



A Workshop to Advance Drought Early Warning Communication for the Nation

Pre-Meeting Preparation

Prepare-Ahead Resources

Required: All participants should do the following in advance of the meeting by September 4, 2026.

- Watch the recording of [the pre-event webinar](#) if you missed the live event on August 25, 2026.

Workshop Purpose Statement: The workshop will take stock of the state of knowledge concerning drought risk communication efforts regionally and nationally. Specifically, the workshop will identify *what is known* about how NIDIS, local media, and emergency managers communicate drought risk; recent *advancements* in social science-informed drought risk communication efforts; *what communication is needed* by individuals who manage drought risk and impacts in their communities; *ongoing challenges* to effectively communicate drought risk; and *opportunities* to produce more useful and compelling drought risk information and early warning messages.

Optional Welcome Reception
Wednesday, September 9, 2026
5:00 to 7:00 p.m. MDT

Location: Avanti
1401 Pearl Street
Boulder, CO 80302

5:00–7:00 p.m.

Optional Welcome Reception

Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

Workshop Agenda – Day 1
Thursday, September 10, 2026
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. MDT

Institute of Behavioral Science, Room 155A
University of Colorado Boulder
1440 15th Street, Boulder, CO 80309

7:30 a.m. Doors to the Institute Unlocked for Access

8:00 a.m. Tech Check

8:00–8:15 a.m. Coffee, Tea, and Light Snacks Provided

8:15–8:45 a.m. Opening Session: Welcome, Gratitude, and Workshop Overview

Moderator: Jennifer Tobin, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Notetaker: Minh Anh Ly, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Objectives for this Session:

- Describe the history and motivation for this workshop.
- Begin with the end in mind: discuss the desired outcomes of this workshop.
- Welcome participants and offer gratitude for those who have made this meeting possible.

8:15–8:35 a.m. NIDIS Opening Remarks, Veva Deheza

8:35–8:45 a.m. Natural Hazards Center Opening Remarks, Lori Peek

8:45–9:25 a.m. Participant Introductions and Guidelines

All participants should be prepared to share, in 45 seconds or less: (1) your name; (2) your current role (3) one sentence only - what you hope to get out of this Workshop.

9:25–10:05 a.m. Session 1: Drought Communication Landscape

Moderator: Kelsey Eigsti, CIRES/NOAA/NIDIS

Notetaker: Jocelyn West, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Objectives for this Session:

- Understand national and sectoral drought communications tools.
- Discuss key challenges of messaging drought risk, with a discussion what makes drought risk uniquely difficult to communicate compared to other natural hazards.
- Explore the middle user: how drought communications serve state and local partners, media, and emergency managers who ultimately serve the general public.

9:25–9:40 a.m.	The Drought Risk Communication Landscape: Challenges and Opportunities, Kelsey Eigsti, CIRES, NOAA/NIDIS
9:40–10:05 a.m.	Interactive Group Activity and Guided Discussion

10:05–10:20 a.m.	Morning Break
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10:20–11:55 a.m.	Session 2: Recent Advancements in Social Science–Informed Risk Communication
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Moderator: Mary Angelica Painter, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Notetaker: Minh Anh Ly, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Objectives for this Session:

- Understand social science practices that may help overcome challenges and inform best practices to communicate drought.
- Present best practices to “communicate in the slow lane” for long-timescale hazards.
- Examine lessons learned from risk communication in other hazards.

10:25–10:40 a.m.	Introduction to Panelists and Key Concepts from the Pre-Workshop Webinar
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10:40–11:30 a.m.	Presentations: Hazard Risk Communications Case Studies • Carson MacPherson-Krutsky, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder • Brittany Brand, The Resilience Institute at Boise State University
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- Joseph Trujillo-Falcón, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Apoorva Joshi, Stratagemma Solutions LLC

11:30 a.m.–11:55 a.m. Interactive Q&A and Discussion

11:55 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Group Photograph

12:00–1:00 p.m. Lunch Provided

**1-2:30 p.m. Session 3: Drought Communications Product Breakout
Activity: Mini-Design Sprint**

Moderator: Eleanor Hasenbeck, CIRES/NOAA/NIDIS

Notetakers: Armita Dabiri, Subashree Dinesh, Minh Anh Ly, and Jocelyn West

Objectives for this Session:

- Identify barriers to effective drought risk and warning communications.
- Understand how existing drought communications can be improved to support the middle user.
- Apply best practices from other hazards to drought risk communication.
- Develop a working list of cognitive, design, and framing challenges specific to drought risk communication.

