being replenished; due to this condition, AWS rules went into effect. These rules provide that no new subdivisions can be platted using groundwater. In order for the City to maintain its "Designation" of AWS, it must demonstrate that water supplies are and will be physically, legally, and continuously available for 100 years. A Designation must be updated when required; since 1999, it has been updated in 2005 and in 2009. The City has actively managed its water resources to provide reliable supplies for decades, and will continue to do so in the future.

Determining water availability for a property

In accordance with state laws, city subdivisions have an AWS. After receiving a development application Water Resource Management determines if the property is identified for groundwater, alternative water or neither. Let's look at this more closely.

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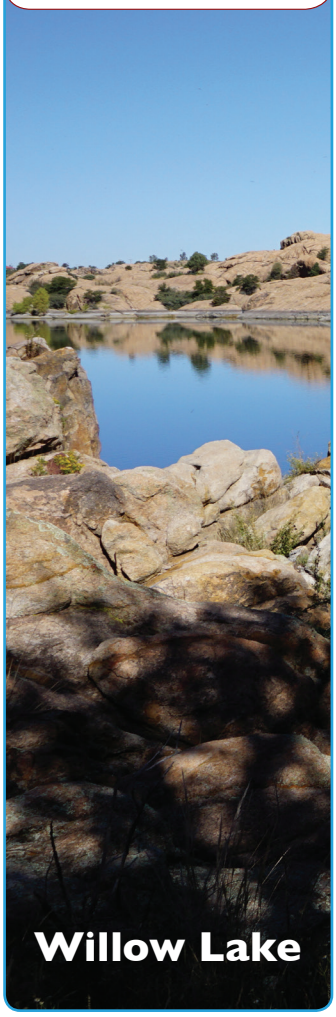

Willow Lake

Groundwater - In 1999, the State "grandfathered" lots of record created by final plats (official property maps) and the associated groundwater that was being provided to them. This is often referred to as the City's "current and committed demand". Subdivisions at the preliminary plat stage in 1998, were also recognized for development using groundwater subject to certain requirements. Since then, properties not eligible for grandfathered groundwater, in order to be developed, require renewable supplies ("alternative water").

Alternative Water - The City uses the term "Alternative Water" to describe its renewable resources. The two primary sources are recharged and recovered surface water from the Watson and Willow Lakes Reservoirs, and treated effluent from the City's wastewater treatment plants. The City's AWS also includes a future, imported supply from the Big Chino Water Ranch. This source has not yet been connected to the City's water infrastructure.

Renewable resources are recognized and encouraged by the State of Arizona. These supplies are predominantly used for new development. Upon review of the parcel number(s) for a development application, if a reservation of water exists, then the project can proceed according to City policies and any existing contractual requirements. What if there is no reservation? Projects without a reservation seek alternative water from the City's annual budget.

If a property is not eligible for grandfathered groundwater, or "alternative water" is not available, the owner can seek and pledge to the City extinguished, irrigation grandfather rights for the development application (See City's water policy for more details).

What happens after water availability is determined?

Once water is determined to be available, the City will enter into a contract (Water Service Agreement). This agreement specifies performance criteria that may be required. Water Resource Management then tracks how the water has been allocated to new development via these contracts to determine the remaining balances in the water portfolio accounts.

Be WaterSmart!

Harvesting rainwater can reduce the use of drinking water for landscape irrigation. Couple with the use of ***native and desert adapted plants***, rainwater harvesting is an effective water conservation tool because it provides ***"free" water*** that is not from the municipal supply.

(Source: Harvesting Rainwater for Landscape Use Booklet, Cooperative Extension, page 1)

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