

# Prescott's Water History

By Fred Oswald, member Citizens Water Advocacy Group



1864: Prescott founded. Water supply was from Granite Creek and private wells.

1881: Wells with hand pumps installed on the four corners of the square for fire fighting.

1884-1892: Dam impounded water on Miller Creek. Steam-powered pump lifted water to reservoirs on Mt. Vernon St.

1889-1901: Well dug in "Goose Flats" south of Prescott Mile High Middle School along Granite Creek to capture ground water and flow from Granite Creek.

1899: Low dam and well built near confluence of Granite Creek and North Fork.

July 14, 1900: The Great Fire that destroyed most of downtown showed that the water supply was not adequate.

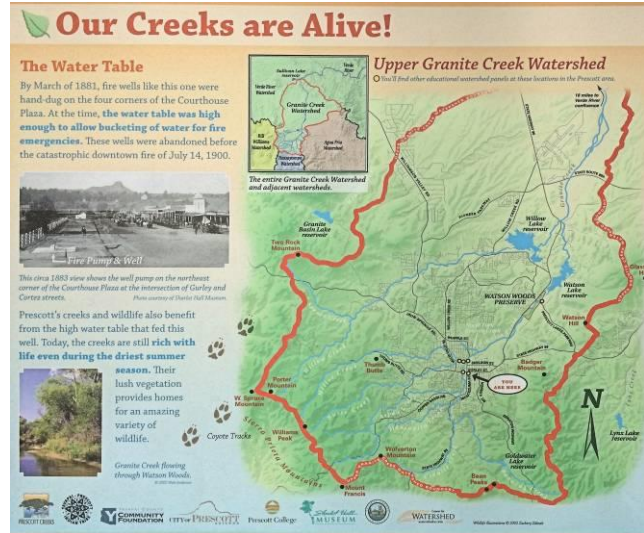
1901-1926: 19-mile pipeline from Del Rio Springs near Chino Valley supplied city water.

1915: Watson Lake dam built for irrigation by Chino Valley Irrigation District.

1923 & 1932: Two dams built on Banning Creek to produce Goldwater Lakes for water storage. Water delivered by a pipeline along Banning Cr. until 1988.

1935: Willow Creek dam built for irrigation by Chino Valley Irrigation District.

1937: Dam built on Hassayampa Creek to provide additional water to Goldwater Lakes. Dams also built on Wolf Cr. & Groom Cr.



Sign by old well on SE corner of the Square



Old dam on Miller Creek



Historic Del Rio Springs water facility  
Gary Beverly photo

1948: Prescott bought farmland in Chino Valley, developed the well field currently used for domestic water and built a 17-mile pipeline to the city (pipeline subsequently upgraded twice).

1980: Groundwater Management Act established Prescott Active Management Area (PrAMA).

1988: Treated effluent (sewage) used for groundwater recharge near airport.

1998: Watson & Willow Lake dams bought by Prescott for recreation and for additional source of water to recharge groundwater.

1999: Arizona Department of Water Resources declared that PrAMA was no longer in safe-yield. Requirement to reach “safe yield” by 2025.

2004: City purchased Big Chino Water Ranch for future supply.

2010: Agreement to work together, resolve litigation and protect Verde River between Prescott, Prescott Valley, Salt River Valley Water Users’ Association and the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District.

For more information, see:

<http://www.sharlot.org/library-archives/days-past/early-history-of-prescotts-water-supply-and-the-prescott-national-forest-designation-part-ii/>

<http://www.sharlot.org/library-archives/days-past/del-rio-springs-provided-water-for-many-northern-arizona-towns/>

[http://prescott-az.gov/\\_d/newsletter\\_2015\\_winter.pdf](http://prescott-az.gov/_d/newsletter_2015_winter.pdf)

<http://www.sharlot.org/library-archives/days-past/willow-and-watson-lakes-reflect-a-beautiful-history/>

<http://www.dcourier.com/news/2009/oct/06/talk-of-the-town-prescotts-serious-about-safe-yie/>  
W.S. Gookin and Associates, *Comprehensive water study of the City of Prescott and environs*, (Prescott Library)

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**Old pipeline from Goldwater Lake to Prescott**



**Water production facility in Chino Valley  
Gary Beverly photo**