



**PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP  
 (LDIG)**  
 Wednesday, May 20, 2015  
 National Park Service  
 Desert Research Learning Center

**RECAP**

Attendance:

|                 |      |                  |               |
|-----------------|------|------------------|---------------|
| Kathy Chavez    | RWRD | Mitch Basefsky   | CAP           |
| Colby Bowser    | RWRD | Mike Cantin      | NWS           |
| Melanie Alvarez | PAG  | Matthew Cummings | Comm Water GV |
| Andy Hubbard    | NPS  |                  |               |

1. Welcome and Introductions - K Chavez welcomed everyone and introductions were made
2. Updates
  - a. Recap of March 11 meeting: Erin Boyle provided presentation on the 2014-15 Winter Season and Mitch Basefsky provided an update on the Colorado River Basin
  - b. Short term and long term drought status maps provided in the packet
  - c. Colorado River Water Forum on April 2 well attended
  - d. ADWR/CAWCD Drought Workshop on April 22 also well attended. The unified message is that Arizona is prepared for Colorado River Shortage. A meeting handout provided in the packet describes how shortages will be implemented
  - e. ADWR Interagency Coordinating Group met on May 5. Updates on the winter 2015-16 outlook, Colorado River water supply, Salt and Verde watersheds and wildfire outlook provided. Update on California's drought and response actions. ICG recommended that the Governor's Emergency Drought Declaration remain in place
  - f. Pima County Quarterly Drought report included in packet and forwarded to RWRD Director
  - g. PAG Outreach Poster on shallow groundwater resilience explains how low impact development protects shallow groundwater-dependent ecosystems. PAG to provide a presentation at a future LDIG meeting
  - h. Other Updates – Bureau of Reclamation continues to monitor inflow to Lake Powell to determine the equalization release. Projections are being made monthly. A typical release from Lake Powell is 8.23 million acre-feet. The Bureau was planning to release 9 million acre-feet, but depending on inflow into Lake Powell, it could be as low as 7.5 million acre-feet. The equalization release impacts the levels of Lake Mead. In August the Bureau will make its projection of the elevation of Lake Mead. If the elevation is projected to be below 1075 feet in January 2016 a Tier One shortage will be declared, reducing Arizona's CAP

- water delivery by 320,000 acre-feet. The current probability of a shortage declaration in January 2016 is 33 percent.
3. National Park Service Drought Mitigation and Adaptation – Andy Hubbard, National Park Service, provided a presentation making the following points:
    - a. The mission of the Desert Research Learning Center is to promote the scientific understanding, protection and conservation of Federal parks, preserves and refuges in the Southwest
    - b. The NPS is honoring its centennial year (2016) by implementing an inventory and monitoring program:
      - i. Parks are grouped into networks; ten parks in Arizona’s network include Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Chiricahua National Monument, Montezuma Castle, Tonto National Monument, Saguaro National Park and five others.
      - ii. The network shares crews, data and protocols in the Southwest
      - iii. The inventory includes air quality data, water quality data, climate inventory, geologic resources, natural resources, soil resources, species lists, vegetation and water body location and classification
      - iv. Parks in the network are experiencing warmer temperatures than in the past 100 years and less freezing days
      - v. NPS cooperates with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for climate data and the US Geological Survey for stream flow data. The citizens weather program and research grade climate change stations are also used
    - c. The impacts of climate change on parks are being evaluated by looking at mean temperatures, precipitation, potential evapotranspiration and reconnaissance drought index
    - d. Climate information is used for resource management activities and to assess the likelihood of exotic plant invasions (such as buffel grass), availability of surface water and potential plant die-off
    - e. Drought indicators can vary among parks. One example, aridity index plotted against elevation
    - f. There can also be large precipitation variability between canyons and peaks within the same park
    - g. Climate predictions and seasonal outlooks are used for many resource management activities. Examples are:
      - i. A wet summer can mean preparation for exotic plant management and restoration activities
      - ii. High wind advisories can impact wildfire management and prescribed burns
    - h. Cultural resources are also affected by climate including flooding, erosion and wildfires.
    - i. Extreme climate events, such as flooding impact park functionality including visitor safety, evacuations, damaged trails and campgrounds and park closures
  4. Consideration of Drought Stage 1 - K Chavez explained that Pima County, along with the other regional water providers are at Drought Stage 1. Should a Colorado River shortage be declared, Tucson Water’s Drought Response Plan calls for an increase to Drought Stage 2. Since no shortage has yet been declared, she recommended continued monitoring of drought conditions and to remain at Drought Stage 1. The group agreed to remain at Drought Stage 1.

5. Adjournment – The next meeting is July 8, 2015 and the location will be the Public Works Building-3<sup>rd</sup> floor conference room. Melanie Alvarez offered to provide a presentation on PAG's monitoring and restoration activities at Cienega Creek.