

**Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST)** is a collaboration between 12 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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# WestFAST News

June 2013

## WestFAST Transitions—New Leaders and Agency Representatives

Thank you Jean Thomas (US Forest Service) for serving as the WestFAST vice chair and as the WestFAST chair! Also, Jean has served as the Forest Service representative since May 2008.

Beginning July 2013, Becky Fulkerson will begin her two-year term as the WestFAST chair. In a recent election, WestFAST representatives selected Roger Gorke to serve as the vice chair for the next two years.

Welcome aboard Marc Kodack as the new representative for the Department of Defense! Thank you Clare Mendelsohn for your work representing the Department of Defense.

A Chair and Vice-Chair are elected biennially by WestFAST representatives. Following the pattern of WSWC, the terms run from July 1-June 30. Both the Chair and the Vice Chair will serve two-year terms. The vice chair becomes the next chair. The following is a list of the WestFAST chairs and vice chairs, both past and present.

### Chairs, WestFAST

- Michael Fallon, Corps of Engineers: May 2008 to July 2009
- Roger Gorke, EPA: July 2009 to July 2011
- Jean Thomas, Forest Service: July 2011 to July 2013
- Becky Fulkerson, Reclamation: July 2013 to July 2015
- Roger Gorke: July 2015 to July 2017

### Vice Chairs, WestFAST

- Ward Staubitz, USGS: July 2009 to November 2010
- Jean Thomas, Forest Service: November 2010 to July 2011
- Michael Fallon, Corps of Engineers: July 2011 to February 2012
- Becky Fulkerson, Reclamation: May 2012 to July 2013
- Roger Gorke: July 2013 to July 2015

## WSWC Summer Council Meeting—Casper, Wyoming

The WSWC held its 172nd meetings on June 24-26, in Casper, Wyoming. There, WSWC adopted three new positions.

First, WSWC endorsed a letter to House Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee leaders in opposition to H.R. 1460, which would remove “fish and wildlife” as an authorized purpose for which the Corps can manage the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System. Among other things, the letter noted that fish and wildlife provide substantial economic and recreation benefits in the basin, and that “river management and states in the System may be better served by a comprehensive, simultaneous, and transparent review of all eight authorized purposes to develop a plan for the sustainable future management of the System.”

Second, WSWC expressed support for federal efforts to prepare for and respond to extreme weather impacts, including an expanded and enhanced west-wide extreme precipitation monitoring system. It also expressed support for legislation to: (1) minimize the loss of life and property and economic, environmental and social cost from extreme weather events; (2) improve collaboration and coordination among agencies and organizations at all levels; (3) increase consultation with state, local and tribal governments; (4) maintain and enhance data gathering and monitoring, as well as communication capabilities, identifying and addressing gaps and overlap; (5) identify and address federal agency responsibilities, as well as regulatory and other preparedness and response barriers; (6) recognize and address regional differences; and (7) avoid unfunded mandates.

Third, WSWC explained that federal hydraulic fracturing efforts “should leverage state knowledge, expertise, policies, and regulations.” It said that such efforts “should be limited in scope, based upon sound science, and driven by states.” The position noted that the WSWC “opposes any and all efforts that would diminish the primary and exclusive authority of states over the allocation of water resources used in hydraulic fracturing.”

On Monday, 24 June, participants enjoyed an informative bus tour along the North Platte

River. Discussions focused on the Kendrick Project, the recently completed Pathfinder Dam modification, the Platte River Recovery and Implementation Program, and the Platte River Decree. The tour stopped along Bates Creek for a discussion of recent redevelopment and conjunctive management issues. Representatives from the Wyoming State Engineer's Office, Wyoming Water Development Office, and the Bureau of Reclamation gave presentations and answered questions along the way.

On Tuesday, 25 June, Lisa Vojta and Elizabeth Erdmann from the Government Accountability Office gave an update on the survey of the states regarding their views on how federal agencies could help meet the challenges of anticipated water shortages. This survey and the resulting report are expected to be completed by early 2014.

