

**Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST)** is a collaboration between 13 Federal agencies with water management responsibilities in the West. WestFAST was established to support the Western States Water Council (WSWC) and the Western Governors' Association (WGA) in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water issues.

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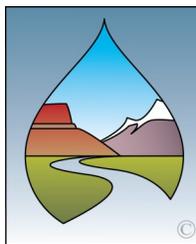
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## Western States Water Council 185<sup>th</sup> Meeting

(WSWC/WestFAST 10/23/17)

On October 18-20, the WSWC held its 185<sup>th</sup> meetings in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Council adopted one new position supporting several Farm Bill programs important to Western states. Multiple U.S. Department of Agriculture financial assistance programs are included in this bill that can be used in the water resources and habitat restoration areas. Jeanine Jones, California Department of Water Resources, discussed existing and potential uses of Farm Bill programs for enhanced water management, including water conservation initiatives and transitioning from irrigated to dryland farming in some areas



During the Full Council meeting on Friday, Pat Lambert, Western Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST), reported agencies want to pro-actively maintain and enhance collaborative state federal partnerships, which takes persistence and

patience. WestFAST will strive to engage with the states early and often on policy and technical programs. Roger Pierce, WestFAST Liaison expressed appreciation to the WSWC staff for a warm welcome. Further, he noted the WestFAST work plan is being updated taking into account WSWC priorities.

Various state water management efforts were reviewed. Julie Cunningham, Oklahoma, and Duane Smith (a former WSWC member) described work on the Southwest Oklahoma Water Action Plan prepared in response to an historic drought that threatened water supplies and the economy. The plan calls for specific short, medium and long-term actions to achieve sustainability. A number of federal agencies, under the WestFAST umbrella, and as part of the National Drought Resiliency Partnership (NDRP), are working to provide financial and technical assistance.

Mathew Weaver, Idaho, and Jason King, Nevada, addressed respectively, aquifer recharge and recovery efforts on Idaho's Eastern Snake Plain, and conjunctive groundwater and surface water management rules and activities in Nevada's Humboldt River Basin.

Jeanine Jones and Roger Pierce, described discussions about a possible seasonal to sub-seasonal (S2S) pilot proposal for improving water supply predictions in the Upper Colorado River Basin.

Sara Larsen provided an overview of progress with the WSWC's Water Data Exchange (WaDE), and its genesis. With respect to the latter, Vince Tidwell, Sandia National Lab, de-

scribed ongoing studies on energy and water needs in the western U.S. WaDE is a continuation of efforts initiated through the Western Governors'



Left to right: Patrick Lambert, USGS; Chris Carlson, USFS; Doug Curtis, BLM; Becky Fulkerson, Reclamation; Roger Pierce, WestFAST Liaison; and Andrew Hautzinger, USFWS



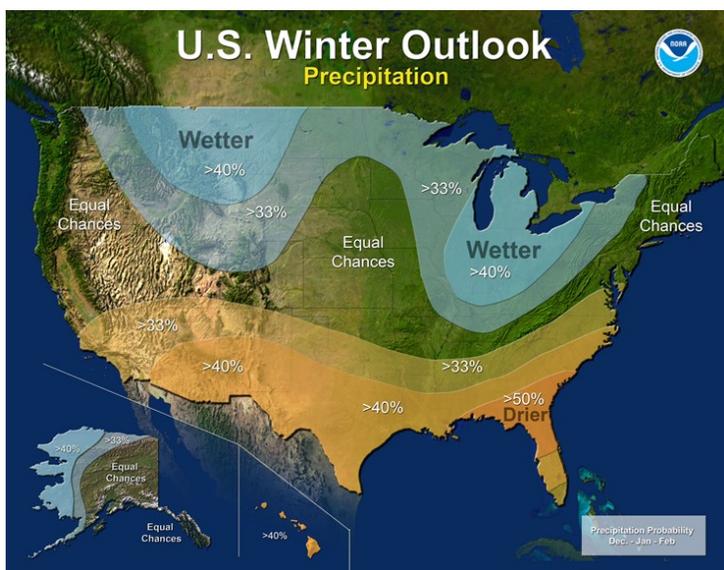
Association in cooperation with Sandia and other national labs.

Roger Pierce summarized the WSWC/WestFAST Federal Non-Tribal Water Claims Workshop, which was held on October 18. Case studies include state and federal efforts to protect federal water resources at Crater Lake in Oregon, Devil's Hole in Nevada, and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in Kansas. He noted three overarching themes that emerged as a result of the case studies discussed: (1) communication; (2) economics; and (3) smart use of new technologies. The workgroup will continue furthering their efforts on non-tribal federal water rights.

Roger Gorke provided an update on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new waters of the U.S. rule, noting the EPA is still in drafting mode and asking states to share with the agency what they think a new rule should look like. Roger also described a workshop held in September, which was hosted by the EPA Water Finance Center to discuss the idea of a Water Innovation Fund. Roger also stated that EPA has been approached by a group in California to do a Good Samaritan abandoned mine clean-up, which an internal EPA team is reviewing.

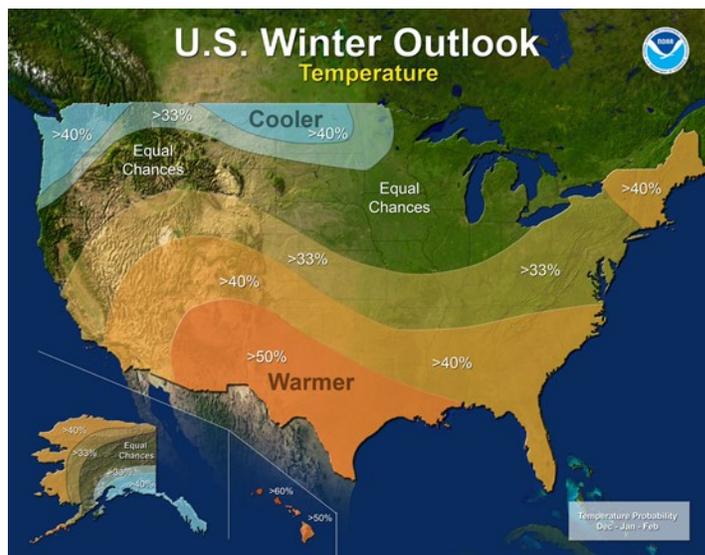
## Winter Outlook 2017-2018

(WestFAST/NOAA 10/19/17)



NOAA Winter Precipitation Outlook 10/19/17

Wetter than average conditions are expected in the Northern Rockies into the Northern Plains which is good news in those regions where ongoing drought could be mitigated. Dry conditions expected in the Southwest will only continue concerns for water supply issues across the region.



NOAA Winter Temperature Outlook 10/19/17

Cooler than average conditions are expected from the Pacific Northwest into the Northern Plains with warm conditions expected from the Central Rockies into the Southwest.

If you want more details, [here is a short YouTube Video with the Climate Prediction Centers Deputy Director.](#)

## Fires Continue in the West, but With Improving Weather Conditions

(WestFAST 11/03/17)

On November 3, the National Interagency Coordination Center Incident Management Situation Report reported that 13 fires continue in the Western U.S. Weather conditions, especially in the Pacific Northwest into the Northern Rockies have greatly improved with precipitation falling in those areas. Parts of the Southwest and much of Central and Southern California remain in fire season conditions. In addition to fighting fires, many WestFAST agencies continue to be in recovery mode helping state and local officials with clean up efforts from the devastating fires.



[www.nifc.gov](http://www.nifc.gov)

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## Study Estimates About 2.1 Million People Using Wells High in Arsenic *(USGS 10/18/17)*

A new study by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates about 2.1 million people in the U.S. may be getting their drinking water from private domestic wells are considered to have high concentrations of arsenic, presumed to be from natural sources.

“About 44 million people in the lower 48 states use water from domestic wells,” said Joe Ayotte, a USGS hydrologist and lead author of the study. “While we’re confident our research will help well owners understand if they live in an area of higher risk for arsenic, the only way for them to be certain of what’s in their water is to have it tested.”

Using a standard of 10 micrograms of arsenic per liter – the maximum contaminant level allowed for public water supplies – the researchers developed maps of the contiguous U.S. showing locations where there are likely higher levels of arsenic in groundwater, and how many people may be using it.

Nearly all of the arsenic in the groundwater tested for this study and used to map probabilities is likely from natural sources, and is presumed to be coming primarily from rocks and minerals through which the water flows.

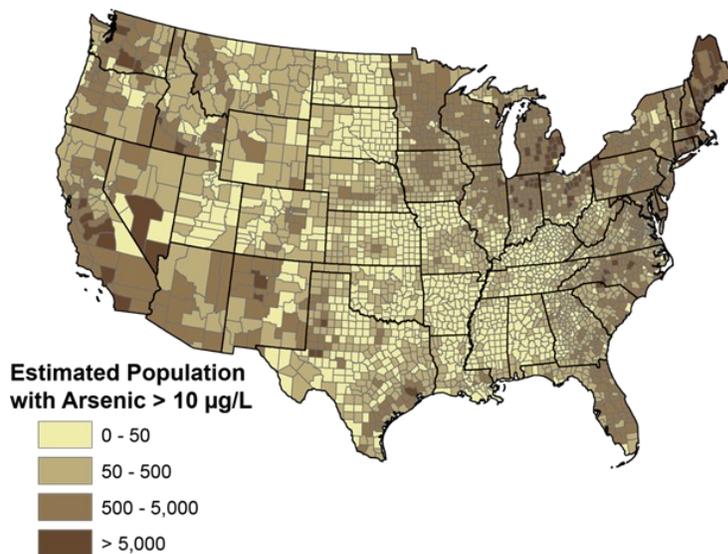
The findings highlight the importance of private well owners working with their local and state officials to determine the best way to test and, if necessary, treat their water supplies.

“Fortunately, in most areas of the country and with appropriate safeguards, the majority of homeowners can get good quality drinking water from private wells,” said Ayotte. “But this study is a good reminder that prudent, routine testing of the water, including its interaction with the water supply system, is an essential first step so homeowners and their families can confidently drink water from their faucets.”

Using water samples from more than 20,000 domestic wells, the researchers developed a statistical model that estimates the probability of having high arsenic in domestic wells in a specific area. They used that model in combination with information on the U.S. domestic well population to estimate the population in each county of the continental U.S. with potentially high concentrations of arsenic in domestic wells.

“One of our study’s basic assumptions is that the probability of high arsenic can be estimated by a statistical model. We also assume that the domestic water use population is represented by census information used in the study,” said Ayotte.

Some of the locations where it’s estimated the most people may have high-levels of arsenic in private domestic well water include much of the West – Washington, Oregon, Nevada, California, Arizona, New Mexico.



[Link to the full article](#) with map zoom in capability.

## Folsom Auxiliary Spillway Completion Ceremony Marks Conclusion of Historic Project *(USACE 10/17/17)*

SACRAMENTO, CA – On October 17, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Sacramento District and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) hosted a ceremony to celebrate the completion of nearly a decade of work on the new Folsom Dam auxiliary spillway.

Representatives Doris Matsui, California’s 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, and Tom McClintock, California’s 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, joined USACE Sacramento District Commander Col. David Ray and other senior officials from the USACE, BOR, California Central Valley Flood Protection Board, California Department of Water Resources and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency to commemorate the milestone.

The project kicked off in 2008 when the BOR began excavating the site, and with the first two phases com-



plete by 2011, the site was transferred to the USACE to begin construction of the spillway approach channel, chute and control structure. The first concrete was placed in May 2012 and in 2014, the gates that now help make up the 158-foot tall control structure, arrived from Vancouver, Washington.



*Folsom Dam's New Auxiliary Spillway Photo USACE*

In April 2016, the last of more than 307,000 cubic yards of concrete – enough to pave 157 miles of two-lane highway – was placed in the spillway chute, and by December 2016, construction of the new Folsom Dam auxiliary spillway was complete.

The \$900-million cooperative effort was designed to improve the safety of Folsom Dam and to reduce flood risk for the approximately 2.5 million people in the Sacramento metropolitan area.

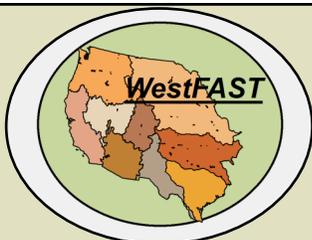
## WSWC Upcoming Meetings

The WSWC Spring (186<sup>th</sup>) Meetings and Washington, DC Roundtable, cosponsored with the Interstate Council on Water Policy will be held in Arlington, Virginia on March 14-15, 2018. A meeting with the WestFAST Principals is scheduled for March 16th at NOAA Headquarters in Washington, DC.

For further information, please see:  
<http://www.westernstateswater.org/upcoming-meetings/>.

## Federal News (Control click to articles)

- 10/03: [EPA Launches Smart Sectors Program](#)
- 10/04: [USDA Invests in 48 Projects in Local Watersheds to Protect Communities and Vital Infrastructure](#)
- 10/05: [Scientists Ground Truth What Influences Hurricanes](#)
- 10/06: [Farm groups: Washington culvert case not just about culverts](#)
- 10/07: [USGS Installs Storm-Tide Sensors Along Gulf Coast for Hurricane Nate](#)
- 10/10: [Supreme Court Will Settle States' Water-Rights](#)
- 10/10: [Conserve Open Space](#)
- 10/11: [Celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week](#)
- 10/12: [Central Valley Project begins 2018 water year with 8.9 million acre-feet of storage](#)
- 10/12: [Wildfires Continue to Ravage California; NOAA Experts are on the Scene](#)
- 10/12: [USDA Offers Opportunities to Help California Producers Rebuild and Recover; Assessments Underway](#)
- 10/13: [EPA News Advisory: Northern California Wildfire Response Update](#)
- 10/17: [Future Temperature and Soil Moisture May Alter Location of Agricultural Regions](#)
- 10/17: [New Folsom Dam spillway completed](#)
- 10/18: [Globe Had 2<sup>nd</sup> Warmest Year to Date, 4<sup>th</sup> Warmest September on record](#)
- 10/18: [NASA Damage Map Aids California Wildfire Response](#)
- 10/18: [USACE Infrastructure Assessment Subject Matter Experts Help in Harvey Recovery Mission](#)
- 10/20: [EPA awards nearly \\$900K in wetlands grants to help grow state and tribal wetland programs in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska](#)
- 10/24: [Impact of Northern California Fires Seen in New NASA Satellite Image](#)
- 10/23: [Hunting is Essential for Preserving Wild Lands](#)
- 10/23: [New research: Forests minimize severe heat waves](#)
- 10/26: [After the Storm, Who Takes Care of the Trees?](#)
- 10/25: [Weather Watches and Warnings are not Just for the U.S.](#)
- 10/27: [Sandy Five Years Later. What have We Learned?](#)
- 10/30: [Learning Together about America's Wild and Scenic Rivers](#)
- 10/31: [NASA Estimates the Global Reach of Atmospheric Rivers](#)
- 10/31: [EPA Recognizes Excellence and Innovation in Clean Water Infrastructure](#)
- 10/31: [Administrator Pruitt Issues Directive to Ensure Independence, Geographic Diversity & Integrity in EPA Science Committees](#)



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