

sustainable water uses in landscapes, and community partnerships that promote sustainable water use – including, but not limited to:

- Effluent enhancements
- County turf / landscape updates at several County locations (Libraries and Parks, as examples),
- Stormwater park progress (Wa:K and Amphi),
- Updates on the impacts of Detention Basin developments (Rita Ranch Detention Basin),
- Community partnerships and evaluation of Stormwater Parks

Details of all these projects are within the WWG Update provided to the BOS.

Heat Ordinance Update

The County has implemented two substantial Heat Safety policies to protect County and contracted workforce. The history of these policies is outlined in the Heat Ordinance Update provided to the BOS on June 4, 2026. A report on the Heat Ordinance was also requested in the May 12th Study Session.

The County's Heat Safety Administrative Procedure (AP 3-35) and the County's Heat Safety Ordinance for Contractors (2024-010) demonstrate several dedicated activities to inform, develop and implement policies that protect heat vulnerable workforce. While the City of Phoenix and the City of Tucson also implemented similar ordinances, Pima County is the first County to develop and implement such a policy in Arizona. Pima County's Heat Ordinance has been in effect since September 2024, after the BOS approval of the policy in August 2024. Since the adoption of the Ordinance, the County has included the Heat Safety clause on 1,700 contracts and has received no third-party complaints as of this reporting.

Several first-year activities are detailed in the Heat Ordinance Update memoranda and will be highlighted in the BOS study session discussion. There are several opportunities to bolster data collection on workforce safety, enhance partnerships, and evaluate the two policies.

Stipulated in the BOS approved CAPCO (Extreme Heat – Chapter 2) is that the Climate Action Team will proceed with an evaluation of the Heat Safety Ordinance. Specifically, CAPCO states that Pima County Administration, Pima County Procurement and Pima County Health Department will develop an evaluation plan for the Ordinance and the AP.

The team will also create some baseline measurements and data measurement plan for available data that can enhance the safety policies. The CAPCO also states that the County will work with several partners including, but not limited to, Arizona Department of Occupational Health and Safety Administration, jurisdictions that have implemented Heat Safety policies (such as the City of Tucson) Labor Unions and Business community to inform the evaluative strategies. This is progressing and an update will be provided at the completion of CAPCO year 1.

The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
Re: **Update on Pima County Heat Ordinance and Heat Safety Policies**
June 5, 2026
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Additional CAPCO Updates

Several additional updates will also be included in the presentation.

Carbon / Energy – Renewable Energy

I will provide a robust update from the Carbon and Energy Working Group in Fall / Winter 2026 that will detail not only this project, but broader energy / emissions assessment recommendations for the upcoming CAPCO years and recommended projects to meet the 60% emissions reduction goals. I will also update on development of the fiscal year (FY 2026 / 2027) renewable energy projects (planned solar installations).

Waste & Materials

The Waste & Materials Working Group is set up to inform on overall waste, recycling and procurement of sustainable goods. There are several activities to date such as reviewing contracts, policies and procedures on handling of waste, materials, and surplus across County operations.

In alignment with those strategies, the County deployed its first Surplus Event. Developed as a pilot, this event was incredibly successful – drawing over 200 staff from over 28 county departments to reuse and distribute over 2,000 pounds of office supplies, valued at an estimated \$25,000. This is an incredible achievement that diverted unnecessary waste and demonstrated a cost (and storage) saving impact.

Landscapes

The Landscapes Working Group updates are being prepared for the BOS August Update. The Working Group is working on several data informed strategies that will improve tree planting, conservation and ranching lands, food systems and data-informed connections to the WWG activities, and several other efforts, such as Heat Vulnerability and Wildfire Mitigation.

Attached please find the Climate Update prepared for the June 9th Study Session.

JKL/anc

Attachment

- c. Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Chad Kasmar, Deputy County Administrator
Sarah Davis, Senior Advisor, Pima County Administrator's Office
Pima County Climate Action Executive Team Directors



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Climate Action Plan for County Operations (CAPCO) 2025-2030

Pima County Board of Supervisors Update June 9, 2026



Climate Action Plan for County Operations 2025-2030



CHAPTER 1
Carbon
& Energy

CHAPTER 2
Waste &
Materials

CHAPTER 3
Extreme
Heat

CHAPTER 4
Wildfire &
Invasive Species

CHAPTER 5
Water

CHAPTER 6
Landscapes

CHAPTER 7
Climate &
Community



CAPCO June Update

Water Working Group Update

- Enhance Water Supply,
- Reduce Water Demand at County Operations, Enhance Sustainability – sustainable use of effluent, and
- Build innovative strategies to connect water and landscapes

Heat

Heat Safety and Workforce – Ordinance and Administrative Procedure

Waste and Materials
Surplus Event May 2026



Water Working Group

Enhance Water Supply

Regional Flood Control District

Stormwater Parks, Detention Basins, and Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Updates, Accomplishments & Active Projects

- Opening of **Julia Keen Stormwater Park** (completed)
- **Wa:K Park** (active)
- **Amphi Stormwater Park** (active)
- **Rita Ranch Detention Basin**

RFCD has seven completed Stormwater Parks:

