Salt & Verde River Supplies

The Salt River drains an area of approximately 5,980 square miles and is the largest tributary of the Gila River (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1982). The headwaters of the Salt River are the White and Black Rivers which originate at elevations near 11,400 feet above mean sea level in the White Mountains. From the confluence of the White and Black Rivers, the Salt River roughly follows a 140-mile course southwesterly to its confluence with the Gila River.

Drought is a common occurrence in the Salt and Verde river watersheds. Fortunately, Mesa's water rights in the Salt and Verde river system are senior compared to those of most other users. During drought, junior water rights are curtailed before senior water rights. During the most recent drought, inflow to Roosevelt Lake fell to 2% of normal, yet Mesa was still able to take delivery of the water it needed from the canal to meet peak demands. Mesa also maintains wells in the SRP service area to further protect against drought.

The Verde River drains an area of approximately 6,188 square miles and traverses a distance of about 140 miles from Sullivan Lake Dam near Paulden, to its confluence with the Salt River. The river drains eastward from Sullivan Lake Dam to Perkinsville, then southeastward to its confluence with Fossil Creek where it continues southward until it joins with the Salt River.

Several of Mesa's Salt and Verde river water supplies are delivered through the SRP South Canal, including normal flow water from the 1909 Kent Decree, SRP stored water supplies and new conservation space water from behind Roosevelt Dam.