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Planning for the Next Drought: A National Drought Mitigation Center Workshop Sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the National Governors' Association

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Planning for the Next Drought

**A National Drought Mitigation Center Workshop
Sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
and the National Governors' Association**

Southeast: Columbia, S.C., March 31–April 2, 1998

Great Plains: Rapid City, S.D., May 6–8, 1998

Midwest and Northeast: Ft. Mitchell, Ky. (Cincinnati area),
May 12–14, 1998

Purpose and Objectives

The drought that gripped the Southwest and southern Great Plains states in 1996 was the most recent reminder of the nation's continuing and apparently increasing vulnerability to drought. Although drought is a common feature in the West, it is a normal part of the climate of each region of the United States: drought struck the Southeast in 1986; most of the country, especially the Midwest and Plains states, in 1988–89; the West from 1987 to 1992; and the Northeast in 1995. Experiences from each of these droughts reinforce the need for advance planning. Even though drought is a slow-onset disaster, it is difficult to respond quickly and effectively to reduce the effects of drought unless a contingency plan is already in place. Citizens and stakeholders benefit from the coordinated efforts of local, state, federal, and tribal governments and agencies.

The National Drought Mitigation Center is organizing a series of workshops, each in a different region of the country, on how to prepare for drought. Workshops in Albuquerque and Salt Lake City were held in July and November 1997, respectively, and additional workshops are now planned for the Southeast, Midwest and Northeast, and Great Plains regions.

Workshop participants will learn how to develop a drought plan. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss their specific planning needs with experts and learn how others coped with recent droughts.

The objectives of the workshops are to:

- help people understand drought and the need for drought planning;
- teach natural resource managers, water utility managers, emergency managers, planners, and others how to develop drought contingency plans;
- help different levels and agencies of government coordinate drought-related programs.

Workshop participants are expected to include local, state, and federal officials; tribal representatives; people responsible for managing water and other natural resources; people in industries affected by drought, such as agriculture, energy, water utilities, recreation, and transportation; reporters; and others interested in reducing vulnerability to drought.

Program

The workshops will focus on early warning systems, vulnerability assessment, drought mitigation, and planning and preparedness. Other sessions will highlight involving stakeholders in advance planning; Internet resources; urban water conservation programs; and how various federal programs and resources can ease drought's effects.

Registration

The workshop has no registration fee. Please register at least two weeks in advance, or sooner, because space is limited. You may register via e-mail by sending the following information to ndmc@enso.unl.edu: which of the three workshops you would like to attend; your name, position, and employer; and contact information, including your full mailing address and phone and fax numbers. To request a brochure (containing additional information about accommodations and facilities for each workshop), contact the National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, P.O. Box 830749, Lincoln, NE 68583–0749; phone: (402) 472–6707; fax: (402) 472–6614.