

Regional Drought Programs

Name of Commission, Council or Initiative	Regional Jurisdiction (States)	Years in Service	Description of Regional Mission or Objectives	Category: R=Response; MAP=Monitoring, Prediction; M=Mitigation; C=Communication; P=Planning	Recommendations of Regional Group to NDPC Commission based on experience
Western Drought Coordination Council (WDCC)	AZ, CA, CO, ID, KS, ND, NE, NM, OK, OR, UT, TX, WA, WY; USDA, DOI, FEMA, SBA	February 1997 to present	Develops and implements model drought policies & management/mitigation measures that reduce impacts associated with droughts. Promotes economic and environmental sustainability in the West.	R, MAP, M, C	Activities initiated by the WDCC could be emulated as a coordinated national effort. A national oversight group could link with regional groups for program delivery. See "Western Drought Experience," The Western Drought Coordination Council's Report to the NDPC, May 1999.
			Develops a monitoring system that can provide timely recognition of drought for response measures. Prepares guidelines pertinent to triggers and thresholds. Provides alerts of drought and its severity.	MAP	Diagnostic information from both climate and water sources, including snowpack data from Eastern and Midwestern states. Search for ways to integrate current water information into long-term historical perspective. Incorporate state, local and tribal climatic conditions into a national assessment of conditions that is linked to emergency assistance programs. Develop new and better tools to interpret and use long-lead outlooks with soil moisture and groundwater reference networks.
			Concentrates on long-term and short-term national management issues. Identifies preparedness actions and mitigation options, and promotes drought contingency planning.	M, P	Provide specific ideas to encourage incorporation of incentives for drought mitigation and preparedness at the local, state and regional levels.
			Enhances drought response capability. Promotes regional drought response aid. Strengthens intergovernmental response partnerships.	R	Establish a lead federal agency, designated by law and adequately funded, to coordinate communication and cooperation among regional groups. Develop a drought situation report to determine whether assistance programs adequately respond to adverse impacts of a drought.
			Coordinates communication functions within WDCC.	C	Expand the WDCC's Historical Drought Impact Survey data nationally. Ensure that the Catalog of Federal Assistance programs is maintained. Use media to raise awareness of drought issues on a national level.

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Upper Mississippi River Basin Charter	MN, WI, IA, IL, MO	October 2, 1989, to present	Notifies and consults on proposals to divert interstate waters.	C	Any state having knowledge of a proposal for a new or increased diversion of water that will exceed 5 million gallons per day average in any 30-day period from the Upper Mississippi River Basin to another basin shall notify and consult all other basin states.
Southeast Water Resources Dialog	AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, MD, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA	August 1998 to present	Builds a foundation for an effective regional approach to managing water in the Southeastern U.S.	M, C	Water management policies should encourage conservation and end-use efficiency; use alternative methods for resolving inter/intrabasin conflicts; encourage joint studies to collect data and promote dialog between different sets of water users; incorporate interdisciplinary teams, interagency cooperation and public participation in water management planning; use incentives to conserve water such as pricing charged for water reflecting the costs its use to society and the environment.
Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin	MD, PA, VA, WV, DC, and Federal Government	July 11, 1940 (Pub. Res 93, 76 Cong.), as amended by P. L. 91-407 (Sept. 25, 1970)	Created by an act of Congress as an interstate compact among the jurisdictions with a mission to enhance, protect and conserve the water and associated land resources of the Potomac River and its tributaries through regional and interstate cooperation.	R, MAP, M, C	River basins (and watersheds) are useful, natural drought planning "regions" below the national level, but greater than the state level. Throughout the country there are existing regional (and river basin) organizations with drought responsibilities.
Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin Commission (subcommittee)	DC, MD, VA	1981 to present	Conducts an annual drought exercise to assure drought plans are up-to-date and trains new staff in drought planning.	M, C	Annual training in drought planning to staff and update drought plans regionally; consider implementation of drought policy on a river basin or watershed basis.

