

Public Water Supply Utilities Climate Impacts Working Group MONITORING and FEEDBACK – REPORT 1¹

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Explore impressions of the first working group meeting held in Orlando, 22 Sept. 2010, including process and outcome elements.
- Document expectations for the working group and assess how participants envision next steps.
- Determine participant responses to generative themes that emerged during the meeting.
- Identify information needs and characterize decision making related to climate
- Describe previous involvement in similar collaborative knowledge sharing efforts and map current knowledge exchange pathways among participants and institutions.

METHODS

- We incorporated secondary data from first meeting into telephone interviews and online surveys with working group participants (See Table 1 for an indication of response rates). We analyzed the data using qualitative methods and descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Respondents involved in this research

Stakeholder Group	Meeting Participants Sept., 22	Phone Interview Respondents	On-line Survey Respondents
Water Utility Representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gainesville Regional Utilities(1) • Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department(1) • Orlando Utilities Commission(3) • Palm Beach County Water Utilities (2) • Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority(1) • Tampa Bay Water(2) 	10	9 1 rep from Orlando not interviewed	5 (5 missing)
Water Management District Representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saint Johns River Water Management District (2) • South Florida Water Management District (2) • Southwest Florida Water Management District (1) 	5	4 1 rep from SF WMD not interviewed	2 (3 missing)
Academia: Researchers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Florida (4) Florida State University (2) • UF Water Institute • Florida Climate Institute & South East Climate Consortium 	6 w/o Facilitation Team	7 Facilitator added	6 Facilitator added (1 missing)
Total	21	20	13

FINDINGS

- This summary document presents a selection of research results. Details can be found in the full working group report.

“I was there just soaking it up – trying to find out where everyone was coming from and what the concerns are.”
– Water Management District

“It was valuable to listen to different viewpoints and issues and see the disparity in how utilities will have to deal with climate change”
– Utility

“The meeting gave me an appreciation for the difference between the utility perspectives and those of the water management district in terms of how they operate... And these roles affect how we might interact with them.”
- Academic

¹ Full report prepared by researchers at the University of Florida - Bartels, W., Irani, T.A. and S. Galindo.
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“It was beneficial to me to get some indication that there may be some additional tools for rainfall prediction...I am interested in seeing if there may be better tools.”

- Utility

“If you look out 1 to 5 years, there’s not a lot of change to get a policy maker excited about”

- Utility

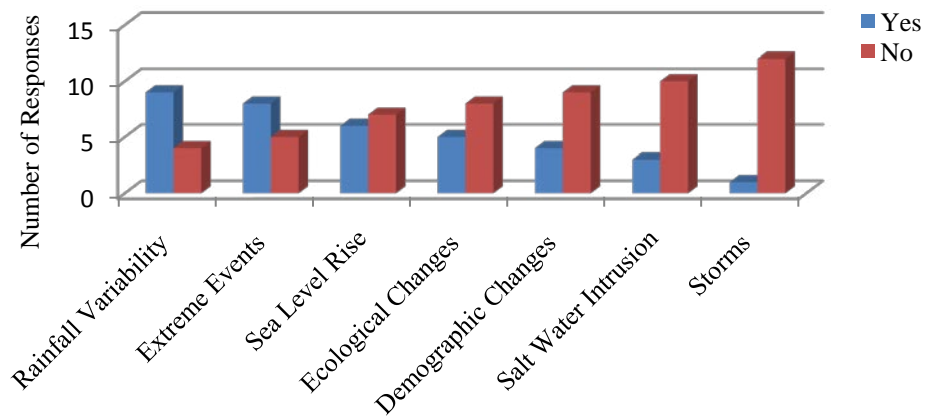


Figure 1. Concerns about Potential Impacts Associated with Climate Change - Perceptions across Stakeholder Groups (n=13)

“It’s hard to tell people about flood protection when you’re in the second year of a drought.” - Utility

“How do we get information out to the appropriate people such as policy makers without saying that the sky is falling but rather giving them options to pick from?” - Utility