Seneca, Richey, Cherry Avenue, Las Vistas, Elvira, Peter Howell & Julia Keen

UA Stormwater Parks Evaluation



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Water Working Group

Reduce Water Demand at County Operations, Enhance Sustainability

County Operations Demand & Sustainable Use of Effluent

Update, Accomplishments & Active Projects

County Turf, Landscape and Water Use

- Martha Cooper, Richard Elias Mission and Himmel Park **Libraries** – artificial turf, xeriscaping / water containment and desert vegetation
- Effluent at **Arthur Pack Regional Park**
- Pima County Kino Sports Complex and Stadium District Water Optimization – **all fields on reclaimed water**



Pima County Kino Sports Complex & Stadium District Project
Infrastructure to deliver reclaimed and collected stormwater – saving 30 acre-feet of potable water, annually – the equivalent of 90 households

County Water Use & Demand

- Opportunity to pursue water monitors-priority in remote areas
- Continue to assess and evaluate fixtures, equipment, and air handling in the downtown buildings
 - Overall County water use up 22%





Water Working Group

Build Innovative Strategies to Connect Water and Landscapes

Enhanced data use and geospatial strategies such as flooding conditions, heat vulnerability & heat islands, tree canopy, census tract & vulnerable neighborhoods, multiuse spaces

Reducing Demand:

- Economic Development Related Water Consumption – BOS Policy;
- Large Water User Opportunities – Industry;
- Groundwater Wells, Acquisition and Retirement of Groundwater Uses
- Additional Water Harvesting

Growing Supply:

- Mountain Front Runoff Recharge
- GSI Quantification Project

Sustainable Use of Effluent:

- Advanced Water Purification & El Corazon Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration,
- Marana High Plains and Green Valley Managed Recharge Projects

Looking Forward





Heat and Workforce

Evolution of Heat Policies 2024

Oversight of development, implementation and oversight of Heat Safety Policies

Pima County Administrator's Office
Pima County Procurement
Pima County Health Department

Heat Safety – Workforce and Pima County Policies *Timeline and Evolution of Heat Safety Policies*

BOS Direction to Explore and Draft Heat Safety Policies

Resolution 2024-17 Adopted Heat Awareness Week and directs the County to develop and enact policy and / or procedural recommendations for worker safety

Rulemaking – OSHA, partner jurisdictions; Administrative Procedure 3-35 County's Heat Safety Policy

Pima County's Heat Safety AP effective June 5, 2024
City of Tucson Mayor and Council approval of Heat Ordinance for City Contractors
OSHA Proposed National Rulemaking for Heat Safety
BOS direction to draft a Heat Safety Ordinance (Ordinance), adjusting Pima County's Procurement Code

Approval of Heat Safety Ordinance August 16th, Effective September 19th, 2024

Public comment and comment from the AG's office added to Ordinance language.

BOS approval of Ordinance August 16th, 2024 – effective September 19th, 2024

Feedback Gathering – Staff Survey, Focus Groups – Labor Unions, Business / Industry

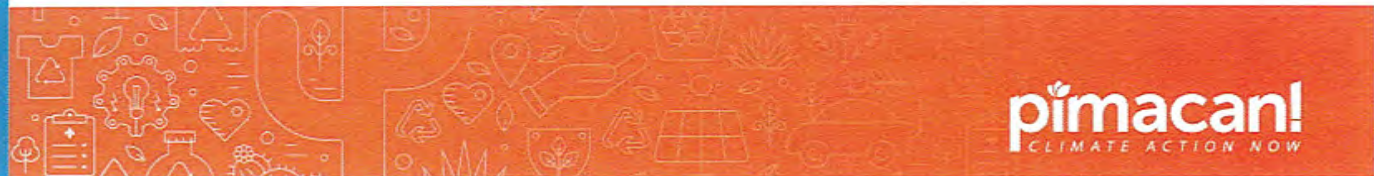
Pima County, City of Tucson and partner organization **feedback gathering** – focus groups and survey input – labor unions and business / industry community, Pima County employee survey (1,500 respondents)

Led to framework and priorities of essential elements of Pima County AP 3-35 Heat Safety for Pima County Workforce

Draft Ordinance for BOS Consideration and Public Comment

Ordinance language provided to Pima County BOS and open for public comment.

Several comments, mostly in favor of heat safety rulemaking. Comment also provided by Arizona Attorney General (AG) Kris Mayes.





Heat and Workforce

Core Elements of Pima County's Heat Policies

- Recognizing Heat Related Illness / Emergencies and Protocol
- Acclimatization for Worksites
- Water, Shade, Breaks, Personal Protective Equipment
- Adjusted work schedules
- Buddy systems / post-worksites check-ins
- Clear communication / multilingual
- Clear and safe reporting of heat safety non-compliance

Implementation of Heat Policies and Opportunities

Key Milestones in Implementation

- Creation of accessible resources for Heat Safety Planning – Heat Safety Planning (guides and templates, publicly available)
- Annual Heat Summit 2025 – **Heat Safety for Workforce Breakout Session** – facilitated by Labor Union partners, City of Tucson and Pima County
- State Directives to **explore state-wide heat safety policies**
- Baseline / gaps in data for workforce safety
- BOS Approval of CAPCO, directing the evaluation of the Heat Safety Policies (H.2.2a & H.2.2b)

Opportunities:

- Heat Safety Training coupled with Heat Safety Plans
- Heat Safety Plans that are accessible across all levels of the workforce
- Data on heat safety, incidents and heat safety plans





Waste & Materials

Pima County Pop-Up Surplus Event



Organized by Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Facilities Management (FM), Project Design & Construction (PDC), and Pima County Green Stewards

Event Impact

- Over **200 employees** participating from 28 County Departments
- Over **2,000 pounds of office supplies** redistributed to County departments, **valued at an estimated \$25,000** and diverted from landfills



CAPCO Upcoming Reports



Bi-monthly Update Topics – August BOS Study Session

- Landscapes
 - Waste & Materials
 - Update on Carbon / Energy and Water Use Assessments
 - Tucson Electric Power Integrated Resource Plan Update
 - GIS Maps and PimaCan Website Enhancements
-

Get Involved!

