

2021 Water Fluency for Journalists Program

Session Two Schedule

Session Two: Drought, aridification and sharing shortage in the Colorado River Basin

August 12, 2021

This session will examine the Colorado River Compact and layered agreements that make up the “Law of the River,” the flawed hydrology that served as the basis for the original compact, the 20-year drought plaguing the basin, and drought contingency planning among the seven U.S. states that share the river, in cooperation with the nation of Mexico and Native American Tribes.

Part I – Fellows and Interested Registrants

2:00 Welcome and overview of the day – Jerd Smith, Fresh Water News Editor

2:03 The Law of the River, and water users

Hear an overview of Colorado River geography, including the upper basin and lower basin and the backbone compacts, laws and agreements that govern the use and administration of Colorado River water. We'll also be introduced to the idea of demand management, with an update on work in Colorado and the upper basin to assess the feasibility of developing a demand management program.

Amy Ostdiek, Deputy Chief, Federal, interstate and Water Information Section,
Colorado Water Conservation Board

2:25 Questions

2:30 Who runs the river

Get to know the entities who manage the river and the significance of tribal water rights, quantified and unquantified, throughout the basin.

Jerd Smith, *Fresh Water News Editor*

2:45 Questions

2:55 Hydrology, aridification, and system imbalances

The Colorado River Compact and treaty with Mexico allocate more than 16 million acre-feet of water per year, but these agreements were built on flawed hydrological assessments. Review the hydrology that the compact was built upon and look at recent flow and storage levels, projections for the future and what that could mean for Colorado River water users.

Brad Udall, *Senior Water and Climate Research Scientist/Scholar, Colorado Water Center, Colorado State University*

3:20 Questions

3:30 Break - Open learning session adjourns and community participants sign off

Part II – Fellows Only – Susan Greene, *Journalist, Colorado News Collaborative* and **Jerd Smith**, *Fresh Water News*

3:35 Logistics and updates

3:40 Brainstorming the collaborative project

4:28 Session wrap-up

Review next steps

4:30 Adjourn