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Section for Cooperative Water Supply Operations on the Potomac (COOP), Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin	MD, VA, WV, DC, and Federal government	P.L.91-407 (Sept. 25, 1970) and ICPRB Resolution dated Nov. 1, 1979	Authorized by the interstate compact creating the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, the COOP Section was established to have one central cooperative technical center to manage the water supply for the Metropolitan Washington Area.	R, MAP, M, C	In the Potomac River Basin, it has been demonstrated that coordination and management of water resources assets on a multi-jurisdictional, regional basis during drought periods can allow a major metropolitan area to sustain itself without excessive regulation.
Tarrant Regional Water District	TX	1997	Conducted a virtual drought exercise in 1997, utilizing Corps of Engineers Sec. 22 planning assistance.	M	Use virtual drought exercises as a training tool.
Western States Water Council	AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NE, NV, NM, OK, OR, UT, TX, WA, WY	1965 to present	Purposes are to accomplish effective cooperation among western states in conservation, development and management of water resources; to maintain state prerogatives; to provide a forum for the exchange of views, perspectives, and experiences among the states; and to provide an analysis of federal and state developments.	R, C	The Water Resources Committee has prepared reports on 1) improving implementation of the Endangered Species Act, 2) water conservation, 3) water and growth management, 4) drought response, and 5) groundwater recharge. In 1987, the committee prepared and distributed a model response plan that many states have since utilized.
Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission	AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NE, NV, NM, OK, OR, UT, TX, WA, WY	1996--98	Makes recommendations for the proper role of the federal government in Western water management for the next 20 years.	M	Establish an interagency task force to develop an integrated national drought policy that emphasizes mitigation and risk management and promotes self-reliance. Policy should ensure sustainable use of resources; maintain national goals and standards; emphasize local implementation, innovation, and responsibility; provide incentives; respect existing rights; promote social equity; organize around watersheds and river basins; employ participatory decision-making; and provide innovative funding, including public and private partnerships.

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Multi-State Drought Task Force (FEMA--Drought of 1996)	AK, AZ, CO, KS, NM, OK, TX, UT	1996 to present	Coordinate the federal response to drought-related problems and develop long-term suggestions for national actions to provide drought relief	C	Create resource databases and Information Bulletin Board clearinghouse. Support regional forums for drought discussion. Support national drought monitoring and prediction system. FEMA support at National Drought Mitigation Center.
			Coordinate the federal response to drought-related problems and develop long-term suggestions for national actions to provide drought relief	M	Remove existing requirement of crop planting for federal crop insurance eligibility. Improve zoning regulation at county/local level for making new developments "fire-safe." Fund vegetative management programs on federal lands to lower fuel loads. Provide fish hatchery/refuge support for sport fish production and endangered species protection. Enhance water conservation technology and incentives at the local level. Support development of National Drought Policy or Response Plan. Expand SBA program to include drought-affected businesses that are not associated with agricultural production. Issue block grants to state departments of agriculture or state-level FSA offices for declared emergencies. Include drought in FEMA's national mitigation strategy.
			Coordinate the federal response to drought-related problems and develop short-term suggestions for national actions to provide drought relief.	R	Extend authority for Livestock Feed Programs, Reclamation State Emergency Drought Relief Act, Economic Injury Disaster Loans (SBA), Emergency Water Supply (USACE). Release haying and grazing during droughts in Conservation Reserve Program. Extend authority to USACE for water hauling for livestock. Implement National Wildlife Refuge emergency provisions in drought. The President should name a federal agency in charge of drought planning and response (states suggest FEMA; FEMA suggests DOI, USDA, or USACE); agency in charge would maintain compendium of federal programs for assistance, planning sessions with states, trigger mechanism communication, and recommendations for further legislative authority.