Pima County Employee Engagement in Climate! Monthly Roundtables In Alignment with CAPCO Activities

June: Invasive Species and Wildfire

(Aligns with CAPCO, Wildfire Mitigation Plan, CWPP, and Invasive Species AP)

July: Water Working Group



PIMA COUNTY

Questions and
Thank you!

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MEMORANDUM

Date: June 1, 2026

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner
County Administrator

Re: **Update on County Projects and Initiatives to Conserve Water Resources in Pima County**

Since the last annual update from the Water Working Group (WWG) on [June 23, 2025](#), the Board of Supervisors adopted the Pima County Action Plan for County Operations (CAPCO) which establishes the goals, performance measures, and implementation strategies for core areas of the County's operations as it relates to climate impact. Chapter 5 of CAPCO addresses the core areas of water supply, demand, and sustainability and designates the WWG as the lead implementor.

The WWG has been working on these core water-related areas since it first convened in 2022. In addition to the June 23, 2025 memorandum, I have provided you with regular updates from the WWG — in [2022](#), [2024](#), and [2025](#) — that explain the projects and initiatives that the County and Regional Flood Control District (RFCD) have worked on to reduce water demand and augment the regional supply of water resources in the aquifer and natural environment. These activities included evaluating the feasibility of capturing stormwater for recharge and beneficial use, better utilizing effluent, reducing and eliminating turf and improving turf management. The WWG coordinated with the County's Climate Action Executive Team to develop and draft CAPCO. The WWG also provided support for defining the Water Resources Element of the Pima Prospers 2025 Comprehensive Plan as well as promoting water resource related activities for the 2025 Floodplain Management Plan.

Below are summaries of new and ongoing projects and initiatives that address the core areas of water in Chapter 5 of CAPCO.

Core Area	W.1 Augmenting Water Supply with Enhanced Use of and Recharge of Stormwater
Target:	Address vulnerable areas including where there is subsidence and dropped groundwater tables, heat islands, low park score neighborhoods, disadvantaged demographics, flooding impacts, and diminishing creeks. In the long term, reach stormwater capture levels equivalent to the amount of new runoff created by streetscapes.

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Rita Ranch Detention Basin Update

RFCD owns a channel and detention basin that collects stormwater from the Rita Ranch master planned community in the City of Tucson. Prior to RFCD's acquisition, the detention basin was not designed or constructed to promote groundwater recharge. This site was selected for recharge based on opportunity and to serve as a pilot for further stormwater recharge projects. In December 2024, RFCD installed two large infiltration trenches within the basin to enhance the volume of stormwater that can be recharged during and after rain events.

During the first year of operation, the basin captured flows from several rain events resulting in 23.32 acre-feet of stormwater and rainwater flowing into the infiltration trenches. RFCD has recently published a full report on the performance of the basin, and the report is available on the [PimaCan website](#). RFCD and Tucson Water have continued discussing cooperative action to perform geophysical analysis of the basin, make further alterations to the basin, and monitor the groundwater recharge.

Julia Keen Stormwater Park

On May 2, 2026, RFCD hosted *Fiesta in the Park* to celebrate the new Julia Keen Stormwater Park. Part of Parkview Park in the Julia Keen neighborhood near 22nd Street and Alvernon, the stormwater park addresses local flooding and brings necessary green space to provide shade and cooling to the community. RFCD designed and constructed the stormwater park in partnership with the City of Tucson Storm to Shade, local nonprofit Flowers and Bullets, and the Julia Keen Neighborhood Association.

Wa:K Park

RFCD has partnered with the San Xavier District (SXD) of the Tohono O'odham Nation to design and construct the Wa:K Neighborhood Stormwater Park south of the San Xavier Mission. The park mitigates the consistent flooding from Campus Wash near a major vehicular intersection linking the Reservation to Interstate 19. Construction of the water harvesting basins and planting is complete and RFCD remains involved in the project by providing project management services for SXD for construction of their recreational amenities, including an exercise area and Toka field.

Amphi Stormwater Park

On February 4, 2025, the Board approved the acquisition of two properties from the City of Tucson and an IGA for the City of Tucson and RFCD to collaborate on the development and maintenance of a green stormwater infrastructure ("GSI") park in the Amphi neighborhood. Due to the properties' location within the Navajo Wash floodplain and the comparatively shallow water table, the site is an ideal candidate for the installation of dry wells to enhance infiltration to recharge urban stormwater. This neighborhood is in a disadvantaged and heat-vulnerable area, meaning that the installation of the typical elements of a GSI park, including water harvesting, native plant restoration, and other park amenities will provide needed additional benefits to the area, including flood hazard reduction and recharge.

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RFCD is currently working with the neighborhood community to provide information and receive feedback for the design concepts and feasibility of the park.

