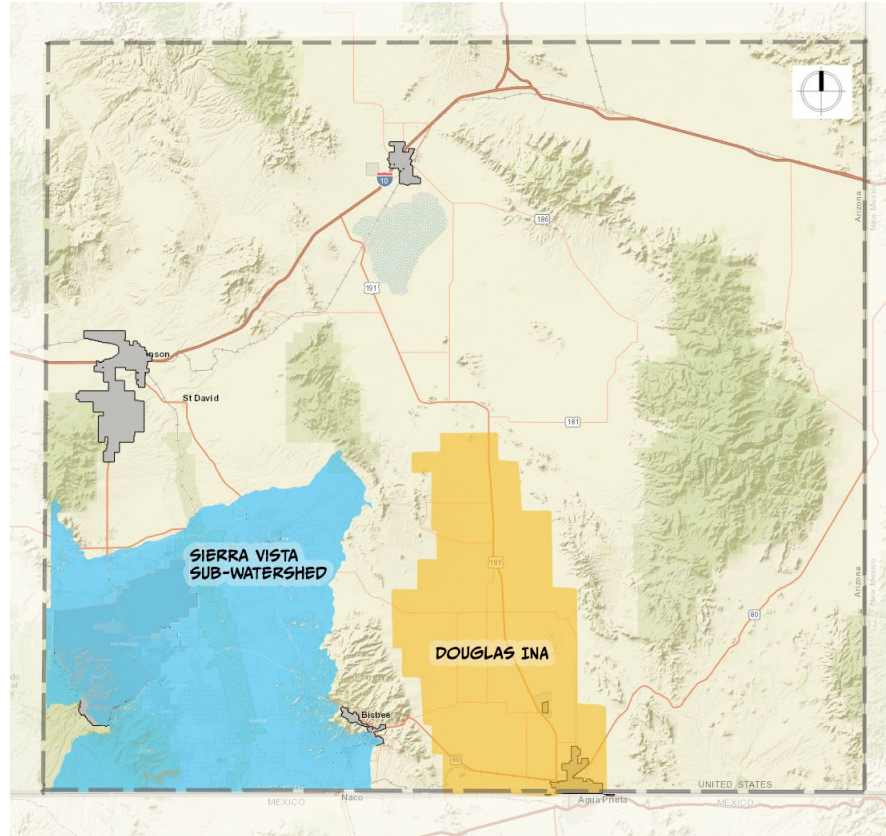




# Growing Water Smart Action Plan Report



Board of Supervisors Work Session  
June 29, 2021



- Earlier this month, County representatives participated in a 3-day workshop centered on strategies to promote water conservation, efficiency and reuse.
- Prior to the workshop, the County completed a self-assessment.
- During the workshop, each group brainstormed on a message and next steps, resulting in an action plan.



### **Our Water Message**

Cochise County loves our small towns and rural lifestyle. But drought and excess groundwater use are threatening our shared and limited water supplies. Therefore, we need your support to ensure the lifestyle we all love is available for our kids into the future.



