

An aerial photograph of a desert landscape. A river flows along the left side of the frame. On the right bank, there is a small, light-colored building with a brown roof. Below the building, there is a sandy area with some sparse vegetation. Further down the bank, there is a small campsite with several tents and people. The background consists of reddish-brown desert hills with sparse vegetation.

WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH CENTER

Annual Report FY 2026



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

**WATER RESOURCES
RESEARCH CENTER**

wrrc.arizona.edu



GREATER DEPTH, BROADER PERSPECTIVE FOR A CLEAR WATER FUTURE

We tackle key water policy and management issues, empower informed decision-making, and enrich understanding through engagement, education, and applied research.

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FY 2026 Annual Report
Previous WRRC Annual Reports



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), a University of Arizona unit based in Cooperative Extension, continued its strong engagement, educational, and applied research programming in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. Through our *Weekly/Summer Wave* e-newsletter, webinars, annual conference, and regularly updated website, we shared current water information, insights, and developments. With robust interest in understanding Arizona's water management, including the challenges associated with reduced Colorado River flows, the WRRC responds to requests for speaking engagements, information, and connections to water experts. In a time of unprecedented water challenges to Arizona and the region, engagement and partnerships remain key to fulfilling our applied research, engagement/outreach, and education mission. We look forward to your continuing participation in and support of our events and programs and welcome your suggestions and communications.



Sharon B. Megdal

About the Director

WRRC Director Sharon B. Megdal oversees programs and operations of the WRRC and engages with multiple partners on projects that investigate water resource policy issues and inform a range of audiences. Her publications, conference and workshop participation, and lectures have focused on approaches to water management in a drying climate. During FY 2026, Megdal was busy with invited presentations, article writing, and interviews involving local and global media outlets. She once again taught her graduate course, Water Policy in Arizona and Semi-arid Regions. Her service activities included memberships on the Kasser Joint Institute for Food, Water, and Energy Security Board, the Water & Tribes Initiative | Colorado River Basin, and the Global Leadership Council for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. A detailed listing of her professional activities can be found on [this page](#). A member of the faculty in the Department of Environmental Science, Megdal is the C.W. & Modene Neely Endowed Professor for Excellence in Agriculture and Life Sciences and a University Distinguished Outreach Professor. She also holds numerous courtesy appointments in departments and colleges across campus.

EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EAC)

Bradford, Shawn

EPCOR Water USA, Inc.

Burman, Brenda

Central Arizona Project

Buschatzke, Tom

Arizona Department of Water Resources

Collings, William (Bill)

Maricopa Consolidated DWID

Dadgar, Maria

Inter Tribal Council of Arizona

Davis, Tom

Yuma County Water Users' Association

Fleming, Ron

Global Water Resources, Inc.

Forrest, Alan

AF Engineering

Hauter, Jason

Akin Gump Strauss Hauter & Feld LLP and Attorney for the Gila River Indian Community

Kmiec, John

Tucson Water

Lacey, Michael

Freeport-McMoRan

Macy, Jamie P.

USGS Arizona Water Science Center

Matas, Randy

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Meyers, Leslie

Salt River Project

Olsen, Joe

Metro Water

Orme, Paul

Attorney

Porter, Sarah

Kyl Center for Water Policy, Morrison Institute for Public Policy, ASU

Richards, Philip

Arizona Public Service

Sanchez, Calline

IBM

Schneider, Fred

Arizona Water Company

Schonek, Kimberly

The Nature Conservancy

Smith, Alexander

Bureau of Reclamation

Take, John

Stantec

Tenny, Warren

AZ Municipal Water Users Association

Volpe, Christopher (Kip)

The Estes Co.

Wegner, Dave

Woolpert Engineering, Inc., National Academy of Sciences, Board Member Emeritus, Water Science Technology Board

Wilson, Maxwell

City of Phoenix

Wilson, Sid

Retired, Central Arizona Project

Wong, Brian

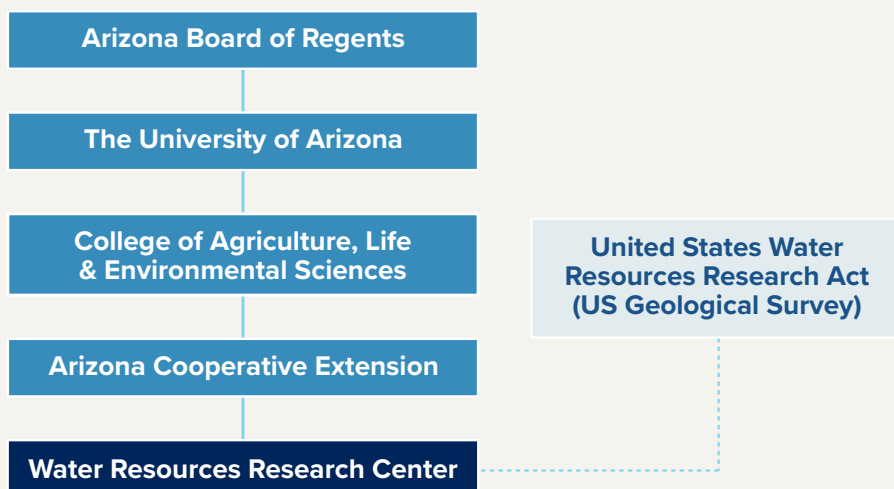
BKW Farms

Zamora, Francisco

Sonoran Institute

ORGANIZATION

The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center is Arizona's federally authorized water institute pursuant to the Water Resources Research Act (WRRRA), as administered by the US Geological Survey (USGS).



