



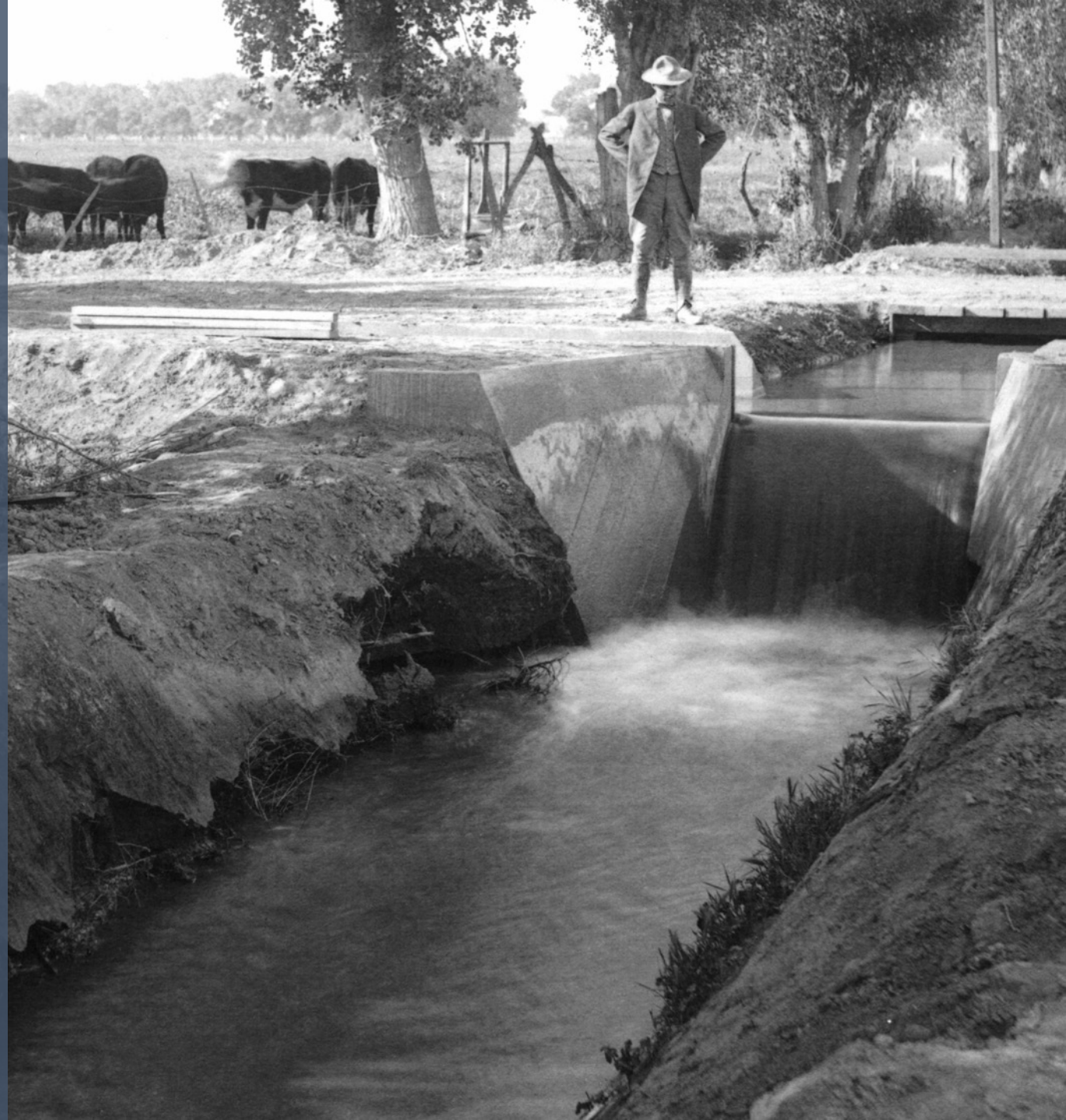
Salt River Project

Fall Adjudication Update

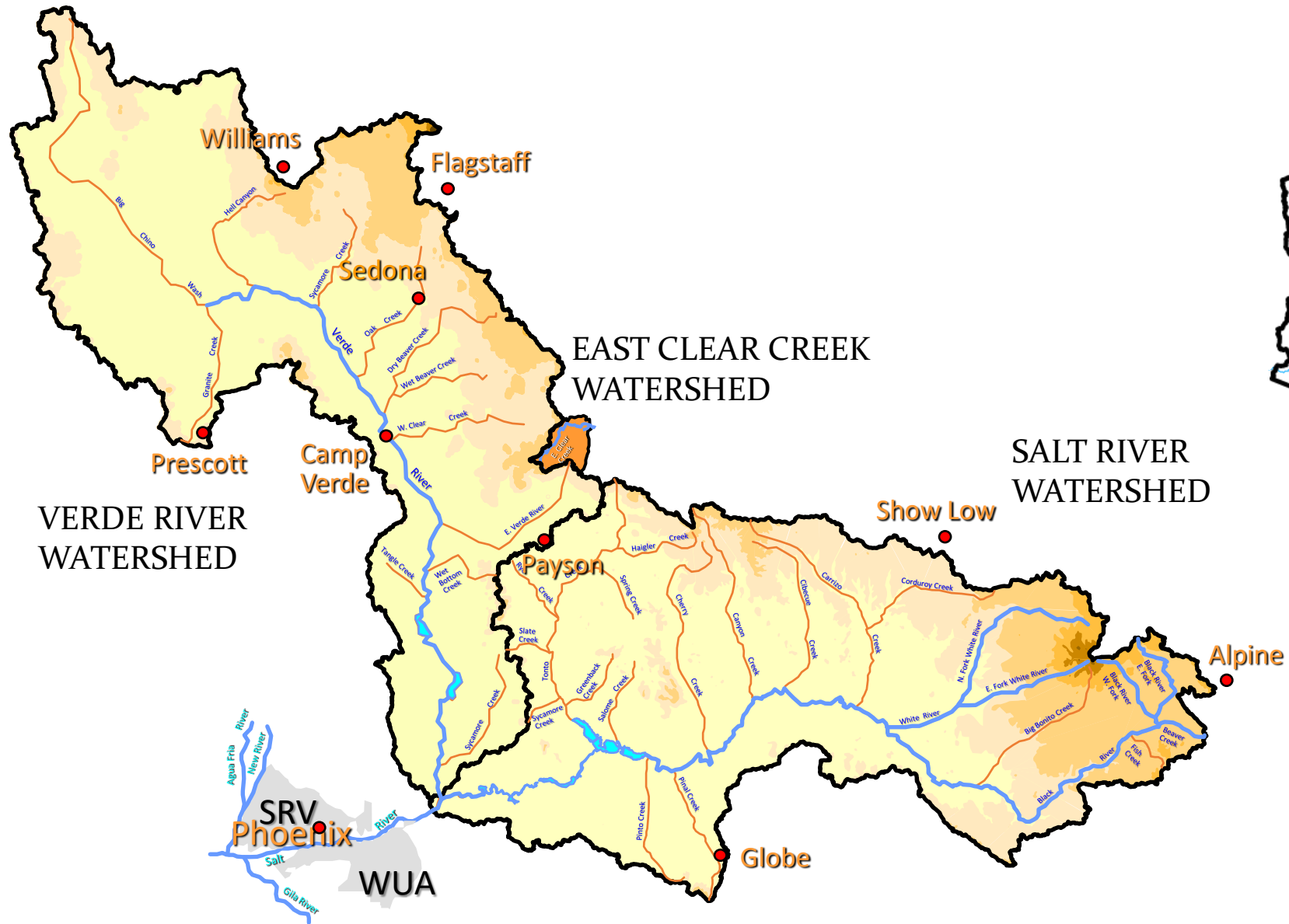
Carter Benton
VV NRCD 11/8/2024

History

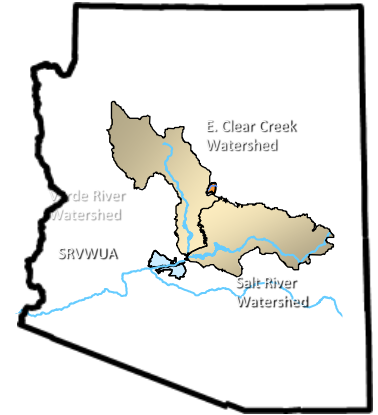
- In 1903, SRP was formed by farmers
- The landowners mortgaged their land to form the federal reclamation project
- Power business was developed to provide electricity to farmers



