

# GOVERNMENT

## AZ County Requires Water Before Development

Earlier this year, Cochise County in southern Arizona became the first county in the state to amend zoning regulations to require new subdivisions to meet the state's 100-year water adequacy requirements before being approved. This requirement already exists within Arizona's five Active Management Areas (AMAs) that cover the major metropolitan areas, but rural areas outside the AMAs had no such authority. However, last year the Arizona legislature

moved to allow counties, cities, and towns outside AMAs to enact their own legislation requiring similar demonstrations.

Three years ago, the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) determined that the Upper San Pedro Basin, which lies largely within Cochise County, did not warrant AMA designation because adequate water supplies exist to meet future needs. Many disagreed with this decision, claiming the water demands of the rapidly growing city of Sierra Vista and nearby U.S. Army's Fort Huachuca threatened the flow and ecosystem of the

upper San Pedro River. The new zoning regulations will now allow the county to manage its water resources more closely.

An adequate water supply is defined by ADWR as sufficient groundwater, surface water, or effluent of adequate quality to satisfy the proposed use for at least 100 years. The supply must be continuously, legally, and physically available. In addition, the financial capability to construct the water delivery, treatment, and storage facilities must exist. Tom Whitmer of ADWR elaborated on these requirements to the *Sierra Vista Herald*: If the subdivision will be distributing water from a provider or central system, that water use must not cause the water table to fall further than 1,200 feet below the surface for 100 years. If no central system is to be used and private wells on each lot are planned, the combined projected water use of the subdivision must not cause the water level elevation to fall more than 400 feet below the surface. A subdivision is defined by ADWR as six or more parcels in which at least one covers less than 36 acres. The new regulation does not affect the installation of individual wells by private landowners.

## HydroFacts

Number of species ever listed as threatened or endangered: 1,353  
 Number of species ever delisted for any reason: 41 (3 percent)

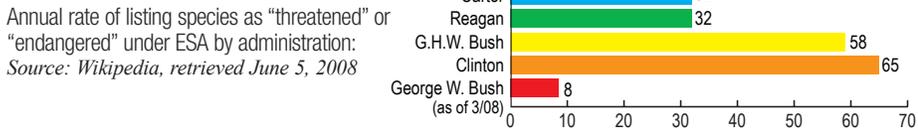
Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Number of environmental laws waived by Homeland Security in April 2008 to build the final 470 miles of border fence: 30

Source: CNN

Date that desert-nesting bald eagles were listed under ESA: March 11, 1967  
 Date U.S. Fish & Wildlife removed protection: July 9, 2007  
 Date court reinstated protection: March 5, 2008

Various sources



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The *Herald* reported that although the Cochise County supervisors approved the zoning amendment, some expressed concern over whether smaller developments could afford the hydrologic studies necessary to make the adequacy demonstration. ADWR is aware of that concern, said Scott Miller of the agency's assured and adequate water supply program, and is figuring out ways to help the smaller developments, according to the paper.

Visit [www.azwater.gov](http://www.azwater.gov) and [www.svherald.com](http://www.svherald.com).

## Planning Proceeds on Utah's Powell Pipeline

Documents submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) this spring put into motion the public review process and environmental assessment of