NEW ANNUAL REPORTING PERIOD

This year, after careful consideration, the WRRC decided to shift the annual reporting period from a calendar year (CY) schedule to a fiscal year (FY) schedule. The University of Arizona's fiscal year aligns with that of the State of Arizona, beginning on July 1 and concluding on June 30 the following

calendar year. Please note that as part of this transition, the reporting period of this FY 2026 report overlaps with a portion of the reporting period of the WRRC's previous CY 2025 report; information from July 1 through December 31, 2025, appears in both reports.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

(Note: Links to webpages are provided when available.)

In FY 2026, the WRRC continued to collaborate with stakeholders and partners and serve as a trusted source of Arizona water resources information. Throughout the year, the WRRC's role in helping to facilitate water resources discourse in Arizona and beyond has been reaffirmed through many research and engagement efforts.

Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program (TAAP)

Website

The WRRC continues to contribute research and leadership as a partner in the Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program, which seeks to strengthen binational collaboration, enhance stakeholder engagement, and advance scientific understanding of shared groundwater resources along the Arizona–Sonora border. Director Megdal continues to serve as TAAP's University of Arizona PI.

From July through December 2025, WRRC team members continued technical, coordination, and outreach activities under TAAP. Consultant Dr. Eylon Shamir submitted a technical inventory of mining activities within the Santa Cruz and San Pedro aquifers, integrating geospatial data from US and Mexican sources. Dr. Elia Tapia joined the WRRC staff in September 2025 and, together with Lizeth López, MS, supported binational coordination and the final technical and editorial work associated with the *Binational Study of the Transboundary Santa Cruz Aquifer*.

From January through June 2026, the WRRC expanded public access to TAAP findings and reconnaissance information. During the first half of the year, Director Megdal's chapter, "Factors that Contribute to Successful Diplomatic Outcomes: Case Study of the Colorado River Basin Cross-boundary Institution," was published in the *Routledge Handbook of Water Diplomacy*. On April 30, Tapia presented the poster "Reconnaissance of Border Aquifers in the Arizona–Sonora Region: Supporting Binational Groundwater Assessment Through Data Harmonization" at the University of Arizona College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences Annual Research Showcase. The WRRC also released public reconnaissance web maps for eight Arizona–Sonora border aquifers and continued developing a TAAP StoryMap and bilingual informational booklet. In May, the WRRC released the Spanish-language Arroyo publication *Borders and Water: Institutions, Investments, and Information (Fronteras y Agua: Instituciones, Inversiones e Información)*. On June 8, the WRRC worked with the New Mexico and Texas Water Resources Research Institutes to organize and participate in a TAAP session at the Universities Council on Water Resources/National Institutes for Water Resources Annual Water Resources Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Throughout the reporting period, the WRRC advanced stakeholder mapping, meetings with key stakeholders, and TAAP-focused outreach. Organizations engaged included the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality; Arizona Department of Water Resources; Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority; Santa Cruz County; Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Secretaría de Ciencia, Humanidades, Tecnología e Innovación; El Colegio de Sonora; and Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua. Tapia delivered online

lectures on TAAP and transboundary groundwater assessment for audiences at El Colegio de Sonora and Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua and participated in additional meetings and stakeholder engagement events with regional partners. Bilingual engagement materials were developed to support these activities and future outreach with partners, stakeholders, and border communities. The team also updated the English- and Spanish-language TAAP webpages to improve public access to information.

completed and approved by all participating partners from the United States and Mexico and was pending final reviews and release by the International Boundary and Water Commission. Tapia and López contributed substantially to editing, bilingual harmonization, map and figure review, coordination, and preparation of materials associated with the study.

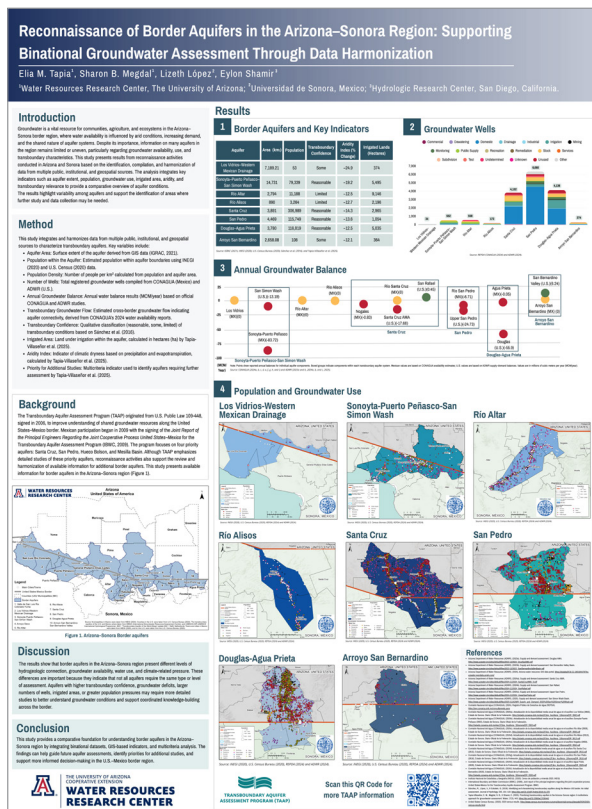
Water Research and Planning Innovations for Dryland Systems (Water RAPIDS)