## **Goal:** Standardize policies across jurisdictions and collaborative activities

**Planning:** Evaluate water policy countywide, assist jurisdictions in adopting water policy through IGA

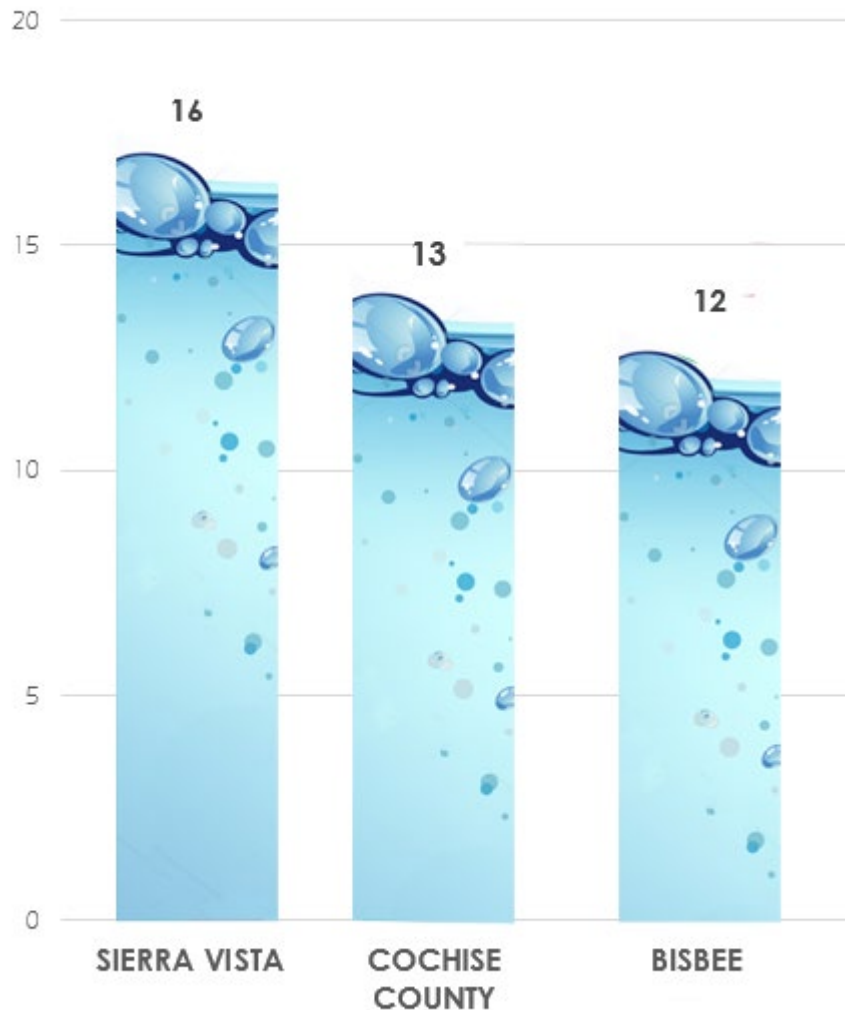
### **BOS:**

- Ensure that the County's Strategic Plan aligns with our water conservation priorities.
- Develop consistent messaging around the importance of water conservation.

### **Drought-stricken communities push back against data centers**

As cash-strapped cities welcome Big Tech to build hundreds of million-dollar data centers in their backyards, critics question the environmental cost.





## Adoption of water conservation requirements

- Sierra Vista has the most water-related code restrictions, Bisbee also regulates water conservation
- The remainder of cities in Cochise County have few, if any, water conservation code requirements



## **Goal:** Increase agricultural water efficiency

- **Planning:** Explore additional development standards for special use agriculture, such as agricultural processing
- **BOS:** Education programs, incentive programs, voluntary metering, Cochise Farm and Livestock Bureau meeting participation
- **Engineering:** Recharge/ green infrastructure opportunities for large growers (pilot projects)

