

## News from WestFAST

### Message from the WestFAST Chair

In the West, no longer is water “just for fightin.” Water resources development and management are an opportunity for federal agencies – through WestFAST – to support the western States and to work more collaboratively together. Climate change – and management strategies adapting to climate change – are issues of critical importance. As the Declaration of Cooperation notes, WestFAST will “work together whenever and wherever possible throughout the 17 Western States to promote and educate the public on the benefits of sustainable and efficient use of water resources.” I look forward to continuing the work of WestFAST and thank Michael Fallon for his leadership during the last year.

Roger Gorke  
Environmental Protection Agency

### WestFAST

Nine federal agencies comprise the Western Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST). The Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have signed a Declaration of Cooperation to provide assistance to the Western States Water Council (WSWC). The WestFAST CY 2009 Work Plan emphasizes “proactive, voluntary, participatory and incentive-based approaches to water resource management and conservation assistance programs throughout the Western States.” The Work Plan provides federal assistance to WSWC to implement objectives outlined in *Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: Next Steps*. To see the report, go to <http://www.westgov.org/wswc/water%20needs%20&%20strategies-6'08%20final.pdf>

For July 2009-June 2010, the WestFAST chair is Roger Gorke (EPA) ([gorke.roger@epa.gov](mailto:gorke.roger@epa.gov)); the vice-chair is Ward Staubitz (USGS) ([staubitz@usgs.gov](mailto:staubitz@usgs.gov)).

### WSWC News

At its 160<sup>th</sup> meeting July 17, 2009, WSWC named Tony Willardson Executive Director of the Council. Tony joined the Western States Water Council in 1979 and has served as Associate Director since 1983. Tony graduated from Brigham Young University with a BA in political science and an MPA from the University of Utah, with emphasis in policy analysis and natural resources. Tony is a member of the National Honor Society of Public Affairs and Administration (Phi Alpha Alpha) and the American Water Resources Association (AWRA).

The Western States Water Council is the primary water resource advisory body of the Western Governors' Association (WGA) and was created by them in 1965. WSWC members are appointed by each state's Governor and focus on the water issues of the West. WSWC seeks west-wide consensus on issues of mutual concern related to water.



### WSWC News (cont'd)

WSWC meets three times each year and develops annual work plans to implement objectives in the WGA report, *Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: Next Steps*.

WSWC publishes a weekly newsletter. The latest edition is included at the end of the WestFAST newsletter. Subscription to the WSWC newsletter is \$100/year. Contact Julie Groat ([jgroat@swc.state.ut.us](mailto:jgroat@swc.state.ut.us)) for subscription.

For more information on WSWC, go to <http://www.westgov.org/swsc/>

### Western Governors' Association

Tom Iseman has recently joined the Western Governor's Association as the Program Director for Water Policy and Implementation for the Western Governors Association. Tom deals with water supply, drought, and climate issues for the 19 Western States and 3 U.S.-Flag Pacific Islands. Prior to joining WGA, Tom managed the water program for The Nature Conservancy in Colorado and worked on water and hydropower issues for the Office of Policy in the Department of the Interior. Tom grew up in Englewood, CO, and received a BA in History from Princeton University (focusing on Western water issues) and an MS from the University of Michigan in freshwater ecology. [tiseman@westgov.org](mailto:tiseman@westgov.org)  
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### WestFAST in the news

There have been several recent references to WestFAST. In testimony before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee,

EPA's Acting Asst Administrator said: EPA ... continues to coordinate and collaborate with other federal agencies on research and other policy matters through ... the Western States Federal Agency Support Team (which was organized by the Western States Water Council) and a multi-agency memorandum that authorizes senior staff from EPA, NOAA, USDA, DOI and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to cooperate on climate change adaptation work related to water resources. Such cooperation is essential to leverage resources across agencies, avoid duplication of effort, and minimize confusion ....

Read the testimony:  
[http://www.epa.gov/ocir/hearings/testimony/111\\_2009\\_2010/2009\\_0331\\_ms.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ocir/hearings/testimony/111_2009_2010/2009_0331_ms.pdf)

And in *A Critical Need, A National Interagency Water Plan* published in the Journal of Southwest Hydrology, Brad Udall, Director, Western Water Assessment writes:

The sheer number of organizations in the United States concerned with water creates a substantial coordination problem.... EPA now has a water program strategy, Interior has a climate change strategy, Reclamation has incorporated climate change into at least one environmental impact statement, and the Army Corps of Engineers has begun to look at how reservoir operations may need to be modified to handle bigger floods. An interagency agreement was signed in August 2008 [the WestFAST Memo of Cooperation] to allow these agencies to discuss many of these issues ...

Read the article:  
[http://www.swhydro.arizona.edu/archive/V8\\_N1/feature1.pdf](http://www.swhydro.arizona.edu/archive/V8_N1/feature1.pdf)

The WestFAST Newsletter will be distributed following WSWC meetings.  
Contact [jhower@swc.state.ut.us](mailto:jhower@swc.state.ut.us) to be added to the distribution list.



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### **Message from the Retiring WestFAST Chair**

It was, indeed, a privilege to serve as the first chair of WestFAST. The activities of WestFAST represent a coordinated effort to respond to the unique needs of the Western States and to assist in the implementation of objectives identified by WSWC and the Western Governors' Association. As with any new endeavor, there was a level of uncertainty and risk involved. However, WestFAST demonstrated it is a viable bridge to the future partnership between WSWC and Federal agencies. The work plan objectives crafted by WestFAST represent a collection of integrated activities where WestFAST agencies are providing – and will continue to provide - assistance to WSWC.

A summary of WestFAST successes include participation and involvement of WSWC in the Collaborative National Water Planning effort led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and participation and involvement in development of a workshop to identify data needs of the National Integrated Drought Information System. In addition, WestFAST agencies have participated in the development and presentation of three Water Information Management Symposia. WestFAST has initiatives currently underway focused on providing information and assistance to WSWC in the areas of climate change, water to meet future demands, and water planning and management.

Michael P. Fallon, PE, SES  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
June 30, 2009

