

Responsible Water Management Brings Reliability Despite Colorado River Challenges

Raging wildfires, an unrelenting record-breaking heatwave, and a drying Colorado River have generated significant concern about our water and our future in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Adding to our unease are the extended drought conditions in Arizona and stressed water conditions throughout the West. These conditions are sobering, yet they are not a surprise to your city and the water professionals who have been planning and investing to ensure they can meet the needs of their customers in multiple scenarios here in the desert. Additionally, your water provider is continually working to ensure reliable water deliveries never cease, regardless of the circumstances.



Based on concern about these current dry conditions, some question if [water restrictions or curtailments](#) could be beneficial and should be imposed. However, it's important to note that such measures are designed for temporary water savings to address an immediate or short-term emergency impacting our water supplies. Even with our existing challenges, restrictions are not needed because the AMWUA cities have prepared for this current shortage through years of planning and investing. Additionally, the strong water conservation ethic developed over the decades is why we have avoided imposing water restrictions even amid a prolonged drought and in the face of shortage in the middle of a desert. Yet, we recognize the [Colorado River situation](#) and state-wide drought may worsen. Still, even then, if mandatory restrictions are ever needed, they would only be imposed in a strategic manner and with surgical precision. What is more critical is that we reinforce the vital role a water-wise lifestyle plays in our sustainability as we face a drier and hotter future.

While the AMWUA cities have a [robust and diverse water supply](#), there is never enough to waste. It is essential that we collectively continue to build upon the conservation ethic we have created here in the Valley. Being responsible for the water we have is up to each of us. Having water-efficient features and fixtures, low-water-use yards, and practicing water conservation is what will safeguard our water for now and future generations. There are ways that we can use water more efficiently, such as reducing our [outdoor watering](#). We recognize that citizens understand the importance of conservation and want to know how they can step up and help in serious times like these. That is precisely why the AMWUA cities have invested in programs and resources to help residents and businesses use water more efficiently. For a plethora of conservation ideas, visit your [city's conservation website](#), check out [What You Can Do](#) for a wealth of information about water conservation, and visit [water Use it Wisely](#) for practical tips on how to conserve water.

Along with taking action to use water more wisely, it is also important to know that the AMWUA cities understand that the situation on the Colorado River will most likely worsen. Hence, preparations for various shortage scenarios continue to be a priority. Planning and investing in water have prepared us for this moment and what may follow. For decades, the cities have been taking proactive measures and utilizing long-term planning to ensure reliable water supplies in our arid State. This has included investing in diverse and reliable water supplies, funding infrastructure and technology, storing water underground, building a conservation ethic, and developing drought and shortage preparedness plans. In addition to the efforts taking place locally within each city to manage our water supplies, the AMWUA cities are also engaged in the critical work at the State and regional level. For example, the AMWUA cities supported the implementation of the [2019 Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan \(DCP\)](#), pulled together by Arizona, California, Nevada, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and Mexico to strengthen the management of the Colorado River. It is a plan to keep Lake Mead from reaching dangerously low levels until at least through 2026. DCP is the plan the Basin States put in place to prepare for this current Colorado River shortage, and now we are carrying out that plan. As the Colorado River Basin sees historically low inflows, DCP has proven to be effective at slowing the declining water levels in Lake Mead. Yet, the work continues. Arizona has already begun discussions on how to best tackle the Colorado River challenges. In addition, the Colorado River Basin states are planning for Colorado River management beyond 2026. The AMWUA cities will continue to be engaged in supporting the State in this effort.

We recognize the seriousness of the Colorado River shortage and the challenging circumstances we are facing. Fortunately, the AMWUA cities, their water managers, and citizens know what it takes to thrive in the desert. For generations, we have managed, invested in, and conserved our water supplies, and it is even more vital that we continue to do so.

For over 50 years, the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association has worked to protect our member cities' ability to provide assured, safe, and sustainable water supplies to their communities. For more water information, visit www.amwua.org.