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For Immediate Release

## Workshop To Focus on Drought Early Warning Needs

Researchers studying drought early warning want to hear from decision-makers and planners about what kind of data and information they need. One chance to provide input will be at the Workshop on the Status of Drought Early Warning Systems in the U.S., June 17-19 in Kansas City, Mo.

The workshop, sponsored by the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) runs from 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 17, through noon on Thursday, June 19. There is no cost to attend but space is limited, so anyone who is interested should sign up soon.

For more information about the workshop, including online registration, please visit <http://snr.unl.edu/ndmcsurvey/nidisregistrationkc2008.html>, or call 402-472-3373.

The workshop will bring together drought planners from watersheds, agriculture, energy, municipal water, and other sectors. Panelists and participants will include providers, brokers, and users of drought information. The workshop is structured to encourage discussion and audience participation.

“This is a chance for drought researchers to find out what people need to know,” said Dr. Michael J. Hayes, Director of the National Drought Mitigation Center and one of the workshop organizers. Drought forecasts are usually one of the first requests, but Hayes cautioned that reliable drought forecasts are still in the future, at least for most of the United States.

Hayes said that a more realistic expectation would be for researchers to work more closely with users of drought information to gather and analyze relevant data at time and space scales that match people’s needs.

NIDIS, established by federal law in 2006, is responsible for improving drought early warning, both through research and through more targeted information dissemination. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is the lead federal agency, coordinating federal, state and local efforts.

At the workshop, the first morning will provide overviews of drought monitoring science and activities initiated by NIDIS. Later, panel-led discussions will focus on agriculture, water supply, protected lands, and energy, and on state and tribal drought planning experiences. Breakout sessions will be on improving federal, state and local drought monitoring; developing “triggers” for energy, water, and environmental sectors; and on drought, climate and sustainability.

Special sessions will provide brief overviews of ethanol-related issues and of what the U.S. can learn from the Famine Early Warning System.

For more information about NIDIS, please visit [drought.gov](http://drought.gov). The National Drought Mitigation Center’s website is [drought.unl.edu](http://drought.unl.edu).

For more information, please contact Kelly Smith, 402-472-3373, [ksmith2@unl.edu](mailto:ksmith2@unl.edu).