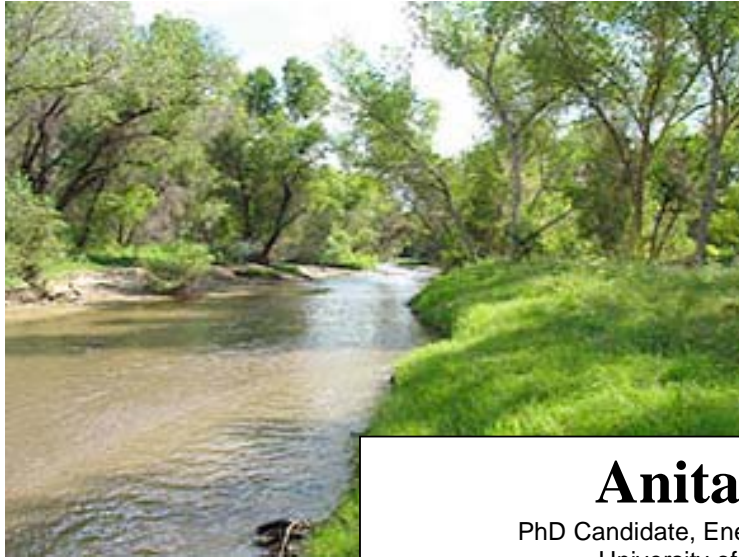


Energy and Resources Group Fall 2009 Colloquium Series (ER295)

October 7, 2009



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Bordering on Water Management: Ground and
Wastewaters in the United State - Mexico Transboundary
Santa Cruz River Basin

110 Barrows Hall – 4:00 P.M.

As reliance on groundwater increases, the impact of groundwater intensive use in internationally shared aquifers threatens to create not only negative environmental and economic externalities, but also to generate tensions between neighboring nations. Through an investigation of the shared Santa Cruz aquifer, located along the United States - Mexico border, I examine factors influencing the effective management of transboundary groundwaters. In particular, I explain how scientific uncertainty combined with national (domestic) arrangements for water management condition a country's position vis-à-vis its shared groundwaters. Contested visions, incommensurability in management goals and values, and insufficient information on water availability and demands inhibit a clear definition of what each country stands to gain or lose from adopting specific water management policies. In addition, polycentricism and the evolving nature of national and sub-national institutional regimes lead to gaps, overlaps, and ambiguity in authority. Together, these factors serve to deter the formation of formal agreements; yet crucially they also provide opportunities for innovation in bi-national agenda-setting and data sharing, which in turn aid in the alignment of both countries' priorities for the transboundary Santa Cruz aquifer.