

WRRC 2026  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**WATER FOR TECH,  
MINING & ENERGY**  
PATHWAYS TO ARIZONA'S FUTURE



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
**WATER RESOURCES  
RESEARCH CENTER**

# Agenda

Image: Bert Bell, Bill Williams River, AZ

## Tue, April 14

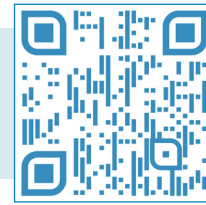
### CONFERENCE DAY 1

University of Arizona, Student Union Memorial Center, Grand Ballroom  
1303 E University Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85719

#### LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

11:30 AM	SPONSOR CHECK-IN and SET-UP
12:00 PM	Conference Registration (Ongoing)
1:00 PM	<b>Conference Starts: Land Acknowledgement/Blessing/Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sharon B. Megdal, <i>Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona</i></li><li>The Honorable Austin Nuñez, <i>Chairman, San Xavier District, Tohono O'odham Nation</i></li></ul>
1:30 PM	<b>Opening Keynote: Future Prospects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Upmanu Lall, <i>Professor &amp; Senior Global Futures Scientist, Arizona State University</i></li></ul>
1:55 PM	<b>Session 1: Sector Introductions</b> <p><i>Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Troy Kimball, South32</i></p> <p>Arizona Energy 101</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Moderator – Kyle Tilghman, <i>Director, Water Strategic Projects, Salt River Project</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bryan Jungers, <i>Principal, Emerging Technology &amp; Innovation, Tucson Electric Power</i></li></ul></li></ul> <p>Arizona Mining 101</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Moderator – Alicja Babst-Kostecka, <i>Associate Professor, Department of Environmental Science; Director, Center for Environmentally Sustainable Mining, University of Arizona</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Steve Trussell, <i>Executive Director, Arizona Mining Association and Arizona Rock Products Association</i></li><li>Sandy Fabritz, <i>Director of Water Strategy, Freeport McMoRan</i></li></ul></li></ul> <p>Arizona Tech 101</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Moderator – Rob Simm, <i>Senior Vice President, Water, Stantec</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>David McCabe, <i>Engineering Director, Sundt Construction</i></li></ul></li></ul>
3:25 PM	NETWORKING BREAK

**Additional Conference info can be found here**  
[wrrc.arizona.edu/conference](http://wrrc.arizona.edu/conference)



3:55 PM	<b>Session 2: Planning for Large Industrial Water Use</b> <i>Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Kyle Tilghman, Salt River Project (SRP)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Moderator – Rachael L’Heureux, <i>Water Resource Specialist, City of Phoenix</i></li><li>Data Centers: A Playbook for Communities<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mary Ann Dickinson, <i>Policy Director, Land and Water, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy</i></li></ul></li><li>Water Markets in Arizona: Industrial Water Use<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Amanda Long, <i>Associate, WestWater Research</i></li></ul></li></ul>
4:45 PM	<b>Day 1 Audience Reflections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Moderator – Sharon B. Megdal, <i>Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona</i></li></ul>
5:15 PM	RECEPTION at <a href="#"><b>Cork and Craft (U of A Student Union)</b></a>

## Wed, April 15

### Conference Day 2

University of Arizona, Student Union Memorial Center, Grand Ballroom,  
1303 E University Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85719