Website

The Water RAPIDS Program works at regional, state, watershed, and local scales to build capacity within communities for water resources and watershed planning. The Water RAPIDS program fosters holistic approaches that integrate water planning with land use planning.

Assisting the Town of Superior in Understanding Environmental Flows for Queen Creek

In 2025, the Water RAPIDS Program continued to provide coordination and facilitation services in support of the Town of Superior's and the Queen Creek Working Group's activities, including the Queen Creek Restoration Project and green stormwater infrastructure projects. Queen Creek Working Group members finalized a Project Partnership Agreement with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to secure \$2.25 million in funding to rehabilitate and install infrastructure that will restore base flow to reaches of Queen Creek through the town. With WRRC support, the Town of Superior also secured approximately \$245,000 in Bureau of Reclamation funding for integrated watershed planning and a \$140,000 Water Infrastructure Financial Authority of Arizona (WIFA) grant to develop a new green stormwater infrastructure project. Through 2025, Water RAPIDS continued to support activities for both awarded grants. Additional WRRC involvement in Town of Superior activities included participation in meetings to seek other grants, such as exploring an opportunity for the Town of Queen Valley to apply for infrastructure funding to store treated wastewater for use by their local golf course. A new effort, initiated in response to flooding from



Director Megdal continued to oversee and coordinate the WRRC's TAAP efforts, with a focus on binational coordination and stakeholder engagement. The binational technical team met approximately every two weeks to address technical and editorial matters and plan future Arizona–Sonora TAAP activities. Megdal shared TAAP findings and lessons through meetings, presentations, publications, and responses to inquiries from researchers, agencies, elected officials, journalists, and other interested parties. She also co-edited the *Water Special Issue* “Working Across Borders to Address Water Scarcity” with Dr. Rosario Sanchez of Texas A&M.

By June 30, 2026, the *Binational Study of the Transboundary Santa Cruz Aquifer* had been largely

hurricanes Priscilla and Raymond in early October and emergency declarations, led to formation of the Copper Corridor Flood Mitigation Coalition between Globe, Miami, and Superior, allowing the towns to apply for funds collaboratively to address flooding problems in the watershed.



The WIFA grant to develop a green stormwater infrastructure project with the Town of Superior was completed at the end of June 2026 with the development of the Stone Dip Pocket Park. The Water RAPIDS' role included grant coordination, development of educational signage, and the completion of a **Green Stormwater Infrastructure Factsheet**.

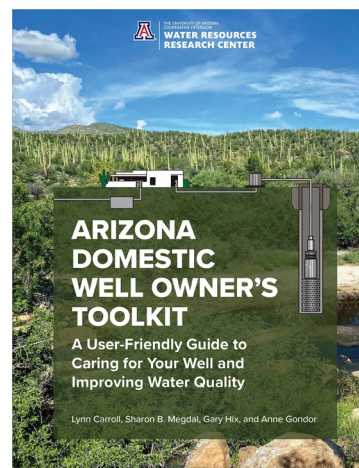
Arizona Water Conservation Factsheets

In September 2025, WRRC received notice of an award for a WIFA grant supporting the development of water conservation factsheets targeting populations throughout the state that are under-resourced in terms of existing conservation education resources. Using the WRRC process of factsheet development established by the successful **Arizona County Water Factsheets** project, the Water RAPIDS program staff and three graduate research assistants initiated research on conservation programs and began engaging groups and individuals with knowledge of water uses for which

conservation education is likely to produce water savings. Six factsheets were produced by June 2026 containing useful water-saving strategies to communities, businesses, and individuals in areas where technical resources may be limited. Topics include conservation strategies for small water systems and their customers, domestic wells, small-scale farms, and rural industries, as well as streams and their riparian areas. Technical review of factsheet content was accomplished with experts at partner organizations. In June, outreach was conducted in Yavapai, Coconino, Cochise, and Santa Cruz counties. Additional outreach for dissemination of the factsheets continues.

