



Reflecting on the Water/Climate Briefings

Desirae Hoffman, Adrienne Uphoff, & Rebecca Watkins
School of Geographical Sciences & Planning, Sustainability, & Life Sciences, Arizona State University
Decision Center for a Desert City

What is a Water/Climate Briefing?

Water/Climate Briefings (WCBs) are 90 minute panel discussions held at the Decision Center for a Desert City (DCDC). The briefings initiate discussion on the current and future states of Arizona's water system, engage various stakeholder viewpoints, and involve a broad audience of water professionals, academics, and students. A facilitator leads the expert panel and the audience through a discussion on a pre-determined topic.

The Community of Undergraduate Research Scholars (COURS) attended each of these briefings throughout the 2009-2010 academic year and created summaries of each discussion to be posted on the DCDC website.

Water/Climate Briefing on Sustainable Water Reuse in Arizona



Benefits

WCBs result in a variety of benefits:

- Facilitates stakeholder engagement
- Encourages ASU student involvement
- Provides ideas for further research
- Encourages networking
- Spreads awareness of critical water issues, such as scarcity and water reuse
- Connects critical water issues to the theme of sustainability
- Increases accessibility of information

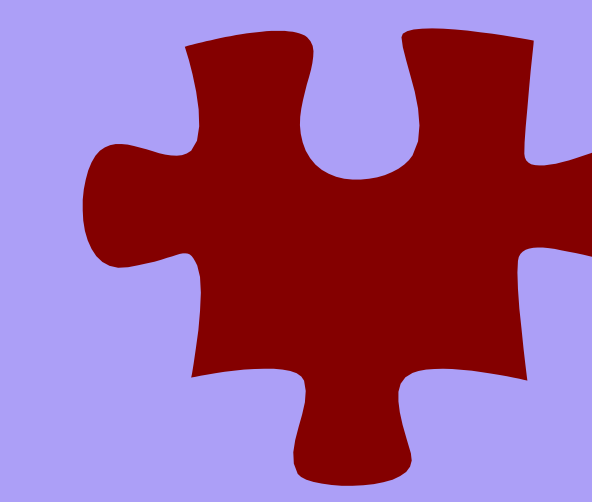
Cross-cutting theme of the Water/Climate Briefings: Achieving Water System Sustainability in AZ

Panelists gave their views on a sustainable state for the AZ water system throughout the WCBs. They identified social, political, scientific, and physical obstacles to achieving this state and specific solutions for addressing many of these obstacles, but strategies were noticeably absent from the discussions.

Obstacles

- Varied viewpoints on defining sustainable state
- Current water policies
- Valuation of water
- Negative public perceptions of water reuse
- Water infrastructure limitations
- Effects of climate change on water availability
- Different political and ecological boundaries
- Disconnect between timing of scientific findings & policy changes
- Policies based on historical data instead of future projections
- Financial costs associated with water conservation & reuse strategies
- Centralized water treatment system and associated energy waste

Strategies



A missing piece?

Solutions

- Increase public awareness & education
- Develop and use modeling & future scenarios
- Encourage and implement small scale reuse now, such as smart water meters and rain catchment
- Increase legislation, especially with regard to groundwater use
- Collect more data on water supplies

Water/Climate Briefing Synopses

Water-Energy Nexus- 9/02/2009

Identified the challenges involved with balancing the amount of energy and water we use through institutional structures, pricing strategies, subsidies, water-reuse, and decentralized water treatment facilities.

Water Law and Sustainability- 10/07/2009

Focused on the challenges and limitations of Water Law in Arizona as well as future sustainable development of the local water system. Panelists agreed that population growth and the current laws surrounding groundwater regulation are major challenges.

Irrigated Agriculture in Arizona- 12/02/2009

Discussed the common practice of reclaiming agricultural land for urban development and identified the challenges, solutions, and possible futures of agriculture in Arizona. One major outcome of the WCB was understanding the cultural value of agriculture.

Regional Water Governance- 01/27/2010

Focused on the current and future states of Arizona's regional water governance, specifically with regard to the benefits and obstacles of collaboration and visions for sustainable water governance. Panelists indicated that inter-organizational collaboration is often motivated by a conflict or common need.

Future Scenarios of Agriculture and Water in Central Arizona- 02/17/2010

Graduate students presented three future scenarios: "Nearly Las Vegas," "Urban-Ag Partnership," and "Powered by AZ." Panelists responded to the scenarios, particularly with regard to their desirability, likelihood, and feasibility. Overall, participants thought "Nearly Las Vegas" and "Powered by AZ" were least desirable as agriculture was not prominent.