7:30 AM	Day 2 Registration/BREAKFAST
8:30 AM	<b>Welcome Back Remarks/Land Acknowledgement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sharon B. Megdal, <i>Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona</i></li><li>Welcome Remarks – Suresh Garimella, <i>President, University of Arizona</i></li></ul>
8:35 AM	<b>Session 3: Environmental and Community Perspectives Panel</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Moderator – Jamie McEvoy, <i>Associate Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona</i></li><li>Christopher Kuzdas, <i>Arizona Water Program Director, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)</i></li><li>Kim Schonek, <i>Arizona Water Program Director, The Nature Conservancy</i></li><li>Lindsay Rogers, <i>Policy Manager for Municipal Conservation, Western Resource Advocates</i></li><li>Anna Darian, <i>Executive Director, Patagonia Area Resource Alliance</i></li></ul>
9:35 AM	<b>Session 4: Impacts, Strategies &amp; Stewardship – Part I</b> <i>Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Shawn Storey, Stantec</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Moderator – Alice Templeton, <i>Client Relations Specialist, Stantec</i></li><li>Advances in Copper Production<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sophie Dessart, <i>Manager, Communications &amp; Public Affairs, Florence Copper LLC</i></li></ul></li><li>Space-based Data Centers<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Krishna Muralidharan, <i>Professor, Materials Science and Engineering, University of Arizona</i></li></ul></li><li>The Role of Nuclear Power Generation in Arizona<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Brad Berles, <i>Senior Director, Palo Verde Water Strategy, Arizona Public Service</i></li></ul></li></ul>
10:35 AM	NETWORKING BREAK

11:05 AM	<p><b>Session 5: Impacts, Strategies &amp; Stewardship – Part II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator – Scott Schladweiler, <i>Deputy Director, Tucson Water</i></li> <li>• Critical Mineral Mining and Water Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pat Risner, <i>Hermosa President, South32</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mining and Public Health: Santa Cruz County Health Impact Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nathan Lothrop, <i>Assistant Professor, Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Energy and Tribal Sovereignty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pilar Thomas, <i>Adjunct Professor, University of Arizona School of Law</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Water Stewardship in Semiconductor Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kelly Osborne, <i>Senior Technologist, Intel</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12:30 PM	LUNCH BUFFET OPENS
12:45 PM	<p><b>Lunch Program:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgements &amp; Introduction – Sharon B. Megdal, <i>Director, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Arizona Water: Accomplishments and Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Honorable Katie Hobbs, <i>Governor of Arizona</i> (via recorded video)</li> </ul> <p><b>University of Arizona Research and Initiatives: Water, Tech, Mining, &amp; Energy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomás Díaz de la Rubia, <i>Senior Vice President for Research and Partnerships, University of Arizona</i></li> </ul>
1:35 PM	<p><b>Tribal Keynote: Pressure Points for Tribal Country</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Lewis, <i>Managing Director, Native American Energy, Avant Energy Inc.</i></li> </ul>
2:05 PM	NETWORKING BREAK
2:35 PM	<p><b>Session 6: Collaboration Case Studies</b></p> <p><i>Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Arturo Gabaldón, Southern Arizona Water Users Association (SAWUA)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator – Greg Hitt, <i>Research and Outreach Programs Associate, College of Engineering, School of Mining Engineering and Mineral Resources, University of Arizona</i></li> <li>• Town of Superior and Resolution Copper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Todd Pryor, <i>Town Manager, Town of Superior</i></li> <li>▪ Mila Besich, <i>Mayor, Town of Superior</i></li> <li>▪ Vicky Peacey, <i>President, Resolution Copper</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• City of Phoenix and Large Commercial Water Users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Max Wilson, <i>Water Resources Management Advisor, City of Phoenix</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3:35 PM	<p><b>Session 7: Insights from the Field: Community Engagement and Planning That Works</b></p> <p><i>Session Introduction by Platinum Sponsor: Scott Schladweiler, Tucson Water</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan Craig, <i>Director, Impact Water - Arizona, Arizona State University</i></li> <li>• Eliza Stokes, <i>Program Manager, Growing Water Smart, Sonoran Institute</i></li> <li>• Tahnee Robertson, <i>Director and Senior Facilitator, Southwest Decision Resources</i></li> </ul>
4:30 PM	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Wegner, <i>Senior Strategic Consultant, Woolpert Engineering; Board Member, National Academy of Sciences; Board Member Emeritus, Water Science and Technology Board</i></li> </ul>
4:45 PM	End of Conference

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.