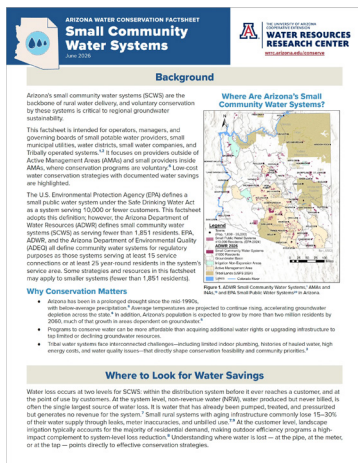
Arizona Domestic Well Owner's Toolkit

Also in June 2026, the WRRC and Arizona Cooperative Extension released the **Arizona Domestic Well Owner's Toolkit**. This updated guide provides information about well components and maintenance, geology, water quality, and water treatment to empower well owners to better maintain and monitor their wells and water supply.



Community Partners

The Water RAPIDS Program continued to provide support to assist community partners with watershed planning. The durable partnerships and relationships maintained by the program helped support activities, including a speaking engagement by Megdal at the **Patagonia-Sonoita-Elgin Rural Groundwater Resilience Workshop**, which was held on October 30, 2025, and convened by Arizona State University's Arizona Water Innovation Initiative in partnership with the University of Arizona's Institute for Resilience and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy. Megdal provided an overview of Arizona's groundwater policy framework, and Tapia supported workshop facilitation, helping local leaders and community members explore strategies for rural groundwater resilience. On December 4, Noah Rios, a graduate research assistant, presented



the WIFA Water Conservation Factsheets project to the **Sulphur Springs Water Alliance Workshop** hosted by the ASU Arizona Water Innovation Initiative.

Water RAPIDS staff also continue to participate in community of practice initiatives such as the Arizona Cross Watershed Network and the Rural Groundwater Resilience Exchange to develop new potential partner engagements, network, and learn about water resource management needs across the sectors and potential for grantmaking opportunities.

Together, these partnerships reflect the WRRC's commitment to advancing collaborative water solutions and supporting community-driven approaches across Arizona and the Arizona-Sonora border region.

Multi-University Collaboration on Groundwater-Dependent Agriculture

Website

Work continued during FY 2026 on the USDA-funded project, "Sustaining Groundwater and Irrigated Agriculture in the Southwestern United States under a Changing Climate." The project is led by UC-Davis, and the small University of Arizona team focuses on Pinal AMA agriculture and cover crops. Soil Health Extension Specialist Dr. Debankur Sanyal worked on research related to soil health and cover cropping. Sanyal participated via Zoom, along with Arizona farmer Ron Rayner, in a session Director Megdal organized for an August 2025 conference focused on no-till and sustainable agriculture, which was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Arizona team continued to collaborate with project team members from California and New Mexico. In January 2026, the annual project symposium was held at California State University, Fresno.

Indigenous Water Dialogues

This year, the WRRC continued to co-sponsor the **Native Voices in STEM** seminar series and partner on other programs with Tribal water content and speakers. Director Megdal served on host-planning committees and attended two programs. The first,

where Megdal also spoke, was the Collaborative Adaptive Management Workshop, held at Six Nations of the Grand River and Toronto, Canada, October 8–10, which was co-sponsored by the Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research. The second was the Women and Water Convening, held November 5–7 in Tuba City, Arizona, which was organized by Planet Women. On November 12, WRRC alum Dr. Aminta Menjivar gave a **webinar presentation** on her dissertation research on "Indian Water Rights Settlements in Arizona: An Analysis of Their History and Potential Future." **An article**, "Tribal Water Rights Settlement Acts Involving Arizona and Their Impacts on Water Security," coauthored by Menjivar, Megdal, and Heather Whiteman Runs Him, was published in *Water* in March 2026. The WRRC maintains ongoing collaboration and communication with Indigenous water professionals and leaders in Arizona and beyond. Megdal continues to serve on the Leadership Council of the Water & Tribes Initiative | Colorado River Basin.

Middle East Water

Website

Director Megdal's Middle East water activities continued to center on serving as one of two University of Arizona board members for the Kasser Joint Institute for Food, Energy, and Water Security (KJI), a unique partnership of the U of A, Jewish National Fund - USA, and the Arava Valley in the South of Israel. KJI's agrivoltaics work includes working with the Makueni community in Kenya. The six-person binational board meets regularly via Zoom. Through lectures and other commentary, Megdal shared information and insights about Middle East water policy and management.

Water Resources Research Act Programs

Website

The WRRC is the water resources research institute for Arizona, federally authorized under the Water Resources Research Act (WRRRA). The WRRRA base funding (104b) supports a portion of the WRRC's information transfer activities and a small competitive research grants program, which is open to research personnel at any of the three universities that are part of Arizona's

public university system (U of A, ASU, and NAU). A key criterion for these small grants is that the proposed project shows significant student training. In November, the WRRC hosted a **Water Webinar** featuring the research findings from the project funded last year on “Indian Water Rights Settlements in Arizona: An Analysis of their History and Potential Future,” mentioned above. For the 2025–2026 project year, WRRC personnel increased efforts to publicize and solicit proposals for the 104(b) program, which resulted in the submission of nine proposals to the WRRC. Based on the recommendation of the WRRC’s Technical Review Committee, two projects were selected for funding, but one had to withdraw due to personnel changes. The 104(b) project for 2025–2026 was “Quantifying the Water Losses of Data Centers in Maricopa County,” led by Principal Investigator (PI) Dr. Dwarakanath Ravikumar and co-PI Dr. Saurav Kumar, both at Arizona State University. Due to delays in federal funding, the 2025–2026 WRRR funding was not dispersed until the end of January 2026, five months after the anticipated September 1 start date. In anticipation of the 2026–2027 project

year funding, WRRC personnel continued efforts to publicize and solicit proposals, which resulted in the submission of fourteen proposals to the WRRC. As of the end of FY 2026, final selection of proposals was pending the release of the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the 104(b) by US Geological Survey (USGS).

