

A Second Opinion On “The Town of Chino Valley Water Sustainability and Conservation Code”

Pgs. 1&2 Responding to the eleven “Whereas’s”

#1 Whereas States that, “Chino Valley has an extremely small and finite local water supply”.

The “Little Chino aquifer” is actually quite large. Its east boundary is the base of the Mingus Mountain Range; its west boundary is approximately Williamson Valley Road. And along the western hills of Chino Valley, its south boundary is approximately highway 89 between Granite Dells and Coyote Springs Rd., and its northern boundary is Sullivan Lake. The claim that it is “Finite” is rather misleading, as there is a continuous supply of water that enters and exits this aquifer hence the source of the headwater of the Verde River which flows year round.

#2 Whereas States that Prescott “AMA groundwater supplies are not a reliable current or future water supply, especially with increasing over-draft conditions and the lack of significant regional safe-yield efforts.”

Here we have three items to address:

1) Our “groundwater supply”, is it or is it not “reliable”, and if it is not, will government interference make it more, “reliable”?

On the one hand I am absolutely positive that the “groundwater supply is reliable”.

On the other hand, I am equally positive that this same groundwater supply is being abused, not by any or even all of Chino Valley Water users, but rather Prescott Municipal Water System.

2) “Over-draft conditions” what are they? Let me explain:

In 2008 Prescott pumped approximately 2.5 Billion gallons of water out of the “Little Chino Aquifer”. The Prescott Waste Treatment plants captured and treated approximately 1.5 billion gallons of this same water. They then pumped .5 billion gallons to three of the Prescott golf courses and discharged the remaining approximately one billion gallons back to the aquifer behind the airport.

This quite simply means, that Prescott is “over-drafting”, yes by the oversight and management of a Municipal Water Provider, 1.5 billion gallons per year out of the “Little Chino Aquifer”.

3) “Lack of Safe-yield efforts”

Its no mystery that the drop in water table or (cone of depression) created near Chino Valley High School is created by pumping 6.6 million gallons per day out of the aquifer, and only returning 2.6 million gallons per day.

You decide to whom belongs, “Lack of safe-yield efforts” and answer the question, will giving up my existing rights and giving all control to another municipal water provider actually fix the real problem, or simply make things more difficult, expensive, intrusive and irreversible.

#3 Whereas States, “Other renewable water supplies such as rain or snow, can be utilized for replenishment of the groundwater aquifer, provide water for exterior landscaping and uses, and be used for mitigation efforts.”

That portion of rain and snow water that does not run-off or evaporate, is the very God given source of renewable water that replenishes our aquifer. And in spite of the fact that some would skew actual recharge gallons into the Little Chino Aquifer by adding in piped water out of Willow or Watson Lakes, these have been the natural courses for recharge into the Little Chino Aquifer since creation.

As for the installation and use of rainwater catchment systems you pay the cost to install, run and maintain. For the average 2000 sqft. home, to install gutters, down spouts, filters, lift pump, electrical tie-in, plumbing-tie-in, and preferably an in-ground tank 1500 gallons or larger can run an estimated \$5,000 to \$15,000. At 12” of rain per year this system will net about 16,000 gallons of water. If you’re on city water at \$5.00 per 1000 gallons of water this system, (say the \$5,000 one) will save you \$80.00 per year. And if you don’t count electrical cost and pump replacement cost, it will take 62.5 years to break even. Add in a lift pump every 10 years and electrical cost, your break even is over 100 years.

You decide if you can afford this, remember it will be mandatory if you want to keep any outdoor vegetation alive.

#4 Whereas States, “the Town desires to achieve the first recognized water resource sustainability and conservation plan that will not impact the Prescott AMA groundwater but enhance it and have the ability to recharge one or more gallons of water for every gallon of water distributed and used within the town’s water service areas.”

Consider three things here, The Presumption, The Promise and The Purpose.

1) The Presumption is this, it is the Town’s desire to do this, it’s not only presumptuous to assume that the majority of Chino Valley residence are behind this, it’s down right arrogant.

2) The Promise in not so many words, is that they can actually put more water into the aquifer than they take out

Stop for a moment and rationalize this promise, if this were really true there would be absolutely no need to continue pumping or expanding Chino Valley’s well fields, and there would be no need to acquire HIA property in Paulden to pump water out the Big Chino Aquifer. Why? Because if you can really do this, you don’t need an aquifer you just need a very large tank with an overflow to let your excess water go into an injection well.

3) The Purpose. Everyone knows that the proposed or waiting in the wings, subdivisions and yes golf course, are all high density and cannot materialize without municipal water and waste water hookups.

Now since the city obviously cannot afford all the necessary infrastructure, and developers cannot make their projects pencil if they have to pay for it, you probably guessed it, under the guise of, “**environmental health, public health, safety and welfare**”, you get to pay for all the infrastructure. Just so you know, the most common water size in Chino Valley is 1”, currently the average water (1” meter) and sewer hookup fee is about \$41,000.00. Just so you know, the average water bill is approximately 10, yes 10 times more expensive than what you pay for electricity to pump the same amount of water from your own well.

#5 Whereas States, “it is necessary for the Town to Protect its limited water supplies to allocate and monitor water uses to both existing, pending and future development within its jurisdictional boundaries to ensure the sustainable development, health, safety and welfare of the town.”

Chino Valley’s number one resource has always been it’s water, it sustained farming, ranching and two towns for the better part of 150 years, and now its suddenly “necessary” for thousands of Chino Valley citizens to hand over their water rights and privileges to a handful of politicians. Once we give away these rights and privileges we have no other option but to buy our own water for the rest of our lives. It gets better, we get to buy it back from a select few, that want to “protect it”. “limit it”, “allocate it”, “monitor it” and fine you minor violations, criminalize you for multiple violations and even lein your property and force its sale for major violations.