On Wednesday, 26 June, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science Anne Castle discussed Interior's water resources activities, including: (1) President Obama's recently announced climate change action plan, which focuses on reducing carbon emissions; (2) Interior's drought efforts; (3) the future of the Landsat program; (4) the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) streamgaging programs; (5) forthcoming changes to Bureau of Reclamation policies regarding how the agency defines the use of project water for "irrigation;" and (6) revisions to the Bureau of Land Management's proposed hydraulic fracturing rule. Among other things, Castle thanked the WSWC for its efforts in ensuring that Landsat 8 included a thermal infrared sensor and noted that the Office of Management and Budget has directed USGS and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to develop a 20-year plan for how to sustain the Landsat program.

Also, Jean Thomas gave the WestFAST update, reminding participants that this month is the fifth anniversary of the formation of WestFAST. In reflecting on the formation of WestFAST and her involvement over the past five years, she mentioned some of the projects of WestFAST and described things that WestFAST is doing to improve collaboration with the states.

See the following [link](#) for more information about the Summer Council Meeting.

## Agency News

**06/04:** EPA Survey Shows \$384 Billion Needed for Drinking Water Infrastructure by 2030; see [link](#).

**06/07:** BLM Extends Public Comment Period on Proposed Hydraulic Fracturing Rule; see [link](#).

**06/07:** ICIWaRM Organizes Session on Rainfall Estimates Using Satellite Data; see [link](#).

**06/07:** NRCS, Landowners Improve Habitat for At-risk Species; see

[link](#).

**06/10:** Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Additional Emergency Watershed Protection Funding to States Affected by Natural Disasters; see [link](#).

**06/10:** Visualizing the May 2013 Moore, Oklahoma, Tornado; see [link](#).

**06/13:** NCDC Releases May 2013 U.S. Climate Report; see [link](#).

**06/13:** BLM, Tribes Continue Dialogue on Hydraulic Fracturing Rule; see [link](#).

**06/13:** USACE Responds to FEMA Mission in Aftermath of Oklahoma Tornadoes; see [link](#).

**06/13:** NCDC Releases 2012 Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters Information; see [link](#).

**06/17:** EPA Report Details How Development Can Impact Public Health, Environment; see [link](#).

**06/18:** NOAA, Partners Predict Possible Record-setting Deadzone for Gulf of Mexico; see [link](#).

**06/18:** Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project OM&R Transfer Contract Negotiations to Begin with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority; see [link](#).

**06/18:** Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline Title Transfer Agreement Negotiations Continue with Reclamation, and the Navajo Nation; see [link](#).

**06/19:** Department of the Interior Hosts Stakeholder Workshop on Mitigation Strategy for Large Infrastructure Projects; see [link](#).

**06/20:** Wyoming to Lead Further Investigation of Water Quality Concerns Outside of Pavillion with Support of EPA; see [link](#).

**06/20:** Final Water Supply Forecast Confirms Dry Outlook for the West; see [link](#).

**06/20:** US Forest Service Awards Nearly \$2.5M for Renewable Energy Projects; see [link](#).

**06/21:** USACE Civil Works and Military Missions, History, Challenges Featured in "Building America"; see [link](#).

**06/21:** Securing the Nation's Future through Water Video; see [link](#).

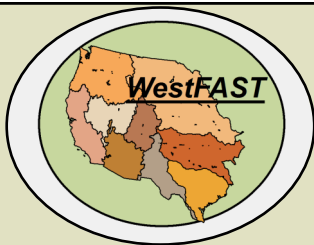
**06/24:** IWR Director Delivers Keynote on Integrated Water Resources Management at Annual Meeting of the North American Network of Basin Organizations (NANBO); see [link](#).

**06/24:** Latest Regional Climate Impacts and Outlooks Reports Released; see [link](#).

**06/25:** Remarks by the President on Climate Change; see [link](#).

## Upcoming WSWC Meetings & Events

- **August 5-7, 2013:** [WSWC and CDWR Workshop on Quantifying Drought Impacts](#); San Diego, California; Doubletree Downtown.
- **August 13-15, 2013:** [Indian Water Rights Settlement Symposium](#); Santa Fe, New Mexico; Hilton Santa Fe at Buffalo Thunder.
- **October 2-4, 2013:** Fall Council Meeting; Deadwood, South Dakota; The Lodge at Deadwood.



WestFAST News is published monthly. To get an Agency Announcement published or to get added to the WestFAST News distribution list contact:

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