

## **The Future of the West: Adapting to a Warmer World**

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In the Southwest, the current drought, coupled with increasing temperatures, has prompted many to argue that this region is “ground zero” for climate change impacts in the continental US. Among resource managers there is a heightened level of concern regarding the issue of climate change impacts due to the two factors. First, a strong scientific consensus has emerged that human impacts on the climate system is real and detectable. Second, evidence for detectable impacts of climate change on natural resources is accumulating from diverse ecosystems across the West. In this talk, I critically review the evidence for climate change impacts on ecosystems in the Southwest, including declining snow pack, increasing wildfire, and accelerating forest stand mortality. I then outline what adaptation to climate change will entail, with a particular emphasis on the role of connectivity and protected areas in buffering impacts on biodiversity.

*Dr. Lisa J. Graumlich's position as Director of the School of Natural Resources at the University of Arizona allows her to combine her career-long interest in global climate change with the emerging issue of how to best manage natural resources in an uncertain future.*