Now, I am all for prudent development, health, safety and the towns welfare, but since when do any of these necessitate giving up one’s rights and privileges to “protect” pump and “monitor” their own water system as well as private septic systems.

You decide who really benefits from giving away your water rights, abandoning your wells and filling in your septic systems.

#6 Whereas States, “The Town of Chino Valley desires to become a “Water Smart” community whereby new growth does not impact precious water supplies but becomes a valuable solution towards sustainability and safe-yield within the Prescott AMA.”

They say if you repeat something long enough sooner or later you believing it. Here again we see the presumptuous statement that, “the Town of Chino Valley desires to become water smart”. I have been here for 33 years and somehow I’ve not heard this before. Now, since “new growth” that “does not impact precious water” are a contradiction in terms, I would pose this suggestion. Take this silver bullet plan, this “valuable solution” plan to the 22,000 metered customers in Prescott that are currently extracting water from Chino Valley. Sell them on these grand ideas, implement them and let us watch first hand to see if it has any effect in slowing down the 1.5 billion gallon per year leak from Chino Valley’s aquifer. The infrastructure is already there, and the average household income in Prescott is much higher than Chino Valley. This ought to be an easy sale. Or is it?

#7 Whereas States, “It is necessary to require that the Town implement conservation measures and to require that water is utilized in the most sustainable way and prevent waste, unreasonable use or unreasonable methods of water use.

If this isn’t the language of a socialist, I don’t know what is. For hundreds of years, the majority of Americans have and still do derive their water from private wells. These private wells and septic systems continue to operate safely and efficient. Most folks manage this amazing task without the interference and oversights of someone telling them if they are “wasting” water, or they have, “unreasonable use” or “unreasonable methods”.

The current situation with most Chino Valley residence where there is (1) well and (1) septic system on (1) acre or larger is by far the best use of our Chino Valley Aquifer. Where you have many low-impact water wells that are spread evenly over a large area this enables a community to pump the exact same amount of water that they would buy from a water company, but without the enormous cone-of-depression that municipal wells produce in the aquifer. The second "Aquifer Smart" condition is by way of the many individual septic systems that constantly return the majority of that pumped water, back into the aquifer. High density subdivisions or golf courses are not capable of utilizing this cycle which has worked for hundred of years, hence the necessity to take away your water, micro manage it for you and pave the way for high density development. If you are a well owner, you have a right to 651,702 gallons per year and they want it.

#8 Whereas States, "Ordinance No. 09---- is a fair and reasonable means of achieving and substantially advancing the public purposes set forth in this Ordinance, and has been drafted to provide the controls necessary to accomplish the stated public purposes."

The following is simply a second opinion of what I believe it would say if the unspoken portion were added back in.
"Ordinance No. 09--- though it may be unjust, intrusive and very expensive, particularly during this economic crisis, never-the-less we shall present it as a fair and reasonable means of achieving our personal agenda. By substantially advancing this behemoth we will secure sovereign control over that portion of the public that we convince, the purposes set forth in this Ordinance is surely for your health, safety and welfare. And for as many as swallow this hook, line and sinker, for them we have prepared the detailed controls necessary to maintain generations to come under the bondage of this ordinance. We shall package it in a box with the label, "Publics best interest."

#9 Whereas States, "the conservation of water is in the interest of the Town and its citizens and promotes environmental health, safety and welfare, and maintaining our quality of life".

This is the type of political rhetoric that is needed to sell gullible souls on a plan that will:
Require customers to pay tens of thousands of dollars each to hook-up.
Require that you throw away your working well and septic that costs on an average of \$15,000.00.
Require that you spend \$5,000 to \$15,000 on a rain catchment system, if you want to keep your landscape alive.
Require that you spend approximately \$1,000 to abandon your perfectly good well.
Require that you never again drill a new well or modify an existing well.
Require that you grant permission for them to enter and inspect anything hooked to water or sewer, at any time they deem reasonable.
Require that you buy water at a rate approximately ten times what you currently pay for power. This rate of course is guaranteed to increase.
Require that you report any one violating and ordinance.
Require that you follow strict rules on what, when, where and how to water.
Require that you pay fines if you violate an ordinance.

Since we have lots of laws that currently regulate "environmental health, safety and welfare", I'm not convinced that this, or an ordinance like it would "Promote" such things.

On the other hand you may find this fact interesting and even alarming, the portion of our population that are at the highest risk and most vulnerable to a biological terrorist attack, are people that are on Municipal Water Systems, where an entire city could be devastated in a single day through their water system. When looking through these glasses, private water supplies promote better health, safety and welfare.

#10 Whereas States, “Ordinance No. 09--- is adopted pursuant to the authority vested in the Town of Chino Valley by the Arizona Revised Statutes to maintain and operate a water system and provide the Town with a sustainable water supply.”

#11 Whereas States, “the Town hereby encourages other communities within our region, the State of Arizona, or anywhere in the United States to adopt, mimic and replicate any part of this ordinance in the pursuit of water conservation and water sustainability.”

This verbiage arrogantly assumes three things:

- 1) This ordinance is as good as done.
- 2) A sustainable water supply is given.
- 3) So successful is the outcome of this program that everywhere in the U.S. would do well to copy it.

In the 12-09-09 Courier, Prescott Mayor Marlin Kuykendall when posed with the dilemma of dropping water tables responded, “We have until 2025 to reach safe yield and we will reach it.

Here’s the chance to save Prescott, send this silver bullet to them so they can reach “safe yield” now and not have to wait 15 years.