

WRRC 2025  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE



SHARED BORDERS  
SHARED WATERS

Working Together in Times of Scarcity

Image: Ben Yang, WRRC Photo Contest



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

WATER RESOURCES  
RESEARCH CENTER

# 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)  
University of Arizona Student Union Grand Ballroom  
1303 E University Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85719

1:00 PM Conference Starts: Land Acknowledgement/Blessing/Opening Remarks

- Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*
- The Honorable 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*
- Ramon Macias III, *Principal Engineer, International Boundary and Water Commission – US Section*
- Adriana Reséndez, *Commissioner, International Boundary and Water Commission – Mexican Section*

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2:40 PM NETWORKING BREAK

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2:55 PM Special Dedication to the Memory and Legacy of Raúl Grijalva (1948–2025),  
US Congressman (2003–2025)

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## Session 2: Sharing the Colorado River

Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Southern Arizona Water Users Association

3:10 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
  - The Honorable 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

Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Michelle Oldfield, ASU Arizona Water Innovation Initiative

4:05 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

4:50 PM

- The Honorable 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**

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7:30 AM Day 2 Registration/BREAKFAST

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8:30 AM Welcome Back Remarks/Land Acknowledgement

- 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)***

8:55 AM

#### Session 4: Water Security and Trade

- 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 Exploring Water Augmentation on the Verde
- Francisco Lara-Valencia, *Professor, School of Transborder Studies, Arizona State University*  
Planning Across Borders

10:00 AM

#### Session 5: Water Challenges and Funding

**Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Alice Templeton, Stantec**

- 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

11:05 AM

#### Dear Body of Water Interlude

- Gretchen E. Henderson, *Poetry Center, University of Arizona*

11:10 AM

#### NETWORKING BREAK

11:25 AM

#### Tribal Leader Keynotes:

- ♦ The Honorable Verlon M. Jose, *Chairman, Tohono O'odham Nation*
- ♦ The Honorable Stephen Roe Lewis, *Governor, Gila River Indian Community*
  - Introduction – Karen Cesare, *Board Secretary, Central Arizona Project*
  - Introduction and presentation on the Indigenous Women's Leadership Network – Gwendena Lee-Gatewood, *Co-Chair, Indigenous Women's Leadership Network*

**Additional info can  
be found here**

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



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12:15 PM

LUNCH BUFFET OPENS

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12:35 PM

## Lunch Program: Arizona-Sonora Border Dialogue:

### ♦ The Honorable Katie Hobbs, Governor of Arizona

- Acknowledgements – Sharon B. Megdal, *Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona*
  - Introduction – Suresh Garimella, *President, University of Arizona*
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2:15 PM

## Session 6: Water Sector Collaborations

### Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Michael Mendonca, Salt River Project

- Moderator – Joaquin Marruffo, *Border Programs Manager, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality*
  - John Kmiec, *Director, Tucson Water*  
Municipal Sector: Tucson's Collaborations Across Borders
  - 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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3:25 PM

## Session 7: Data and Knowledge Sharing

- 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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4:10 PM

## US Bureau of Reclamation Update

- Introduction – Alexander Smith, *Area Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix Area Office*
  - Carly Jerla, *Post-2026 Program Manager, Bureau of Reclamation (Via Zoom)*
  - Amy Witherall, *Binational Program Manager, Lower Colorado River Basin Region, Bureau of Reclamation (Via Zoom)*
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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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