

PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP
(LDIG)
Wednesday, November 13, 2019
Pima County Public Works Building
RECAP

Attendance: Kathy Chavez (OSC), Mitch Basefsky (CAP), Angela Della Croce (OSC), Kris LaFleur (Tucson Water), Wally Wilson (Metro Water), Melanie Alvarez (PAG), Amanda Webb (OSC), Galovale Galovale (Sahuarita), Angela Della Croce (OSC), Sandra Maina (OSC)

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Review September 11 LDIG meeting (Kathy Chavez, OSC)
3. ADWR Updates (Zack Richards, ADWR)
 - a. October Short-Term Drought Status – shows worsening drought conditions throughout much of the state, especially in the northeast, reflecting the impacts of below average precipitation during the summer monsoon season.
 - b. July-September Long-Term Drought Status Report – shows return of last year’s drought conditions last. Some improvement in January-March and April-June. Northeastern Arizona, including the Navajo Nation, is experiencing severe and extreme drought conditions
 - c. November 12 Interagency Coordinating Group Meeting – Unlike last October, no precipitation since the start of the water year, October 1.
 - i. The U.S. Drought Monitor shows widespread drought across the Colorado River Basin.
 - ii. The three-month temperature outlook for winter is above normal in the southwest and southern U.S. The three-month precipitation outlook calls for below normal rainfall in Arizona, New Mexico and southern Texas.
 - iii. Salt River Reservoir storage conditions are 67% full, compared to 47% full at the start of the year. However, the trend indicates mega drought severity similar to record drought in the 16th century. According to the tree-ring record, the current mega drought is the most severe.
 - iv. Lake Powell is at 52% of capacity and Lake Mead is at 41%
 - v. The Interagency Coordinating Group recommends the Governor retain the emergency drought declaration. The 2019 Arizona Drought Preparedness Annual report is final and will be available in early December. The next Monitoring Technical Committee meeting is January 2020. ADWR’s new Drought & Conservation Coordinator, Némesis Ortiz-Declet, is on board
4. Drought Monitoring Results Cienega Creek and Davidson Canyon (Melanie Alvarez, PAG)
 - a. Background – Cienega watershed has 171 miles of intermittent streams, 56 miles of perennial streams and 31.3 miles of Outstanding Arizona Waters (OAWs). PAG monitors approximately 9.5 miles of Cienega Creek and 1.8 miles of Davidson Canyon within Pima County’s Cienega Creek Natural Preserve, both OAWs. PAG’s monitoring program began in mid-1980’s and resumed in 1998 due to drought. Monitoring began in Davidson Canyon in 2006. PAG conducts quarterly wet/dry mapping, which includes monitoring of pools, water quality, presence of fish and frogs, repeat photography and other observations.
 - b. Drought Updates- PAG measures pre-monsoon “perennial” flows in June when minimum flows are typically observed in perennial reaches. Monitoring results in June, 2019 were:
 - i. Cienega Creek had 1.8 miles of flow; the third wettest in ten years.
 - ii. Davidson Canyon was dry.

- iii. Since 1985, the trend at Cienega Creek has been less flow prior to the monsoon season, as well as less annual maximum flow extent.
 - iv. Within PAG's monitoring area, the lower and upper flow segments have consistently decreased since 2000, while the middle segment has remained largely unchanged.
 - v. In Davidson Canyon, pre-monsoon flow has remained low, but the annual maximum flow extent has decreased since 2006.
 - vi. During September's 2019 monitoring event, Cienega Creek had less flow than in June. This has occurred only once before in 2009. Davidson Canyon had 0.13 miles of flow.
 - vii. Lessons: there is a downward trend in Cienega flows, quarterly monitoring is valuable and flows are sensitive to climate variability.

c. Next Steps

- i. Spreading the word: On-the-ground restoration, education and engagement and research efforts are underway, led by several partnerships. The next quarterly monitoring event is in December.

5. Updates

- a. Metro Water reports progress on the Northwest Recharge, Recovery and Delivery System project. The transmission main is being bid for construction. Recovery wells will be drilled in the spring. The project will improve groundwater levels in Metro Water, Oro Valley and Marana service areas. The estimated cost is \$40 million. Metro Water also reported on the Vetting 4 Water meeting where potential water legislation is discussed, including support for the Gila River General Adjudication, Best Practices, plumbing fixture efficiency and WQARF
 - b. RWRD reports a favorable turnout for the Citizens' Water Academy. They are getting ready for the annual grease collection campaign in January
 - c. PAG is holding an EPAC meeting December 9. It will include approval of the 2020 environmental priorities
 - d. OSC is preparing a climate monitoring protocol for the county's conservation lands and is entering into a partnership with CLIMAS for rain gauges
 - e. CAP announced there will be no Tier One shortage in 2020. The next important milestone will be Reclamation's 24-month study in April reporting on winter watershed conditions in the Colorado basin and equalization releases from Lake Powell. The key state water discussions center on Pinal County and ADWR's report showing a projected 8 maf deficit in 2100. The projections don't reflect the various ongoing activities. CAP is relining the Salt/Gila River siphon and CAP deliveries are suspended until late November.
 - f. Tucson Water reports Mayor & Council approved the green infrastructure fee and fund. There will be \$3 million available for green infrastructure projects within the city. The fee will be 13 cents per Ccf to provide maintenance on existing sites. Staff will prepare a list of priority sites. Some may include collaboration with RFCD. The project kick-off is in July 2020
 - g. Sahuarita is partnering with RWRD on the grease campaign
 - h. OSC introduced two new employees, Sandra Maina and Amanda Webb
6. Adjournment and next meeting is January 8. The meeting scheduled for 2020 is January 8, March 11, May 13, July 8, September 9, November 10