

PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP
Wednesday, September 8, 2021
Via Microsoft TEAMS
RECAP

Attendance: Kathy Chavez (Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation), Némesis Ortiz-Declet (Arizona Department of Water Resources), Erin Boyle (National Weather Service), Mitch Basefsky (Central Arizona Project), Jaime Galayda (Tucson Water), Mark Johnson (Tortolita Alliance), Julie Robinson (Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation), Justyn Dillingham (Pima County Communications Office), Mead Mier (Pima Association of Governments), Selso Villegas (Tohono O'Odham Nation), Asia Philbin (Marana Water), Scott Perkins (Flowing Wells Irrigation District), Arturo Gabaldón and Glen Barnes (Community Water Company of Green Valley), Dara Duffy (Green Valley DWID), Wally Wilson (Metro Water), Cathy Kuefler (Avra Valley Water Co-op), Jaimie Galayda and Jessica Rodriguez (Tucson Water), Bill Schock (Santa Cruz NRCB/Schock Ranch), Colby Bowser (Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation)

1. Welcome & Introductions – Kathy Chavez, OSC, welcomed attendees and announced them.
2. Review May 12 LDIG meeting - Kathy Chavez, OSC
 - a. ADWR provided updates
 - b. Colorado Basin and Water Supply Conditions, Drought Early Warning System (DEWS), NIDIS Drought Website and NWS Local Weather Forecast Office Drought Services presentations.
3. Arizona Department of Water Resources Updates - Némesis Ortiz-Declet, ADWR
 - a. Short-Term and Long-Term Drought Status - Review of 5-month short-term maps. March-June 2021 consistent until July, Extreme and Exceptional drought condition throughout the first half of the year were a result of a non-existent monsoon season in 2020 and dry winter. Significant improvement from July active monsoon season. As of August 31, 2021, there were improvements to Moderate and Severe drought, only small areas (about 1% of the state) in Exceptional drought, and Extreme drought went down to 15% of the state. Pima County is in Moderate drought (along with 42% of the state). Review of long-term maps. July-September 2020 and October-December 2020 show increasing drought, leading to decreased streamflow and recharge. January-March 2021 conditions led to increasing Extreme and Exceptional drought, and the April-June 2021 map shows spread of the same conditions throughout state. The July-September 2021 map will be published after the October 5 Monitoring Technical Committee Meeting.
 - b. Review of July 6 MTC. June 2021 short term map and April-June 2021 long term map, introduction of University of Arizona's station-based drought monitoring tool developed by Michael Crimmins.
 - c. Check ADWR's [website](#) for information on the Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council and ADWR Public Meetings for updates and ADWR Public Meetings [website](#). [BOR](#) and [CAP](#) websites list shortage information.
 - d. ADWR's Annual Drought Preparedness Plan under development. Pima County LDIG report due to ADWR September 30. Draft will be send to LDIG for review during September.
4. Summer 2021 Monsoon Season Overview – Erin Boyle, NWS Tucson
 - a. Much improved from 2020 monsoon which was the 2nd driest, now almost wettest on record to date. June-August officially 2nd wettest and 16th warmest, first time since 1990 July and August average temperatures below normal. 12.08" of rain.

- b. Hottest June on record. Dry, 91 days of no rain, 12th longest streak ended June 23. 48th wettest with 0.18", June precipitation highly variable.
 - c. July wettest July on record and month on record. 8.06" of rainfall, normal is 2.21". Coolest July since 2012.
 - d. July multi day rain event caused sustained flows, flooding and road closures with rivers at flood stage.
 - e. July observed precipitation, Pima County 2nd wettest on record, 6.32". Concentrated in eastern Pima County and Santa Cruz County.
 - f. Higher than normal rainfall amounts for August. June 15-September 3rd Wettest monsoon to date, improved drought conditions in Pima County by 3 classes.
 - g. Fall is forecast to be warm and dry, with La Niña conditions beginning to develop.
 - h. Colorado River Basin Water Year precipitation is below average and needs improvement.
 - i. Review of new NWS climate page. See [Climate \(weather.gov\)](#)
 - j. Fire season will be a concern with increase in fine fuels.
5. Colorado River Report, Mitch Basefsky, CAP
- a. Colorado River Basin, Lake Powell doing poorly. 2nd lowest inflow since 1960's when Powell was filled.
 - b. Inflow April-July usually increase elevation in lakes or elevation remains the same. This year poor inflow has dropped lake levels 30' in Lake Powell and 20' in Lake Mead.
 - c. Review of Tier 1 reductions, Arizona implementing mitigation strategies under the Drought Contingency Plan.
 - d. Probability of Tier 1 now at 100% in 2022, but for 2023-2025 increasing probability of Tier 2 shortage with 20-38% probability of Tier 3 shortage by 2025.
 - e. When Lake Mead elevation is projected to fall to 1,030' the Secretary of Interior and Lower Basin States must consult on additional measures. Parties already in preliminary discussions with BOR, CA and NV on what additional actions may include.
 - f. Lake Powell minimum power pool concerns, energy generated at Powell is important for West as immediate backup generating supply. Can't afford to let Powell fall below 3490'. Additional water taken from upstream to increase Powell elevation by 3'. Funds from energy sales also fund environmental programs in Upper Basin.
 - g. 7.48 MAF release from Powell next year and 2023.
 - h. No impact to municipal and industrial water deliveries, but cost of water will increase. CAP stabilization funds will be applied over next 2-3 years. Without the rate stabilization funds the shortage cost of CAP per AF in 2022 would be \$192, an increase of \$32 from 2021. When the stabilization funds are included, the 2022 rate will be \$179. Just with any utility, there are fixed costs that are shared by fewer customers when less water is delivered.
 - i. CAP University September 29.
 - j. Monsoon has reduced CAP orders minimally, helped in Yuma. M&I subcontractors are purchasing full allocation; no one turning back water.
6. Drought Updates
- a. Bill Schock, Santa Cruz Natural Resources Conservation District
 - i. Agreement with latest drought map, monsoon has been spotty but everyone getting water, 14.5-20" in Santa Cruz. Preparing for severe fire season.
 - b. Mark Johnson, Tortolitta Alliance
 - i. Invasion of Pappus Grass along Alamo Springs Trail, some buffel grass but Pappus Grass more substantial. See [Soft Feather Pappus Grass](#)
 - c. Arturo Gabaldón, Community Water Company

- i. Fielding customer questions on Tier 1 shortage, customer education and positive to see state collaboration: ADWR and CAP. Works with Water Utilities Association of Arizona, www.wuaaz.org
 - d. Wally Wilson, Metro Water
 - i. Average demand decreased 15% due to monsoon, Metro Hub in August decreased 25%.
 - e. Mead Mier, PAG
 - i. Cienega Creek was at record low June 2020, wet/dry monitoring event is coming up and will indicate any recovery, compare with Pima County well water levels. Results can be presented to LDIG.
- 7. Adjournment and next meeting is November 10. Notes and presentation materials will be posted on the [LDIG Website](#).
- 8. Meetings 2021: November 10 via Teams