Central AZ Watersheds



KEY MAP



Adjudication – Issues in the Verde Watershed

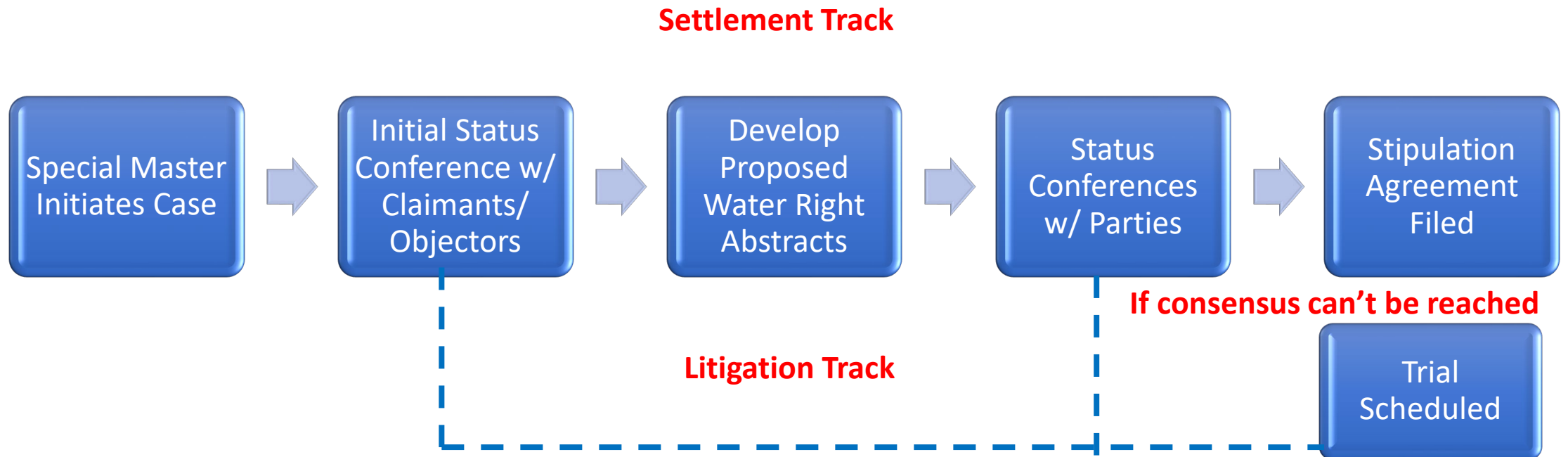
What is an Adjudication?

- Definition - A general stream adjudication is the judicial determination of the extent and priority and source of all water rights in a river system (ARS 45-251)
- Greater Certainty to ALL water users
- All Western States need adjudication
- <http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/SuperiorCourt/GeneralStreamAdjudication>

