

CLIMAS Update

NEWSLETTER OF THE CLIMATE ASSESSMENT PROJECT FOR THE SOUTHWEST

integrating science, policy, and community

Volume 1, Number 2

December, 1998

CLIMAS JOINS WITH USGCRP NATIONAL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT

The urban water study and the ranching study have been selected for use in the Southwest Regional Assessment. The assessment is part of the U.S. Global Change Research Program's national assessment process. William Sprigg, Deputy Director of UA's Institute for the Study of Planet Earth Climate (ISPE) and Todd Hinkley of the U.S. Geological Service in Denver are heading up the Southwest assessment project, assisted by an array of research, public-sector, and private-sector representatives. Janie Chermak, economist at the University of New Mexico, Laura Huenneke, plant ecologist at New Mexico State University, Wil Orr (Prescott College) are among those who will assist in enhancing the CLIMAS urban water and ranching studies to accommodate the requirements of the USGCRP assessment.

The Southwest regional assessment project will be a regular feature of the *CLIMAS Update* newsletter from now until the report is published. Stay tuned for progress updates!

WHO'S A CLIMATE STAKEHOLDER?

A climate stakeholder is someone who uses, or has a potential need for climate information. The person may need information about a specific event, or type of event, that occurred in the past. The need may even be for information about paleo-climate events that is, ones that happened centuries or more in the past. The individual may need forecasts about what will happen in the future: tomorrow, next week, next month or next season, year, or

perhaps decade. The person may manage a water company, run a cattle ranch, be a professional photographer, be a health care provider, or engage in any of a vast array of other activities. Communities made up of people engaged in common pursuits or who live close to each other and share common aspirations or problems may also be stakeholders if climate has an identifiable impact on their lives.

The first stakeholder survey report, covering an array of sectors and individuals in southeastern Arizona, has just been released. You may request a copy of the report from our office, or you can view the report at <http://www.arizona.edu/swclimate/stakeholder>. Check it out!

ARIZONA CONVECTIVE OUTLOOK SURVEY RESULTS

As noted in our last newsletter, the CLIMAS office set up an online survey to find out what sorts of stakeholders are visiting the National Weather Service Tucson Office's Convective Activity webpages, and what their evaluations of the site are. Due to the fact that the survey was not operationalized until August, well into the summer monsoon season here, there were not a great number of responses. However, the 27 valid questionnaires that were filled out provided good feedback on the site and its uses. More than 80 percent of respondents stated that they used the site for personal reasons; only five people reported consulting the site for professional reasons. Of the 27 respondents, 13 anticipated visiting the site more than once a day.

Almost 90 percent of those responding to the survey rated the information provided as clear and understandable; over 90 percent found the graphics shown to be useful and sufficiently detailed. More than 30 percent of respondents indicated that they would like to see even more graphics on the site. Suggestions ranged from adding more animated graphics, especially ones that depict cell movement to graphs that depict cumulative precipitation, lightening strikes and moisture convergence. Among the 18 information sources available on the site, the Tucson Radar data was cited substantially more often (25 times) than the next most popular selections: Convective Outlook and Forecast Discussion pages (cited 17 times each). The remaining options were all cited, but in descending frequency from 13 times to once. Perhaps not surprisingly, the National Convective Outlook, which was cited as most useful by only one person, was cited by 13 individuals as least useful. Tied for second place in terms of least usefulness were the Camera View of Weather from UA and El Paso Radar.

THE SOUTHWEST IN CONTEXT

In preparation for undertaking field work on the Benson community integrated assessment, the ranching study, and the urban water study, members of the social science team pooled their time and talents to gather background information on the Southwest region. The Southwest in Context report, available on the CLIMAS web site, provides insights into the implications of climate impacts for the region's sociodemographic structure, land tenure and land use patterns, agricultural activities, water supply/demand, and policy structure. This report, and the data gathered to develop the report, provide important information needed to anchor project research activities to specific places, communities, and economic activities.

CLIMATE DATABASE PROJECT

One of the two natural science projects currently underway involves gathering together in one place information and

knowledge about the past and present climates of the Southwest. The intent is to build a database of what information is available in terms of both historical and paleo records, and to identify where the gaps in our current knowledge are. A white paper discussing preliminary findings will be available on the CLIMAS web site shortly after the first of the year; the final report and database are scheduled for completion next spring.

CLIMATE AND HYDROLOGIC FORECAST PROJECT

Work has been underway since last summer on identifying the array of forecasts available for the Southwest, collecting information on how these forecasts are made, and getting a sense of how (and even if) the forecasts are evaluated for accuracy. The CLIMAS core office sponsored a workshop last July for an invited group of forecasters to discuss these questions. A report on the workshop, and on the status of climate and hydrologic forecasting, will be posted on the CLIMAS web site soon.

WELCOME TO RESAC!

Good news.... The University of Arizona was awarded one of nine grants by NASA to open a Regional Earth Science Application Center (RESAC). The Southwest RESAC aims to facilitate the use of remote sensing data and NASA technology in the region. The CLIMAS project is only one of many groups that will benefit from association with the new center.

THE CLIMAS WEB SITE

The CLIMAS web site is located at <http://geo.ispe.arizona.edu/swclimate/>

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

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