

PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP
(LDIG)
Wednesday, July 10, 2019
Pima County Public Works Building
RECAP

Attendance: Kathy Chavez (OSC), Erin Boyle (NWS), Jeanette Montano (RWRD), Zack Richards (ADWR), Caroline Vargas (RWRD), Jaime Galayda (Tucson Water), Janelle Gaun (ALWT), Bailey Kennett (ALWT), Cathy Kuefler (Avra Valley Co-op), Glen Barnes (CWC Green Valley)

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Review May 8 LDIG meeting (Kathy Chavez, OSC)
3. ADWR Updates (Zack Richards, ADWR)
 - a. Short-Term and Long Term Drought Status
 - i. Review of June short-term drought status – Over the last six months drought has continuously improved across Arizona. June’s report shows the far northeast corner experiencing Abnormally Dry (D0) conditions. Only 4% of the state is experiencing short-term drought conditions.
 - ii. Review of April-June long-term drought status – The long-term drought status has also improved over the last year, but many portions of the state are in some stage of drought. Monitoring Technical Committee met July 1 to discuss drought conditions. Portions of La Paz, Apache, Navajo, and Mohave counties are experiencing drought ranging from Severe (D2) to Exceptional (D4).
 - b. Short-term versus Long-Term Drought: What is the difference? The short-term drought focus is on a 12-month time scale, while the long-term drought map for Arizona is based on a 24-month and longer time scale focusing on Standardized Precipitation and Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI) data. The overall message for drought is that, although short-term drought conditions have improved, we should continue to monitor long-term drought and remain vigilant. One wet year will not alleviate the impacts of the 19-year drought Arizona has experienced and the short-term improvement is not a definitive indicator that the drought is over. Zack referred to the [US Drought Monitor website](#) that describes impacts associated with the various drought categories. He also referred to an [ADWR article](#) that discusses the differences between short-term and long-term drought in Arizona and includes a podcast from ADWR’s Statewide AMA Director, Einav Henenson.
4. Arizona Land and Water Trust-Desert Rivers Program (Janelle Gaun and Bailey Kennett, ALWT)
 - a. The Arizona Land and Water Trust (The Trust) has provided land protection to over 50,000 acres in the 40 years it has been in existence. It collaborates with private landowners and public partners to conserve land and water and preserve rural landscapes and agriculture using conservation easements
 - b. Water transactions in Arizona focus on watersheds within the upper Gila River, Santa Cruz River and San Pedro River. The Trust has completed 12 water transactions with six landowners saving 2,781 acre-feet of water for these river systems
 - c. Water transfer tools ensure saved water stays in the river system.
 - i. Funding one-year seasonal fallowing
 - ii. Conversion of high water use crops to lower water use crops
 - iii. Irrigation efficiency improvements
 - d. Water transaction tools, including short-term fallowing, give landowners flexibility to adapt their operations to drought. Through the sale of development rights, conservation easements

can provide landowners with the flexibility and capital they may need to manage their landscape and cattle during sustained drought – which may mean expanding grazed land or purchasing supplementary hay instead of being forced to sell cattle.

5. Updates

- a. RWRD is working in its citizen water academy in collaboration with the University of Arizona and Tucson Water. They participated in Tucson Water's Santa Cruz River Heritage Release on June 24. RWRD is working with the Town of Marana on the El Rio Preserve, along with RFCD.
 - b. Avra Water Co-op noted that water demand is down, compared to last year. Their peak water demand month is usually in July
 - c. The National Weather Service is monitoring monsoon conditions and forecasts a later than normal start. There have been several fires, but the fire season started later this year due to the wet winter. Precipitation through June is 3.8 inches above normal for the water year. Temperatures have been average, but are expected to be warmer than usual, which intensifies drought impacts
 - d. CWC of Green Valley reports the last pipe segment in Pima Mine Road is being installed and will be pressure tested later this month. The remaining 7-mile segment to Sahuarita will follow.
 - e. Tucson Water is fine-tuning the Heritage release flows into the Santa Cruz River. Their conservation planning, which will inform future water demand for the long-range plan, is underway.
6. Adjournment and next meeting is September 11. It will include an overview of the 2019 summer monsoon season and status of the Colorado River.