

NEW REPORT: First of its Kind Regional Replenishment Network Drives Water Solutions Along the San Pedro River in Drought-stricken Arizona

[SIERRA VISTA, AZ] Thirteen billion gallons of water have been saved or used to replenish groundwater supplies as described in the [Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network's](#) first comprehensive report. [The 5-Year Review and 2020 Annual Report](#) summarizes the progress to date at eight water conservation and replenishment sites along 25 miles of the upper San Pedro River, encompassing more than 6,000 acres. The network's goal is to conserve groundwater to benefit people, nature and local economies.

"Our ability to sustain both a flowing river and a vibrant economy in the region is a result of a long history of collaboration between scientists and decision makers, and our ability to speak with one voice about real solutions that make the most sense," says Rick Mueller, Mayor of Sierra Vista.

Why is groundwater so important? In the United States, groundwater is the source of drinking water for about half the total population and nearly all of the rural population, and over 40 percent of irrigation water is groundwater. Groundwater supplies have diminished in many parts of the nation over the past century, and these rates of decline are amplified even more in the arid West during extended periods of drought, when surface water availability results in an increased dependence on groundwater.

Grounded in Science

Twenty-three years of [mapping the flows of the San Pedro River](#), during the hottest time of the year, as well as the collaborative science produced by the Upper San Pedro Partnership and its members (<https://uppersanpedropartnership.org/>) has informed where water conservation and replenishment projects are needed most.

By the Numbers:

- There are eight replenishment projects along 25 miles of the upper San Pedro River.
- The impact of CCRN projects since 2015 includes total water benefits of over 40,000-acre feet or more than **13 billion gallons**
- Utilizing stormwater and treated effluent has resulted in more than 17,000-acre feet of recharge which is more than 5.5 billion gallons.
- Groundwater pumping that is now permanently retired has saved more than 15,000-acre feet which is equal to an estimated 5 billion gallons.
- Precluded groundwater pumping – pumping which has been permanently prevented from happening in the future –saves over 8,000-acre feet of pumping each year, which is equal to an estimated 2.6 billion gallons.

"What we've been able to accomplish at the scale of the San Pedro is really encouraging," adds Holly Richter, Arizona's water projects director. "Our strong science is enabling us to find new ways to balance the water needs of both local communities and one of the last large desert rivers that continues to flow in the Southwest. Now we need to find a way to fund the necessary recharge infrastructure projects".

[Inside the Report](#)

- Learn about the roles of the stakeholders including Cochise County, Cities of Sierra Vista and Bisbee, Fort Huachuca, The Nature Conservancy, and the Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District in regional water management
- See how science was used to inform regional water management
- Access details of specific water projects such as type, location, and benefits

The Cochise County Recharge Network website can be found [here](#).