

**Western States Federal Agency Support Team
Summary - CY 2009 Work Plan**

In support of
Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: Next Steps

We hereby declare that we as WESTFAST partners will collaborate with the Western States Water Council to guide the development of an appropriate action plan for this partnership.

- An excerpt from *Declaration of Cooperation, signed by 9 agencies in 2008*

During 2009, WestFAST agencies initiated work on 12 of the 42 objectives in listed in the *Next Steps* report.

WestFAST Accomplishments (highlighted below in red)

Objective 1. (from Foreword.) Western States Water Council should enter into a formal agreement to create a ‘Western States Federal Agency Support Team’ made up of representatives of federal agencies having water resource responsibilities and create a WSWC ‘liaison position’ to facilitate collaboration. (*Next Steps, 2008; page I*)

- **Memo of Cooperation signed in 2008; Federal Liaison hired 22-Sep-08.**
- **WSWC-WestFAST agency meetings (held in Washington, DC), 03-05-Mar-09.**
- **WSWC member included on EPA’s Climate Change Council**
- **WestFAST interagency work includes:
DOI Secretarial Order - Climate
Reclamation’s Basin Studies**

Objective 7. State and federal water resource agencies should work together to provide universal access to the water-related data collected by all state, local, and federal agencies, as well as tools and models that better enable the synthesis, visualization and evaluation of water-related data, including that to be shared with local governments. (*Next Steps, 2008; pages III-IV*)

- **WestFAST agencies participated in WSWC’s 2008 Water Data Needs Symposium and subsequent Work Group. The Work Group is on hold pending direction from WSWC.**

Objective 8. Federal agencies with long-range water supply planning responsibilities should:
a) Work in cooperation with states to help communities develop drought preparedness plans, drought contingency plans, establish or enhance federal reservoir drought contingency plans, and be visible and engaged in all drought-related forums: nationally, regionally and locally. (*Next Steps, 2008; page IV*)

- **See items in A, B, C, D, and F listed above**

Objective 8 (b). Support the implementation of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) by

- (i) providing drought information, such as reservoir storage levels, linking Federal web sites with the NIDIS site;

- (ii) supporting state and local drought planning within an integrated water resources management framework;
- (iii) providing information on drought impact assessment in areas where they have expertise, such as navigation, hydropower, ecosystem needs, and recreation; and
- (iv) participating in NIDIS pilot studies, particularly in studies involving water resources management. (*Next Steps, 2008; page IV*)

- **The WestFAST Federal Liaison Officer, working in conjunction with WSWC and WGA staff, planned and presented National Integrated Drought Information System and Climate Services Workshop for the Midwest United States. WestFAST agencies were involved as participants and speakers.**

Objective 8 (c). Ensure there is an accurate assessment of the Nation’s water availability and water demands, with the goal of integrating the information into state water resources planning, recognizing that a truly national assessment must begin at the state and local level with appropriate technical and financial support from the federal government. (*Next Steps, 2008; page IV*)

- **WSWC remains engaged with USACE’s *Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future*.**
- **WSWC participated as a partner in USACE’s Western regional meeting in Kansas City, and National meeting in Washington, DC.**
- **WSWC plans to participate with development of a Plan of Action including development of a federal tool box.**

Objective 20. All levels of government, along with appropriate private sector involvement, should cooperate in the development and implementation of appropriate criteria for prioritizing infrastructure needs, asset management strategies, policies, standards, techniques and technologies. (*Next Steps, 2008; page V*)

- **USACE and EPA presented sessions on infrastructure needs and priorities, at the Society of Military Engineers meeting, Tulsa, OK, 01-Sep-09.**
- **Pilot projects are planned for Oklahoma and Texas.**

Objective 31. Federal agencies should begin a systematic updating of their respective reservoir operating plans and drought contingency plans to assure that operating plans are adaptable to a changing climate. (*Next Steps, 2008; page VI*)

- **Reclamation and USACE are researched agency information on USACE’s Water Control Plans, Reservoir Operating Plans, Reallocation Studies and Reclamation’s Standing Operating Procedures. This information was presented to the Water Resources Committee meeting, scheduled for Oct. 15.**

Objective 32. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration should take the lead in improving forecasts on multiple geographic and temporal scales and conduct additional research in collaboration with water management agencies so that forecasts can be incorporated into reservoir operations. (*Next Steps, 2008; page VI*)

- **A partnership has been developed between NOAA, (Colorado Basin River Forecast Center) and Reclamation to improve ensemble stream flow predictions on Colorado River. This partnership is providing assistance implementing the 2008 Colorado River**

Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lakes Powell and Mead.

Objective 33. The USGS, in cooperation with states, should improve monitoring and data collection to identify and respond to changing regional and local trends, and allow for better early warning systems that (a) focus on critical or vulnerable systems; (b) deliver real-time data; (c) improve data access, storage and retrieval; (d) allow for real-time ‘smart’ analysis; and (e) provide feedback and evaluation. *(Next Steps, 2008; page VI)*

- **WestFAST began an inventory of climate change programs in WestFAST agencies.**

Objective 34. The federal government, in cooperation with states, should take the lead in putting together a web site to provide more useful and scaled output from climate models for the water management community. *(Next Steps, 2008; page VII)*

- **NOAA revised their drought website to provide time series depictions of drought at the climate division and the station levels.**

Objective 35. Water managers should take the initiative to clearly communicate their needs for applied science to the climate research community, and must seek opportunities to guide hydroclimate research in directions that will support real-world problem solving. *(Next Steps, 2008; page VII)*

- **Reclamation and USACE organized the Climate Change and Western Water Group (CCAWG.) WSWC member Jeanine Jones represents the Council on this group.**
- 2) Conduct a pilot-scale activity that is complementary to the federal agency climate change research groups, such as the CCAWWG initiative, and promotes collaborative WSWC/WestFAST input into the R&D activities of USACE’s System Wide Water Resources Program (SWWRP).
- **WestFAST agencies have engaged with the PACE (Post-docs applying climate expertise) program. NOAA and Reclamation have PACE participants assigned to each agency.**

Objective 36. Planning for climate changes should be undertaken at all levels, from the federal government to private and public water utilities, with participation from non-governmental organizations. *(Next Steps, 2008; page VII)*

- **In 2009, EPA announced the formation of the Climate Ready Water Utilities Working Group of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council; WSWC is represented on this Council.**
- **USGS published Circular 1331 - *Climate Change and Water Resources Management: A Federal Perspective*, 03-Feb-09 and presented this information at a Council meeting.**
- **At the 2009 WSWC Symposium, NOAA, USGS, USACE, and Reclamation provided a progress report on implementation of Circular 1331.**

Objective 37. More water storage should be considered, accompanied by an extensive risk and cost-benefit analysis, together with an analysis of the potential for reducing demand and increasing water use efficiency. *(Next Steps, 2008; page VII)*

- **WestFAST began work on an inventory of agency programs which provide technical, policy, and/or planning assistance to States.**