Rincon Creek

Recently, the Board approved a development agreement that will result in RFCD’s acquisition and preservation of 610 acres of the Rincon Creek floodplain. This is a good example of the planning that the County is undertaking with respect to prioritizing the preservation of the floodplain. Upon acquisition, RFCD will begin restoration activities, including identification and removal of invasive species, and begin community engagement to identify other restoration and recreation elements that could be included.

Further downstream, RFCD is designing a grade control structure to prevent the Rincon Creek from downcutting. This grade control will also be designed to increase groundwater recharge.

University of Arizona Stormwater Parks Evaluation

RFCD contracted with the University of Arizona to assess how four recently constructed stormwater parks perform during periods of rainfall. RFCD has installed rain gauges and pressure transducers to collect data that allows RFCD to evaluate the performance of individual stormwater parks under varying rainfall scenarios. This study conducts an in-depth empirical analysis on four stormwater parks: Cherry Park, Richey Park, Seneca Park, and Alvernon Park. Empirical equations and hydrologic models were used to analyze rainfall and water levels in the detention basins during a reporting period of 1.-1.75 years. [Results of the study](#) indicate that these small detention basins have harvested between 0.2 and 6.15 acre-ft during that time period and they are collecting stormwater as planned and they are sustaining a vibrant tree canopy. The purpose of these smaller basins is to increase the urban tree canopy without use of additional potable water, and this study confirms that this is successfully occurring.

Evaluation of Mountain Front Recharge

RFCD is partnering with the Watershed Management Group and Sky Island Alliance on a planning grant project funded by the Bureau of Reclamation to determine how to enhance water availability for springs and shallow groundwater areas in the Santa Catalina Mountain front. The planning effort is identifying the location of springs, which are added to a database. Several Homeowner Associations (Al Marah, Hill Farm, LACR, La Cebedilla, Canyon Ranch Estates, Finger Rock HOA) have been contacted to request permission to build small earthen structures to protect the springs.

Core Area	W.2 Promoting the Sustainable Use of Effluent
Target:	Enhanced multi-benefit use of reclaimed water on County and Community Sites. Balance amount of regional aquatic / meso / riparian habitat lost to drought and increased water demands with river habitat gained through effluent flows and effluent irrigation.

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Lower Santa Cruz River Managed Recharge Project (LSCMRP)

The LSCMRP is collaborative agreement that includes Pima County, the City of Tucson, the Bureau of Reclamation, and other jurisdictions to manage the effluent that the County discharges from the Tres Rios and Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facilities into the Santa Cruz River. The participants receive long-term storage credits for the recharge that occurs in the river before the effluent reaches the Trico Road bridge near the Pima and Pinal County line.

The rights to the effluent – and, therefore, the amount participants may claim in storage credits – are governed by a series of agreements beginning with the 1979 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City of Tucson and Pima County. The 1979 IGA grants the City ownership of 90% of the effluent that is generated at reclamation facilities in the metropolitan area while the County retained ownership of 10% of the effluent. In 1983, the City of Tucson agreed to deliver 28,200 acre-feet of effluent per year to the Secretary of the Interior to meet obligations to the Tohono O’odham Nation under the Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act of 1982. The Bureau of Reclamation manages the Nation’s entitlement under the agreement. A 2003 IGA established the LSCMRP and set the terms and conditions for the participants to manage the effluent recharge in the river. In 2025, the Bureau of Reclamation owned approximately 48% of the recharged effluent under this agreement, the City of Tucson owned 39%, and Pima County owned 5%. The other jurisdictions divided ownership of the remaining 8%.

Marana High Plains Effluent Recharge Project

On December 3, 2024, ADWR issued RFCD permits to double the capacity of the Marana High Plains Effluent Recharge Project (“MHPERP”) and store a maximum of 1,200 acre-feet of treated effluent annually until 2044 for groundwater recharge credits. During the 2025 calendar year, the MHPERP stored 826.3 acre-feet of effluent, a 38% increase from 2024. The complete 2025 Annual Monitoring Report for MHPERP is available on the [PimaCan!](#) website.

In January and February of 2026, the County has delivered approximately 291.7 acre-feet of effluent to the facility with net recharge totaling 289.9 acre-feet after evaporation and evapotranspiration losses. In addition to the benefit of recharging groundwater before it leaves Pima County, the MHPERP also supports nearby riparian habitat, floodplain management, and public recreation opportunities along the Santa Cruz River.

Santa Cruz River Cortaro Narrows Training Structures

RFCD is currently installing seven new soil cement grade control structures within the inner channel of the Santa Cruz River where the lower terrace of bank protection is experiencing undercutting. These installations will stabilize the riverbed, helping to maintain the channel's elevation and effectively guiding and spreading out the river's flow. By taking these proactive steps, RFCD aims to further protect our community from flooding and ensure the safety of all residents in Pima County. The structures will have an additional benefit of facilitating recharge in the river by slowing down flows, promoting

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infiltration, and enhancing riparian vegetation. The effect of the structures has not yet been estimated, however once the project is complete, RFCD will monitor the outflows at Trico Road bridge to assess the effectiveness of the structures in reducing the amount of water flowing into Pinal County and recharge levels.

Direct Use of Effluent at Kino Sports Complex

A large portion of the County's effluent allocation is wheeled through Tucson Water's Reclaimed Water System. In 2025, the City wheeled 1,479 acre-feet for direct use at County parks and the Stadium District.

