



USCID

The U.S. society for irrigation and drainage professionals

**United States Committee on Irrigation and Drainage
Annual Conference**

**Irrigation Delivery Operations:
Adapting to Current and Future Demands**

**October 20-23, 2026
Reno, Nevada**

**Announcement
and
Call for Presentations**

www.uscid.org

Introduction

The 2026 USCID Conference theme is: **Irrigation Delivery Operations: Adapting to Current and Future Demands**.

This conference will focus on all types of “**operations**” for irrigation and drainage districts and raw water delivery organizations. Increased scarcity of water supplies with competing uses and demands for water in the United States as well as staffing challenges requiring advancements in system and organizational operations. These types of advancements include infrastructure upgrades, technology implementation, policy changes, organizational restructuring, water supply and demand planning, collaboration, and maintenance to protect our water resources and effectively sustain water uses on the basin scale.

Sustainable basin water management, a challenge even in normal hydrologic conditions with plentiful water availability, is becoming even more difficult for all water users. Water for agricultural use continues to compete with the needs of other water users, threatening our food security. As such, solutions to these challenges must be approached comprehensively and often require operations, infrastructure, management, and policy changes.

The effects of weather pattern changes, regulatory constraints, developing science in **hydrology and hydrogeology**, and competing needs of water users continue leading to less reliable surface water supplies while increasing the reliance on already stressed, and sometimes over allocated, groundwater and basin resources. Recent responses to climate change, drought, urban growth, and increased scrutiny of current **water management practices** have only worsened the already dire situation. In partial response to these issues, an emphasis must be placed on upgrades to irrigation infrastructure and technology that can increase crop production and conveyance efficiency while effectively utilizing available water and staff resources. Likewise, we must think “outside the box” in creating solutions for varying terrain, **climate, and geographical limitations**. Creating effective partnerships to solve water resources problems at the system scale is a must.

Irrigation and water district managers, water consultants, as well as our state agencies, must consider how to adapt delivery operations to both current and future demands. To effectively sustain water use efficiency and management, while dealing with the complexity of water supply and demand issues, local entities will have to become increasingly involved in promoting improved operations – from the canal to the Boardroom. That is, being able to sustainably manage the water uses and demands at the basin scale requires increased **operational management** activities from all those who rely on its water.

The USCID Conference in Reno, Nevada, will provide a forum for water district staff, water agency staff, irrigation and drainage specialists, consultants and academics to share innovative solutions and learn from each other’s experiences. This Conference will bring together many water resources professionals with experience and interest in governance, policy, management, financing, and technical issues related to **Irrigation Delivery Operations: Adapting to Current and Future Demands**. Conference topics and sub-topics are listed on the following pages.

Who Should Attend?

The Conference will provide a forum for water district staff, irrigation and drainage specialists, consultants, equipment suppliers and academics to share innovative solutions and learn from other’s experiences. Water resources professionals **from around the world** are also encouraged to attend.

Conference Format

A half-day study workshop on Tuesday morning will be followed by lunch and a **Plenary Session** featuring presentations of broad interest in irrigation operations and management. Focused oral presentations during

Technical & Policy Sessions will be held on Wednesday and Thursday. Invited speakers will offer their perspectives during meals. The Conference will conclude with a Friday tour. Receptions, meals, breaks and tours will provide excellent networking opportunities. An **Exhibition** will feature organizations providing products and services related to water resources.

Call for Presentations

Abstracts of proposed presentations addressing the Conference Topics are invited. **Abstracts with presentations only** may be accepted for a 15-minute oral presentation. Those wishing to submit a **paper with their abstract** may be accepted for a 20-minute oral presentation. While papers are encouraged, authors can submit abstracts for an **oral presentation only**.

Abstract with Paper and Presentation: Accepted authors are invited to prepare an electronic version of their paper for publishing in the **Conference Newsletter**, which will be distributed in the year following the Conference. Authors are asked to submit their original researched draft manuscript for a peer review. The manuscript review committee will have discretion as to whether the paper will be published in the Newsletter.