WRRR administrative responsibilities also include the highly competitive Section 104(g) National Competitive Grant Program. The WRRC solicits proposals from researchers at any of Arizona’s three state universities and submits them to the US Geological Survey (USGS). In 2025, there were two 104(g) submissions, one of which was selected by a national review committee for funding. The project, titled “Medium (30-meter) Resolution Evapotranspiration Modeling of the Quantity of Water Used for Alfalfa and Other Hay in the Lower Colorado River Basin,” will be led by Dr. Russell Tronstad. The WRRC’s webpages for the 104(b) and 104(g) were updated to show a current list of funded projects.

OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

The WRRC engages with partners, stakeholders, and the public throughout Arizona and beyond through multiple media platforms. The communications team meets weekly to coordinate work on outreach activities and products. WRRC personnel routinely responded to requests for information and media interviews. A wide range of external news and information outlets featured WRRC personnel and programs in FY 2026.

International Engagement

Director Megdal continued to be involved in international partnership efforts during FY 2026, particularly through the Women in Water Diplomacy Network (WWDN), for which she serves on the inaugural Global Leadership Council. Megdal participated in July 2025 United Nations meetings to further the planning of the **2026 UN Water Conference**, to be held in the United Arab Emirates in December 2026. In October 2025, Megdal helped plan and attended the **Braiding Knowledges in Water & Land: Collaborative Adaptive Management Workshop** in Toronto, Canada. She

also led the planning for a WWDN event in Las Vegas immediately following the conclusion of the 2025 Colorado River Water Users Association annual conference. In addition, Megdal led the planning for a December 15, 2025, WRRC-hosted webinar featuring content from the recently published **Routledge Handbook of Water Diplomacy**, to which she contributed the case study, “Factors that Contribute to Successful Diplomatic Outcomes: Case Study of the Colorado River Basin Cross-boundary Institution.” The webinar was co-convened by the Stockholm International Water Institute and others. Additionally, Megdal was hosted by the Argentinian no-till association, Aapresid, in August 2025. She returned to Argentina December 3–4 for the 5th International Congress - *Water for the Future: Towards a New Agreement for Water* in Mendoza. Megdal shared information and take-aways from many of these experiences via her *Reflections* essays, published in the *Weekly Wave* and posted on the WRRC website. In March 2026, the WRRC co-convened and co-hosted a special event **MDPI World Water Day 2026 Webinar: Water for All People – Governance, Security, and Access**, which featured international guest speakers, and in

June the WRRC hosted a Water Webinar with UNU-INWEH Director Kaveh Madani, titled **Global Water Bankruptcy: Living Beyond our Hydrological Means in the Post-Crisis Era**. During FY 2026, the WRRC hosted international researchers Dr. Anna Msigwa (from Tanzania) and Dr. Pintu Kumar Mahla (from India) and met with international visitors to the United States.



Weekly Wave e-News Digest

Website

In FY 2026, the WRRC published 35 editions of the *Weekly Wave* and 6 editions of the bi-monthly *Summer Wave*. Each edition included WRRC and water community news, events, publications, and announcements. As noted above, the *Weekly Wave* published Director Megdal's **Reflections** series; she authored 9 *Reflections* in FY 2026. As of June 2026, the *Weekly Wave* was distributed to approximately 4,000 subscribers. Its reach is enhanced through posting on the WRRC website and further distribution by recipients.

Annual Conference

Website

The WRRC's 2026 annual conference, *Water for Tech, Mining & Energy: Pathways to Arizona's Future*, was held April 14–15, 2026, at the University of Arizona Student Union, with free livestreaming. Its theme focused on the challenges and opportunities for water stewardship in Arizona's industrial sectors for mining, energy, and technology. Discussions covered innovative strategies, best practices, regulatory frameworks, municipal-industrial partnerships, and environmental considerations. The program included insightful keynote talks from ASU Professor & Senior Global Futures Scientist Upmanu Lall, U of A Senior Vice President for Research and Partnerships Tomás Díaz de la Rubia, Avant

Energy Inc. Managing Director of Native American Energy John Lewis, and Woolpert Engineering Senior Strategic Consultant Dave Wegner. Other sessions, panels, and presentations included sector-focused "101" introductions to the topics of energy, mining, and tech; planning for large industrial water use; audience reflections; environmental and community perspectives; impacts, strategies, and stewardship; collaboration case studies; and insights on community engagement and planning that works. Other highlights included an opening blessing on Day 1 from Chairman of the Tohono O'odham Nation's San Xavier District Austin Nuñez, an evening of food and fun at the networking reception at Cork & Craft, a welcome on Day 2 from U of A President Suresh Garimella, and a video message from Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs on "Arizona Water: Accomplishments and Updates." The conference team developed the agenda with input from a Conference Advisory Committee to deliver an engaging one-and-a-half-day program.

