

PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP

(LDIG)

Wednesday, July 12, 2017

Pima County Public Works Building

RECAP

Attendance: Kathy Chavez (OSC), Erin Boyle (NWS), Mitch Basefsky (CAP), Marie Light (PCDEQ), Brian O'Neill (University of Illinois), Lynn Orchard (RFCDD)

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. What is New with Pima County RFCDD ALERT Warning System – Lynn Orchard, RFCDD. The Regional Flood Control District's Automated Local Evaluation in Real Time (ALERT) system is a network of real time sensors that provides precipitation, stormwater runoff and weather conditions to county personnel and other agencies. There are 106 precipitation sensors, 43 stream sensors and 5 weather sensors. The system incorporates data from four additional National Weather Service sensors. The primary goal is safety. The weather stations provide data on temperature, precipitation, wind speed and relative humidity. Sensors send data by line-of-sight radio signals to a tower on Mt. Lemmon where it is converted to a different signal and sent to the downtown location.

Lynn provided a live demonstration of the data and available layers. He demonstrated how historical data can be searched and explained how his staff maintains the stations. He also showed how inundation maps could be prepared for areas within the Rillito, Tanque Verde, Sabino and Agua Caliente washes. Public safety agencies can use the maps to alert the public in these areas of potential flooding and evacuation warnings.

CAP's potential use of ALERT could be to identify when storm flows might enter the CAP canal. Lynn recommended CAP access afws.org for data throughout the state. PDEQ uses ALERT to forecast locations where water quality samples can be taken after a rain event. PCDEQ can also use ALERT to determine if there have been rain events near industrial facilities where they require compliance sampling. The National Weather Service obtains the ALERT data directly along with data from Pinal County and USGS stream gauges.

3. Review May 10 LDIG meeting - Kathy Chavez, OSC
4. Review Short-Term Drought Status Report - Kathy Chavez, OSC
 - a. May short term – shows all Southern Arizona, including Pima County, in moderate drought reflecting dry spring conditions. Central Eastern Arizona is abnormally dry.
 - b. June short term - also shows all Southern Arizona, including Pima County, in moderate drought and all of Central Eastern Arizona abnormally dry. June was exceptionally dry. Some relief will be expected once the large-scale monsoon activity begins
5. Updates
 - a. Erin Boyle, NWS – Forecast for the fall calls for above average precipitation. ENSO conditions are neutral, so the precipitation may be from predicted tropical storms in the Pacific
 - b. Mitch Basefsky, CAP – Snowmelt flow to the Colorado River system has been lower than anticipated due to warm spring temperatures and increased vegetation uptake. As a result,

Lake Powell's equalization release will likely be 8.23 million acre-feet instead of 9 million acre-feet expected earlier this spring. The Governor is forming a working group to address groundwater and Colorado River issues

- c. Kathy Chavez, OSC shared data provided by Schock Ranch. It shows June's maximum temperatures and relative humidity at the most extreme since the Santa Cruz NRCD began monitoring eight years ago. Soil moisture dropped precipitously during peak temperatures and remained low for an extended time having a very detrimental effect on grasses and forbs. She will also share the information with ADWR's drought staff
6. Adjournment and next meeting
- a. Next meeting is September 13 at the Public Works Building Third Floor
 - b. Topics will include Summer Monsoon review and Colorado River. The Bureau of Reclamation's projected year-end elevation at Lake Mead and determination of shortage will be available for the meeting