

Arizona BLM Water Strategy – 1.20.11

The increasing demand for water by growing communities, as well as agricultural demand and on-going drought conditions have led to a decline in groundwater tables, reduced surface flow and water quality issues in many parts of Arizona. The BLM in Arizona has formulated the following strategy to contribute to the sustainability of living rivers within the state.

Assess conditions, trends and risks for quality and quantity of water. (Understand what is happening).

- Participate in interagency assessments for priority watersheds.
- Identify issues and actions related to the quantity and quality of surface waters based on inventory and monitoring data.
- Support the efforts of the DOI WaterSMART initiative to achieve a sustainable water strategy.

Engage or participate in formal processes to conserve and protect water related values on public lands (Living Rivers).

- Participate in and support formal water processes as appropriate.
- Explore conservation leases, acquisition and/or retirement of existing water rights.

Support community-based partnerships engaged in mitigation and restoration actions to stabilize or reverse downward trends affecting surface waters on public lands in Arizona (Wet Water Partnerships).

- Engage local watershed organizations, communities, conservation interests and natural resource agencies involved in active development and implementation of protection and restoration efforts for priority watersheds.

Prioritize 10 living Arizona streams at the watershed level to focus effort and available resources (Focus effort and capacity).

- As a starting point for public dialogue, identify the following top 10 priority watersheds at-risk on BLM managed lands
Upper San Pedro River, Bill Williams River, Lower San Pedro Tributaries (Aravaipa and Muleshoe Ranch group), Agua Fria River, Lower Colorado River (below Imperial Reservoir), Upper Gila River (above San Carlos Reservoir), Big Sandy River/Burro Creek, Hassayampa River, Santa Maria River, Kanab Creek
- With partners, engage in an annual review, including partners, to refine the above list, and adjust as appropriate.