Adjudication Process



Contested Case Process



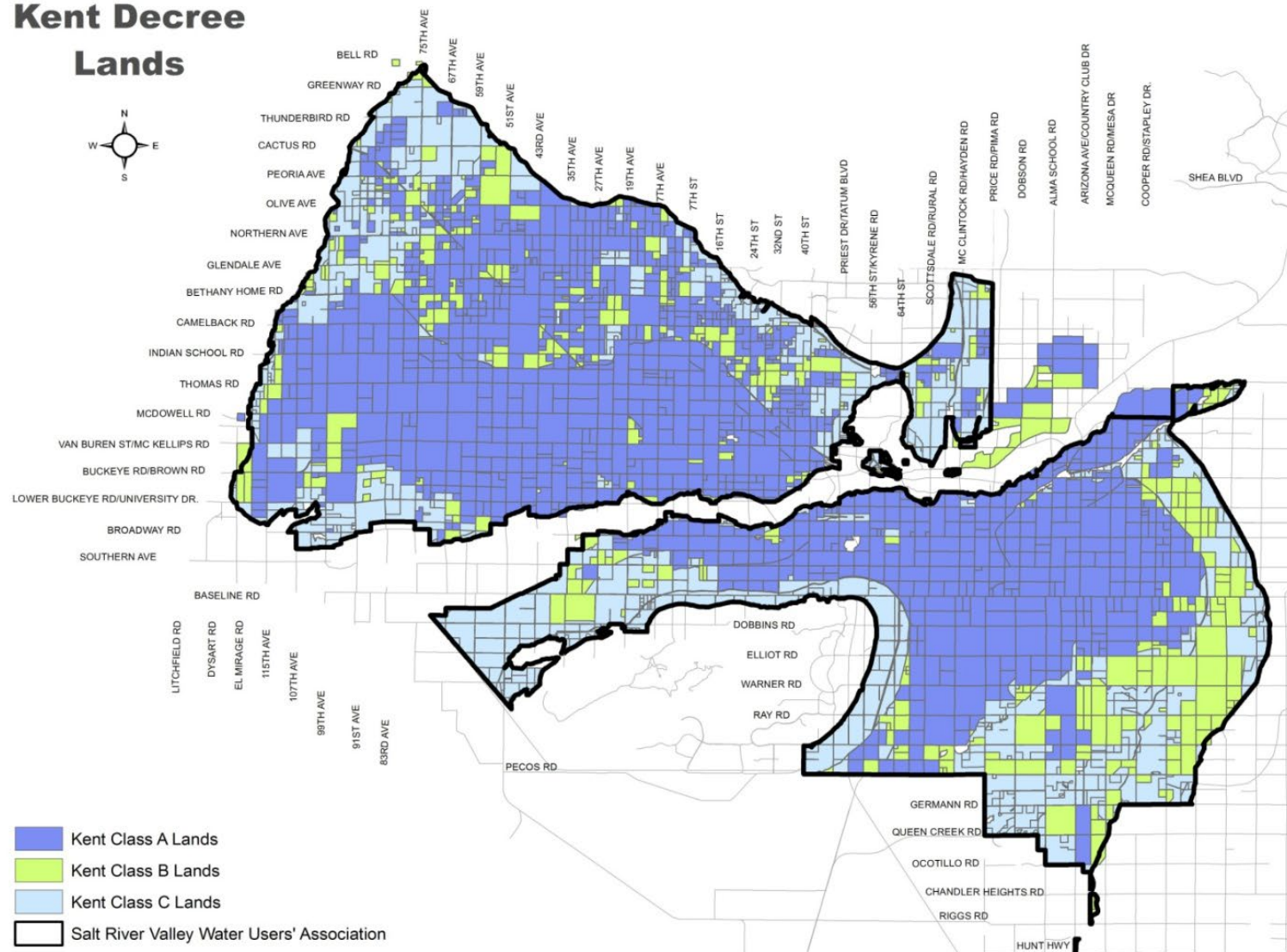
Surface Water Rights

Prior Appropriation Doctrine

- First in time, first in right
SRP Early priority dates: 1860s – 1910s
- Appurtenant to the land
Rights stay with decreed and member lands
- Must be beneficially used
ADWR annual reporting requirements

SRP Shareholder Water Rights – Kent Decree

Kent Decree Lands



General Stream Adjudications

