

PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP
(LDIG)

Wednesday, September 9, 2015
Pima County Public Works Building

RECAP

Attendance: Mike Cantin (NWS), Mead Mier (PAG), Mitch Basefsky (CAP),
Kathy Chavez (RWRD), Lilian von Rago (RWRD), Colby Bowser (RWRD), Marie Light (DEQ)

1. Welcome and Introductions -Welcome and Introductions were made
2. Updates – Kathy Chavez, RWRD
 - a. Recap July
 - i. Drought Update
 - ii. PAG Drought Planning Comparison
 - b. Drought Status Maps
 - i. Short Term Map shows no drought in western Pima County, some Abnormally Dry condition centrally and Moderate drought in eastern portion.
 - ii. Long Term Map (April, May, June) indicates Abnormally Dry throughout Pima County with exception of no drought in northwest corner in Lower Gila River watershed.
 - c. MTC Meeting
 - i. Improvement in seven watersheds due to spring precipitation. Several Central Arizona watersheds remain in Moderate drought.
3. 2015 Monsoon Season – Mike Cantin, NOAA
 - a. Two weeks left in monsoon season; 2nd hottest on record, average lows were higher than average highs- area retains heat at night, not cooling off. 7th straight summer that ranks in top ten warmest, indicates a “new normal”.
 - b. 4.44” of rain, near normal for Tucson. No large rain deficits across Southern Arizona, overall a decent monsoon.
 - c. June
 - i. 4th Warmest with average moisture. Period of hot spell, 13 days straight of 105F temperatures. Southeastern precipitation pattern, wet June for County with 0.56” of rain, +0.36” above normal. More storms toward east Tucson and mountains, due to convection which builds outflow boundary and microbursts.
 - d. July
 - i. Near normal precipitation, 2.08” recorded, normal is 2.25”. Core of monsoon occurred in Cochise County. Dew points remained in the 60’s. Avra Valley area received little rain.
 - e. August
 - i. 3rd Warmest, 9th straight August with below normal precipitation with 1.80” recorded (-0.59”). Despite monthly deficit, Tucson is above normal precipitation for Calendar and Water Year (+0.23”, +1.34”). Some areas experienced a surge, Rincon receiving well above normal precipitation. August is usually wettest month. Continuing warm average low temperatures.
 - f. El Nino
 - i. El Nino effects to strengthen going into winter, typically more impact.

- ii. Since 1992 there has been 6 El Nino episodes. The current episode is recording the warmest temperatures though it still needs some development. Each episode has different development.
 - iii. Overall, Tucson will have a strong El Nino with cooler and wetter weather into next year.
 - g. October 17th NWS Open House, public welcome at UA office.
 - 4. Status of Colorado River and Lake Mead – Mitch Basefsky, CAP
 - a. Upper and Lower Basin and Mexico allocations, review.
 - b. Unregulated inflow into Lake Powell has been decreasing, 12 of last 15 years have been below average flow with a mean of 10.73 million acre feet (MAF). 16.5 MAF has been allocated.
 - c. “Miracle May”
 - i. Forestalled shortage; probability of shortage before was 33% for 2016 and 75% for 2017. After May, no shortage in 2016 and 18% for 2017.
 - ii. 200-400% average precipitation at various weather stations. Prior projected inflow for April-July period (2 MAF) was exceeded by 3 MAF. Increased Mead elevation 5’ above projected level.
 - iii. Weather surge helped by a drop in usage and diversion throughout Basin system at same time.
 - iv. Despite windfall, a 10% chance exists that Mead could fall into Tier 2 shortage in 2018 (52% chance of a shortage in 2018, 65% in 2019).
 - d. CAP Deliveries and Shortage
 - i. Bureau of Reclamation August and April Reports; April is used for mid-year adjustments. In Balancing Tier more water can be released, such as this year with an additional 750,000 af, which translates into 7’ of elevation in Lake Mead.
 - ii. By October, Tiers are determined- CAP orders are made in October.
 - iii. Ag Pool
 - 1. Ag Pool is declining and will phase out in 2030, that variable volume becoming Excess; essentially Ag Pool contractors lose first right of refusal.
 - 2. In 2017 Ag Pool is 300,000 af. In shortage, all Ag Pool contractors take pro-rata cut. Ag would lose 93,000 af in a 2017 Tier 1 Shortage.
 - e. CAP Shortage Management Programs
 - i. Water Banking
 - ii. Lake Mead Reservoir Protection
 - 1. CAP is keeping 345,000 af in Mead through various programs such as fallowing and not re-marketing canceled water orders.
 - 2. Multi-state plan to keep 740,000 af in lake storage.
 - iii. Conservation Research Grant Program
 - 1. Multi-state fund to finance conservation projects, goal to save 75,000 af in Basin.
 - iv. Weather Modification-Cloud Seeding
 - 1. 3 year study indicates increase in snowpack but overall increase in Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) unknown.
5. ADWR Annual Drought Report – LDIG report

- a. Annual Drought Report to be completed by November
 - b. The LDIG portions will submitted in mid-October
 - c. Draft outline discussed
 - d. Recommendations to include last year's and new recommendations distributed
 - i. Suggested to include the Low Impact Development/Green Infrastructure resolution adopted by PAG during the year
 - ii. Draft to be sent to LDIG in early October for comments
6. Adjournment and next meeting
- a. The September 28 PAG Watershed Planning Subcommittee will include a discussion of drought comparison report
 - b. CAP and the Salt River Project are providing public service announcements on social media
 - c. The DroughtFacts.com website will be maintained by CAP
 - d. A Water Forum sponsored by CAP and the Water Resources Research Center will be held in Tucson November 6.
 - e. Next LDIG meeting Tuesday, November 10, 2015