

TALK OF THE TOWN
Central Arizona Partnership
7/28/2017
Water Conservation

Recently in this space, the Central Arizona Partnership observed that much has happened regarding our water resources since the year 2000. This is especially true with respect to water conservation. For example, as was previously noted, it is now mandatory that only highly efficient, water conserving plumbing fixtures be available for residential and commercial use and that our local municipalities have enacted water conserving plumbing codes for all new construction within their jurisdictions. But there is more to the story.

Recall that the City of Prescott, Towns of Prescott Valley, Chino Valley and Dewey-Humboldt are all located in the Prescott Active Management Area (AMA). Therefore our residents utilize the same underground supply of water. Remarkably, the demand for groundwater in the AMA today is the same as the demand for groundwater was in the year 2000, yet the population has increased by nearly 25,000 residents during that same period of time. How come?

Water conservation is a commitment of consumers to evaluate and modify existing water consumption habits in order to use less water for various purposes today than had been historically used for those purposes in the past. While much of the increasing residential water demand has been off-set by a decrease in agricultural water demand, it is also true that the per capita rate of residential water consumption has decreased as well. Our homes and the appliances within them, our exterior landscapes, our behavior and habits have all contributed to this decline in residential water demand. Within the City of Prescott alone, the average consumptive water use has decreased from 170 gallons per person per day (GPCD) in the year 2000 to 115 GPCD in 2015. Our residential water use patterns have been changing.

Many of our new homes are now being built by EPA WaterSense® certified homebuilders, landscapes are installed utilizing only native or low water use plants and many are maintained by harvested rainfall. Our citizens enthusiastically seek out new knowledge and information regarding the development of water management policy. This was evidenced recently by the 300 or so people who attended the May 17, 2107 showing of the movie "Groundwater" and the panel discussion that followed at the Elks Theater. Participation in local water conservation education and rebate programs continues to be high.

Our well informed residents have become conscientious water consumers, each developing their own culture of conservation. They demonstrate by example the importance of *living* conservation in their day to day endeavors. Is there more to do? Of course there is. Our municipalities continue to refine the operations of their aquifer recharge facilities. We must remain diligent in detecting and repairing damaged water utility infrastructure to minimize lost and unaccounted for water. We must become as efficient as possible in the collection, treatment, reuse and/or recharge of our storm water and wastewater supplies. We must also continue to search for and develop alternative water supplies.

While acknowledging the accomplishments of our residents, CAP is also dedicated to developing and implementing new water conservation and augmentation strategies, to benefit both our residents and the regional economy.

Through collaboration with the regional communities, Central Arizona Partnership advocates for responsible growth, a balance between economic stability and ecological sustainability, judicious management of natural resources and exceptional healthcare, education and community services.

Provided by Central Arizona Partnership.