In May, the Kino Sports Complex and Stadium District completed construction of infrastructure to deliver reclaimed and collected stormwater to the Veterans Memorial Stadium (VMS). The VMS was the last field that the Stadium District watered with potable water. The use of reclaimed and stormwater at the VMS will save approximately 30 acre-feet of potable water per year or the equivalent of approximately 90 single-family households.

Direct Use of Effluent at Arthur Pack Regional Park

This spring, Parks and Recreation Department completed a capital improvement project to convert the source of irrigation water for the ballfields at Arthur Pack Regional Park from both Tucson Water and Pima County wells to reclaimed water. The Parks Department estimates that the conversion will save approximately 45 acre-feet of groundwater per year.

Advanced Water Purification

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) published their final Advanced Water Purification (AWP) regulations in March 2025. Pima County participated in ADEQ's rulemaking effort with staff represented on the rulemaking Technical Advisory Group.

In January of 2025, the City of Tucson received an \$86.7M grant from the Bureau of Reclamation in exchange for leaving 56,000 acre-feet of their Central Arizona Project water supply from the Colorado River in Lake Mead over the next 10 years. Tucson Water originally planned to build a 2.5 million gallon per day (MGD) AWP facility at the Tres Rios Wastewater Reclamation Facility (WRF), to be operational by 2031, and a smaller demonstration facility at their existing reclamation plant near Agua Nueva WRF to be operational as soon as possible. But due to the discovery of sensitive cultural resources near their proposed construction site at Tres Rios WRF, which were expected to delay the project and impact the 2031 completion date, current plans indicate both the pilot project and the 2.5 MGD full-scale project are planned to be located at the Agua Nueva WRF. Both facilities will use Pima County RWRD's high quality treated effluent as their source water, with the goal of turning that into potable water.

RWRD continues to participate in evaluation of the AWP rule with Tucson Water and their contractors to determine what additional effort and expenditure by RWRD may be necessary to meet the requirements. As currently written, there are significant

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responsibilities that must be undertaken by the wastewater authority, which will likely translate directly into increased costs, and include enhanced source control, in-line monitoring and alert systems, and additional analytical monitoring, among others. Further evaluation of the cost to comply with the rules and the proportional investment necessary by RWRD and Tucson Water will be needed.

Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tucson (in partnership with Pima County) all plan to implement AWP in their areas. As some of the largest water providers in the state, a working group was formed in 2025 to support regular meetings not only between these four entities, but also with ADEQ. Much of the group's discussion with ADEQ included clarifications on ambiguities or specific impracticalities required by the current rule language. As a direct result of these efforts, ADEQ currently plans to open select parts of the rule for revision and public comment. On April 13th, 2026, ADEQ director Karen Peters gave the green light to ADEQ staff to submit the request to revise the rule to the Governor's Regulatory Review Council. These rule revisions are expected to simplify and clarify several tasks that would be the responsibility of RWRD, ultimately saving in costs to Pima County. Pima County will remain engaged and plans to submit comments when the rule revisions are published.

El Corazon Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project

RFCD is partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prepare a feasibility study for the restoration of aquatic habitat along the Santa Cruz River downstream of Pima County's Agua Nueva Wastewater Reclamation Facility. Effluent from the facility flows in this location of the river approximately from Camino del Cerro to Ina Road and includes the confluence of the Santa Cruz River, Rillito River, and Canada del Oro Wash. The restoration project will use the effluent to help restore habitat for native fish and migratory birds, remove nonnative vegetation (e.g. salt cedar trees), and reestablish native vegetation. The Corps is completing their feasibility analysis of potential alternatives to determine a preferred alternative which can then be considered for design.

Green Valley Effluent Reuse

The WWG provided a memo that I submitted to the Board on [December 5, 2025](#) regarding "The Potential Use of Reclaimed Water, Zoning Authority, and Voluntary Land Acquisitions to Reduce Groundwater Demand from Golf Courses in Green Valley." Since then, RFCD has met with the Upper Santa Cruz Providers and Users Group to discuss water reuse options and RFCD is waiting for a recommendation from that group. In anticipation of the creation of a reclaimed system, RWRD is planning to acquire the appropriate easements that would be of sufficient width to construct a sewer from the current Green Valley Wastewater Reclamation Facility to the future regional plant as well as a reclaimed line from the regional plant south back toward the old plant. Discussions are occurring at a staff level regarding the funding of the construction of a primary reclaimed water transmission main and whether that would be a potential future bond project.

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In January 2025, RWRD submitted to the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) an application and report for the Green Valley Managed Recharge Project to allow in-stream recharge of treated wastewater from the Green Valley Reclamation Facility. The application remains pending with ADWR.

Core Area	W.3 Managing the Demand for Water Both in County Operations and Community
Target:	15% Reduction from 2024 County Operations Use in the long term, reach net zero levels of single-use water across county operations, except where offset by recharge of local renewable supplies.

Facilities

FM uses EnergyCap, an energy-tracking software, for targeted monitoring and utility alerts. This software tracks water use and integrates utility-provided notifications of unusual consumption, enabling FM staff to detect and address leaks, equipment malfunctions, and abnormal patterns.

FM reports that water consumption for FM buildings decreased 15% in 2025. However, there was an overall increase of 21% in consumption for all Pima County-owned properties as a whole – this was due to leaks in outlying areas. To address this increase, the WWG will pursue an external audit of the County’s facilities and operations to identify, prioritize, and develop implementation strategies for water-related initiatives that align with CAPCO.

