

PIMA COUNTY LOCAL DROUGHT IMPACT GROUP
Wednesday, September 14, 2022
2:30 – 4 pm
Via Microsoft TEAMS
RECAP

Attendance: Kathy Chavez (Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation), Némesis Ortiz-Declet (Arizona Department of Water Resources), Mitch Basefsky (Central Arizona Project), Arturo Gabaldón and Glen Barnes (Community Water Company of Green Valley), Scott Perkins (Flowing Wells Irrigation District), Justyn Dillingham (Pima County Communications Office), Marie Light (Pima County Department of Environmental Quality), Mark Johnson (Tortolita Alliance), Joseph Tabor (Pima County), Sandra Rosales and Jody Dean (OSC), Asia Philbin (Marana Water), Melanie Alvarez (Pima Association of Governments), Melodee Loyer (FICO), Sharon Browning (Pima County Health Dept), Vanessa Barchfield (BOS District 2)

1. Welcome & Introductions – Kathy Chavez, OSC, welcomed attendees and announced them.
2. Review July 13 LDIG meeting - Kathy Chavez, OSC
 - a. ADWR reviewed short term and long term status
 - b. Economic Impact of Drought on Agriculture and Recreation
3. Arizona Department of Water Resources Updates - Némesis Ortiz-Declet, ADWR
 - a. Short-term Drought status: Review of the past five months short-term drought maps, March was a transition from winter to spring with few storms in the northeast but most of the state had below-normal precipitation. April was a warm and dry month with trace precipitation at Coconino and Cochise counties, much of the state had no measureable precipitation. Drought increased in Mojave County. May was driest on record, storms in Flagstaff area and Exceptional drought developed in Mojave County. In June, monsoon storm activity began and improvements in drought occurred in July as Moderate and Abnormally Dry conditions expanded. August saw productive precipitation, most of the state received above normal (100-400% of normal) precipitation, with higher percentages in La Paz, Yuma, western Maricopa, Cochise, northern Navajo, and central Apache counties. Removal of all Exceptional drought, 76 percent of state in Moderate drought or Abnormally Dry conditions.
 - b. Long-term Drought status: ADWR issued the January-March long-term status in July. The Long-Term map has not changed and will be updated after the Monitoring Technical Committee meeting in October. Review of January-March improvements in drought conditions. Extreme and Exceptional drought remains in the north, south and central areas saw improvements. The next Long-Term map may show additional improvements. Third consecutive La Niña predicted with odds shifted towards below-normal precipitation amounts during the winter.
 - c. ADWR updates: New conservation specialist.
 - d. Monitoring Technical Committee will meet October 5th.
4. Pima County Updates – Kathy Chavez, OSC
 - a. Review of LDIG Annual Report Outline
 - i. Information for annual report to include drought stage status. Tucson Water at Stage 1, Marana at Stage 2, Metro Water has updated their plan.
 - b. Pima County Water Factsheet
 - i. Much available water information is TAMA specific, but this fact sheet is all Pima County information.