WRRC 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



WATER FOR TECH, MINING & ENERGY

PATHWAYS TO ARIZONA'S FUTURE

The conference attracted 270 in-person registrants and 567 virtual registrants on the Zoom livestream. Feedback received during and after the conference was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees frequently praising its high-quality content, timely and substantive discussions, diverse perspectives, and strong organization. Many respondents highlighted the value of the conference as a forum for meaningful dialogue, networking, collaboration, and cross-sector learning around Arizona water issues, technology, sustainability, mining, and energy. The WRRC 2026 conference agenda and session recordings are available on the **conference webpage**, along with bios for the 40 speakers and moderators, information about the many generous conference sponsors, and archived materials from past WRRC conferences.

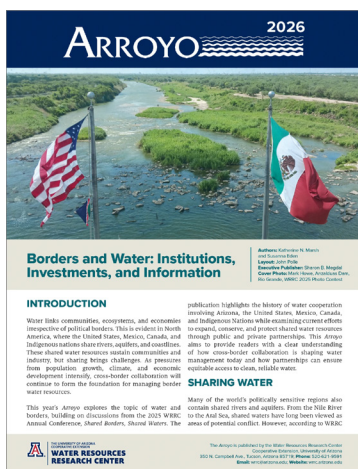
In 2026, the staff began planning for the **WRRC 2027 Annual Conference**, which will focus on water conservation in the face of Colorado River shortages and declining groundwater supplies. The conference will be held in Tucson at the University of Arizona Student Union on **April 26–27, 2027**. As in past years, free non-interactive livestreaming will be available.

Arroyo

Website

In FY 2026, *Arroyo*, the WRRC's annual publication on a single topic, built off the theme of the previous year's conference: *Shared Borders, Shared Waters: Working Together in Times of Scarcity*. The 2025 *Arroyo* Summer Intern, Katherine Nichole Marsh, a U of A undergraduate, attended the 2025 WRRC conference, familiarizing herself with the topic. Working with WRRC staff, Marsh developed a draft using information and examples from the conference presentations, augmented with additional research. The draft underwent internal review and revision before being sent to external reviewers, including conference speakers. Revised on the basis of their comments, the 2026 *Arroyo* was published in electronic form on March 30, and a Spanish language version was published on May 29. Subsequently, hard copies were mailed to print subscribers, including libraries, schools, firms, agencies, and nonprofits. Additional copies have been distributed through various organizations and events. *Arroyo* and Platinum level 2025 conference sponsorships supported development and publication: the Agnese Nelms Haury Program, City of Tucson/Tucson Water, Walton Family Foundation, Resolution Copper, Stantec, the ASU Arizona Water Innovation Initiative, Salt River Project, and the Southern Arizona Water Users Association (SAWUA).

Work on the 2027 *Arroyo* began in April 2026, when Lauren Yeager, the 2026 Summer *Arroyo* Intern,



attended the WRRC Annual Conference, *Water for Tech, Mining & Energy: Pathways to Arizona's Future*. Under the direction of WRRC's Susanna Eden, Yeager, who is pursuing a master's degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics, helped produce a draft *Arroyo* based on conference themes and presentations supplemented by research into publicly available information sources such as reports, articles, and websites. Publication is anticipated in early 2027, following review by external experts. Stantec, SAWUA, South32, Salt River Project, City of Tucson/Tucson Water; Diamond Ventures, and the Agnese Nelms Haury Program provided support through their 2026 Platinum and *Arroyo* level conference sponsorships.

WRRC Water Webinars

Website

In FY 2026, the WRRC continued to deliver the Water Webinar Series, attracting diverse audiences to presentations on a variety of water topics. During this reporting period, 13 Water Webinars featured a wide range of water experts and professionals. On average, 125 people attended WRRC Water Webinars in FY 2026, with an average of 208 registrants. Subject to speaker permission, Zoom recordings and copies of the slide presentations for each Water Webinar are posted to the WRRC website.

Other Public Events, Presentations, and Outreach

Website

In addition to Water Webinars, the WRRC hosted or co-hosted a variety of special events, including the annual Chocolate Fest, which featured updates on WRRC student research projects. Among the WRRC's co-sponsored events were the ASU Water Institute Earth Day webinar, "Poisoning the Well: How Forever Chemicals Contaminated America," and the **Native Voices in STEM (NVIS)** seminar series, a collaboration with the U of A **Indigenous Resilience Center**. NVIS seminars feature Native scientists, engineers, activists, community members, and leaders sharing their personal and professional journeys. The WRRC also partnered with the **Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy** and the U of A Center for **Climate Adaptation Science & Solutions (CCASS)** to co-host water events this year.