As examples of how Facilities Management (FM) implements water conservation measures, FM continues to install WaterSense fixtures throughout Pima County and these upgrades also include waterless urinals, each of which can save up to 40,000 gallons of water per year. Where feasible, FM is also converting water-cooled chillers to air-cooled chillers. This change allows FM to shutdown cooling towers, saving up to 1,000,000 gallons of water or more annually. For locations where water-cooled chillers remain in use, FM has upgraded chemical treatment systems and installed automatic filtration systems in all cooling towers to reduce the cycles of concentration (COC) – also known as blowdown—from 2 to 3, reducing water waste and saving thousands of gallons of water annually.

The WWG will also coordinate with Tucson Water to install advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) in County-owned facilities. AMI allows for monitoring water use in real time, providing leak alerts, and the ability to track daily water usage. The implementation of AMI is a high-priority for the City of Tucson One Water 2100 Plan and will be completed in phases through the Tucson Water service area. The installation of AMI in County-owned facilities, and outlying areas will allow the County to respond more quickly to leaks, track water conservation, and save time and resources in monitoring the County’s water use.

Turf in Pima County Parks

Parks and Recreation has a deliberate and comprehensive plan to eliminate all non-functional turf that does not provide value to the County’s urban parks. During yearly park inspections, staff identifies non-functional turf for removal, evaluate the irrigation efficiency of non-functional turf, and will address turf removal during major park renovations. The amount of turf that staff removes in a year varies based on staff’s assessment. Since 2018, Parks has removed approximately 7 acres of non-functional turf at all urban parks.

Parks has ceased the practice of overseeding in urban parks since 2018. Overseeding is the planting of grass seed directly into existing turf, without tearing up the turf or the soil. While an easy way to fill in bare spots, improve the density of turf and green turf following the long summer heat, the practice also creates a large increase in fall water demand. Parks has a full-time specialist whose primary job is turf management and staff training related to turf standardization and best practices. Parks works to continuously improve the overall organic material, reduce irrigation/water, reduce herbicide use, create dense turf so that it acts as its own weed control, improve staff knowledge, and deliver the best possible turf to our park patrons at the 64 program sites, covering 120 acres.

Core Area	W.4 Promoting Water Sustainability, Innovation and Connection Between Water and Landscapes
Target:	Water Supply Augmentation through partnerships, green infrastructure and connection to landscapes. Utilize RFCD Stormwater Park plan and the Retrofit analysis that is a component of the County’s Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit to target most impactful opportunities. Improve resilience through a diversified water portfolio by maximizing recharge and use of stormwater in order to minimize water dependence on energy intensive water imports. Mitigate habitat loss risks due to drought through natural stormwater infiltration enhancements and shallow groundwater recharge

Stormwater Parks

RFCD has conducted a geospatial analysis to inform the siting of stormwater parks that can be seen in this storymap: [Mapping a Sustainable Future](#). Eight RFCD stormwater parks have been completed, two more are in progress and two are being planned.

Community Water Program

The RFCD Community Water Program (CWP) partners with local schools in underserved communities to train teachers and high school students to increase awareness and participation in the benefits of stormwater parks. The CWP aims to build a local network of informed and engaged advocates that will connect communities with RFCD initiatives. The program directly advances the County’s Prosperity Initiative, specifically Board of Supervisors Policy E.36.2, by addressing generational poverty and fostering individual and community wealth through investments in physical and social infrastructure.

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RFCD began funding student-focused outreach in 2025 through a partnership with the local non-profit Environmental Education Exchange (EEE). Together, they worked with schools across Pima County, including those in Sahuarita, Vail, and Marana. EEE developed locally relevant educational content highlighting the impacts of climate change on water resources, flooding, and environmental changes such as increased fire risk.

NatureWorks – Climate Resilience Workforce Development

NatureWorks is an RFCD-led workforce initiative first developed in 2024, workshopped and piloted with professionals in 2025, and being implemented in partnership with Tucson Clean & Beautiful in 2026. The Board approved the contract with NatureWorks on January 6, 2026.

NatureWorks is designed to strengthen climate resilience while expanding access to career pathways in green infrastructure and allied professions such as urban forestry, ecological restoration, and conservation. The team has developed Green Infrastructure Careers Academy - a 12-week, paid, hands-on training program designed to prepare young adults for employment in green infrastructure, tree care, and ecological restoration industries.

The NatureWorks Green Infrastructure Academy graduated the first participants on April 3, 2026, and successfully placed all graduates into either paid apprenticeships or full-time employment. The program will run a second Academy in Fall of 2026. The NatureWorks Program directly advances the County's Prosperity Initiative and BOS Policy E36.2 by investing in both physical and social infrastructure in ways that reduce generational poverty, increase access to opportunity, and improve quality of life in high-poverty neighborhoods.

Next Steps for the Water Working Group

The WWG will use CAPCO, Pima Prospers, and the Floodplain Management Plan as the guiding documents to continue to work on water sustainability in the region. I expect that more progress in the areas of water supply, demand and regional partnerships will continue in this important topic area. Future updates on these efforts will be provided to the Board of Supervisors as efforts of the WWG progress.

