



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
September 4, 2014

SEPTEMBER 18 PUBLIC MEETING IN TUCSON TO DISCUSS REGIONAL GROUNDWATER ISSUES AND DROUGHT PLANNING

Strategies to manage water resources during climate uncertainty and drought will be the focus of a public meeting in Tucson, Arizona this month. The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has scheduled the meeting of the Southeast Arizona Citizens Forum on Thursday, September 18, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., in the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department's Water & Energy Sustainability Center, 2955 W. Calle Agua Nueva in Tucson.

At the meeting, Susanna Eden, Assistant Director of the Water Resources Research Center at the University of Arizona, will give an update on the Groundwater, Climate and Stakeholder Engagement (GCASE) Project. The Water Resources Research Center and the Hydrologic Research Center concluded a two-year research project funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to help water managers deal with climate uncertainties. The project combined an innovative modeling framework with stakeholder engagement. Groundwater basins within the Santa Cruz Active Management Area in Arizona served as a case study. The modeling framework converts rainfall to stream flow and aquifer recharge in the case study basins. By varying assumptions about groundwater pumping, the model outputs will show a range of likely future aquifer conditions. Enhancements of the modeling framework enable it to analyze water management scenarios under likely future climate conditions, as well as under historic conditions.

The meeting will also feature a presentation on Drought Management Challenges and Opportunities in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region by Gregg Garfin, Deputy Director for Science Translation & Outreach, Institute of the Environment, University of Arizona. Drought does not usually

involve direct property damage so society tends to ignore drought until it becomes a problem and then a disaster. The U.S.-Mexico border region, one of the driest parts of North America, is prone to drought episodes lasting from a year to multiple decades. Drought episodes in the Southwest are due primarily to the interactions between the atmosphere and oceans in ways that are fairly well understood, but imperfectly predictable. Managing drought means managing risk and uncertainty in ways that provide early warning, coordination among agencies and organizations at a variety of levels of governance, planning actions and programs to address both impending drought and its impacts, and resources to ensure the implementation of plans.

Dr. Garfin will discuss a 2012 study of western state drought programs in the U.S. that noted that typically more resources are allocated for drought response than preparedness and mitigation. Among state drought officials' recommendations to improve drought programs are the development of clear and relevant indicators of drought and triggers for drought action, frequent communication among agencies, local governments, and stakeholders, regular updates to drought plans, and strong leadership. To improve drought monitoring, forecasting, planning and cross-border coordination, the North American Climate Services Partnership (NACSP) is engaged in a pilot project in the lower Rio Grande basin. In the pilot project, partners from Mexican and U.S. agencies and organizations are working to better coordinate drought monitoring, early warning, and forecasts, improve communication through meetings, workshops, and newsletters, and engage stakeholders in the region to build the capacity to plan for and respond to future drought.

The purpose of the Southeast Arizona Citizens Forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community regarding Commission projects and related activities in Pima, Cochise, and Santa Cruz Counties, Arizona. A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information may call 520-281-1832 or contact sally.spener@ibwc.gov.

Media may contact:

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SOUTHEAST ARIZONA CITIZENS FORUM
Thursday, September 18, 2014
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Radon N & S Room
Pima County Water & Energy Sustainability Center
2955 W. Calle Agua Nueva*
(still known as 3035 W. El Camino del Cerro on most maps)
Tucson, AZ

Agenda

- Call to Order – John Light, Citizens Forum Co-Chair, USIBWC
- Groundwater, Climate and Stakeholder Engagement Project Update – Susanna Eden, Ph.D., Assistant Director, University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center
- Drought Management Challenges and Opportunities in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region – Gregg Garfin, Ph.D., Deputy Director for Science Translation & Outreach, Institute of the Environment, University of Arizona
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

***Directions:** From I-10 west, take Exit #252 Camino del Cerro/Ruthrauff. Turn left (west) and continue past the underpass and past the first light then turn left through the gate to the Water & Energy Sustainability Center.

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time at 520-281-1832 or sally.spener@ibwc.gov.