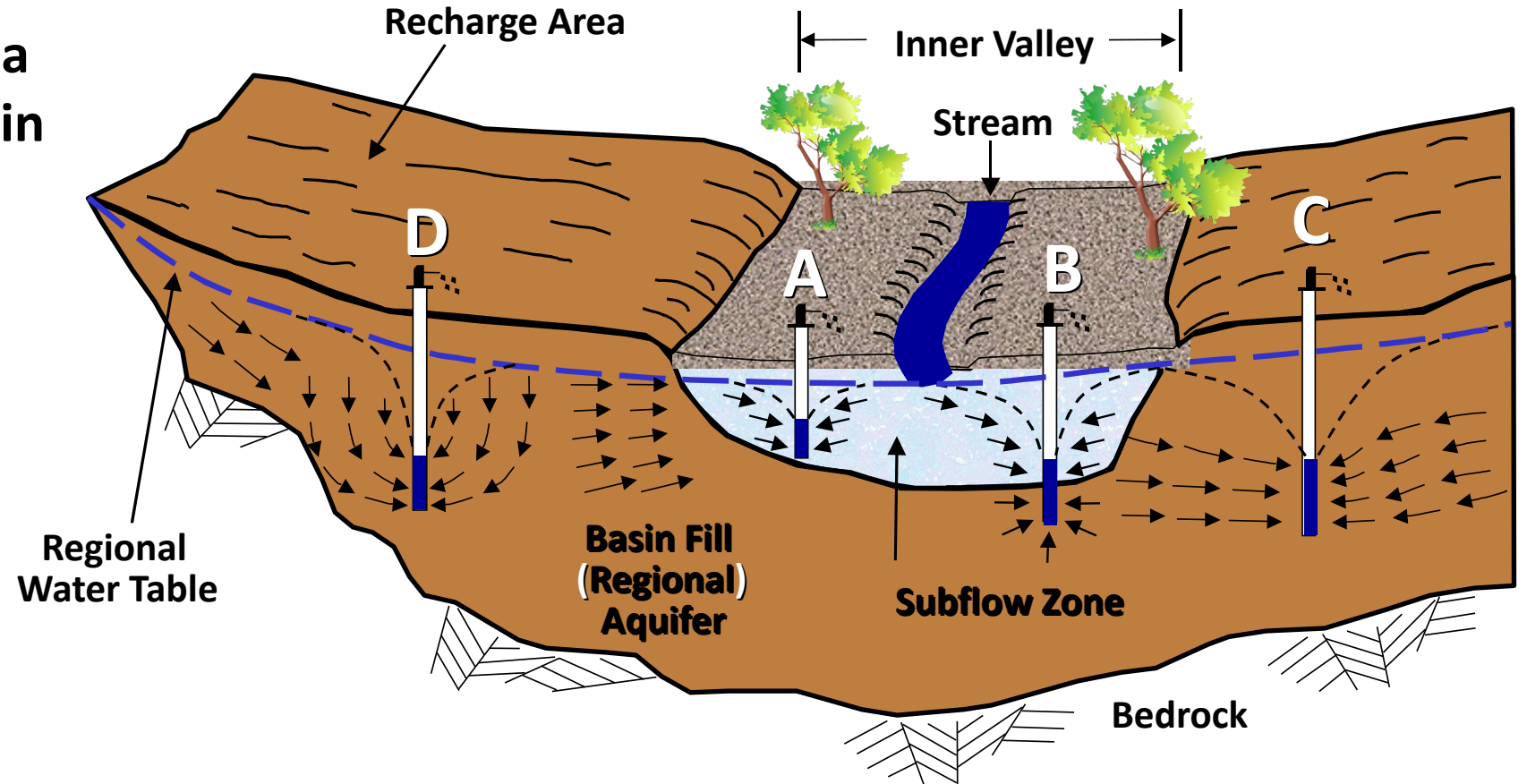
Adjudication	Gila River	Little Colorado River
Court	Maricopa County Superior Court	Apache County Superior Court
Watersheds	Upper Salt, Verde, Upper Gila, Lower Gila, San Pedro, Agua Fria, Upper Santa Cruz	LCR and tributaries
No. of parties	~24,000	~3100
No. of claims	~87,000	~15,000
Judge	Hon. Scott Blaney	Hon. Scott Blaney
Special Master	Hon. Sherri Zendri	Hon. Sherri Zendri



