Pima County Local Drought Impact Group
(Drought Monitoring Committee)
Wednesday, January 12, 2011
2:30 p.m.
Public Works Building
201 North Stone

Attendance:	Kathy Chavez	RWRD	Linda Smith	Tucson Water
	Mitch Basefsky	CAWCD	Fernando Molina	Tucson Water
	Lilian Von Rago	RWRD	Dan Hartley	Tohono O'odham Nation
	Mead Meir	PAG	Susan Craig	ADWR (via telecom)
	Chris Smith	USGS	Marie Light	PCDEQ
	Connie Woodhouse	UA		

1. Introductions and Updates – Introductions were made. Kathy Chavez noted the Pima County LDIG Annual Report had been submitted to ADWR.

   The Board of Supervisors and Tucson Mayor & Council adopted the Water Infrastructure Study Project Phase 2 Action Plan on November 9, 2010. It includes a recommendation to conduct multi-pronged planning and to update the drought management plan. When those activities are undertaken, the LDIG will be included.

   The Pima County Drought website has been restructured and K Chavez demonstrated some of the changes. It was recommended that links to water providers' websites be included on the drought home page. Suggestions to improve the website are welcome. http://www.pima.gov/drought/

2. Recap of September 8 meeting - K Chavez summarized the September 8 LDIG meeting. There were no corrections or additions to the summary.

3. ADWR Activities – Susan Craig, ADWR announced that Sandy Fabritz-Whitney has been appointed acting director of ADWR and Deputy Director Karen Smith has resigned. Herb Guenther will remain at ADWR in an advising capacity. S Craig also reported that the Annual Drought Report had been submitted to the Governor. Two local drought impact groups in Arizona remain active; Pima County and Mohave County. No action is required from the Governor regarding the Annual Drought Report. The Drought Interagency Coordinating Group met in November and agreed to recommend the statewide drought declaration remain in place.

   The December short-term drought status update was reviewed. Although two winter storms brought moisture to central and northern Arizona in December, other portions of Arizona remain dry. La Niña conditions are expected to result in drier than normal conditions throughout Arizona.

   The Statewide Drought Monitoring Technical Committee is holding its quarterly meeting on February 2 to review state impacts. Mike Crimmins, University of Arizona, will discuss results of a recent survey on AzDroughtWatch. Immediately following, there will be a discussion of the Arizona Water Atlas Volume 9 which will assess water sustainability and vulnerabilities. S Craig mentioned that the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Water Sustainability had recently completed its report and recommendations. The report is available at the ADWR website: http://www.azwater.gov/AzDWR/waterManagement/BlueRibbonPanel.htm

4. Drought History in the Southwest Reconstructed from Tree Rings – Dr. Connie Woodhouse, Associate Professor, School of Geography and Development and Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research at the University of Arizona gave a presentation including reconstruction of drought in the Colorado River basin, southeastern Arizona and monsoon rainfall. Questions and discussion followed. Key points made included:

- There is a positive correlation between tree ring width of many (but not all) species and precipitation in the southwestern U.S.
- Tree ring reconstruction indicates there were wet years in the Colorado basin during the 1910s and 1920's, and the Colorado River compact was approved based on this wet period (gage data also show this, but the tree-ring data indicate just how unusually wet this period was, going back centuries)
- Some trees are as old at 900 years

- An extended 60-year drought occurred in the 12th Century which corresponds to warmer temperatures (although not warmer than today's temperatures) during the medieval period in Europe
- Drought duration varies; the 20th Century has had many one-year dry periods, but the medieval period (~900-1350 AD) had more multi-year dry periods
- Based on tree rings, the history of the Salt River/Verde River basin precipitation is not much different than the upper Colorado basin in terms of the occurrence of drought
- Southeastern Arizona was examined because it represents the core of the summer monsoon conditions in the US
- A new area of study involves reconstructions of winter and monsoon rainfall

The presentation will be posted to the Pima County Drought webpage.

5. Next Meeting - The next LDIG meeting will be March 9. A presentation on the results of the 2010-11 winter season is planned. Mitch Basefsky noted that there is less than a ten percent probability that a shortage will be declared on the Colorado River in 2012. The potential for a shortage declaration has eased primarily because of the abundant snowpack levels in the upper Colorado basin this winter. Equalization of water levels between lakes Powell and Mead may occur in 2012.

6. Adjournment