JKL/anc

- c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
- Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
- Chad Kasmar, Deputy County Administrator
- Sarah Davis, Senior Advisor, County Administrator's Office
- Eric Shepp, P.E., Director, Regional Flood Control District
- Jackson Jenkins, Director, Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department
- Scott DiBiase, Director, Department of Environmental Quality

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Tony Cisneros, Director, Facilities Management
Victor Pereira, Director, Parks and Recreation
Lauren Ortega, P.E., Director, Development Services
Kris Gade, PhD, Director, Conservation Lands and Resources
Climate Action Executive Team Directors



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 4, 2026

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Lesho 
County Administrator

Re: **Update on Pima County Heat Ordinance and Heat Safety Policies**

At the May 12, 2026 Pima County Board of Supervisors (BOS) Study Session, there was a request for additional information and update on [Pima County's Heat Safety Ordinance for its contracted workforce](#), which was approved by the BOS in August of 2024.

Introduction

The County is committed to building protective policies, procedures, and partnerships to ensure heat safety for the County's own workforce and each County contractor. In 2024, not only did the County develop and deploy its 3-year Heat Plan, collaborate with the state directives, and convene a regional heat effort, it bolstered the ability to collect important data on heat-vulnerable populations and created pioneering policies to protect the workforce - specifically the County's Heat Safety Administrative Procedure and the Heat Safety Ordinance for the County's contracted workforce.

The Pima County Heat Ordinance was developed in response to an absence of national and state-level heat safety policies, with an exclusive reliance at that time on the "General Duty" clause for workforce protection. In response to the lack of broader policies, some local governments developed and implemented Heat Safety Ordinances to ensure better protection for outdoor workers and workers who are exposed to high-heat worksites (indoor or outdoor). The Pima County Ordinance, as approved, was framed to align with the jurisdictional policies of the City of Phoenix and City of Tucson. The County is the first Arizona county to develop and approve such a policy.

The Heat Ordinance includes the essential heat safety components recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and directs County contractors to have heat safety plans that include those critical components.

Background and Development of Pima County's Heat Safety Ordinance

The development and final approval of Pima County's Heat Ordinance was underpinned by months of planning, data and feedback gathering, legal review, and eventual approval and implementation of the Ordinance. Nine memoranda were provided to the BOS on the matter

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through each stage of development and the overall growth and implementation of the 3-year heat plan and County- and region-wide heat safety strategies.

In 2024, Pima County Health Department (PCHD) embarked on its 3-year Heat Plan consistent with state directives across Arizona to deploy coordinated heat efforts across the state through county health departments and jurisdictional partners. Collaborative efforts spanned non-governmental organizations, shelters, faith-based organizations, non-profits, academic partners, emergency response partners, and labor union partners, among others. This interdisciplinary partnership remains integral to an integrated heat safety response. PCHD's longitudinal epidemiological data on heat-related illness (HRI) and the Office of the Medical Examiner's (OME) data on heat-related and heat-caused deaths (HRD) have been essential in identifying gaps that contribute to individuals at higher risk of HRI and HRD. High-heat (indoor or outdoor) environments are a known risk for adverse effects of heat, and there is limited data to understand the full scope of risk or adverse HRI/HRD incidents on exposure within worksites.

On May 7th, the BOS approved the [Resolution 2024-17](#) for the Adoption of Heat Awareness Week, which directs the County to develop and enact policy recommendations including the potential development and consideration of an ordinance or procedural modifications to assure heat protections for worker safety.

On May 22nd, a memorandum was provided to the BOS on the [City of Phoenix Heat Safety Ordinance](#) for its contracted workforce, resulting from discussion at the May 21 BOS meeting to explore a similar ordinance for Pima County.

Concurrently, the County conducted several activities that framed the trajectory of policy development. Staff compared national and state occupational health policies (or the lack thereof), and reported to the BOS on several feedback-gathering activities—specifically, a County-wide staff survey with 1,500 respondents, focus group input from labor unions and the business community, and parallel development of the County-wide Administrative Procedure (AP) on Heat Safety for County Workforce. The County's AP was crafted under the guidance of the Climate Action Executive Team through the Climate Action Plan for County Operations (CAPCO) process. The comprehensive [memorandum](#) and data from this effort, alongside the County's AP, were provided to the BOS in anticipation of the June 4 discussion and action on "Extreme Heat."

Direction was given by the BOS at the June 4, 2024, meeting to proceed formally with the exploration of formal heat safety policies for workforce, including an ordinance similar to that developed by the City of Phoenix and in development by the City of Tucson. The County's [Heat Related Safety Protocols AP \(3-35\)](#) became effective on June 5, 2024.

On July 8th, a memorandum was provided to the BOS on comprehensive efforts to-date and [PCHD released their 3-Year Heat Plan](#), which included workforce components in several key priority areas. This memorandum provided a robust analysis of existing national and state policies pertaining to heat safety, limitations for the County on employer liability and its

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contracted workforce, and how local policies align with or are superseded by the national rulemaking effort occurring with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Draft language for the Pima County Heat Ordinance was presented to the BOS at the July 16, 2024, meeting in preparation for public input.

On August 9, the County presented the [public input draft of the Heat Ordinance](#) to the BOS, which included input from the Arizona Attorney General, several labor unions, and members of the public at large. Direction was given by the BOS to include additional components in the ordinance, specifically non-retaliation, worksites, sub-contractors, plan accessibility, and an advisory committee for the Ordinance. [The Ordinance was approved on August 16, 2024](#) with these additions, and effective September 19, 2024.

