

The Heat is on

The Southwest is in the midst of a potentially disastrous drought. At the same time its cities are growing by leaps and bounds. The implications are sobering: a Southwest with shortages of water and an overabundance of blazing wildfires in this century and beyond.

Globally, average annual temperature is expected to rise by somewhere between 3 and 10 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100, according to a range of scenarios developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Computer models are less adept at simulating regional climate change, but some researchers with NOAA (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) predict a rise in average annual temperature in the Southwest of roughly 4 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050 (see chart below). Their projection averages results from four different computer models, and doesn't assume the warming will stop at mid-century.