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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1980 Groundwater Management Act

Arizona's Groundwater Management Act, passed by state lawmakers in 1980, remains one of the most stringent groundwater codes in the county. It addresses concerns about how to support water supply needs for economic development and residents' quality of life in areas of the state with a high reliance on groundwater.

Five active groundwater management areas were identified, including the Prescott Active Management Area (PrAMA), 485 square miles in central Yavapai County encompassing the City of Prescott, Town of Prescott Valley, Yavapai-Prescott Indian Reservation, and portions of the Towns of Chino Valley, Dewey-Humboldt and unincorporated areas of Yavapai County.

The Act established the Department of Water Resources as the state regulatory agency charged with overseeing management of groundwater resources and progress toward reaching identified water management goals identified for each active management area.

To assist communities in reaching their identified water management goals, the act mandated development of a series of five management plans through 2025. Each plan is tailored to the specific active management area, and the 4th Management Plan currently is in effect for the PrAMA.

Achievement of Safe Yield by 2025 is the PrAMA water management goal. Safe Yield is reached when the amount of groundwater annually withdrawn from the aquifer is equal to the amount of groundwater annually recharged. An aquifer is a saturated zone of permeable rock beneath the groundwater table that holds water in interconnected pore spaces.

The Act also prohibits the expansion of irrigated agriculture supported by groundwater, and requires residential developers to demonstrate to ADWR that they have a 100-year assured water supply before lots can be sold. It set up mandatory reporting requirements for large water providers, such as municipalities, and authorized incentives for water reuse and effluent recharge. Large water providers must use ADWR Best Management Practices to support water conservation and conduct public education.

Learn more about your water resources by visiting the ADWR website at www.new.wateraz.gov or Upper Verde River Watershed Protection Coalition website at www.yavapaiwatersmart.org.