



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

**WATER RESOURCES
RESEARCH CENTER**

SABBATICAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR ENGAGEMENT

Sharon B. Megdal

Director, University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center



I am pleased to announce my sabbatical plans for the **Spring 2027 semester (January – May 2027)**. Through invited lectures, I aim to achieve the goals of my sabbatical, which are (1) to share information and perspectives regarding water policy and management from my applied research, teaching, and Extension experiences and (2) to learn from my visits and interactions. I hope to deliver lectures in Arizona, elsewhere in the US, and internationally. The following list provides some suggested topics on which I can speak, with presentations always customized for the host organization and audience. Please email me at smegdal@arizona.edu to discuss speaking engagement opportunities.

Sharon B Megdal

Arizona Water Management, Challenges, and Solutions

Arizona is a leader in groundwater management within designated active management areas and in water banking and aquifer recharge and recovery. The state's statutory framework and approach can serve as a model for other regions. Yet, challenges exist due to groundwater overdraft and the reduced availability of Colorado River water. This presentation provides an overview of current challenges and potential solutions, including a discussion of regional differences, and it provides information on free Water Resources Research Center educational resources available to assist communities in understanding their water situations and opportunities to conserve water.

Wicked Water Problems and Processes to Address Them

Identifying pathways to addressing complex or wicked water problems requires collaboration, interdisciplinary efforts, and multiple strategies. This presentation provides a discussion of wicked water problems and potential solutions to address them in the context of (1) the Colorado River Basin's imbalance of water supply and demand and (2) groundwater invisibility and overdraft. Processes to address wicked water problems are explored through a discussion of factors that contribute to successful outcomes.

The Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program and Working Across Borders

The United States and Mexico have collaborated on assessment of their transboundary aquifers and groundwater. The multi-year effort has produced two binational, fully bilingual reports on aquifers shared by the US and Mexican states of Arizona and Sonora, respectively. The presentation provides an overview of the history and current status of the multi-state, binational program, with a focus on the Arizona-Sonora work in which the Water Resources Research Center has been engaged.

A Retrospective on an Unexpected Dive into Water: Lessons Learned Over the Years

Careers can take unexpected twists and turns. This discussion, which could be a portion of other lectures, offers some storytelling and insights into how assuming risks associated with unexpected career opportunities, dealing with setbacks, and building upon varied professional experiences can lead to a productive career involving both academic and non-academic positions. This lecture could include discussion of engagement in international efforts, networks such as the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, and professional service.

Other Topics

There are numerous other topics that could be covered and presentations can be mixed and matched from the suggested topics listed above. For additional ideas, please consult the Publications and Presentations portions of my Curriculum Vitae, which is available at wrrc.arizona.edu/director.

Sharon B. Megdal, Ph.D. is Director of the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), a Cooperative Extension center and a research unit in the College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences. Other primary titles are Professor and Specialist in the Department of Environmental Science, C.W. & Modene Neely Endowed Professor, and Distinguished Outreach Professor.

Dr. Megdal bridges the academic, practitioner, and civil society communities through water policy and management research, education, and engagement programs. The geographic scope of her work ranges from local to international. Applied research projects include analysis of water management, policy, and governance in water-scarce regions and transboundary aquifer assessment.

Additionally, Megdal is the lead editor of the book, *Shared Borders, Shared Waters: Israeli-Palestinian and Colorado River Basin Water Challenges*, and she has guest edited several special journal issues, with the most recent titled, *Working Across Borders to Address Water Scarcity*. Dr. Megdal teaches the graduate course “Water Policy in Arizona and Semi-arid Regions.” In 2020, she was awarded the Warren A. Hall Medal for lifetime achievement in water resources research and education by the Universities Council on Water Resources, and in 2024 she was named a fellow of the American Water Resources Association.

Alongside her university positions, Megdal serves on the Board of Governors for the Kasser Joint Institute for Food, Water, and Energy Security, the Leadership Team for the Colorado River Basin Water & Tribes Initiative, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s Global Leadership Council, and Governor Hobbs’ Water Policy Council. Past public service includes serving for 12 years as a popularly elected Director for the Central Arizona Project. Sharon Megdal holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Princeton University. Dr. Megdal’s full CV, along with her Reflections essays, can be accessed at <https://wrrc.arizona.edu/director>.

- **Email address:** smegdal@arizona.edu
- **Office Phone:** +1-520-621-9591
- **Mobile:** +1-520-241-0298
- **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sharon-megdal-30412215/>