Participants will engage with a role-playing exercise in which they act as members of their target audience or user base, and identify issues with interpretation, design, and communication.

Attendees will be pre-assigned to breakout groups and together workshop a drought communications product.

2:30–2:45 p.m. Afternoon Break

2:45–4:15 p.m. Session 4: Reflecting on Drought Risk Communications

Moderators: Maggie Hurwitz, NOAA/National Weather Service; Eleanor Hasenbeck, CIRES/NOAA/NIDIS

Notetaker: Armita Dabiri, CU Boulder

Objectives for this Session:

- Synthesize and share out the design, language, communication, and interpretation challenges identified in previous exercise.
- Contextualize the barriers using knowledge gained from Sessions 1 and 2.
- Build out a working list of best practices in improving drought risk communication by using insights and evidence from social science research.
- Identify what lessons learned from other hazards are most applicable to drought.

4:15–4:30 p.m.

Gratitude, Review Action Items from Day 1 and Goals for Day 2, and Wrap-Up

Moderator: Eleanor Hasenbeck, CIRES/NOAA/NIDIS; Jennifer Tobin, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Notetaker: Subashree Dinesh, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Workshop Agenda – Day 2

Friday, September 11, 2026

8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. MDT

Institute of Behavioral Science, Room 155A

University of Colorado Boulder

1440 15th Street, Boulder, CO 80309

7:30 a.m.

Doors to the Institute Unlocked for Access

8:00 a.m.

Tech Check

8:00–8:30 a.m.

Coffee, Tea, and Light Snacks Provided

8:30–9:00 a.m.

Welcome and Check-In

Moderator: Jennifer Tobin, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Objectives for this Session:

- Each participant will have 30 seconds to share either an “aha!” moment from Day 1 or a “muddy point” that they hope will be further clarified during Day 2.

9:00–10:35 a.m.

Session 5: Evaluating the Success of Drought Risk Communication

Moderator: Kelsey Eigsti, CIRES/NOAA/NIDIS

Notetaker: Jocelyn West, Natural Hazards Center, CU Boulder

Objectives of this session:

- Define evaluation for participants. Identify components of evaluation, what evaluation process looks like, and could look like, in the drought and cascading hazard space.
- Define success and outline a path to implement resource-appropriate evaluation processes in communicating drought risk.
- Examine practical case studies to understand how communicators evaluate their approaches.

9:00–9:20 a.m.

Evaluation 101: Katie Boyd, Washington State Climate Office, University of Washington Climate Impacts Group

9:20–9:30 a.m.

Q&A and Discussion

9:30–10:15 a.m.

Case Studies of Effective Evaluation

- Katie Duke, City of Golden, Colorado Drought Communications Work Group
- Summer Woolsey, University of Nebraska Medical Center Water, Climate and Health Program
- Lori Peek, Natural Hazards Center

10:15–10:35 a.m.

Q&A and Discussion

10:35–10:50 a.m.

Break

10:50 a.m.–12 p.m.

Session 6: Creating the Feedback Loop: Evaluation and Assessment Workflows

Moderator: Eleanor Hasenbeck, CIRES/NOAA/NIDIS

Notetaker: Subashree Dinesh, CU Boulder

Objectives of this session:

- Apply evaluation principles directly to participants' own drought communication products or organizational communication processes.
 - Understand evaluation metrics already available or in practice.
 - Co-design realistic evaluation steps tailored to each organization's unique resource limitations.
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12:00–1:00 p.m.

Lunch Provided

1:00–2:00 p.m.

Session 7: Wrap Up

Moderator: Adam Lang, CIRES/NOAA/NIDIS

Notetaker: Armita Dabiri, CU Boulder

- Synthesize workshop insights from Days 1 & 2 into a clear list of drought risk communication and evaluation best practices.
 - Identify critical gaps in knowledge to inform the future national research agenda regarding evaluating drought risk communications.
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2:00–2:30 p.m.

Next Actionable Steps, Gratitude, and Adjourn