



PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP

(LDIG)

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Public Works Building

RECAP

Attendance: Kathy Chavez (RWRD), Colby Bowser (RWRD), Mead Mier (PAG), Erin Boyle (NWS)

1. Welcome and Introductions - Introductions were made
2. Updates
 - Recap of November 13, 2013 LDIG meeting
 - Drought Status Maps:
 - The short term status indicated Moderate Drought in eastern Pima County and Abnormally Dry conditions in western Pima County, Severe drought expanded in eastern Pima County with a pocket of Extreme in the northeast Lower San Pedro area. The long term status, updated in February, reflects conditions for the period of October through December, 2013. Much of eastern Pima County is in Moderate Drought with western Pima County in Severe Drought or Abnormally Dry
 - State Monitoring Technical Committee- January 28, 2014:
 - Many watersheds improved as result of summer monsoon but continued dryness threatens gains, at that time, Severe Drought spreading in Pima and Pinal counties (short term map).
 - Concern is for significantly reduced snowpack that feeds the Salt River system, data below 25% median.
3. Winter Season Review
 - This winter season (Dec, Jan, Feb) was the warmest on record and the 15th driest.
 - December had almost average precipitation (-.10") and above average temp (+1.3F)
 - January, overnight temperatures stayed higher- the 3rd warmest and 6th driest on record with trace rainfall and +4.7F warmer.
 - February was the 2nd warmest and 11th driest on record (-0.85", +5.3F).
 - Outlook for the spring (March, April, May) is continued above average temperatures and even chances for average precipitation.
 - There is currently a 50% chance for an El Niño pattern, which does not have an impact on summer rains but would suggest improved precipitation in winter. The

previous ENSO neutral pattern has changed and ocean temperatures are above average, a condition that needs to sustain as fall approaches for an El Niño event. NWS cautions several years ago, similar conditions signaled an El Niño that was never realized.

4. Pima County Draft Drought Vulnerability Assessment

- Comments
 - i. The County response plan should adjust to a new normal, adaptive management strategy that reflects persistent drought conditions. This could mean drought responses would be long term, requiring permanent water conservation measures such as low impact development and development standards
 - ii. Education and outreach as important tools, educate visitors and seasonal residents, outreach to well owners of conservation
 - iii. Strategies for the environmental sector could include rainwater catchments and acquisition and protection of water rights
 - iv. Rising temperatures can be mitigated by green spaces incorporated in land use design. For public health, cooling centers for communities could be established during summer power outages to help low income areas. Lower temperatures reduce energy needs.
 - v. On-going drought monitoring to distinguish between short term and long term drought impacts
 - vi. Evaluate the impacts of CAP shortage declarations at various tiers
 - 1. Shortage Level One impacts excess water and agricultural settlement pool
 - 2. Shortage Level Two results in further reductions in the agricultural settlement pool—does this mean agriculture will pump more groundwater?
 - 3. Shortage Level Three results in more reductions to the agricultural settlement pool. There could be CAP rates increases for all customers
- Recommendations and Potential mitigation strategies for sectors:
 - i. Wildlife and environment
 - 1. Water catchments
 - 2. Import water to remote areas (costly)
 - 3. Acquire and protect water rights
 - 4. Desert wash protection
 - 5. More environmental restoration projects
 - 6. Use reclaimed water for environmental restoration. This source of water is “drought-proof”
 - ii. Tourism
 - 1. Education focusing on living in a desert environment instead of drought
 - 2. Collaborate messaging with Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau

iii. Water Supply

1. Education to private well owners
2. Consistency in drought declarations among jurisdictions (all are in stage 1 until a Colorado River shortage is declared)
3. Effluent may need to be reallocated during prolonged drought
4. Implement long term water conservation measures such as low impact development and rainwater harvesting to sustain landscaping

iv. Forestry

1. Wildfire plans for federal lands
2. Wildfire plans for county, especially lands abutting Forest Service
3. Continue invasive species control (buffelgrass eradication)

v. Energy

1. Water shortages can limit power production
2. Drought impacts might affect power production
3. Increase reliance on renewable energy
4. Provide community cooling centers
5. Build more green spaces that provide passive cooling

vi. General

New ordinance with long term restrictions may be needed during prolonged drought

- Revisions to Table 8.70.050
 - i. The current table focuses on short term drought measures
 - ii. During prolonged drought measures may need to be increased
 - iii. Long term drought may require a new ordinance with long term measures
 - iv. Effluent may need to be reallocated

- Next Steps: Revise the Vulnerability Assessment to include points discussed above and comments received. Include a draft revised ordinance

5. Adjournment

- a. Next meeting is May 14. Items include final Drought Vulnerability Assessment and presentation on Pima County EOC Emergency Plan and Community Wildfire Protection Plan