

# Arizona Water Fact Sheet

Some areas of Arizona are classified as abnormally dry to severe, according to the Arizona Drought Monitoring Technical Committee drought classification system. Water supply impacts vary geographically, and areas with access to reservoirs are less affected. With a naturally arid climate, a significant population increase in the last decade, and the potential effects of climate change, water shortages continue to be a possibility in the state's future. Despite these conditions, however, a focus on supply management, conservation programs, and water-efficiency education are yielding positive results.



## Sources of Supply

Arizona receives its water from four main sources: the Colorado River, in-state surface water sources, ground water, and reclaimed wastewater. Seven states share water from the Colorado River. A series of federally constructed reservoirs divert water to each state as dictated by the "Law of the River," a legal body set up for the distribution of Colorado River water.

The Central Arizona Project delivers 1.5 million acre-feet of water annually to Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties in central Arizona. Phoenix, the state's largest city and its capital, receives about half of its water from the Colorado River. For the remainder, it relies on surface sources such as the Salt and Verde Rivers, as well as reclaimed wastewater.

Underground aquifers supply a significant amount of water around the state, especially in areas with limited access to Colorado River water or other surface water supplies. Precipitation and

infiltration is not sufficient to naturally replenish groundwater sources at the rate they are being depleted.

## Housing a Growing Population

As the second fastest-growing state in the nation, Arizona recorded more than 6.5 million residents in 2009, a number that has grown nearly 29 percent in one decade. While growth helps support the state's economy, increased population places additional stress on Arizona's already strained water supplies.

To help protect this precious resource, the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) has established programs to ensure current and future water availability before new development can begin.

## Changing Climate

Major Arizona cities such as Phoenix and Tucson receive an average of just 8 to 12 inches of rain annually. Even at higher elevations, precipitation levels only reach 25 to 30 inches annually.

The potential effects of climate change bring increased uncertainty to the state's outlook for future precipitation and water supplies. Decreased precipitation and increased temperatures may reduce the amount of available surface water. Climate change may also further decrease the natural replenishment of groundwater sources.

Lake Mead and Lake Powell, the primary reservoirs in Arizona that draw from the Colorado River, have levels trending downward, although they are currently half full. If current use and climate trends persist, there are concerns that climate change will further reduce already over-allocated Colorado River supplies.

## Looking to the Future

State and local governments and other organizations focus on the management of water supplies and on demand management through conservation programs. ADWR provides residents, businesses, and water providers with

tools about water-efficient products, landscaping techniques, and educational outreach.

In addition to their own state and local conservation efforts, the state has more than 80 partnerships with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) WaterSense® program. Through the efforts of WaterSense partners, Arizona residents learn about savings associated with using WaterSense labeled products and incorporating water efficiency into everyday life to help preserve water for future generations.

In fact, if only one out of 10 households in Arizona installed WaterSense labeled faucets or faucet aerators in their bathrooms, it could save more than 100 million gallons of water annually—enough to supply nearly 1,000 Arizona households. This small change could also save Arizona residents \$800,000 in water bills and an additional \$1.4 million in energy costs to heat their water.

For more information and water-saving tips, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).

## A Model of Partnership

WaterSense is a household name in Arizona, thanks to extensive, statewide WaterSense partnerships. In fact, about two thirds of Arizona's population is served by municipalities and water companies that are WaterSense partners.

ADWR won the WaterSense State Challenge by helping triple the state's number of local water utility partners. As a result, Arizona was picked to host the first national launch of EPA's Fix a Leak Week in March 2009. The Arizona Municipal Water Users Association was also selected to host the third

annual Fix a Leak Week in March 2011, with "We're for Water—Join the Chase," a four mile race that featured a running toilet mascot.

With Arizona households losing as much as 27 billion gallons of water annually from household leaks—more than enough to supply every household in Tucson—WaterSense partners help educate Arizona residents about fixing leaks and using WaterSense labeled products. Arizona WaterSense partners are also working on a community-based social marketing project with WaterSense to change water-wasting outdoor behaviors in the state.

