

# Upper Verde River granted highest level of water protections by Arizona regulators

KJZZ | By [Greg Hahne](#)

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*Alex Hager*

The Verde River flows through Camp Verde, Arizona, on Feb. 23, 2026.

Almost 50 miles of the Upper Verde River and portions of Sycamore Creek west of Sedona have been granted the highest level of water protections by state regulators.

The Governor's Regulatory Review Council approved the Tier 3 water Outstanding Arizona Waters status Tuesday.

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That level prohibits pollutants from degrading the water quality and preserves wildlife habitats, threatened species and recreational resources.

The Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club nominated the waterways in 2023. The environmental organization says the area covers a diverse habitat corridor, three national forests and a wildlife preserve.

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality says it will finish final state level rulemaking before submitting to the EPA for federal approval.

## More Water News



### Politics

## KJZZ panel discussion: Arizona water cuts – what now?

Chad Snow, Alex Hager, August 24, 2026

On Sept. 8, KJZZ water reporter Alex Hager presented your questions and concerns to a panel of experts.



## Politics

# Stanton, Arizona Democratic delegation demand answers about data center proposals on public lands

Taylor Griffith, 46 minutes ago

Last week, the Washington Sun identified four data center proposals on federal public lands in Arizona. Congressman Greg Stanton, and other democratic lawmakers, co-signed a letter to the Bureau of Land Management demanding transparency.

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## Business

# Nearby residents raise pollution and water concerns over SRP's proposed Marigold power plant

Greg Hahne, 12 hours ago

The proposed Marigold Energy Center near Stanfield is set to have a mix of solar, battery and natural gas generation. The Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee held public comment on the proposed plant Monday.

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[The Show](#)

## This water advocate wants to fill Lake Mead first before Lake Powell

[Mark Brodie](#), 17 hours ago

With Colorado River water cuts coming to the lower basin states, a longstanding debate may be bubbling up to the surface, advocates say what water there is should go toward filling Lake Mead.

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Fronteras Desk

## Tucson residents to weigh in on already-approved large water user ordinance for the first time

Taylor Griffith, September 22, 2026

Shortly after rejecting the large-scale Project Blue data center, Tucson officials fast-tracked approval of its first large water user ordinance without a public hearing. City officials said it was important to get something on the books immediately.

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## Greg Hahne

Greg Hahne started as a news intern at KJZZ in 2020 and returned as a field correspondent in 2021. He learned his love for radio by joining Arizona State University's Blaze Radio, where he worked on the production team.

[See stories by Greg Hahne](#)



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