

# The Daily Courier

Monday, June 10, 2013

## Editorial: Water report is a call to action

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Environmental reports only begin with studied ideas that are put to paper. What happens after that is the real measure of commitment.

So, what will happen next, after the Sierra Club late last week released its report on the Upper Verde River's dire situation?

We encourage everyone in central Arizona interested in, well... water, to read the report, which you can find linked to our online news story that published Sunday. We've read it, and the results are as black and white as scientific surveys get.

Tireless volunteers, who have worked on the river's restoration activities every month for the last six years, say the Upper Verde's baseflow, which is dependent on groundwater, has declined 5 cubic feet per second over the past five years. And we're talking about a river flow that, in its most vulnerable spots, flows as low as 9 cubic feet per second currently.

The Upper Verde runs about 25 miles. For now.

This is serious stuff.

If the trend continues, says Steve Pawlowski, Arizona Water Sentinels Program Coordinator for the Sierra Club, "the Upper Verde River above Perkinsville could start drying up during the summer in as little as 10 years."

This goes way beyond water quality, although that's at issue also. If there's no water, quality is no longer the problem. If decreases in the river's baseflow continue, the numbers show that the very water itself is the endangered resource for a river that contains the longest stretch of continuous riparian habitat in all of Arizona.

Now that the evidence is in, it's up to us to take action. These trends are preventable.

Coordinating agency efforts is key, as is the state prioritizing the Arizona Department of Water Resources immediately.

All Arizona residents, too, are called upon. It's a little nutty that there's only a Water Awareness Month in Arizona, which presumes that the other 11 months are ripe for irresponsible landscaping. Personal responsibility is everything in this effort. If you're not sure how efficient your water usage is at your household, find out. Today.

The only thing simpler than recognizing why water is a critical natural resource is understanding when it is drying up before our eyes.

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