

## What is the Pine Valley Water Supply Project?

### Why does it matter?



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# Iron County Water Stewards

## *Answering Community Questions*

*Get to Know Your H2O: Central Iron County Water Conservancy District appreciates questions submitted by community members about the Pine Valley Water Supply Project and local water needs. As part of its role as steward of water in Cedar Valley, the District is working with a group of experts, community members and elected officials to help prepare viable solutions for the future and to respond to community questions and concerns about emergent water issues.*

*This week's question from the community is answered by Curtis Nielson, Professional Engineer for Ensign Engineering and District Engineer for the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District.*

### **Question: What is the Pine Valley Water Supply Project? Why does it matter?**

**Answer:** The year 2021 was a difficult year for water in Cedar Valley. It started with the Division of Water Rights implementing a Groundwater Management Plan that will reduce the water rights of local municipalities by 75 percent by 2080.

Our valley experienced extreme drought, high temperatures, and drastic, unmanageable monsoon storms and flooding. Iron County also had the highest growth rate of all the counties in Utah at 6.2 percent in 2021 according to the [Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute](#).

Our valley is currently mining water from the aquifer by using 28,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) when our basin only receives an average of 21,000 AFY. Our population is increasing, but this is not just a growth issue, as water rights will be declining, and the aquifer is already being overdrawn.

It is crucial that we work toward solutions for water challenges in our basin. The District focuses its efforts towards conservation, recharge and reuse, and importing water to help relieve Cedar Valley's water challenges. However, conservation, recharge and reuse alone cannot meet the needs of an already declining aquifer.

The Pine Valley Water Supply Project (PVWS) is a proposed water delivery system that would deliver 15,000 acre-feet of water to the Cedar Valley from Pine Valley, northwest of Cedar City. The project is designed to provide water solutions for Cedar Valley, including the municipalities of Cedar City, Enoch, and Kanarrville.

Planning for this project began in the early 2000's when Larry Anderson, a consultant for the District and former Utah Division of Water Resources director, suggested that the District file applications for water rights in the West Desert. In 2006, the District filed for water rights in three West Desert basins (Pine, Wah Wah, and Hamlin) that had been virtually unappropriated for over the last 160 years.

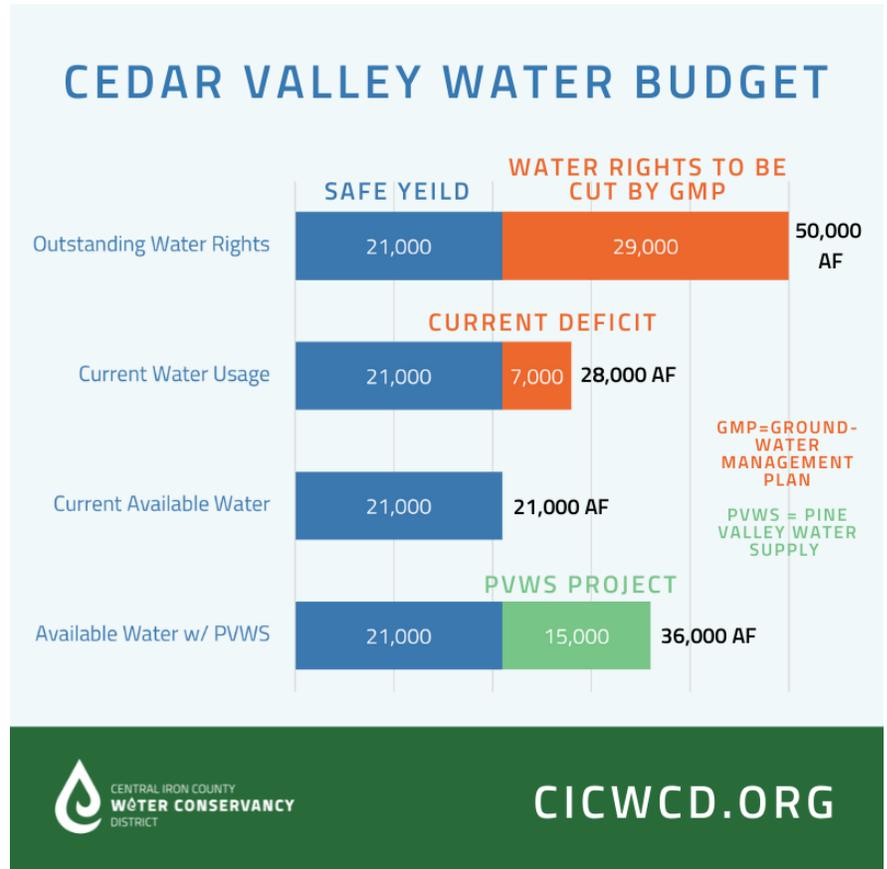
In February 2019, the court decreed 15,000 acre-feet of water in Pine Valley to be put to beneficial use by water users in Cedar Valley. Those 15,000 acre-feet equates to approximately 4.9 billion gallons of water or 9,300 gallons per minute all day, every day.

The PVWS Project is currently in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Draft EIS was created using the latest and best science available to ensure there are no harmful effects to environmental, biological, or cultural resources. All information and studies regarding the Draft EIS can be found on the BLM's NEPA website (link on [cicwcd.org/pvwsproject](http://cicwcd.org/pvwsproject)). Public comment is currently open until March 11, 2022.

Importing water is not a new concept and has been a topic of conversation in our basin since the 1940s when the Kolob Water Project was first being discussed. Western States have continually extended their reach to bring water to the people. For example, [Central Utah Water Conservancy District](#) serves 62 percent of Utah's population (1.5 million people) through 178 miles of canals, tunnels and pipelines, making it Utah's largest trans-basin diversion. Similarly, [Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District](#) serves nearly 1 million people in Utah.

The PVWS Project would supply water to Cedar Valley through 66 miles of pipe which will be located within existing road rights of way for more than 90 percent of the alignment. Through careful consideration, several alternatives were considered to minimize environmental impacts for construction and maintenance.

The PVWS Project is being prepared by the District to provide an additional source of water, help restore Cedar Valley aquifer levels, provide safe and reliable drinking water, and ensure there is water for the future. It is currently in the early planning stages. However, it is ultimately up to city



leaders and our community to decide when the water is needed.

Water is a large part of my personal heritage and the heritage that helped establish this valley. The PVWS Project provides the opportunity for Cedar Valley to sustain its heritage which was established by agriculture, generational practices, Southern Utah University, and many other traditions. The water available through the PVWS Project will support current needs in the valley as well as growth. Having the opportunity to be part of a project that will sustain our way of life in Cedar Valley is humbling.

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*Several special interest groups have recently moved their focus to Cedar Valley water and have been spreading misinformation. The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District was created by a vote of Cedar Valley residents more than two decades ago. It has consistently been dedicated to developing and stabilizing the valley's water supply through conservation, recharge, reuse, and importing of water for the benefit of all current and future water users in the region. The District utilizes scientists, experts and professionals to understand the valley's underground aquifer and to determine responsible solutions for the community as it strives to meet local water challenges. For reliable information on the Pine Valley Water Supply Project specifically and the Cedar Valley's water situation in general, please visit <https://cicwcd.org/>. For more detailed information about the Pine Valley Water Supply Project and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, please visit <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/1503915/570>.*

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