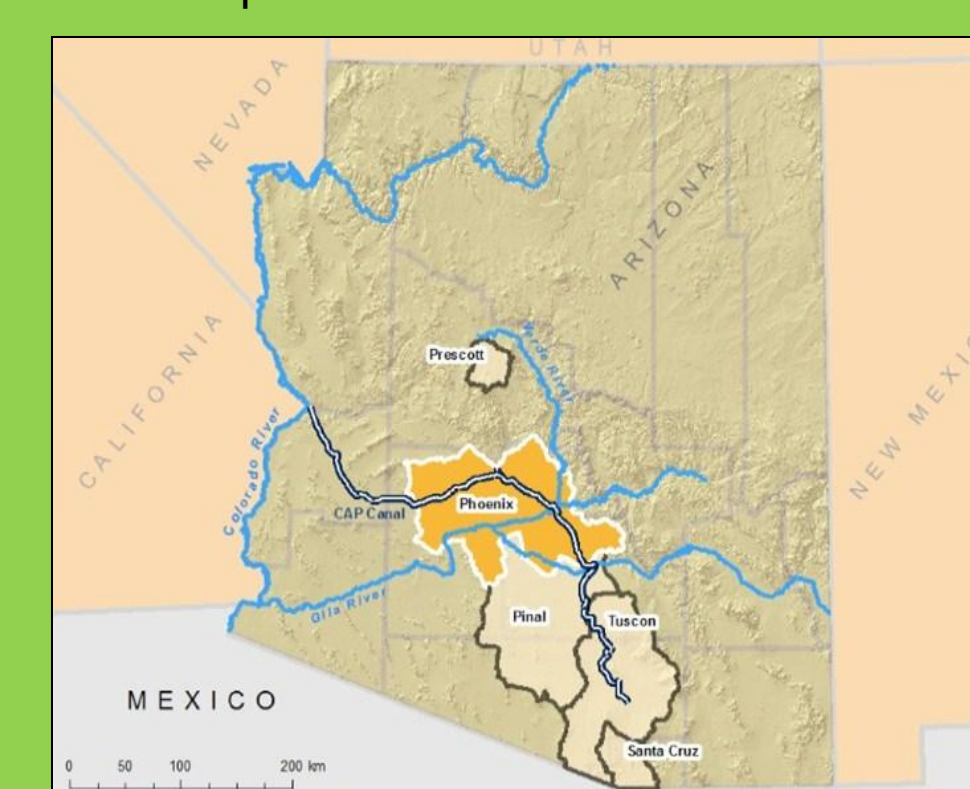
Sustainable Water Reuse in Arizona- 03/03/2010

Discussed the terminology, regulations, social perception, environmental impacts, and sustainability of water reuse in Arizona. Panelists stress public education is key to making water reuse a positive incentive for Arizona residents.

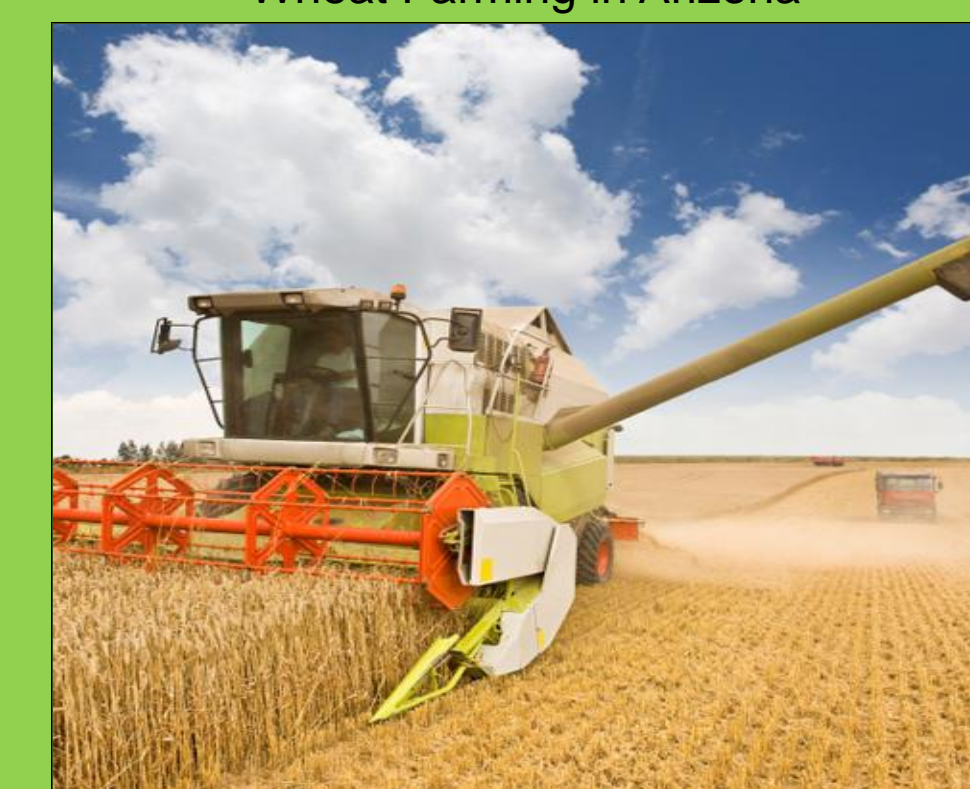
Pipeline transporting water in Texas



Map of Arizona's Water Resources



Wheat Farming in Arizona



Reclaimed Water Sign in Long Beach, CA



The COURS class recommends:

- Transitioning from visions to implementation by incorporating **strategy-based discussions** for sustainable development
- Allow attendants to **suggest topics for future WCBs** by providing a convenient medium, such as suggestion box
- A **post WCB gathering** (serve dessert or move to a coffee shop) to further engage the audience and panelists
- **Identifying disconnects in knowledge** and planning concerning a sustainable water system, then connect them
- Initiating **more stakeholder-student interactions** to foster real-world student research; have COURS students contact panelists
- Increasing **advertisement to ASU students and faculty** in a variety of disciplines to attract a wider and more varied audience
- **Encourage idea-sharing** among stakeholders through website

Like to suggest a topic
for a future WCB?
Submit ideas here! →

Acknowledgment

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