

WRRC 2025  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE



SHARED BORDERS  
SHARED WATERS

Working Together in Times of Scarcity

Image: Ben Yang, WRRC Photo Contest

# Agenda

## Tue, May 20

### PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP: Better Listening to Help Transform Water Conflicts

8:30 AM Workshop Check-In/Light Refreshments

9:00 AM Workshop Start Time

11:30 AM Workshop Ends

### CONFERENCE DAY 1

#### LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

11:30 AM **Sponsor Check-In and SET-UP**

12:00 PM Conference Registration Check-In (Ongoing)

1:00 PM Conference Program Starts: Welcome/Opening Remarks

- Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*
- Austin Nuñez, *Chairman, San Xavier District, Tohono O'odham Nation*

1:20 PM Special Dedication to the Memory and Legacy of Roberto F. Salmón Castelo (1953-2025), Former Commissioner, International Boundary and Water Commission - Mexican Section (2009-2020)

1:35 PM Keynote: Transforming Water Conflicts: Global Lessons in Hydrodiplomacy  
Aaron Wolf, *Professor, Oregon State University*

2:05 PM Session 1: Frameworks for Collaboration Across Borders

- Moderator – Meena Westford, *Director of Imported Water, San Diego County Water Authority*
- TBD, *Commissioner, International Boundary and Water Commission – US Section*
- Adriana Reséndez, *Commissioner, International Boundary and Water Commission – Mexican Section*

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2:50 PM

NETWORKING BREAK

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## Session 2: Sharing the Colorado River

3:05 PM

- Moderator – Arturo Gabaldón, *President and General Manager, Community Water Company of Green Valley*
  - Andrea Gerlak, *Professor, University of Arizona*  
Introduction and Overview: History and Operations of the Colorado River
  - Carlos A. de la Parra, *Founding Partner, Centro Luken de Estrategias en Agua y Medio Ambiente*  
Evolution of Collaboration between US and Mexico on the Colorado River
  - Amelia Flores, *Chairwoman, Colorado River Indian Tribes*  
Effective Tribal Consultation
  - Francisco Zamora, *Senior Director of Programs, Sonoran Institute*  
Cross-border Collaborations with NGOs
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## Session 3: Sharing Other Waters

4:00 PM

- Moderator – Justin Dutram, *Assistant Vice President, Mexico and Latin American Affairs, University of Arizona*
  - Gilbert Anaya, *Chief, Environmental Management Division, International Boundary and Water Commission – US Section*  
and  
Blanca Cabello, *Deputy Director of Water Quality and Sanitation, International Boundary and Water Commission – Mexican Section*  
Understanding the Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program (TAAP) and Advances in Harmonizing Data Across Borders
  - Tanya Trujillo, *Deputy State Engineer and Senior Water Policy Advisor, New Mexico*  
Update on the Rio Grande and Groundwater in New Mexico
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## Special Recognition: Chairwoman Amelia Flores and Day 1 Closing

5:00 PM

- Amelia Flores, *Chairwoman, Colorado River Indian Tribes*
  - Levi Esquerra, *Senior Vice President for Native American Advancement & Tribal Engagement, University of Arizona*
  - Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*
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5:15 PM

RECEPTION at **Cork & Craft (U of A Student Union)**

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**Wed, May 21**

**CONFERENCE DAY 2**

7:30 AM

Day 2 Registration/BREAKFAST

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8:30 AM

Welcome Back

- Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*
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8:35 AM

Keynote: Infrastructure, Investment, and Binational Collaboration  
John Beckham, *Managing Director, North American Development Bank (NADBank)*

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## Session 4: Water Security and Trade

8:55 AM

- Moderator – Natalie DeRoock, *Administrator for Public Affairs, Tucson Water*
  - Rob Simm, *Senior Vice President, Emergent Sector Leader, Water, Stantec*  
Future Prospects for Binational Desalination
  - Glenn Williamson, *CEO, Canada Arizona Business Council*  
Project Hourglass and Canadian Investments in the Water Sector
  - Ben Ruddell, *Professor, School of Informatics Computing and Cyber Systems, Northern Arizona University*  
Virtual Water Across Borders
  - Michael Mendonca, *Senior Director, Water Strategic Services, Salt River Project (SRP)*  
Cross-border Partnerships for Water Augmentation and Flood Flow Capture in the Verde River System
  - Francisco Lara-Valencia, *Professor, School of Transborder Studies, Arizona State University*  
Planning Across Borders
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## Session 5: Water Challenges and Funding

