

# CLIMAS Update

## NEWSLETTER OF THE CLIMATE ASSESSMENT PROJECT FOR THE SOUTHWEST

*integrating science, policy, and community*

Volume 1, Number 1

August, 1998

### **GREETINGS!**

The Climate Assessment Project for the Southwest, CLIMAS for short, is pleased to send out its very first newsletter, Vol.1, No.1. We anticipate issuing the newsletter on a quarterly basis. The newsletter will feature news about the project, climate information sources to check out, and other items. This issue focuses on the activities of the social science team. The next issue will feature the research activities of the hydrology and climatology groups.

### **PRELIMINARY STAKEHOLDER RESULTS ARE IN**

The CLIMAS team finished its first round of interviews with people who directly or indirectly have an interest in climate information. The foray took interviewers into southeastern Arizona, where they spoke with ranchers, utilities managers, water providers, emergency managers, farmers, business people, and others. They collected a wealth of information about how people use climate information, what sorts of information they use, and what kinds of information they need. A summary of what we learned from the interviews will soon be posed on our website.

Over the coming year, we will continue collecting this kind of information, and using the insights we gain to begin working on how to connect people with the information they need. If you need climate information that you currently don't have, or if you would like to see the information you get presented in a different way, let us know. Our phone number and addresses appear at the end of this newsletter.

### **TUCSON NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE UNVEILS SE ARIZONA CONVECTIVE OUTLOOK**

The National Weather Service's Tucson office offers daily information on convective activity around southeastern Arizona on their website. In addition to the usual temperature and precipitation forecasts, the site offers forecast discussions and a range of graphics, satellite images and Doppler radar images. You can find the site at <http://nimbo.wrh.noaa.gov/Tucson/twc.html>. From the home page, click on The Southeast Arizona Convective Outlook. While you're visiting the Convective Outlook pages, please take a few minutes to fill out the survey (you can click on survey at the top of the Convective Outlook homepage). CLIMAS developed the survey questionnaire in cooperation with the Tucson NWS office to get a better idea of what kinds of information our constituents use, and how they would like to have that information presented. Feedback from people like you will help us serve you better!

### **CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE**

The CLIMAS website is up and running. Find out about what the project is up to, and be sure to check out the links to many good information sites, including the official NOAA Climate Prediction Center web site. We are adding more information to our own web site all the time. Bookmark it, you will have fast access to the latest updates. The website is located at:  
[www://geo.ispe.arizona.edu/swclimate/](http://www.geo.ispe.arizona.edu/swclimate/).

## **BENSON TOWN COUNCIL PASSES MOTION TO SUPPORT INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT STUDY**

Monday, August 17, marked an important landmark in the first-year research agenda of the Project. Barbara Morehouse, Program Manager for CLIMAS, presented to the Benson Town Council the team's proposal to conduct an integrated assessment of the vulnerability of the community to variations in climate. The team is pleased to announce that Council voted unanimously in support of the project. After the council meeting, Tim Finan, Director of the Bureau for Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA), Robert Hackenberg, research scientist at BARA, BARA research assistant Nick Benequista, and Malcolm Hughes, director of the UA Tree Ring Lab, mingled with council members and local residents to answer questions and discuss the proposal more fully. Folks expressed considerable interest in the project, and several people offered their assistance to the team.

This outreach activity was followed in short order by a second presentation. On Thursday, August 20, Tim Finan, Barbara Morehouse, and Petra Tschakert, research assistant in the project core office, attended a luncheon meeting of the Benson economic development committee. Tim Finan made an informal presentation on the project. After the meeting, Tim, Barbara and Petra discussed the project with individual committee members. As at the town council meeting, the project was well received and offers of assistance were extended to the team. Buoyed by these successes, the team is now engaged in detailed planning for the field research component of the study.

## **SPOTLIGHT ON URBAN WATER**

At a 1997 symposium sponsored by the Udall Center on climate change in the Southwest, urban water was identified as one of the sectors that was most vulnerable to climate variability. This information prompted the CLIMAS team to place an emphasis on urban water in its research

agenda. For the past couple of months, under the direction of Barbara Morehouse, research assistants Rebecca Carter and Petra Tschakert have been gathering background information on water supply and demand in the greater Phoenix area, Tucson, Nogales and in the Benson-St. David area. As the study unfolds, the team will be conducting a survey to identify the particular areas where urban water providers are vulnerable to changes in climate, and to identify areas where changes in policies and procedures might introduce greater flexibility into the region's urban water systems. The team will also be conducting a sensitivity analysis aimed at finding out how sensitive water supply and demand are under alternative urban growth and climate scenarios.

## **RANCHING STUDY UNDERWAY**

Tom Sheridan, associated with the Arizona State Museum and the UA Department of Anthropology, is heading up a study of the vulnerability of the ranching sector to climate changes. As so starkly illustrated by the severe drought in Mexico and Texas, ranching is unquestionably one of the most vulnerable sectors to climate variability. Through working with ranchers in southeastern Arizona, Tom, together with Diana Hadley (also at the Arizona State Museum and a rancher herself), and research assistant Hallie Eakin seek to build a profile of the industry in the region, identify the specific kinds of risks climate poses, and identify information needs that could help ranchers cut their losses and perhaps even develop a competitive edge.

*CLIMAS Update* is produced quarterly by the Climate Assessment Project for the Southwest. For more information about the project, contact:

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