

## **Growth and Water in the Tucson Active Management Area**

Kenneth Seasholes  
Arizona Department of Water Resources

### **ABSTRACT**

The population of the Tucson Active Management Area (AMA) has doubled since its creation in 1980. During that same period, overdraft has been reduced by more than 50% and additional progress is being made towards the management goal of AMA-wide safe yield. Using the Tucson AMA as a case study, this paper examines the interplay between growth and water resources, with an emphasis on some of the key strengths and limitations of the approach taken within Arizona's AMAs.

Relying on a variety of data sources, the author illustrates how the water management framework in the AMA has responded to, and been challenged by population growth. Particular attention is paid to artificial recharge activity, which has allowed Tucson's regional aquifer systems to be used in ways that are flexible, innovative and sometimes controversial. Those activities are examined within the complex institutional context of ADWR's Recharge and Recovery Program, the Assured Water Supply Rules, the Arizona Water Banking Authority (AWBA) and the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGRDR).

The author argues that the issues of population growth and water management in the AMAs could benefit from greater analysis, and a more nuanced discussion of the long-term implications of current policies.