

Why water conservation matters in our communities

Although conservation alone will not resolve water challenges, having it rooted in our daily actions enables us to better weather drought and shortages. Being water-wise will be critical to our resiliency, just as it always has. This is precisely why the ten AMWUA cities continue to invest significantly in their water conservation programs.

As we face a future with less Colorado River water, there is an opportunity for all of us to step up our water-saving efforts. Since many people wonder about the role of conservation here in the Valley with our historic drought and now Colorado River shortages, we thought it would be helpful to answer some of those lingering questions.



What are we conserving for?

- We live in the desert, so water is precious, and water conservation is critical to supporting our way of life.
- Conservation is what we do to protect all of our water supplies, not just when one water source is impacted by a shortage or extended periods of drought.
- Enhanced conservation practices today stretch our water supply to make our communities more resilient for the future.

Are we conserving water for future growth?

- The simple answer is no.
- The ten AMWUA cities have prepared for growth. They have water resources for build-out demands, including currently undeveloped land, allowing new projects to be built.
- Some municipalities have a water allocation policy that provides mechanisms for projects that propose to use more water than planned so it does not negatively impact the water supply for current residents and commercial customers.
- To support responsible growth in our desert communities, our ten cities recognize the importance of continual wise planning, investing, and being efficient with all of our water supplies.

Does conservation make a difference?

- Yes, it does.
- While it may not directly change the worsening conditions on the Colorado River, practical water-wise changes in lifestyle will positively impact our community's water future.
- Even with growth in population and business, the overall water use among the AMWUA cities has remained relatively the same, highlighting the impact of our strong conservation ethic.
 - For example, despite an increase in population of over 400,000 people over the last 20 years, the City of Phoenix's water use has been reduced by 30% per capita.

What is system conservation compared to general water conservation?

- Traditional or municipal conservation programs promote using water efficiently to reduce the water you use at home or work.
- [System conservation](#) is when large quantities of water are purposely left in a large water body, such as Lake Mead, to offset declining water levels.
- System conservation in Lake Mead can generate more impactful, immediate, and cost-effective water savings for the Colorado River than municipal water conservation.
- Traditional conservation also provides flexibility for AMWUA cities to participate in system conservation efforts to support or mitigate the conserving of water in Lake Mead.

Why do I need to conserve when I see others wasting water and construction everywhere?

- The AMWUA cities collectively employ more than 300 water conservation best management practices - specific initiatives to reduce or increase water use efficiency. These best management practices include ordinances for residential and non-residential sectors.
 - In addition to meeting statewide mandates, all AMWUA cities regulate low-water-use landscaping, limit turf (grass), prohibit water waste, and have plumbing code requirements.
- Being responsible with our water is up to each of us, and our individual actions to conserve water wherever possible have a positive ripple effect within your community.
- Residents, municipalities, businesses, industries, agriculture, and decision-makers must have a collective commitment to using water efficiently.

Why do we not have mandated water restrictions?

- With the cities' extensive planning and investment in water supplies and infrastructure and our collective effort to conserve, we are not in a current situation that requires [water restrictions](#), even with the Colorado River Basin and Arizona being in a historic drought.
- For decades, water conservation has played a part in protecting all water sources here in Arizona - not just in response to a possible shortage of one source of supply. That

means we all benefit because we made tough decisions early on, thus instilling a conservation ethic.

- Those efforts have enabled us to collectively reduce per capita water use, meet growth demands with existing supplies, and protect water for future use without imposing water restrictions.
- The ten AMWUA cities are dedicated to enhancing our culture of water conservation as it will make us more resilient than mandated water restrictions.

What can I do to be more water-efficient?

- The first step is to know where and how you use water. The amount you use inside and outdoors may surprise you. This easy-to-manuever [water calculator](#) will give you a better understanding of how your household uses water.
- You can then take the [appropriate actions](#) to become more water-efficient in the areas that will make the most difference. This will save you water and money while being part of the solution.
- Utilize your [water provider's website](#), programs, rebates, and resources to reduce water use in identified areas. The AMWUA cities have four decades of knowledge and experience that they are more than willing to share with you.
- Be a responsible desert-dweller by being efficient and aware of water issues.

We can live in the desert because we understand the significance of water conservation and efficiency as a necessity and not a temporary reaction. We know challenges lie ahead, yet our collective goal of being sustainable for the long-term remains the priority, but we cannot do it alone. We can all make a difference by being more water aware and making small changes every single day. After all, our water supply is critical to our quality of life and our state's resiliency.

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.