

# North American Drought Monitor Forum

## *Biennial Review and Planning Workshop*

Drought is one of the costliest and most prevalent natural hazards on the Earth. In recent years within the U.S. alone, drought has resulted in average annual total economic losses of \$6-8 Billion (US), and the worst droughts of the past 25 years led to losses exceeding \$40B (US). In just the U.S. Livestock Forage Disaster Program, \$147 Million (US) was disbursed in 2008 and \$77 Million (US) in 2009 for drought disaster relief. Drought and its impacts are not confined by any nation's borders. In North America, for example, severe drought during the past several years created concerns about shared water rights not only between states and interests within the U.S., but also between neighboring countries. Agriculture and farming interests were affected in all three countries (Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.), wildfire outbreaks forced the sharing of firefighting resources across borders, and municipalities were forced to levy water restrictions at various times in many parts of the continent.

In 2001, government officials within the U.S., Mexico and Canada established a trilateral partnership to improve drought monitoring on the North American continent and provide decision makers with information essential to planning, mitigation and response activities. This was accomplished through the initiation, in November 2002, of a North American Drought Monitor (NADM).

Each month, drought experts from these three countries produce the NADM and associated drought indicators using an array of analytical methods for determining the current state of drought across the continent. The NADM provides a comprehensive analysis of end-of-month drought conditions through the use of numerous objective drought indices and indicators along with input from contributors at the regional, provincial, and local levels. Initially provided as a developmental product before the end of each month, the NADM is now issued on an operational basis by the 16th of each month.

As a collaborative effort between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, the NADM is a key example of: (a) international cooperation in the context of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), and (b) regional (continental) drought monitoring in the context of global drought early warning. These linkages produce a synergy which enhances society's ability to plan for and respond to drought and mitigate drought's impact on economic activities on an expanded international scale.

Continuing work of the trilateral team is focused on improving various aspects of the NADM to better meet the needs of users and decision makers at all levels of the public and private sector. This year's NADM workshop is another in a series of biannual meetings that are part of this continuing effort. NADM Forum workshop goals include:

1. Report on the status and progress of improving NADM-related drought monitoring within each of the three member countries (U.S., Canada, and Mexico).
2. Address administrative, technical, science, and user issues related to the production of the NADM map and narrative products.
3. Strengthen international linkages by meeting in conjunction with the Global Drought Assessment Workshop and U.S.-Canadian GEO Bi-lateral Technical Workshop.