WRRC Website and Communications

Website

The WRRC maintains a robust website featuring news, events, and programs, as well as many publications and other resources, such as recorded Water Webinars. In FY 2026, the communications team continued to employ social media, specifically **Facebook**, X – formerly Twitter (**@AZWRRC**), **LinkedIn**, and Instagram (**@uofawrrc**), to share program updates and events and highlight publications. LinkedIn has become the platform that the WRRC's audience is most actively engaged with.

The WRRC's 2026 Water Outreach Summer Intern, Caroline James, updated the Water & Sustainability **Resources webpage**.

WRRC Photo Contest

Website

Each year the WRRC hosts the WRRC Photo Contest. The photographs are used in multiple ways,

including in the annual report, in the Arroyo and other publications, and on the WRRC website. This year, the contest returned to a broader theme, *A World of Water*, to showcase the many ways water shapes our planet and how we shape water. Winning photographs were selected by a team of



judges consisting primarily of WRRC staff. The winning photos each year are featured at the annual WRRC Chocolate Fest in February. All submitted photographs are maintained in an **online gallery**.

AFFILIATED PROGRAMS

Arizona Project WET

Website

As an Environmental Science extension program physically housed at the Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), Arizona Project WET (APW) aims to bring attention to water-use practices that influence availability, reliability, access, and sustainability. The program actively engages teachers, students, and community members to promote water stewardship while integrating science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) education with practical relevance. APW's mission is "to meet the needs of our community by employing relevant, research-based educational strategies and techniques that empower individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective water stewardship." Offering community-based workshops, events, and modules, APW prioritizes experiential learning outcomes in its environmental

education programming. The APW team delivers water-focused programming meaningfully connecting content areas to participant, and participant to action.

Arizona Water Festivals are the most widely recognized APW program statewide, last year these events brought together:

- 16,703 4th grade students
- 668 teachers
- 226 schools
- 1,280 volunteers

Visit the **2025–2026 APW Water Festival Impact Report** to learn more.

Water, Environment, and Energy Solutions Initiative (WEES)

Website

The WRRC has received significant funding each year from the Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF), including in FY 2026. The WEES initiative invests TRIF dollars in cutting-

edge research, cross-campus collaborations, and innovative partnerships that promote fresh ideas, technologies, and effective resource management practices. Since 2021, control over TRIF funding has been with Arizona Legislature, which initiated a new approach to distributing TRIF monies. The WRRC is grateful for continued TRIF funding, through the University of Arizona Senior Vice President for Research and Partnerships and the Arizona Institute for Resilience.

PERSONNEL NEWS

In FY 2026, the WRRC welcomed two new staff members. Elia Tapia joined as an Associate in Extension for Water RAPIDS/TAAP work. Julia Denton, who started at the WRRC in 2024 as an AmeriCorps member, joined the staff part time as Conference Coordinator & Communications Support Specialist. The WRRC also welcomed Luna Falk, who is pursuing dual master's degrees in Public Policy and in Agricultural Economics, as a graduate research assistant, and Katie Marsh, who is studying Biosystems Engineering, as the 2025 summer *Arroyo* intern and then as an undergraduate research and outreach assistant. In January, Caleb Dusek, a Water, Society, and Policy master's student, began a semester-long position as a graduate research assistant. Caleb, Katie, and continuing students Noah Rios and Ian Cann all completed their assistantships in May. Also in May, Caroleine James, a student in the MFA Writing program, and Lauren Yeager, who is pursuing a master's in Applied Economics and Policy Analysis, joined the team as the 2026 Water Outreach Summer Intern and 2026 *Arroyo* Summer Intern, respectively.

Dr. Aminta Menjivar, who started with the WRRC as a graduate student in 2024, continued to work with the WRRC as a Designated Campus Colleague (DCC). Garland Speight and Ashley Hullinger, who previously worked on Water RAPIDS, also continue to be engaged with the WRRC as DCCs. Several others worked with the WRRC as DCCs in 2025, including researchers Anna Msigwa and Pintu Kumar Mahla, along with Cade Pankowski, who helped with map updates, and Alice Templeton, who served on the conference planning committee.

As the University has moved to a centralized model for Human Resources services, the WRRC received assistance from Business Manager Jennifer

Rascon, Accountant Nicolas Propp, and Finance & Administration Manager Kevin Teres through the shared business office that also provides service to the Department of Environmental Science (ENVS), and School of Plant Sciences. The business office hired several new staff members, including Business Manager Tammy Strom.

