

**Evaluating Our Capacity: A Discussion of Capability for
Ongoing Climate Assessment in the Colorado River Basin
Boulder, Colorado, June 6-8, 2011**

Activity: Workshop on Building Capacity in the Colorado River Basin

Organizers: Climate Assessment for the Southwest, the Western Water Assessment, and the California-Nevada Application Project

The workshop *Evaluating Our Capacity: A Discussion of Capability for Ongoing Climate Assessment in the Colorado River Basin* was held in Boulder, Colorado June 6-8, 2011. Sponsored by the Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS), the Western Water Assessment (WWA), and the California-Nevada Application Project (CNAP), the workshop focused on establishing a framework for evaluating multi-sectoral climate change assessment capacity in the Colorado River Basin. The workshop included federal, state, and private professionals working in water, agricultural, and ecosystem management sectors from all seven Colorado River Basin states and tributary watersheds. The workshop was organized around breakout sessions that covered monitoring and communication capacity, adaptation planning tools, and metrics/methods for evaluating current assessment capacity. Assessment Director Kathy Jacobs provided an overview on the Assessment process and a talk on building the NCA communications networks.

The synthesis from the workshop includes three focus areas to evaluate current assessment activities and to develop activities that build assessment and adaptation capacity in the Colorado River Basin. The first focus area is assessment *activities* in the Colorado River Basin. The workshop participants noted that assessment activities are extensive throughout the basin, with several groups involved in moving into adaptation activities. For example, the Nature Conservancy's Southwest Climate Initiative has four demonstration projects in climate-sensitive landscapes to assess vulnerability, improve resilience, and reduce adverse impacts from changing climate conditions. The second focus area is on *communication*; a major need that was identified is the building of network capacity by supporting key positions that can sustain connections between dispersed organizations in the region. The third focus area is developing a framework of *research areas and best practices* for the region. One area identified by the workshop participants is developing a community of practice in monitoring activities across the region to encourage the cross-sectoral dissemination of data, tools, and projects. The development of these three focus areas has the potential to expand assessment and adaptation capacity across the Colorado River Basin while increasing resiliency in human and natural systems.