Abstract with Presentation Only: Authors may choose to participate in the conference by giving a presentation only (no paper). While PowerPoints are encouraged for presentations, USCID will not distribute any presentation materials.

Submission of an abstract will constitute an agreement that the author will register for the Conference at the reduced author registration fee, attend the Conference, and make an oral presentation in person. We are unable to accommodate virtual presentations. USCID will not provide funding, nor seek funding from donors or other sources, for authors or other participants to attend the Conference. Be sure to **check travel requirements** and start travel VISA applications early. A letter of invitation can be provided upon request. Please do not submit an abstract if funding for your in-person participation is unlikely.

Please submit a 250-300 word abstract, with this information at the top of the page:

- the paper or presentation title
- author and co-author names and affiliations
- address, phone, and e-mail for each author
- indicate if the abstract is submitted for a presentation only, or paper and presentation

Your abstract should be submitted as an attached .doc or .docx file to megan@agamsi.com. Use the senior authorsurname as the file name, e.g., jones.doc.

Once notified that your abstract has been accepted you will be provided with additional information on guidelines, presentation formatting, paper formatting, and draft deadlines. We look forward to your contributions!

2026 USCID Conference

Irrigation Delivery Operations: Adapting to Current and Future Demands

Topics & Sub-Topics

1. Infrastructure Design and Construction

- Design of Innovative Infrastructure
- Construction of New Infrastructure
- Irrigation and Drainage System Improvements
- Irrigation System Design in Urban Areas
- Repair Innovations
- Aging Infrastructure
- Case Studies

2. System Operations

- Operational Reporting on Water Rights Changes
- Water Ordering Systems
- Case Studies

3. Planning

- Capital Improvement Plan
- Financial Planning
- Personnel Planning
- Change Management
- Case Studies

4. Organization Design

- Succession Planning
- Career Development
- Leadership Training
- Recruitment and Retention
- Case Studies

5. Basin Water Management/ Governance/Jurisdictional Issues

- Basin Supply and Demand Management
- Regional Management Governance Structures (JPAs, MOUs)
- Accounting and Enforcement of Water Use
- Implementing Sustainable Groundwater Basin Rules
- Groundwater Sustainability Plans
- Case Studies

6. Competing Agricultural, Urban and Environmental Uses

- Shared Facilities
- Surface Water/Groundwater Exchanges
- Understanding Surface Water and Groundwater Interaction
- Recycling/Oil Field Produced Water
- Desalinization and Wastewater Reuse
- Legal and Political Issues/Water Rights
- Case Studies

7. Basin Water Planning

- Integrating Regional Water Resources
- Integrated Water Planning and Implementation
- Shared Storage and Conveyance Projects
- Reservoir Management and Operation Modeling
- Watershed Management/Climate Change Impacts
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Case Studies

8. System Maintenance

- Asset Management (CMMS) Systems
- Financial Analysis
- Case Studies

9. Water Supply and Demand Management

- Urban and Agricultural Irrigation Conservation
- On-Farm Irrigation Scheduling
- Deficit Irrigation/Drought Management
- Mobile Labs/Assistance to Growers
- Salinity and Water Quality Management
- Case Studies

10. Evapotranspiration

- Evapotranspiration and Consumptive Use
- Case Studies

11. Water Transfers

- *Water Rights Concerns on Water Transfers*
- *Improvements in Ag/Urban Water Transfers*
- *Interstate Compacts*
- *Endangered Species Concerns/Constraints*
- *Water Markets and Water Pricing*
- *Social Equity of Transfers*
- *Environmental Permitting and Policy*
- *Case Studies*

12. Conjunctive Use of Groundwater and Surface Water

- *Aquifer Recharge/Storage/Recovery*
- *Water Banking/Storage*
- *Groundwater Pumping Regulation*
- *Augmentation of Supply*
- *Municipal Water Reuse*
- *Return Flow Management*
- *Case Studies*