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Interstate Council on Water Policy	18 States, 6 river commissions, 5 water districts, 9 affiliates	1959 to present	Organization of state and regional government water managers that helps define the roles of federal, state, regional, and local governments in water management.	R, C	Advocates groundwater and surface water management as an integrated system. Drought management will be focus of September 18-19, 2000, meeting in Chicago.
Great Lakes Commission	IL, IN, MI, MN, NY, OH, PA, WI	1955 to present	Ecosystem-based coordination and policy development	M, C	Promote the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water resources of the bi-national Great Lakes Basin.
Senate Task Force on Funding Disaster Relief	All States	1995 to present	By Public Law 103-211, the task force was commissioned to look at federal disaster assistance programs with regard to their funding and effectiveness, possible program and policy modifications, budgetary and funding options, and the roles of state, local, and other service providers.	M, R	Set a threshold on what is categorized as true emergency spending; fund disaster programs at historic average levels. Establish rainy-day fund to cover disaster expenses for future federal relief. Eliminate emergency safety valve of the Budget Emergency Act. Allow funding only for emergencies in any supplemental appropriation bill. Improve federal-state coordination by adopting performance standards. Provide incentives for planning & mitigation, cost-sharing reductions for those not up to par, frequent training, and post-disaster analyses.

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National Study of Water Management During Drought	CA, USACE	1992--94	Extract lessons learned from California Drought of 1987--92 (Institute of Water Resources Report 94-NDS-6)	M, R	Groundwater use is most effective single response to drought. Ensure that water is available through a variety of management measures: early drought warning and response actions are essential in short-term management of drought; local and regional interconnections of water-supply systems are effective and flexible options against severe water shortage; irrigation may provide complementary environmental benefits; increase in water rates should accompany or precede rationing plans.
Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)	DE, NJ, NY, PA	October 1961 to present	Manages the water resources in the 13,000-square-mile area drained by the Delaware River and Delaware Bay.	R, MAP, M, C, P	Existing interstate organizations such as the DRBC successfully address drought management issues for interstate river basins. The NDPC should support existing interstate organizations and also the creation of new ones.

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Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC)	NY, PA, MD	January 1971 to present	Manages the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin under comprehensive, multiple-purpose planning principles. Exercises planning, regulatory and coordination powers.	R, MAP, M, C, P	The Commission has set forth its recommendations for drought management in Resolution 99-15.
				R, MAP, M, C	Resolution 99-15 (1)(a): Promote communication between jurisdiction members and the Commission in development and revision of all drought-related policies, plans, restriction or regulations; (b): NY, PA, and MD implement SRBC recommendations regarding groundwater and streamflow monitoring; (c): NY, PA and MD use the interstate forum to rectify inconsistencies in their respective bans of nonessential water uses and water variances during drought emergencies.
				MAP	Resolution 99-15 (2): Use the interstate commission to assess the extent to which drought emergency requirements result in reduction in water use throughout the basin; (3): use the interstate commission to review low-flow trigger criteria currently contained in Consumptive Use Regulation 803.42 to determine if the said trigger flow is adequate to protect the water resource and water users.
				M, C	Resolution 99-15 (4): Use the interstate commission to assess long-term availability of water supply for citizens and businesses of the basin, including but not limited to an assessment of the potential for regionalizing small water systems.
				M, C	Resolution 99-15 (5): Convene through the interstate commission a meeting of agencies of member jurisdictions, major water users and other interested parties to assess the effectiveness of drought management measures, list the lessons learned in managing drought, compile the findings in a special report for future reference and distribute to key decision makers within the interstate jurisdiction.

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Ohio River Basin Commission (ORBC)	IL, IN, KY, MD, NC, OH, PA, VA, WV	1971 to present	Improves water and related land resource programs of member states and promotes the primary role of the states in water resources planning and management.	M, C, P	Prepares comprehensive, coordinated plans for development of water resources and related land resources of the basin, and recommends long-range priorities.
International Boundary and Water Commission	United States and Mexico	1906 to present	Coordinates water quality- and quantity-related issues for the Rio Grande and Colorado Rivers.	R, M, C	Recommendations from two binational conferences held in 1998 included: establish a drought fund to assist with international, state, and local emergency responses; establish joint projects that will foster and establish trust; establish mutually defined definition of drought triggers and indices; develop regional trans-boundary drought planning processes, mitigation tools, and criteria for applying resources, plus some site-specific recommendations.