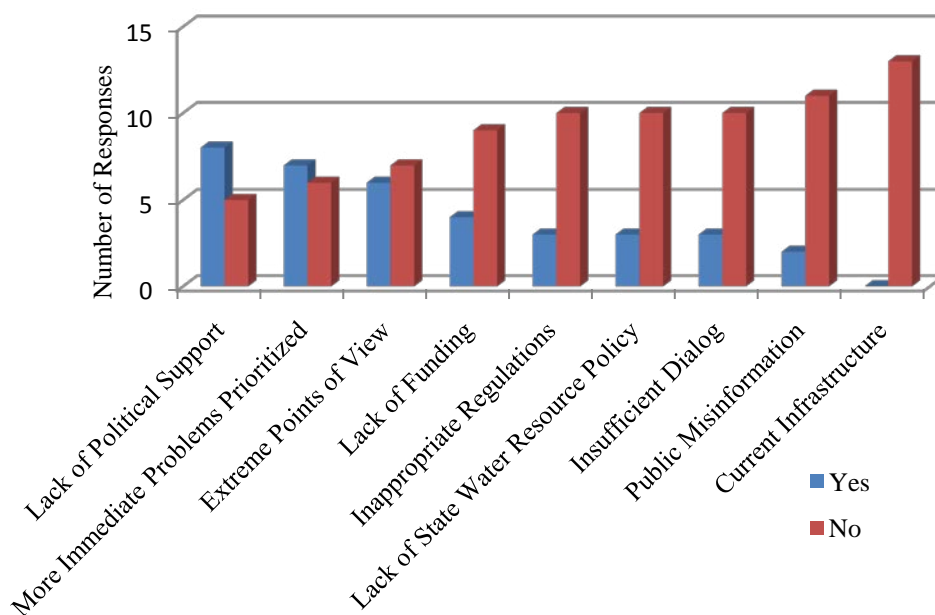
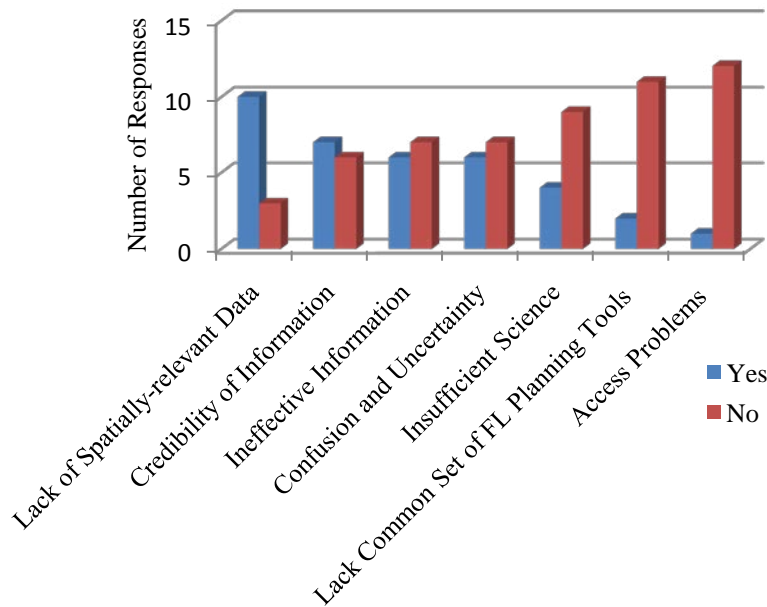


Figure 2. System-related Issues that Constrain Decision Making - Perceptions across Stakeholder Groups (n=13)

“Utilities are within an arm’s reach of the rate payers and so it makes sense to ask how much is this going to cost and how long till I have to inflict rate increases...Some leaders are wondering: How long can I put it off until I really have to invest any money in it.” - Utility

“I would suggest getting the technical process grounded. But somewhere in there you need some policy discussion or you’ll have a nice plan on a shelf ...Don’t have it become a dusty document.” - Utility



“One size does not fit all. This continues to be a problem. When you throw out numbers across the board it is not going to work. And so we need different solutions for different parts of the state. The models must be flexible enough to fit the needs parameters of several different areas.” - Utility

“Operation of our utility is dependent upon how the District operates their regional system, so that is information that would be required for us to optimize our operations.” - Utility

Figure 3. Information-related Constraints to Decision Making - Perceptions across Stakeholder Groups (n=13)

“I am hoping to get some kind of consensus on how fast climate is changing and effects locally to help convince or get the attention of local leaders. We need some cohesion from scientific leaders or else people will select anything they want to support their opinion. We should push the issues state-wide to have one voice instead of 100 (voices) whispering in one another’s ears” - Utility

“We are all in different places, some further along, others knowing that this (climate change) is out there but it’s not on their radar screen....” - Utility

