

Save the Date! Conference and Tour, July 23rd-24th, 2015: “Environmental Justice Issues within the Coachella Valley”

Leaders in academia, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and California state and local government will be attending and speaking at our second Disadvantaged Communities Center conference. The focus of this conference will be on environmental justice issues within the Coachella Valley; work done with disadvantaged communities and health justice in the Coachella Valley region will be discussed.

The conference will be located at Cal State San Bernardino (CSUSB)’s Palm Desert Campus and will take place on Thursday, July 23rd, 2015 from 9 a.m.-3:20 p.m. On the following day, July 24th, there will be an optional tour to the Salton Sea and to polancos in the region.

Panel/presentation topics will include:

- Environmental justice challenges in the Coachella Valley
- Environmental impacts of the shrinking Salton Sea
- A tribal perspective on environmental justice challenges within the Coachella Valley/Salton Sea
- Refinement of CalEnviroScreen mapping of disadvantaged communities
- Small community water systems

For more info, such as an agenda, -or- to RSVP, please email Monica Santander: msantander@csusb.edu

Overview of “Drinking Water Solutions” Conference in Sacramento

In April, the CSU Water Resources and Policy Initiatives (WRPI) hosted the Disadvantaged Communities Center Conference: “Drinking Water Solutions” in Sacramento at CalEPA headquarters.

In attendance were elected state officials and representatives of state agencies, nonprofit organizations, the University of California, and the California State University.

For the *Challenges Facing Urban Disadvantaged Communities* panel, Maria Elena Kennedy, WRPI consultant, and Carolina Balazs, post doctoral researcher at UC Davis, addressed the need for a redefinition of the parameters that qualify a community as a disadvantaged community, i.e. population size, in relation to the emerging yet overlooked prevalence of urban DACs; this affects the assistance that is made available to these communities. Lastly, the issue of community burnout was addressed.

Panelists for *Challenges Facing Rural Disadvantaged Communities* included representatives from Self-Help Enterprises, Community Water Center, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, State Water Resources Control Board, and the Governor’s Office. Laurel Firestone,

Community Water Center addressed the lack of access to water data and the need to engage communities with the water data and solutions regarding their water supply.

For the *A California State Director’s Perspective* panel, Glenda Humiston, USDA Rural Development and Fran Spivy-Weber, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) addressed the need for creative governance approaches. Our panel keynote, Assemblymember Anthony Rendon, discussed how the water bond provides only approximately five percent of the state’s projected water needs, but also has hopes for greater future investments in these pivotal times.

Discussions and networking have continued in the form of work groups, particularly in geographical information systems (GIS) development for DAC projects.



Anthony Rendon, Assemblymember (AD-63), speaking about the Proposition 1, Water Bond at the Drinking Water Solutions Conference



Attendees gathering at the conference.



Glenda Humiston, USDA Rural Development, and **Fran Spivy-Weber**, SWRCB speaking on *A California State Director’s Perspective* panel.