The Mission of CWAG is to protect the Verde River and to achieve a sustainable water supply in the Prescott Active Management Area (PrAMA). CWAG uses the best available science to educate citizens and to influence governmental decision-making by identifying sensible and effective courses of action.

Good public policy is based on facts and public support. Transparency is essential to achieve credibility and support for the City’s policies and programs among stakeholders and the public. Transparency requires communication: public notice, information, opportunity to comment, and response to comments. Good policy requires clear justification based on rational analysis. Study Sessions allowing three-minute public comments, without Council response, are an inadequate method for providing transparency and justification.

The General Plan states:

“Citizen involvement and participation as an essential element for achieving Prescott’s vision and facilitating community-based decision making for the choices and trade-offs which must be made to accommodate and manage growth. Community and stakeholder collaboration is fostered in all City plans and decisions.” (page 6)

“The underlying theme of the Prescott Vision is similar to the words of Lewis Mumford in his essay, The Essence of the City: “…the greatest function of the city is to… encourage the greatest possible number of meetings, encounters, challenges, between varied persons and groups…..to bring people together…til in the end all men will take part in the conversation.”” (page 4)

Recent attempts by the Prescott Council to enact new water policies unnecessarily created suspicion and distrust, demonstrating the need for a more formalized and systematic approach to policy development. CWAG suggests the following framework should be used to develop important public policies in the future. Adopting and utilizing this framework for policy development (not for routine matters) will improve public relationships and create more thoughtful policies.

1. Scoping:
   1.1. Release to the public a document stating the problem and the potential solutions under consideration.
   1.2. Invite the public to suggest alternative solutions and to identify possible impacts that should be evaluated. No one has a monopoly on good ideas; stakeholders or the public may identify concerns or solutions that the City has not yet considered.
   1.3. Citizens must be allowed no less than 30 days to submit written comments to the city.
2. **Draft:**

   2.1. Release to the public a written draft proposal that presents one or more solutions that the City prefers.
   2.2. The draft should include the scoping comments received and the City’s substantive response to each comment.
   2.3. The draft should include an analysis describing how the potential solutions would solve the problem.
   2.4. Importantly, the draft should analyze the effects of the proposed policies on stakeholders, homeowners, taxpayers, City staff, and developers.
   2.5. Additionally, the draft should include a quantitative analysis of the effects on environmental factors, including water resources, open space, population, rate of growth, employment, and the regional economy.
   2.6. Public meetings must be held, with adequate time for discussion, to inform the public and seek a broader response to the draft proposal.
   2.7. Allow no less than 30 days for written public comments on the draft.

3. **Final policy:**

   3.1. The City would consider the comments received and develop a final proposal.
   3.2. The final proposal should present the final wording that will be submitted for Council approval.
   3.3. The final proposal should list all the public comments received on the draft policy and the City’s substantive response to each comment.
   3.4. The final proposed policy, comments, and responses should be posted on the City’s website.
   3.5. The final proposal would be released to the public using the standard public notice procedure before a Council vote.