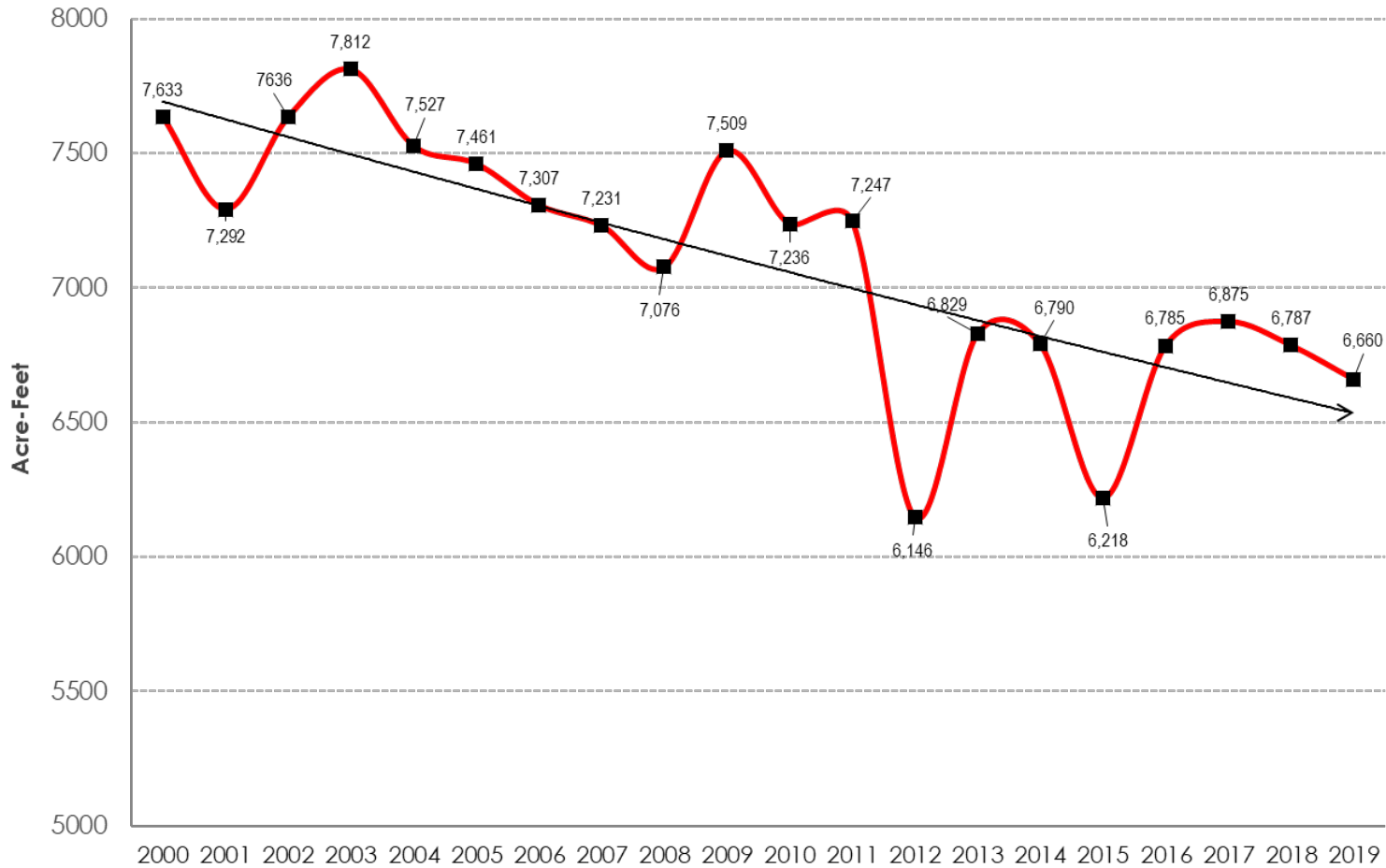


## **Goal: Update Codes/Policy Changes (Building Code, Zoning, Comp Plan, Subdivision Regs) Planning**

- **Zoning:** Update Water Conservation Measures - Countywide, SV Sub-Watershed Overlay, special use factor, rezoning factor, and development standards for specific uses like golf courses, RV parks, and data centers/warehouses
- **Building Code:** Adopt local amendments for water conservation from zoning (waterless urinals, Energy Star labels)
- **Non-Policy:** develop approved plant list, revise special use and rezoning applications to require the applicant to state water conservation measures



## Total City Water Usage (2000-2019) in Acre-Feet (Sierra Vista)



**Good water policy decreases overall water use**

37,775 residents  
U.S. Census

45,047 residents  
U.S. Census

43,045 residents  
U.S. Census (estimate)



## **Goal: Increase Water Recharge (Engineering/CCRN/Willcox Water Project, BOS)**

Treated effluent from local municipalities is used to:

- Support San Pedro River flow
- Protect the San Pedro from municipal groundwater pumping centers
- Irrigate City-owned golf courses (Benson, Douglas, Willcox)
- Various recharge/flood control projects



It's also discharged to Cochise Lakes (Important bird area)



**BOS:** Funding for water recharge initiatives, studies, pilot projects, continual monitoring, community workshops



The Palominas Flood Control and Recharge Project



## Next Steps

- **Planning:** R-21-04 (Zoning Code Changes Assoc. with the Building Code Update), R-21-03 (Water Conservation)
- **Engineering:** Ongoing recharge project development, coordination, monitoring
- **BOS:** Community messaging/education, continue to build Willcox Water Project, partnership participation