Subflow

- **Subflow** - a concept established by Arizona State Supreme Court in 1931

(Maricopa County MWCD No. 1 v. Southwest Cotton)



An analysis of types and quantities of small water uses to determine if summary adjudication is warranted.

1. Water availability in the watershed
2. the number of stock watering, stockpond, and domestic uses
3. the extent and impact of these uses
4. the costs and benefits of a complete, rather than abbreviated, adjudication of these small uses

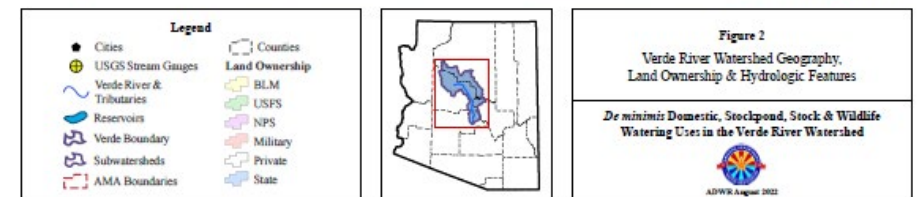
Legend

- Cities
- USGS Stream Gauges
- Verde River & Tributaries
- Reservoirs
- Verde Boundary
- Subwatersheds
- AMA Boundaries
- Counties
- Land Ownership
 - BLM
 - USFS
 - NPS
 - Military
 - Private
 - State

Figure 2
Verde River Watershed Geography, Land Ownership & Hydrologic Features

De minimis Domestic, Stockpond, Stock & Wildlife Watering Uses in the Verde River Watershed

ADWR August 2022



What's New:

Verde De Minimis

- Special Master issued draft de minimis procedure (July 2024)
- October 2024 trial vacated due to development of procedures

DRAFT SUMMARY PROCEDURES TO DETERMINE DE MINIMIS WATER RIGHTS FOR THE VERDE RIVER WATERSHED

Summary adjudication of *de minimis* water uses in the Verde River Watershed will be accomplished according to the following steps:

1. Preparation of a draft abstract of a proposed water right for each eligible water use, including the attributes listed below for the use.
2. Incorporation of the draft abstracts into the applicable hydrographic survey report (HSR).
3. A streamlined objection process.
4. Inclusion of the final abstracts in the Special Master's Catalog of Proposed Water Rights for final adjudication and administration.

