

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.



Membership:

Jean Thomas (Chair), Forest Service
jathomas02@fs.fed.us

Becky Fulkerson (Vice Chair),
Reclamation rfulkerson@usbr.gov

John D'Antonio, USACE
John.R.D'Antonio@usace.army.mil

Roger Gorke, EPA
Gorke.roger@epa.gov

Pixie Hamilton, USGS
pahamilt@usgs.gov

Lee Koss, BLM
lkoss@blm.gov

Andrew Hautzinger, FWS
Andrew.Hautzinger@fws.gov

Mike Strobel, NRCS
michael.strobel@por.usda.gov

Roger Pulwarty, NOAA
Roger.pulwarty@noaa.gov

Brad Doorn, NASA
bradley.doorn@nasa.gov

Craig Zamuda, DOE
Craig.Zamuda@Hq.Doe.Gov

Clare Mendelsohn, DOD
clare.mendelsohn@us.af.mil

Eric Stevens, Federal Liaison
ericstevens@swc.utah.gov

WestFAST News

March 2013

USACE Unveils the Federal Support Toolbox

United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) recently announced the availability of a unique on-line water data resource. The Federal Support Toolbox is a dynamic, evolving, and comprehensive "one-stop-shop" water data portal with direct links to valuable databases, innovative programs and initiatives and state-of-the-art models and tools. This website also serves as a leading-edge resource for sharing ideas and water-related issues, best management practices, collaborations and partnerships, and more for the water resources community.

As a centralized internet data portal, the Federal Support Toolbox will allow federal agencies, states, interstate organizations, Tribes, non-governmental agencies and international entities to access and share water resources information for their planning and management. The capabilities that result from sharing information and forming partnerships for joint initiatives have the potential to consolidate efforts and conserve resources.

The Federal Support Toolbox is one of the outcomes of the USACE "Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future" initiative, which assessed national water resource needs from 2008 to 2009. (For more information visit www.building-collaboration-for-water.org.) The initiative involved research and conferences with federal agencies, states, river basin commissions, Tribes, and non-governmental agencies. Regional and national conferences validated the need for a nationwide "one-stop-shop" for water resources information to improve the nation's water resources management and to build capacity among water agencies nationally and internationally through information sharing and alignment of programs.

The Federal Support Toolbox, available at www.watertoolbox.us, will serve as a single point of entry to comprehensive information about water resources programs, initiatives, legislation, policies, regulations, collaborations, partnerships, databases, tools, models,

data, research and development, education, and leadership that is housed on a participating agency's or organization's own server. Participating organizations are signing partnering agreements with USACE in support of this initiative and for quality control of information. Agencies and other organizations that own the water resources data will collaborate with USACE to keep their data and information current.

The Federal Support Toolbox will also provide agencies with a forum to communicate with one another on water and related topics, and to post news and events of interest. Such learning and linking can foster partnerships, enhance capabilities and support critical water needs nationwide and internationally. Participation is voluntary. The ability to post or update information will be restricted to designat-



ed individuals within partner organizations. The general public will be able to read all posted information but will not be able to enter or edit data.

For additional information on the Federal Support Toolbox, please contact Ms. Ada Benavides at Ada.benavides@usace.army.mil.

First Images Released From Newest Earth Observation Satellite

NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) released the first images from the Landsat Data Continuity Mission (LDCM) satellite, which was launched on February 11, 2013. Natural-color images show the intersection of the United States Great Plains and the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains in Wyoming and Colorado. In the images, green coniferous forests in the mountains stretch down to the brown plains with Denver and other cities strung south to north. After its checkout and commissioning phase is complete, LDCM will begin its normal operations



in May. At that time, NASA will hand over control of the satellite to the USGS, which will operate it throughout its planned five-year mission life. See this [link](#) for more information.

Updated Principles and Guidelines for Federal Investments in Water Resources

The Principles and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies (P&G) govern how Federal agencies evaluate proposed water resource development projects. Since 1983, the P&G have provided direction to Federal agencies when evaluating and selecting major water projects, including projects related to navigation, storm resilience, wetland restoration, and flood prevention.

In March 2013, the Executive Branch released updated P&G that included a final set of Principles & Requirements that lays out broad principles to guide water investments, as well as draft Interagency Guidelines for implementing the Principles & Requirements. Developed by Federal agencies and incorporating extensive public comment, the modernized P&G will help accelerate project approvals, reduce costs, and support water infrastructure projects with the greatest economic and community benefits. They will also allow agencies to better consider the full range of long-term economic benefits of protecting communities against future storm damage, promoting recreational opportunities that fuel local business, and supporting other locally driven priorities.

The [draft Guidelines](#) will be available for 60 days of public comment beginning March 27th and will incorporate feedback from the public and stakeholders before being finalized.

Agency News

03/01/2013: Seasonal Climate Assessments and Outlooks for the

Six U.S. