

## News from WestFAST

### Message from the WestFAST Chair

During the last year, WestFAST initiated work on nearly one-third of the 42 objectives listed in the 2008 report, *Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: Next Steps*. Most of these objectives are grouped under the major substantive area of "climate change" but have other far-reaching benefits. In addition to the work related to the *Next Steps* report, WestFAST continues to reach out and collaborate with efforts throughout the federal, state, and local government. These efforts include developing an inventory of climate change initiatives currently underway by WestFAST agencies, engaging the Western States Water Council (WSWC) on advisory groups for EPA's State and Tribal Climate Change Council, and an interagency climate change research and development work group. We are working hard based on the premise that collaboration is built step-by-step; WestFAST continues to seek and develop such opportunities

Roger Gorke  
WestFAST Chair  
Environmental Protection Agency

### WestFAST

The WestFAST CY 2009 Work Plan ([www.westgov.org/wswc/WestFAST/westfast\\_09\\_oct%20update.pdf](http://www.westgov.org/wswc/WestFAST/westfast_09_oct%20update.pdf)) emphasized "proactive, voluntary, participatory and incentive-based approaches to water resource management and conservation assistance programs throughout the Western States." The 2009 Work Plan identified on-going collaborative, interagency activities and provided federal assistance to WSWC on 12 of the 42 objectives outlined in *Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: Next Steps*.

A significant WestFAST accomplishment was the integration of the Federal Liaison Officer in on-going WSWC initiatives. This included involvement in an initiative led by USACE, "Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future." As part of this initiative, WSWC partnered with USACE in the Western Regional Meeting. WestFAST and the Federal Liaison Officer participated with the WSWC in planning and developing two technical symposia - one focused on watersheds

and land use planning, and one focused on management adaptation strategies resulting from climate change. WestFAST and the

Federal Liaison Officer provided assistance to WSWC and the WGA for the "National Integrated Drought Information System and Climate Services Workshop for the Midwest United States." This workshop explored climate, weather, and water-related information. The workshop was the first of several to be presented by WGA.

### WestFAST in the news

In testimony before the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water and Power, on October 27, 2009, Tony Willardson, the WSWC Executive Director, said WestFAST activities have "... led to ... progress on recommendations ... in the "Next Steps" Report.

## Report from the 161<sup>st</sup> Western States Water Council Meeting

This meeting was held Oct. 14-16, in Lincoln, NE. WSWC revised and readopted a policy position ([www.westgov.org/wswc/09%20oct16%20climate-data%20rev.pdf](http://www.westgov.org/wswc/09%20oct16%20climate-data%20rev.pdf)) urging the Administration and Congress to give a high priority to the allocation and appropriation of sufficient funds for important federal water and climate data programs that: (1) provide data on flooding, drought and climate change impacts; (2) project future water supplies; (3) estimate streamflows; and (4) facilitate water management and the administration of water rights, decrees and interstate compacts. The position specifically added the USGS groundwater monitoring and measurement, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service and Climate Programs Office to a list of "critical" programs.

WSWC also discussed how best to be involved in the dialogue sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on national water resources needs and strategies to meet those needs. The WSWC suggested a need for an inclusive and structured dialogue to identify, evaluate, prioritize and face the Nation's present and future water-related challenges. Earlier this year, WSWC adopted a policy position describing the principles important to the states in considering a national vision for water policy ([www.westgov.org/wswc/09aug13%20national%20water%20policy%20vision%20resolution.pdf](http://www.westgov.org/wswc/09aug13%20national%20water%20policy%20vision%20resolution.pdf)).

## WIMS Symposia

WSWC recently sponsored two technical symposia: Water and Land Use Planning and Adapting to Climate Change.

**Water and Land Use Planning** (reprinted with permission from WSWC newsletter #1846)

On September 28-30, the WSWC, the ...WGA and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources sponsored the "Symposium on Water and Land Use Planning for a Sustainable Future: Scaling and Integrating" in Denver, Colorado. The Symposium encompassed a variety of topics on land and water use planning, and participants included developers,

nongovernmental organizations, and state, local, and federal government agencies. Over 150 people were registered. John Tubbs, a former WSWC member and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior for Water and Science, was the keynote speaker. .... Colorado Governor Bill Ritter (D) also spoke, saying, ".... Water use planning and land use planning have got to go together. Other speakers included representatives from EPA; the U.S. Forest Service; the Bureau of Land Management; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Southern Nevada Water Authority; the New

Mexico State Engineer's Office; the Arizona Department of Water Resources; the Portland Water Bureau; the American Institute of Certified Planners, and the Washington Department of Ecology.

## Water Information Management Systems

**Workshop** (reprinted with permission from WSWC newsletter #1853)

On November 17-19, WSWC and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) co-hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Water Information Management Systems (WIMS) Workshop in San Diego. It focused on climate change adaptation and information needs, and brought together over 50 water resources and technology specialists from five states, ten federal agencies, three universities, and numerous consulting and non-governmental organizations. One important theme that emerged is that science can identify possible climate change outcomes, but cannot predict probabilities. States must develop flexible adaptation measures and strategies that best handle all possible outcomes.

## Western States Water Council

For more information on WSWC, go to <http://www.westgov.org/wswc/> or contact Julie Groat ([jgroat@wswc.state.ut.us](mailto:jgroat@wswc.state.ut.us)) for WSWC newsletter subscription information.

## NIDIS Workshop

WSWC, in partnership with the WGA, held the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) and Climate Services Workshop for the Midwest United States, on Oct 13-14, 2009, in Lincoln, NE. The workshop drew together decision-makers from local, federal, and state agencies; the navigation industry, conservation groups, and academia. Participants offered a range of suggestions for coordination, in integrating, displaying, and distributing climate, weather, and water data and information. "Next Steps" include additional workshops (sponsored by WGA) in the West and Southeast, to be scheduled in 2010 and a report to the NIDIS executive council and federal agencies on end user needs and recommendations for future activities.

Go to:  
[www.westgov.org/wswc/nidis%20workshop%20presentations.html](http://www.westgov.org/wswc/nidis%20workshop%20presentations.html) for agenda and presentation information.

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 assist the WSWC.

## WestFAST Agency News

To help foster cooperation and resolve water-related issues, Chris Carlson, the Forest Service National Groundwater Program Leader, has begun a 90-day detail to the EPA Office of Water. In 2007, the Forest Service and EPA Office of Water signed a Memo of Agreement to foster collaboration between the agencies in addressing impaired waters on land managed by the Forest Service. Key objectives of the detail include developing and communication, cooperation, and collaborative problem solving between the EPA's Office of Water and the Forest Service. For more information, contact Chris Carlson at 202-564-0433 or [ccarlson@fs.fed.us](mailto:ccarlson@fs.fed.us).

## 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



### WestFAST members:

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