

INCREASING DESERT URBANIZATION AND BALANCING WATER DEMANDS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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ABSTRACT

In recent years desert communities have put increasing demands on scarce water resources. The City of Victorville in the Southern California desert has grown rapidly in recent years and over pumping has caused groundwater levels to decline significantly. The local groundwater basin was in severe overdraft with urban uses increasing and agricultural uses declining. Water rights in the area are limited, so an innovative water market developed to allow water users to buy and sell groundwater pumping rights. The water market gave farmers and ranchers a way to work with urban users to balance water demand. A system of water credits and fees for over pumping groundwater provides money to purchase and import needed water to the basin. The imported water will allow for future population growth in the basin and sustainable water management.

PALAVRA-CHAVE: water management, water market, water rights