To learn about the outstanding WRRC staff and students, please visit the Personnel Directory. Selected staff contact information is as follows:

- For anything and everything: Sharon Megdal, smegdal@arizona.edu
- Conference, 104 Program: Jamie McEvoy, jmcevoy@arizona.edu
- Communications (Weekly Wave and Water Webinars): Jessie Hampton, jessiehampton@arizona.edu
- Water RAPIDS: Anne Gondor, gondora@arizona.edu
- TAAP: Elia Tapia, emtapia@arizona.edu
- Graphics, Website, Photo Contest: John Polle, jpolle@arizona.edu
- Admin Support: Rose Veneklasen, trvene@arizona.edu
- Arroyo: Susanna Eden, seden@arizona.edu
- Conference Sponsorship: Julia Denton, juliadenton@arizona.edu

Personnel (FY 2026)

Staff



Sharon B. Megdal
Director



Jamie McEvoy
Associate Director



Julia Denton
Conference Coordinator &
Communications Support Specialist



Susanna Eden
Research Program Officer



Anne Gondor
Associate in Extension,
Water RAPIDS



Jessie Hampton
Communications Coordinator



John Polle
Media Specialist



Elia Tapia
Associate in Extension,
TAAP & Water RAPIDS



Rose Veneklasen
Administrative Associate

Business Office



Nic Propp
Accountant



Jennifer Rascon
Senior Business Manager



Kevin Teres
Manager, Finance
and Administration



Tammy Strom
Team 2 Business Manager,
ENVS Staff

Students

Lynn Carroll
Graduate Student Worker

Ian Cann
Undergraduate Research Assistant

Caleb Dusek
Graduate Research Assistant

Luna Falk
Graduate Outreach Assistant

Caroleine James
2026 Water Outreach Summer Intern

Katherine Marsh
Arroyo Summer Intern/Student Assistant

Noah Rios
Graduate Research Assistant/Coverdell Fellow

Lauren Yeager
2026 Arroyo Summer Intern

Designated Campus Colleagues

Research Associates

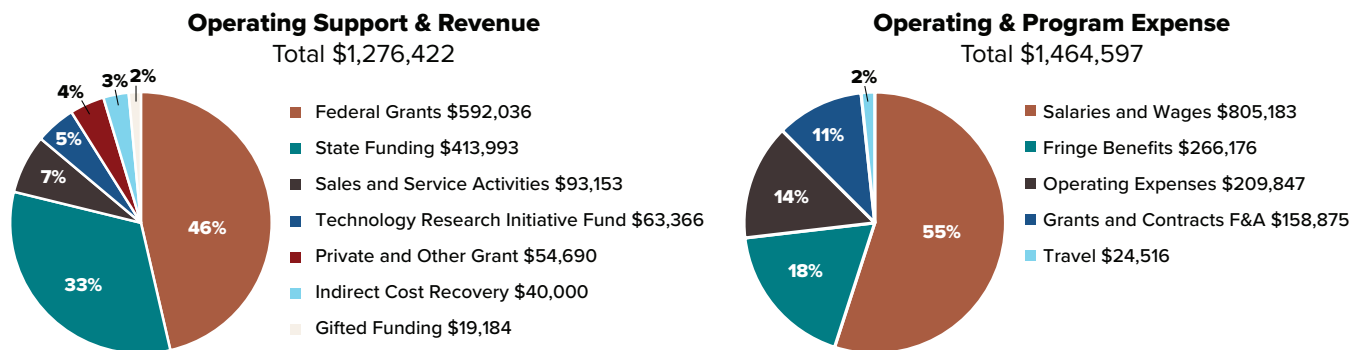
Pintu Kumar Mahla
Aminta Menjivar
Anna Msigwa

Others

Ashley Hullinger
Cade Pankowski
Garland Speight
Alice Templeton

FINANCIAL SUMMARY FY 2026

The WRRC worked with Business Office personnel to summarize revenue and expenses for the FY 2026 Financial Report. While there have been some shifts within WRRC funding, programs, and expenses, the overall budget for the Center has remained stable. In addition to funding from federal grants, financial support continues to come from state funding, indirect cost recovery, sales and service activities, the Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF), private grants, and gifts. Of the WRRC's total FY 2026 revenue, 46 percent came from federal grants, 33 percent came from state funds, 7 percent came from sales and service activities. Due to changes in the timing of allocations of funds by the administration, only a portion of the committed TRIF funds were received during this reporting period. Private grants and gift funding also provided support in FY 2026. Support for staff and appointed personnel accounted for 73 percent of total expenses. WRRC operations accounted for 14 percent of total expenses, grants and contracts F&A accounted for 11 percent of total expenses, and travel accounted for 2 percent of total expenses.





THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH CENTER

wrrc.arizona.edu

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Photos

Front cover: Kohinoor Kar – Horseshoe Bend, Glen Canyon, AZ 2023

Table of contents: David Quanrud – Sweetwater Headwaters, Tucson, AZ 2025

Page 1. Bert Bell – Wendy Islas – Basking In Gold, Rio Rico, AZ 2023

Page 10. Sue Darlington – Kittiwakes at Calving, Svalbard, Norway 2025

Back Cover: Nicole Bies Hernandez – River Trail, Lees Ferry, 2024

All photos were submissions to the **WRRC Photo Contest**.

WEEKLY WAVE

The *Weekly Wave* e-news digest is distributed on Fridays and contains WRRC news, events, and much more.

wrrc.arizona.edu/subscribe