Pinal County encompasses six groundwater basins. Three of the major basins are designated as Active Management Areas (AMAs). The AMAs have specific groundwater management objectives that are administered by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). Distinguishing between AMAs and the non-AMA basins is important in that there are different regulatory schemes that affect the management of water resources, most specifically groundwater. Between the three AMAs, the regulatory framework of the Phoenix and Tucson AMAs are virtually identical, while the regulatory framework of the Pinal AMA is unique among the three. The Phoenix and Tucson AMAs, have water management goals of Safe Yield. Safe Yield means that groundwater withdrawals are not to exceed the amount of water that is naturally and artificially recharged by the year 2025. In the Pinal AMA, the management goal is "to allow development of non-irrigation uses and to preserve existing agricultural economies in the AMA for as long as feasible, consistent with the necessity to preserve future water supplies for non-irrigation uses".

Residential development within all AMAs are required to demonstrate to ADWR an adequate, assured, and physically available 100-year supply of water for residents. Commercial developments are not required to demonstrate an assured water supply unless they fall within the state’s definition of a "subdivision." In the Pinal AMA, groundwater supplies to a depth of 1,100 feet below ground surface may be used to prove a 100-year supply.

The Pinal AMA includes the largest overall special area in the County and includes the communities of Casa Grande, Coolidge, Florence, Eloy, and Maricopa, all of the Ak-Chin Indian Community, and parts of the Gila River Indian Community and Tohono O’odham Nation. The portion of the County that is included within the Phoenix AMA includes Apache Junction, Superior, and Queen Creek, and part of the Gila River Indian Community. The south-central part of the County is included in the Tucson AMA, while the eastern portion of the county includes three groundwater basins that are not part of an AMA. These basins are the Connelly Wash Basin, parts of Lower San Pedro Basin (including the communities of Kearny and Mammoth), as well as parts of the Dripping Spring Wash Basin.

In 2015-2018, approximately 80% of non-tribal water use in the Pinal AMA was by agriculture and 5% was municipal-industrial use. In those same years, the AMA’s water supply portfolio was made up of 45% Central Arizona Project (CAP) water, 8% surface water, less than 1% of reclaimed waste water.
and 47% groundwater. The opportunity for agriculture to use CAP water is diminishing and will go away in 2030. The Arizona Water Company (serves water to all or portions of Apache Junction, Superior, Casa Grande, and Coolidge) and the towns of Eloy and Florence hold CAP water contracts totaling 21,118 acre-feet/year (enough to supply 125,000 people at a combined use of 150 gallons per person per day).

Water providers are primarily responsible for meeting regulatory requirements associated with municipal and private water company systems and therefore typically plan, manage, and develop their water resources to serve their customers/constituents. Independent industrial water users, and agricultural users and irrigation districts are primarily responsible for meeting their respective regulatory requirements. Almost all of these requirements are imposed by State Law and most are enforced by the ADWR.

The County does not hold an “ownership interest” or “right” to water resources or provide water supply delivery services. State statutes identify ADWR as the primary agency responsible for the management of Arizona's water resources. The primary role of the County is one of supporting or affirming policy, encouraging wise water use, providing education regarding the County’s water supplies, and serving as an advocate to protect the County’s water interests in the region.

The County’s Vision assumes that Pinal County will grow and water is the basic element that will allow this to occur. The question on most people's minds is twofold: is there enough water to satisfy the long-term needs of the current population and; is there enough water to allow for continued growth? The answer to the first part of the question is yes. There is adequate water to serve the current population. The answer to the second part is more complicated. Depending on the amount of growth, at some point new resources will be needed that are not currently available in the County. This means new sources will need to be sought and the infrastructure to move the water to the area will need to be developed. This will be costly. If prospective developers choose to make the financial commitment to bring water to the area to serve their projects, the infrastructure will be developed and the people and water will come. If the costs to bring these new sources are greater than the market will bear, growth will not occur.