

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY –

Seven key water management policies rooted in smart relations and values

Named after a circle of 16 Cottonwood trees along the Verde River, where settlers originally made camp, the City of Cottonwood’s appeal for visitors and residents alike is its riparian environment, coupled with historical novelties and a modern business climate catering to practical needs and tourism. Cottonwood expects that over the next decades, it will continue to grow and thrive – but in order to accommodate this growth, the City must develop a water strategy that recognizes and deals with the challenges the City faces. Our water management policies are rooted in “smart relations” with environmental, practical and community values.

1. *The Value of the Verde River* – The stretch of the Verde River that passes through the City is arguably Cottonwood’s most important asset, contributing to the appeal of our community. The Verde River is also a key riparian asset of the people of Arizona and a source of water to many users both upstream and downstream of Cottonwood, as well as within the City. The City respects, supports, and joins in efforts to protect this valuable resource for the enjoyment of today’s community and future generations.
2. *The Value of Conservation* – Water is a precious resource in the Verde Valley and throughout the state of Arizona. A key component to the City’s water management strategy is conserving – and in particular, reusing – water. Cottonwood will implement an effluent policy that will encourage the reuse of groundwater supplies, recharge the aquifer as appropriate, and maximize returns to the Verde River. To the extent that it can enhance the responsible use of its municipal water supply with drought-resistant landscaping programs and other measures, the City will pursue such activities. The City will continuously monitor and utilize new technologies that can contribute to water conservation.
3. *The Value of Reliable Data* – Cottonwood prides itself on its proactive approaches to identifying solutions to potential problems, and in that spirit, knows that having reliable scientific data and hydrological records is key to protecting future challenges to its water uses. Having up-to-date science and data will not only assist the City in its well siting and other water management decisions, but this information will help the City accurately describe its water uses and needs in administrative and adjudication proceedings.
4. *The Value of Surface Water Rights* – Owning a portfolio of surface water rights will prove to be financially and legally valuable for Cottonwood in addressing its short and long-term water management vision. Cottonwood will develop a plan to acquire senior Verde River watershed surface water rights from willing sellers and will consider supplementing its surface water supply with sources outside of the Verde Valley, such as C. C. Cragin Reservoir rights. Obviously, these surface water rights can be used to supplement Cottonwood’s water supply, but they can also prove to be negotiating tools in settling other claims in the Verde River watershed.
5. *The Value of Good Neighbors* – The water challenges that the City of Cottonwood faces are shared by other communities and organizations in the Verde Valley. To the extent that it is feasible, Cottonwood will suggest and engage in cooperative efforts with the nearby communities, businesses and irrigation companies in negotiating settlement agreements with downstream parties, in participating in cost-sharing initiatives and so forth. The City

recognizes that the Yavapai Apache Nation, another of its neighbors, has claims to water that are important for its survival and prosperity. The City will make its best efforts to enter into a settlement agreement with the Yavapai Apache Nation that will recognize and protect legal access to water supplies that benefit the City, the Nation and other participating communities in the Verde Valley.

6. *The Value of Opportunity* – As part of the City of Cottonwood’s water management strategies, Cottonwood recognizes the value that it has as a community and to the region. With its historical features, riverfront properties and easy access to the river, Cottonwood is a popular tourist destination and home to more than 10,000 people. It is anticipated that Cottonwood’s population is going to grow and the City needs to plan for that growth. Along with population growth comes additional business, employment and cultural opportunities for the City’s residents – opportunities that the City has a responsibility to protect and sustain with adequate water supplies and other municipal services. Cottonwood’s water management strategies will fulfill the City’s commitment to serve water to its existing customers, to owners of vacant lots that will build out within its existing municipal boundaries, and to properly planned annexations.
7. *The Value of Fiscal Accountability* – As Benjamin Franklin wisely said, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” The City’s vision for water management policy is a combination of plans that will save it from water shortages demanding expensive solutions in the future, as well as providing for the City’s present needs. Projects will be balanced with financial responsibility and accountability. The values described above will be funded in accordance with approved budgets that utilize the funding mechanisms that are already in place, subject to adjustment as necessary. These funding mechanisms were instituted several years ago, based on strategies that included acquiring private water companies and setting forth the City’s long-term vision.