**Map to Tucson’s Water history**

**~200 mid ~1400s**

For thousands of years, the Hohokam lived near the base of the Tucson Mountains, close to the Santa Cruz River, which flowed year-round. They built irrigation canals to channel water from the river to the fields and villages. The Hohokam figured out when best to plant seeds and harvest their crops.

The Tohono O’odham, or desert people, and the Akimel O’odham, or river people are the descendants of the Hohokam.

**~mid 1700s**

In 1775, Spanish settlers founded the Presidio San Agustin del Tucson, with just a couple hundred people living within the fort. The settlers carried buckets of water from the always flowing river.

**~mid 1800s**

People continued to move to Tucson, traveling via horse and wagon, and later, by trains! They lived further from the river and got their water from shallow wells dug by hand. Water was also delivered in canvas bags carried on donkeys, or later in horse-drawn metal-lined carts.

**1882-early 1900s:**

The Tucson Water Company, known today as Tucson Water, pumped the first piped water to homes and businesses in 1882. By 1900, there were 7,500 people living in Tucson.

By 1910, Tucson’s population had doubled to approximately 14,000 people and in 1940 its population increased to 36,818.

**1950s:**

Technology improved as Tucson’s population and industry continued to grow. This meant that more water wells were drilled faster and deeper. By this time the Santa Cruz River gradually stopped flowing year around.

**1970s-1990s:**

By this time people started to realize that their water usage couldn’t keep up with their water demand, so Tucson began to plan for the future. In 1973, the construction of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) began at Lake Havasu, and it was completed twenty years later south of Tucson. This entire project cost over $4 billion to construct the 336-mile canal.

CAP helps deliver water from the Colorado River to Tucson. Approximately 80% of the water we use comes from CAP and 20% comes from groundwater. However, both waters are mixed and stored together in the aquifers and later pumped to homes.

In 1984, Tucson started to reuse its water by filtering it, cleaning it and then using it for irrigation purposes in schoolyards, parks, and golf courses. This water is called reclaimed water. This reclaimed water does not go through the same rigorous testing that drinking water goes through. This water cannot be used for drinking purposes. If this water is not needed at any time, it is stored in aquifers to be used in the future. So far there are 1000 customers in Tucson that use reclaimed water for their irrigation.

**Today:**

Almost 1 million people live in the Tucson area, using groundwater, Colorado River water, reclaimed water, and harvested rainwater. In 2019, the wastewater treatment facility called Agua Nueva Reclamation Facility (build in 2013) started to discharge 5% or 2.8 million gallons per day of its reclaimed water to the Santa Cruz River Heritage Project. This discharge allows Tucson to recreate the ecosystem that existed before the river dried out. We can appreciate the riparian plants (plants that grow along the river or body of water), as well as the fish, birds, turtles, and all the insects that live along the Santa Cruz River.

The Agua Nueva Reclamation Facility sends 95% of the effluent water to Tucson Water and they send it to the aquifers as recharge credit for later use.