- c. Tortolita Alliance Letter to US Bureau of Reclamation re: support for permanent cuts of 20 percent in Colorado River water delivery.
 - d. Santa Cruz County update, phenomenal rains spotty but frequent, covered large area but damaging erosion. From Bill Schock, NRCD.
5. 2022 Summer Monsoon Season Review – Kathy Chavez, substituting for Erin Boyle, NWS/NOAA
- a. June-August was the 3rd warmest and 52nd driest. Cooler with no record high temperatures. 4.13 rainfall at TAA, normal is 4.42". Most of early summer warmer than normal than cooler.
 - b. June was the 5th warmest and 38th wettest with normal rainfall. On June 18th rain ended 80 day stretch of no precipitation. 9th longest stretch. Review of June observed precipitation and departure from normal maps.
 - c. July was the 7th warmest and 28th driest. Four of the hottest July months occurred in past five years. Over an inch below normal rainfall. Review of July observed precipitation and departure from normal maps.
 - d. August was 38th warmest and 34th wettest. Last two August months above normal rain and cooler temperatures. 2.82" rain, normal is 1.98". But Water Year rainfall below normal, 6.25", normal is 9.29". Review of August observed precipitation and departure from normal maps.
 - e. Monsoon overall is normal, as indicated on Haywood Plot, but well below 2021 monsoon.
 - f. Sierra Vista, Willcox, Nogales Ajo have had above normal monsoons.
 - g. Review of drought condition during monsoon, improvement to Moderate and Abnormally Dry conditions.
 - h. Seasonal Outlook is for drought improvement and removal across the state. Sept-Nov, equal chance for rain and warm temperatures.
 - i. 3rd La Niña Winter continues through November and likely decreases January through March. Drier than average not necessarily every La Nina but typically.
 - j. Question on history of record for NWS ranking. Based on historic record going back to 1890.
6. CAP and Colorado River Update – Mitch Basefsky, CAWCD
- a. Review of bucket charts. Lake Powell is at 3,530' and Lake Mead 1,043.8'. Protective elevation for Powell is 3,525', approaching that level. Mead had intervening flows above normal from the monsoon which raised elevation 1'.
 - b. Review of August 24 Month Study, end of the year Powell will be in 3,520-25' level. Will depend on Apr-May runoff season. BOR release of 7 MAF is 1.25 MAF below an average year release. Last year water managers prepared for a 7.48 MAF but conditions forced 7 MAF release. WY 2023 will be 7 MAF release.
 - c. There might be a balancing release in April but will be limited to protect Powell elevation of 3,525'.
 - d. Mead will operate in Tier 2a shortage with effective elevation of 1,047.6. Effective elevation is the 480kaf operational neutrality condition, otherwise physical elevation of Mead would trigger Tier 2b.
 - e. Review of Mead CRMMS-ESP chart, with all the different scenarios most of the future Mead elevations fall in the low end. Doesn't include future 500+ Plan and other conservation programs contributions but does include the 800kaf+ of Arizona contributions in 2022.
 - f. Review of reduction chart, in Tier 2b California reductions kick in at 200kaf. In the state, there was mitigation water for agriculture in 2022 of 70kaf but no mitigation in a Tier 2a. NIA water will receive 75 percent of its supply with mitigation water. M&I supplies will be impacted approximately 3 percent given NIA reallocations. GRIC owns the most NIA water but will be firmed by the feds and DCP mitigation.

- g. CAP 101 University on September 29th.
- 7. Drought Updates
 - a. None.
- 8. Adjournment
 - a. Next meeting November 9



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September 1, 2022

Camille Touton
Commissioner
United States Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Subject: Colorado River System-Cut 20

Dear Commissioner Touton:

The Tortolita Alliance (TA) is a local (Marana, AZ) non-profit organization that advocates for land conservancy, ensuring protection of open space, wildlife habitat, watershed, and compatible recreational use.

TA has also been active in area of water education, conservation and ensuring an adequate water supply for the Tucson region and the entire southwest.

Thirty-six percent (36%) of Arizona's water supply comes from the Colorado River. The Colorado River system is in dire straits with Lake Mead and Lake Powell at historic low levels.

We offer the following observations:

- Period 1 (1953-1974)¹- Average Colorado River flow = 13.1 mafy.
- Period 2 (2000-2021)¹ - Average Colorado River flow = 12.3 mafy.
- Average Colorado River flow for Periods 1 & 2 = 12.7 mafy.
- Colorado River Full Allocation = 16.5 mafy
- Historic Allocation Imbalance = 16.5 – 12.7 = 3.8 mafy.
- Experts² predict Average Colorado River flows to be even lower than 12.7 mafy in the future due to aridification.
- In 2012 USBR³ predicted a future 3.2 mafy imbalance.
- Average Historic and Projected Imbalance = 3.5 mafy [(3.2 + 3.8)/2]

¹ How Climate Change Is Impacting The Colorado River, Brad Udall, Senior Scientist/Scholar, Colorado State University, Grand Canyon River Virtual River Guides Training Seminar, March 27, 2022.

² The Future of the Colorado River Project-Alternative Management Paradigms for the Future of the Colorado and Green Rivers, Whitepaper No. 6, K. Wheeler, B. Udall et al, February 5, 2021.

³ Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study, USBR, December 2012.

The data is clear---the Colorado River is over-allocated. There is not enough Colorado River water supply to meet existing or future demands, yet much of the southwest depends on it. The current reservoir capacity (Mead-28% and Powell-26%) is confirmation.

The existing and proposed shortage cuts are not enough and the parties cannot come to consensus or agreement. Therefore, it is time for USBR to take drastic action and permanently cut Colorado River delivery contracts by 20% (3.5/16.5 rounded) across the board (Cut 20). This will be the new Law of the River.

Taking this action will protect our public water supply and the Colorado River ecosystem and force water suppliers and users to conserve and implement sustainable water supply planning.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark L. Johnson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark L. Johnson
President

cc: Senator Mark Kelly
Senator Kyrsten Sinema
Congressman Tom O'Halleran
Tom Buschatzke, ADWR