13. Technologies

- *Artificial Intelligence Use and Implementation*
- *Instrumentation/Sensors*
- *Flow Measurement*
- *SCADA, Monitoring, and Water Balance Accounting*
- *Remote Sensing and GIS/GPS*
- *Modeling and Decision Support Systems*
- *Precision Irrigation*
- *Smart Phone/Mobile Device Applications*
- *Small-Scale Irrigation Technologies*
- *Case Studies*

14. Economic Topics

- *Economic Impacts of Supply Shortages*
- *Economic Benefits of Infrastructure*
- *Economic Benefits of Water Conservation*
- *Infrastructure Risk Management*
- *Bonding and Other Financing Vehicles*
- *Cost Sharing Challenges and Benefits*
- *Challenges of Rate Increases*
- *Successful Rate Increase Strategy*
- *Economics of Change: Personnel*
- *Case Studies*

15. Ag/Urban Interface

- *Environmental Flaws*
- *Urban Impacts on Irrigation Infrastructure and Operations*
- *Inter-State Compacts, Tribal and Treaty Obligations*
- *Groundwater Management Issues*
- *Ag to Urban Transfers*
- *Economic Future of Groundwater Mining*
- *Case Studies*

16. Policy

- *Funding Irrigation Operations and Maintenance and Management*
- *Conversion of Land and Water from Agricultural to M&I Use*
- *Dealing with Aging Irrigation Infrastructure — Impacts, Rehabilitation and Replacement, and Funding*
- *Adapting to Declining Water Supplies for Irrigation*
- *What's Next for Water Conservation*
- *Interstate/Trans Basin Water Transfer Issues*
- *Case Studies*

17. Surface Water Supply

- *Impacts of Climate Change*
- *Drought*
- *Modeling*
- *New Supplies*
- *Basin Planning*
- *Irrigation with Effluents, Reclaimed or Saline Water*
- *Water Archives*
- *Conservation*
- *Weather Modification*
- *Impacts of Urban Drainage on Water Supply*
- *Improved Irrigation Efficiency*
- *Case Studies*

18. Groundwater

- *Conjunctive Use*
- *Recharge*
- *Storage*
- *Groundwater/Surface Water Connectivity*
- *Modeling*
- *Produced Water*
- *Case Studies*

Planning Committee Members

Amy Johnson, HDR, Conference-Chair
Forrest Killingsworth, South San Joaquin Irrigation District
Sara Harper, Provost & Pritchard
Kent Norman, South San Joaquin Irrigation District
Alejandro Paolini, Henry Miller Reclamation District
George Cairo, George Cairo Engineering, Inc.
Steve Knell, Ag Water Consulting
Cody Arnold, Northern Water
Sam Schaefer, GEI Consultants
Thaddeus Bettner, Water Ecology
Therese Ure Stix, Schroeder Law Offices, P.C.

*Join Our Planning Committee Today!
Email megan@agamsi.com
if you are interested.*

Conference Schedule

Abstracts Due.....May 5, 2026
Presenters Notified.....June 2, 2026
Draft Papers Due.....July 21, 2026
Comments Returned to Authors.....August 18, 2026
Final Papers, Presentations, Bios Due.....September 15, 2026
Conference.....October 20-23, 2026



USCID

The Mission of the United States Committee on Irrigation and Drainage is to promote progressive and sustainable irrigation, drainage and flood control practices in support of food and fiber production and public safety, recognizing that sustainability embodies economic, social and environmental goals.

USCID is a nonprofit professional society whose members share an interest in the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of irrigation, drainage and flood control works; agricultural economics; water law; and environmental and social issues affecting irrigated agriculture.

USCID was formed under and supports participation in the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), an association of more than 70 countries. Founded in 1950, ICID is a non-governmental organization dedicated to the sound and responsible management of water resources. Its central purpose is to promote the development and application of the sciences and techniques of irrigation, drainage, flood control and river channel stabilization.

USCID publishes the USCID Newsletter, proceedings of USCID meetings and special reports; organizes and sponsors periodic technical meetings and conferences. Since 1986, USCID has organized more than 50 regional, national and international meetings throughout the U.S. These meetings address contemporary issues affecting irrigated agriculture, offering a multi-disciplinary evaluation of problems and solutions.

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