10:00 AM

- Moderator – Thomas Throssell, *Assistant Director, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona*
  - Heather Whiteman Runs Him, *Associate Clinical Professor and Director, Tribal Justice Clinic, University of Arizona*  
Tribal Water Settlements and Funding for Tribal Water Infrastructure
  - Brian Bennon, *Director of National Tribal Water Systems, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA)*  
Operational Capacity Development and Cross-border Knowledge Sharing
  - Antonio Rascón, *Principal Engineer, International Boundary and Water Commission – Mexican Section*  
and  
Ramon Macias III, *Principal Engineer, International Boundary and Water Commission – US Section*  
International Water Treatment Plants in San Diego-Tijuana and Ambos Nogales
  - Judah Waxelbaum, *Chief Legislative Liaison, Water Infrastructure Authority*  
WIFA's Approach to Water Augmentation and Funding/Financing
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11:05 AM

## Dear Body of Water Interlude

- Gretchen E. Henderson, *Poetry Center, University of Arizona*
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11:10 AM

## NETWORKING BREAK

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11:25 AM

## Tribal Leader Keynotes

Verlon M. Jose, *Chairman, Tohono O'odham Nation*

Rolando Flores, *Council Member, Pascua Yaqui Tribe*

Stephen Roe Lewis, *Governor, Gila River Indian Community*

- Introduction – Karen Cesare, *Board Secretary, Central Arizona Project*
  - Introduction – Gwendena Lee-Gatewood, *Co-Chair, Indigenous Women's Leadership Network*
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12:30 PM

## LUNCH BUFFET OPENS

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12:45 PM

## Lunch Program: Arizona-Sonora Border Dialogue

Keynote: The Honorable Katie Hobbs, *Governor of Arizona*

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- Introduction Suresh Garimella, *President, University of Arizona*
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## Session 6: Water Sector Collaborations

2:15 PM

- Moderator – Joaquin Marruffo, *Border Programs Manager, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality*
  - John Kmiec, *Director, Tucson Water*  
Municipal Sector: Tucson's Collaborations Across Borders
  - Joshua Moore, *Farm Manager, Colorado River Indian Tribes Farms*  
Agricultural Sector: CRIT Farms and Water Conservation
  - Allison Moore, *Executive Vice President, Fresh Produce Association of the Americas*  
Agricultural Sector: Cross-border Agricultural Production, Trade, and Transportation
  - Sandy Fabritz, *Director of Water Strategy, Freeport McMoRan*  
Mining Sector: Innovations in Mining Water Use
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3:10 PM

## NETWORKING BREAK

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## Session 7: Data and Knowledge Sharing

3:25 PM

- Moderator – Holly Estrada Mechsner, *Executive Director, Canada Arizona Business Council*
  - Susan Montgomery, *Attorney, Montgomery & Interpreter, PLC*  
Building Trust through Data and Collaborative Modeling
  - Rosario Sanchez, *Senior Research Scientist, Texas Water Resources Institute*  
Binational Knowledge Sharing Platform
  - Elia Tapia, *Professor, Universidad de Sonora*  
Translating Science
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## US Bureau of Reclamation Update

4:10 PM

- Introduction – Alexander Smith, *Area Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix Area Office*
  - Carly Jerla, *Post-2026 Program Manager, Bureau of Reclamation*
  - Amy Witherall, *Binational Program Manager, Lower Colorado River Basin Region, Bureau of Reclamation*
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4:30 PM

## Keynote: Status of Colorado River Negotiations

Tom Buschatzke, *Director, Arizona Department of Water Resources*

- Introduction – Jamie McEvoy, *Associate Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*
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4:50 PM

## Conference Closing Remarks

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5:00 PM

## End of Conference

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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. The University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

**Register Today!**

[wrrc.arizona.edu/conference](https://wrrc.arizona.edu/conference)

