



## How Are Water Offset Credits Created?

**Step 1.** A water user in the Verde Valley area who has historically been using surface or groundwater is willing to stop using that water for a temporary period of time (from one month to a full irrigation season).

**Step 2.** The water user works with The Nature Conservancy and Friends of Verde River Greenway to explore whether a project to temporarily reduce or suspend water use would work both for the water user and for the Exchange program. Considerations include the location and source of the water, details about the potential reduction in use, and relevant water use and water right information.

**Step 3.** If both parties are interested, the water user and The Nature Conservancy negotiate terms and enter into a contractual agreement in which the participant agrees to voluntarily change their water use for a year, usually by fallowing (not irrigating) a portion of their land.

**Step 4.** Friends of Verde River Greenway reviews the project information to estimate the volume of water that has been conserved based on established Verde River Exchange program criteria. Friends of Verde River Greenway then signs a contract with The Nature Conservancy, allowing Friends to create Water Offset Credits. Credits represent a volume of water that is expected to be returned to the Verde River Watershed's surface stream and groundwater systems as a result of the participant's voluntary change in water use.

**Step 5.** Bonneville Environmental Foundation or another third party verifies that the project meets Verde River Exchange criteria for creation of Water Offset Credits.

**Step 6.** The water user implements the project, and The Nature Conservancy monitors the project and makes payment to the participant as agreed to in the contract terms.

**Step 7.** Groundwater users may purchase Water Offset Certificates that represent a certain number of Water Offset Credits in a given geographic "zone." These credits are tracked by the Verde River Exchange through an internal registry. Participants join a network of residents and business leaders working to protect the Verde River.

**Interested in participating in the Verde River Exchange?**  
Contact Jocelyn Gibbon – Verde River Exchange Coordinator  
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