



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

**WATER RESOURCES
RESEARCH CENTER**

WRRC 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Dedicated to the
Memory and Legacy
of Thomas Meixner

AGENDA



IMPLEMENTING WATER SOLUTIONS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

MARCH 12-13, 2024

University of Arizona
Student Union Grand Ballroom
Tucson, AZ

Photo: Brenda Sanchez, Lake Powell, WRRC Photo Contest Submission

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.



Conference Info:

- Livestreaming
- Conference Packet (Agenda, Speaker Bios, and More)

DAY 1 – MARCH 12

12:00 PM

Registration

1:00 PM

Welcome

- Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*
- Shane Burgess, *Vice President, University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life & Veterinary Sciences & Cooperative Extension*

1:15 PM

Dedication to the Memory and Legacy of Thomas Meixner

Kathleen Meixner and Family

1:45 PM

Meixner Tri-University Legacy Project

Moderator – Kathy Jacobs, *Director, Center for Climate Adaptation Science and Solutions, University of Arizona*

Student Presentations

- Approach to Data Access, Hydroclimate Modeling and Scenario Development, Progress to Date
- Alternative Recharge Approaches, Recharge Suitability and Baseflow Assessments
- Landscape and Vegetation Management Options for Enhancing Runoff/Recharge
- Options for Maximizing Urban Runoff, Capture and Recharge
- Contributions of Stakeholder and Partner Engagement to ATUR Process

Additional Project Overview

Neha Gupta, *Assistant Research Professor, Arizona Institute for Resilience, University of Arizona* – Context, Rationale, and Approach for the ATUR-WRP Project

2:45 PM

BREAK (Sponsor Videos)

3:00 PM

Academic Collaborations

Moderator – Jamie McEvoy, *Associate Professor of Geography, Montana State University*

Panelists

- Rashi Bhushan, *Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Arizona*
– Developing a Decision Support Tool for Net Zero Urban Water Systems in the US Southwest: A Collaborative Approach with Academic and Utility Partners
- Luisa Ikner, *Assistant Professor, Environmental Science Department, Water & Energy Sustainable Technology (WEST) Center, University of Arizona*
– Building Water Resource Resilience by Strengthening Academic-Water Utility Partnerships
- Joaquin Ruiz, *Director, Biosphere 2, Vice President for Global Environmental Futures, University of Arizona*
– Status and Progress of the UArizona Implementation Committee on the Future of Agriculture and Food Production in a Drying Climate

3:40 PM

Salt River Project Initiatives

Session Speakers

- Hannah Hansen, *Water Planning Analyst, Salt River Project*
– Downstream Modification of Bartlett Dam
- Tice Supplee, *Arizona/Southwest Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Southwest*
– Horseshoe Reservoir Habitat Restoration Study Phase 1
- Craig McGinnis, *Water Rights Analyst, Salt River Project*
– Roosevelt Dam Flood Control Space Utilization
- Caitlin Brogan, *Water Conservation Coordinator, Salt River Project*
– Conservation Through Collaboration: SRP's Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Water Efficiency Partnerships

4:15 PM

Journalists' Perspectives

Moderator – Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*

Panelists

- Tony Davis, *Reporter, Arizona Daily Star*
- Deb Krol, *Indigenous Affairs Reporter, The Arizona Republic*
- Alex Hager, *Reporter, KUNC*

5:00 PM

Day 1 Wrap

Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*

5:00 PM

Reception/Poster Session

6:20 PM

Announcement of Student Poster Award Winners – Ty Morton, *Senior Project Manager, HDR*

6:30 PM

End of Reception

DAY 2 – MARCH 13

7:30 AM Registration/Breakfast

8:30 AM **Welcome Back**

Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*

8:40 AM **Keynote – Paul Brierley, CEO, Arizona Department of Agriculture**

9:10 AM **Partnership Development & Process**

Moderator – Thomas Throssell, *Assistant Director, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona*

