



CWAG Policy on Landscape Water

Approved by the CWAG Board: 4/9/18

The Mission of CWAG is to protect the Verde River and to achieve a sustainable water supply in the Prescott Active Management Area (PrAMA). We see two main problems facing sustainable water management: our water supply is dependent on groundwater and we are pumping too much. Current trends, amplified by population growth, threaten the flow of the upper Verde River and a long-term sustainable water supply for the Prescott Active Management Area.

Landscaping water use is significant (for example, about thirty percent of Prescott's groundwater pumping) and can be greatly reduced by using established and proven methods: drought-tolerant plants and rainwater harvesting. Water applied to landscapes is lost to evaporation and thus not available for recharge or reuse. Reducing landscape water use directly curtails groundwater pumping and decreases the overdraft of our aquifer.

By adopting the following policies, agencies will assure that new and existing development will reduce groundwater pumping, move the PrAMA towards safe yield, and extend the useful life of our groundwater resource.

CWAG advocates that local governments should:

- Establish or improve public education on landscape water control.
- Provide educational programs and incentives for businesses in order to encourage installation of drought-tolerant landscapes and passive or active rainwater harvesting systems.
- Construct demonstration landscapes and eliminate groundwater use in public spaces.
- Establish or improve programs for new and existing development to reduce groundwater use on landscapes.
- Adopt a phased transition plan such that a) neither groundwater or utility water will be used on landscapes, b) all new building permit applications will include a landscape plan, a plan for an alternative (non-groundwater) water source, and a water budget showing that the proposed landscape can be maintained by that source, and c) ultimately, only drought-tolerant plants should be used for landscapes.
- Permit property owners to choose their preferred landscape design if it can be established and maintained by a non-groundwater source.
- Assist builders and homeowners with appropriate rainwater harvesting system design and training.
- Include landscaping specifications consistent with this policy in development agreements.