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## DRI Part of New Southwest Climate Science Center

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*Six institution consortium earns grant from the U.S. Department of Interior worth \$3.1million*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 21, 2010**

**Reno** — DRI will join four other universities as a partner with the University of Arizona (UA) in a new Southwest Climate Science Center established by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) to address the current and future effects of climate change on the region's natural and cultural resources.

DRI is part of a \$3.1 million five-year grant to initiate the center, one of eight regional centers established or planned by DOI in the nation. It is anticipated that the total funding for the Southwest center will increase significantly as it ramps up its activities. The center will include a mixture of federal and university employees.

"The Southwest has been a center of action over the past decade for climate change in the United States, and the impacts of these changes are starting to become more clear," said Kelly Redmond, one of the center's co-principal investigators and DRI research professor. "The goal of the center is to help our region deal with climate variability and change arising from both natural and human causes," Redmond added.

Most of the state of Nevada is under the stewardship of the Department of Interior, which includes the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, US Geological Survey, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other agencies.

Researchers are tracking indicators of climate and its effects in the region, which show rising temperatures, earlier spring snowmelt, earlier blooming of plants, upward movement of biological zones, and rising sea levels.

Complicating the patterns of impacts stemming from variations in climate is the tremendous diversity in topography, biology, hydrology, land use, as well as the climate itself, in the region — a huge swath of land and coastal area stretching from the U.S.-Mexico border region north to the headwaters of the Colorado River and west to the Pacific Coast of California.

To address the complex climate change issues in the region, the UA will serve as the overall coordination hub for the center as one of six host institutions in a consortium. Other university and federal scientists and partners from the region also will be involved.

The center's lead researcher and principal investigator is Jonathan Overpeck, a professor of geosciences and atmospheric sciences and co-director of the UA's Institute of the Environment. Joining UA's Overpeck in the consortium will be co-principal investigators Kelly Redmond; Mark Schwartz of the University of California, Davis; Glen MacDonald of the University of California, Los Angeles; Bradley Udall of the University of Colorado, Boulder; and Alexander Gershunov of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego.

The six host institutions will run the center with the Department of the Interior, but they will also tap needed expertise and capabilities at other partner institutions, including University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Arizona State University; Northern Arizona University; University of California, Merced; NASA Ames Research Center; and the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution.

"The consortium brings a wide range of scientific and impact assessment capabilities, and includes institutions located in and familiar with the incredible diversity of ecosystems and human settlements and activities that characterize the U.S. Southwest," Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said in announcing the center on Wednesday.

"The consortium is well versed in issues such as coastal management, drought and its impacts on people and the environment, water management in the Colorado and other Southwest rivers, and the impacts of exploding populations of bark beetles on western forests," Salazar said.

Combining and applying knowledge on all the intertwined issues is crucial for understanding and managing the effects of climate change on America's land, water, wildlife, cultural heritage and other resources.

"After extensive discussions among our universities, we unanimously agreed that this challenge is simply too large, too deep and too complex for any single institution to provide region-wide expertise on all critical levels," Overpeck said, referring to the consortium approach to meeting the needs of the

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