HSR's

- Sycamore subwatershed (March 2026)
- Lower Verde Valley subwatershed (September 2027)
- Little Chino subwatershed (March 2029)

Verde Valley Historic Water Use Agreements

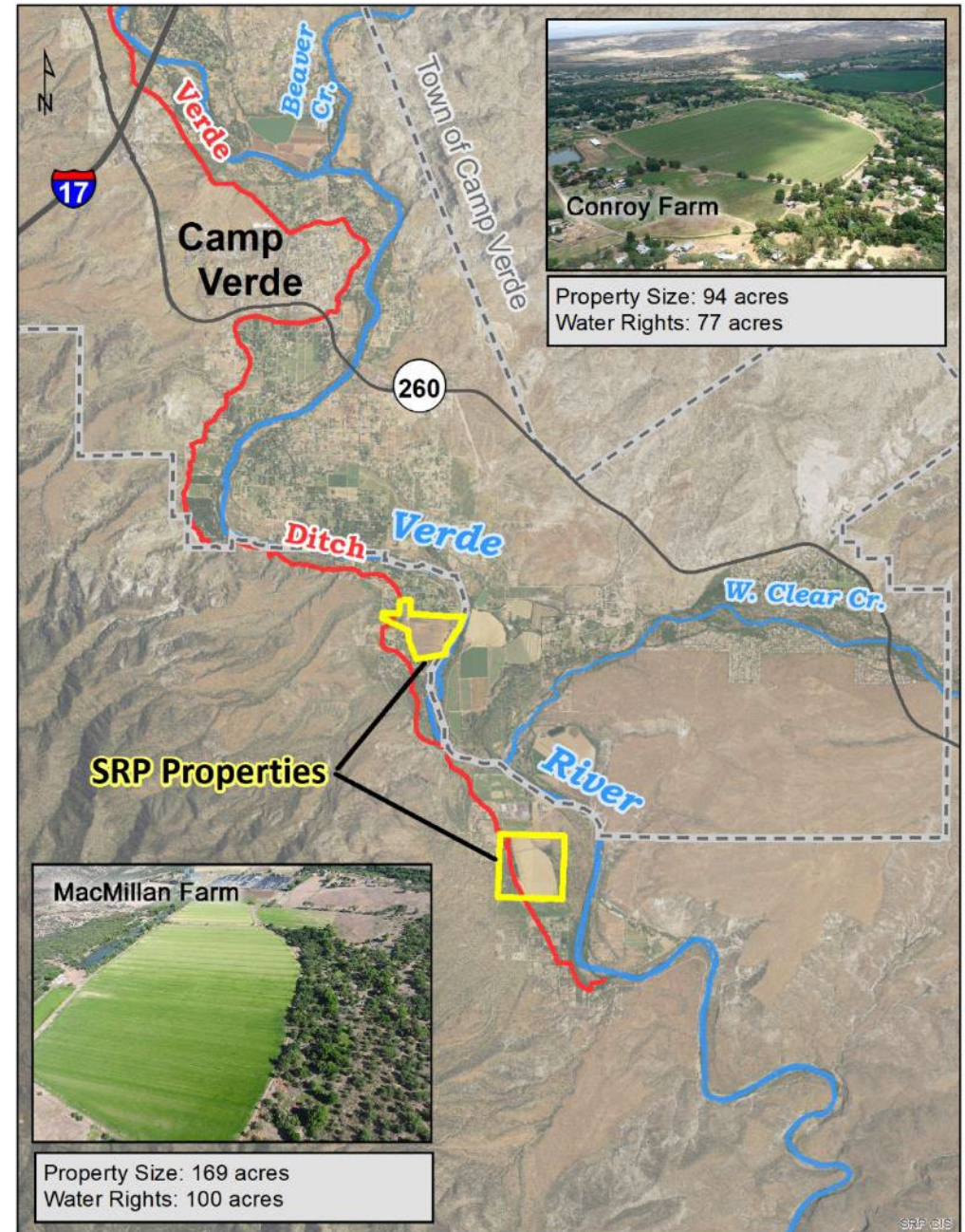
Goals:

- Resolve water right issues
- Enter into agreements between SRP and landowners under ditch systems
 - Recognize the extent of historic water use acres
 - Resolution prior to Adjudication provides greater certainty



Verde Valley Water Rights Program

- SRP purchased two farm properties in the Camp Verde area
- Properties provide 177 acres of historic water rights to resolve local water right issues.
- Properties have development potential and conservation values
- Public outreach Fall 2020 - 2021



Questions?



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