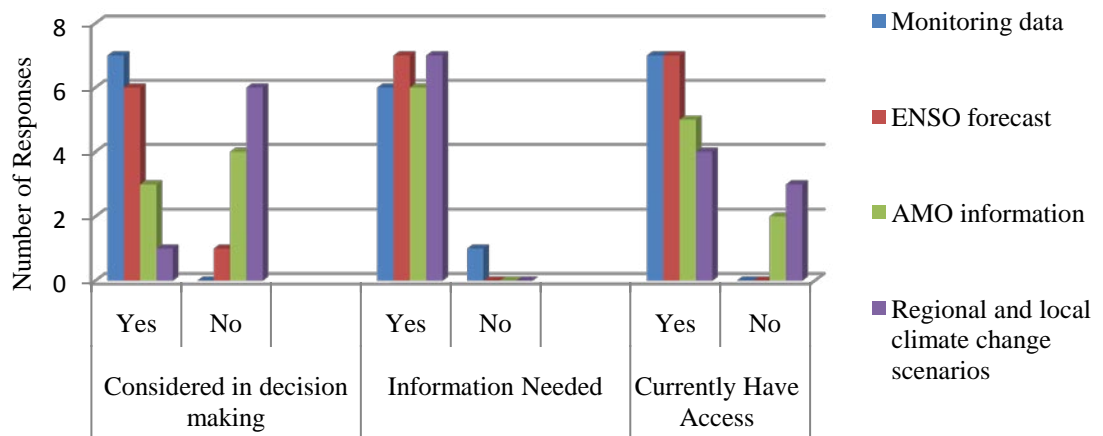


Figure 4. Consideration of, Need for, and Current Access to Climate Information, Data and Tools - Responses from Water Utility and Management District Stakeholders (n = 7)

“Understanding the different timescales of decision making helps us target information for stakeholders and their immediate needs instead of coming out with guns blazing and all types of climate info.” - Academic

“The CIP decision making overlaps nearly everything. CIP typically is 5, 10, & 20 year horizons, but facilities are designed to last 50+ years. More accurate would be to say Capital decision making 1-50 years.” - Anonymous input from online survey

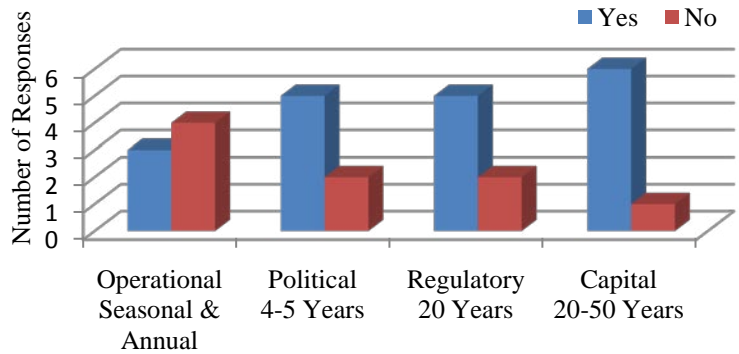


Figure 5. Lack of Information Available for Specific Decision-making Time Horizons - Responses from Water Utility and Management District Stakeholders (n = 7)

“I was surprised that utilities were focused on short-term immediate operational concerns like having enough water, while the academics and water management people seem to see the longer term picture” - Water Management District

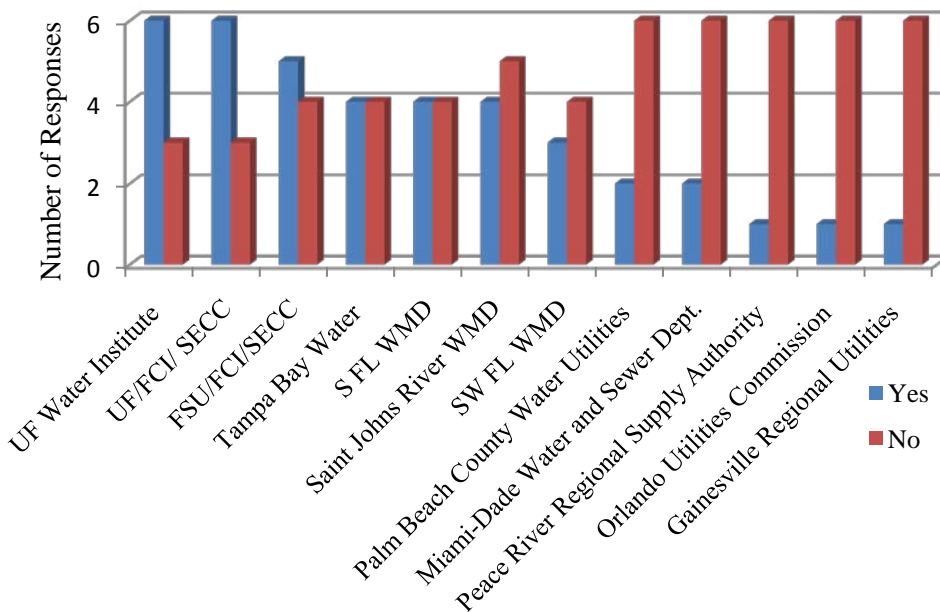


Figure 6. Institutions with which participants currently exchange climate-related information (sample size varies due to incomplete responses)

“We have active research, but in isolation of each other. ...Even though the issues are specific we need to get our respective research communities communicating with each other.” - Utility

“I was surprised because I thought people knew each other more – especially the water management districts and utilities...” - Academic

“We had a lot of expertise in the room so I hope we can get some focus on the effects that climate change will have at a local scale.” - Utilities

“My hope is that this group would help us frame the right questions and that we could derive resources to solve these.” - Academic

“One challenge the group will face is maintaining momentum in light of the long timeframe of climate change. We need to focus on immediate needs as a priority to keep people engaged.” - Water Management District