

Mayor's Report on Water Stewardship (Pt. 1)

As the countryside turns green from the recent rains, it's hard to believe that the Arizona Department of Water Resources is predicting major groundwater overdrafts within the next 20 to 30 years. While that seems far in the future to many (and of no consequence at all to some others), it still poses a very real threat to the well-being of those who will have to deal with the problem after we are gone.

There are many tools available to address our water challenges as a community- some are popular, and some not so much. As we begin to get our arms around the enormity of the problem, one thing becomes apparent: no single option will resolve all of our water needs. At the very least, a combination of these will be required, and most likely all will have to be utilized to some degree. The most popular suggestions (conservation and large-scale rainwater harvesting) tend to be our first choices for obvious reasons: other options such as effluent capture (abandonment of septic tanks and connection to wastewater treatment systems), DPR (Direct Potable Reuse- supplementing existing water supplies with treated effluent) and water importation (piping in water from other areas) are all extremely volatile subjects. Although it would be easy to avoid these subjects altogether and leave them for future Town Councils to address, good stewardship dictates that we at least begin the conversation. After all, 20 to 30 years isn't really that far off.

In the coming months, I hope to address the options available to us as a community (exploring both the pros and cons of each), which will hopefully generate awareness and possibly create solutions to one of the greatest challenges of our future.

Chris Marley, Mayor of Chino Valley