Values, Beliefs, and Preferences of Irrigators Regarding the Use and Management of Water for Agriculture in the Colorado River Basin

**Presenter:** Julie Kallenberger, Colorado Water Institute

**Additional Authors:**

- Reagan Waskom, Colorado Water Institute
- Sharon Megdal, Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona
- MaryLou Smith, Colorado Water Institute
- Peter Taylor, Colorado State University
- Faith Sternlieb, Colorado Water Institute

**Abstract**

Research indicates that those who live in the Western U.S. believe it is important to keep land and water in agriculture and that water transfers for other uses should be limited. Local food and fiber production, protecting open space and wildlife habitat, maintaining agricultural jobs and businesses, and preserving western heritage are among the reasons for ensuring that there are adequate land and water resources for agriculture production. In order to identify solutions for agricultural water users to deal with the pressures and uncertainty they are facing, it is helpful to understand the underlying social characteristics of human thinking and behavior by considering their values, beliefs, and preferences.

This presentation will discuss findings from a survey of farmers and ranchers that use Colorado River water for agricultural purposes, including: the pressures they are facing on their water supplies and options for addressing the pressures, their beliefs towards the permanent and temporary transfer of water out of agriculture, the role of storage, and how to best work with other stakeholders to address the challenges associated with limited water supplies. In addition, the presentation will discuss agricultural water users’ preferences for meeting future water demands, the changes in water law and policy they would like to adopt, and how land-grant universities can best assist with the challenges they are facing, or will be facing with regard to their agricultural water.

Additional information is available on the project website at [www.crbagwater.colostate.edu](http://www.crbagwater.colostate.edu)