Panelists

- Linneth Lopez, *Environmental Engineering Specialist III & Rhona Mallea, Project Manager, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality*
- Dave Roberts, *Former Senior Director of Water Resources, Salt River Project*
– A New Paradigm for Reaching Sustainability in the Upper San Pedro River Watershed
- David Wegner, *Scientist & Public Policy Strategist, Woolpert Engineering & NAS, Water Science and Technology Board*
– Climate Change and Water Availability
- Amy Flores, *Program Manager, ASU Sustainability Teachers' Academies & Charlie Alcorn, Watershed Management Group*
– Storm Smart Schools

10:00 AM **Keynote – The Honorable Katie Hobbs, Governor of Arizona**

10:30 AM BREAK (Sponsor Videos)

10:45 AM **Research & Tool Development**

Moderator – Chris Udall, *Executive Director, Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona*

Session Speakers

- Joseph “Joey” Blankinship, *Associate Professor, Environmental Science Department, University of Arizona*
– Developing Solutions to Arizona Water Scarcity Through the Desert Agriculture Soil Health Initiative (DASHI)
- Andrew French, *Retired Research Physical Scientist, USDA / ARS Maricopa*
– Quantitative Assessments of Water and Salt Balance for Cropping Systems in the Lower Colorado River Region
- Ethan Orr, *Associate Director, Agriculture, Natural Resources & Economic Development, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension*
– The University of Arizona On-Farm Irrigation Efficiency program
- Somnath Mondal, *Postdoctoral Research Scholar, Arizona State University*
– Drought Resilience through Advanced Monitoring, Prediction, and Mitigation Strategies

11:35 AM	Lunch
12:00 PM	<p>Luncheon Program</p> <p>Acknowledgements – Sharon B. Megdal, <i>Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona</i></p> <p>Announcement of Student Poster Award Winners – Ty Morton, <i>Senior Project Manager, HDR</i></p>
12:10 PM	<p>Luncheon Keynote – The Honorable Stephen Roe Lewis, <i>Governor of the Gila River Indian Community</i></p>
12:45 PM	<p>Water User Services & Tools</p> <p>Moderator – Shaina Shay, <i>Owner and Editor-in-Chief, The Water Report</i></p> <p>Session Speakers</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raluca Mihalcescu, <i>Water Conservation Coordinator, Arizona Water Company</i> – Arizona Water Company’s Approach to Water Conservation • Jing Luo, <i>Vice President/Founder, Apex Applied Technology, Inc</i> – North Leupp Family Farms’ Navajo Nation Rural Food Hub • Season Martin, <i>CEO, Virga Labs</i> – Colorado River Basin Post-2026 Operations Exploration Tool • Caitlin Brogan, <i>Water Conservation Coordinator, Salt River Project</i> – Conservation Through Collaboration: Landscape Irrigation Efficiency with Waterfluence
1:35 PM	<p>Financing Solutions</p> <p>Moderator – Faith Sternlieb, <i>Associate Director of Engagement, Internet of Water, Center for Geospatial Solutions, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy</i></p> <p>Panelists</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chelsea McGuire, <i>Assistant Director, External Affairs, Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona</i> – Partnerships in Augmentation • Maya Clifford, <i>Water Resources Manager and Engineer, New Mexico</i> – New Mexico’s Arizona Water Settlements Act Program • Christian Fauser, <i>Western Water Policy Associate, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership</i> – Cross-Watershed Coordination: Reducing Barriers to Accessing Federal Funding to Scale Watershed Restoration Efforts in Arizona • Elijah Tangenberg, <i>Water Resources Specialist, City of Phoenix</i> – The Blue Bank Promise
2:25 PM	BREAK (Sponsor Videos)
2:40 PM	<p>Keynote – Kristen Johnson, <i>Manager, Colorado River Programs, Arizona Department of Water Resources</i></p>

3:05 PM

On the Border

Moderator – Francisco Zamora, *Senior Director of Programs, Sonoran Institute*

Session Speakers

- Martha Gomez Sapiens, *Researcher, Department of Geosciences, University of Arizona*
– The Binational Effort to Restore the Colorado River Delta
- Roberto Molina, *Associate Director West Region, Grants Financing Department, The North American Development Bank*
- Elia Tapia, *Professor, University of Sonora*
– Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program, Arizona-Sonora

3:50 PM

Closing Remarks

Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*

4:00 PM

End of Conference