Pima County's Heat Ordinance – Operational Management and Oversight

Pima County's Heat Ordinance is an adopted ordinance under the Pima County Code – Chapter 11, Procurement Code. The Heat Ordinance stipulates that a County contractor will have a Heat Safety Plan, and that the plan shall include several components such as, but not limited to: how to identify a heat emergency, emergency protocol in the event of a heat emergency, heat emergency prevention, access to shade/cooling and water, breaks, acclimatization, use of adjusted schedules, and personal protective equipment (PPE), among other elements. As added at the direction of the BOS, the Heat Ordinance details stipulations around non-retaliation and development of an advisory committee.

The County instituted a first-year internal advisory committee of several County departments, including County Administration, PCHD, Pima County Procurement, and the CAET, with a goal to eventually grow the advisory committee capacity after a first-year evaluation of any complaints, monitoring, and/or collaborative opportunities with state-level monitoring agencies such as the Arizona Department of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH) and the Industrial Commission.

In the first year, the County determined procedures by which complaints could be handled from third parties. These procedures included the County's Risk Management Team, departmental management of a contract and/or complaint, and/or engagement of Procurement in the event of substantial or repeated complaints.

Since the onset of the Heat Ordinance, the County has issued 1,700 new contracts with the Heat Safety Clause stipulated in the Ordinance and has no known third-party complaints about heat or worksite safety. The County also deployed a public facing [Heat Ordinance website](#) with a series of resources including a [Heat Safety Plan Guide](#) and [Template](#) for contractors, or any employer at-large to use.

National and State Development of Heat Safety Policies

At the time of the County's Heat Ordinance development and approval, the national Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) had recently released notice of

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rulemaking and developed a national set of recommendations for heat safety for public comment. The BOS requested more information on the impact to local ordinances from any national standard that could be set and the impact of that on local policies. OSHA posted the notice of rulemaking in August 2024, when the County BOS approved the Ordinance, and went through several public input sessions and informal hearings. The rulemaking process concluded in July 2025, and OSHA has yet to issue a public rule on the matter.

In Summer of 2025, the Governor convened stakeholders from across the state for a [Workplace Heat Safety Task Force](#) facilitated by the Industrial Commission of Arizona to develop best practices for Health Guidelines for Employers. Included in this stakeholder group were representatives from the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, safety administrators, small business, industry, labor, academia, NGOs, and Dr. Cullen, who was appointed as the public health representative.

The final recommendations from the Task Force were presented to the ADOSH Advisory Committee in February 2026. These recommendations included several that mirrored components of the County's Heat Ordinance. Specifically, the recommendations include written Heat Illness Prevention Plans that outline responsibilities and procedures for providing water, shade, breaks, acclimatization, and heat safety training. In April 2026, the ICA voted to approve and implement all recommendations delivered by the Workplace Heat Safety Task Force. These [recommendations](#) and Heat Safety Plan templates are available on ADOSH's website.

Evolution and Next Steps for the Ordinance and Advisory Committee

Several of the foundational steps detailed herein demonstrate the shared commitment to growth in workforce safety and interdisciplinary approaches to enhancing opportunities for workforce safety. In the first year of the Heat Ordinance and the AP, the County has ensured that heat safety guidelines, plan templates, and access to critical training resources are available.

Departments are required to develop Heat Safety Plans in alignment with the training and plan criteria outlined in AP 3-35. The Final Recommendations for Arizona Heat Illness Prevention from ADOSH are incorporated into Pima County Departments' Heat Safety Plans. These recommendations include ensuring the availability of cool, potable water; providing accessible and adequate shade; promoting preventative cool-down breaks; implementing structured acclimatization processes for new or returning staff; and conducting annual training. All County departments with personnel working at high-heat sites receive this training from the County's Safety Loss Control Management Team, with records and sign-in sheets maintained for all individuals who complete the training.

PCHD's Office of Heat Response and Relief, along with the PCHD Community Outreach and Engagement Team, has created similar resources to encourage any organizations hosting outdoor outreach events to adopt a heat-safety plan and be prepared for extreme temperatures, using the same heat safety best practices highlighted across the national

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recommended best practices, and recommendations in the AP and Ordinance resources. These recommendations include evaluating heat risks on event days, providing sufficient water and shade, scheduling rest and cool-down periods, and establishing clear procedures for responding to heat-related illnesses. By doing so, staff, participants, and volunteers are kept safe during outdoor activities.

County data remains limited on heat vulnerability and workforce. PCHD's heat vulnerability mapping efforts and longitudinal analyses on HRI and HRD continue to glean critical information about risk, location, and type of environment by HRI/HRD incident. Through the statewide initiatives, the County has the opportunity to collaborate with ADOSH and the Industrial Commission on enhanced access to worksite complaint data and associated details on heat risk.

The role of the interdisciplinary Advisory Committee is intended to grow and include partners who were formative in feedback gathering and focus groups during the creation of the Ordinance. The County's first-year evaluative work on gaps, complaints, departmental management, and efficacy of the Ordinance will propel continued opportunities to enhance safety. The County expects to reengage stakeholders on the Ordinance to date and on opportunities for engagement and growth of the Advisory Committee's role.

In the County's Climate Plan, CAPCO, there are several strategies and tactics outlined to evaluate the County's Heat Safety policies. This includes development of evaluative strategies within the CAPCO's first year, collaborating with the aforementioned stakeholders and / or the role of an Advisory Committee, and bolstering access to data elements to ensure baseline measurements. This will ensure the heat safety policies incorporate lessons learned, new data, and alignment with new risks as they become known.

I will continue to provide the BOS periodic updates on the County's Heat Safety policies.

JKL/anc

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