

PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP
(LDIG)

Wednesday, January 13, 2016
Pima County Public Works Building

RECAP

Attendance: Kathy Chavez (RWRD), Mead Mier (PAG), Melanie Alvarez (PAG),
Erin Boyle (NWS), Asia Philbin (Marana)

1. Welcome and Introductions -Welcome and Introductions were made
2. Updates – Kathy Chavez, RWRD
 - a. Recap November 10 meeting
 - b. Drought Status Maps November and December show drought conditions improving throughout the state. Pima County shows no drought, except the central portion which is abnormally dry
 - c. ADWR’s Annual Drought Report was forwarded to the Governor and is on the ADWR website
 - d. Agency Updates:
 - i. PAG is implementing some weather resiliency and resource reliability outreach through the *Clean Water Starts With Me* campaign. PAG’s Management Committee has approved the Resolution on *Regional Resilience to Climate and Weather Variability*. It will be forwarded to Regional Council for approval
 - ii. The Southern Arizona Water Users Association is partnering with the Bureau of Reclamation on a basin study of the Lower Santa Cruz River. The study will estimate water supply and demand imbalances and evaluate climate change impacts. PAG is one of the study partners
 - iii. The National Weather Service is monitoring the status of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO). Most areas are receiving higher than normal precipitation. There are indications that ENSO conditions may be trending toward neutral conditions in late spring. More information can be found at www.climate.gov
3. Summary of *Living with Less Water Conference*—deferred to future meeting
4. Shallow Groundwater Areas and Cienega Creek Drought
 - a. Mead Mier provided an introduction that made the following key points about the value of Cienega Creek monitoring
 - i. Cienega Creek represents the urban periphery and natural systems
 - ii. It is important because it is one of the few lowland perennial streams and is designated as an Outstanding Arizona Water for water quality protection
 - b. Melanie Alvarez provided the Cienega drought updates
 - i. Monitoring began over 30 years ago, so there is robust data on flow extents, flow volume, and groundwater levels over the eight-mile stream segment
 - ii. Measurements taken in June 2015 indicated 0.88 miles of perennial flow which is only 106 feet longer than the June 2014 record low. In the 1980s 9.5 miles flowed.
 - iii. There has been decline of flow extent since 1998 which groundwater levels parallel

- c. Mead Mier made the following points regarding shallow groundwater
 - i. In addition to drought impacts, there are 2,560 wells are located within or near shallow groundwater areas
 - ii. Shallow groundwater (less than 50 feet below surface) is important for riparian vegetation's access to water in the root zone
 - iii. PAG is collaborating with the Watershed Management Group on public outreach and education on the importance of shallow groundwater areas
 - iv. PAG is advancing a Heritage Waters Resolution which will include a task force, establish benchmarks for value, and set goals. Anticipated outcomes are funding, collaboration and benchmarks
 - v. Additional PAG efforts include establishment of water accounting areas, participation in the Bureau of Reclamation Basin Study and formation of a Cienega groundwater-geology-surface water working group

- 5. Adjournment and next meeting
 - a. A series of climate talks will be held at the University of Arizona. Details can be found at: <http://uascience.org/#lectures>
 - b. Next LDIG meeting is Wednesday, March 9 and will include an update on 2015-16 Winter Season and status of Colorado Basin.