



All civilizations have to manage resources to be sustainable. In a desert environment, like the Phoenix metro area, managing water is the key to sustainability. Even though Phoenix is located in the Sonoran Desert, the greenest and wettest desert in the world, civilizations here have always required an irrigation system to manage water. The Hohokam, a pre-historic people from 450 to 1450 C.E., created a civilization that lasted 70 generations in the Sonoran Desert. When their water system faced vulnerabilities, their civilization collapsed.

Our water system faces similar challenges. As our population rises, our water sources become more scarce. Will rising vulnerabilities in our water system cause our civilization to collapse or will new practices of water management sustain our civilization? What future will we choose?

One way to learn about sustainability is to look to the past at successes and failures to better guide our choices.

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