

# Twopipelinescouldbecomeone

**By Joanna Dodder Nellans, The Daily Courier**

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## *Prescott, PV and CV discuss merging projects*

PRESCOTT - Prescott-area mayors say they want to try to work together on one Big Chino pipeline instead of building two.

The mayors of Prescott, Prescott Valley and Chino Valley met Tuesday morning with their city managers to discuss how they can cooperate on their multi-million-dollar pipeline plans to bring Big Chino Sub-basin groundwater south to supplement supplies in the Prescott Active Management Area, where residents are using more groundwater than is being replenished.

At one time all three communities planned to cooperate on one pipeline under Prescott's leadership, but then Chino Valley dropped out amid concerns that it could not afford it.

Last year, Chino Valley officials announced that the new owners of the CV ranch - now Chino Grande ranch - would pay to build a pipeline for Chino Valley in exchange for the proceeds of water sales.

So in recent months, the municipalities have been proceeding with plans for two pipelines that could be under construction within a year. They have already spent millions on their projects.

But now, they are hoping to get together again.

"We all agreed to seriously work together regionally on the possibility of a joint pipeline," Chino Valley Mayor Karen Fann said after Tuesday's meeting.

"This is the first time we've really sat down and said, 'We've got to work on this thing together,'" Prescott Valley Mayor Harvey Skoog said.

Prescott Mayor [Jack Wilson](#) declined to discuss the topic of Tuesday's meeting beyond saying, "The topic of our discussion was regional cooperation." He said he could not comment further because issues are under negotiation.

The other mayors said they authorized their managers and water experts to meet and see if they can draft an agreement to work on one pipeline.

Chino Valley's current plans call for spending roughly \$15 million plus right-of-way costs to build an eight-mile-long pipeline from the Wineglass ranch to Chino Valley. That figure does not include associated costs such as right-of-way acquisition, or previous expenses such as land purchases for water rights.

Prescott and Prescott Valley are working on a \$140 million plan to build a 30-mile-long pipeline from Prescott's Big Chino Water Ranch to Prescott's existing facilities in Chino Valley. That figure includes right-of-way and associated costs, but not previous expenses such as the \$22.5 million ranch purchase.

Skoog and Fann said they want to save taxpayers money by cooperating.

Prescott and Prescott Valley officials also have been concerned about Chino Valley's plan to pump Big Chino groundwater at a site much closer to the [Verde River](#), Skoog said.

Pumping 20 miles versus just 4 to 5 miles above the river's headwaters can help avoid hurting the river, Skoog said.

Chino Valley officials have discussed the possibility of moving their pumping location about 20 miles above the Verde River to the Chino Grande ranch, which is next to Prescott's Big Chino Water Ranch.

Scientists generally agree that the Big Chino aquifer supplies about 80 percent of the baseflow for the Upper Verde River, which depends almost entirely on that baseflow during dry seasons.

That has led downstream Verde Valley officials, the Center for Biological Diversity, [Salt River Project](#) and others to express concerns about how the Prescott-area pipelines could affect the river.

SRP officials have stated they would rather see the pumping occur farther away from the river, and so have local officials.

"We want it to flow on this end and keep on flowing" all the way through the Verde Valley and beyond, Skoog said.

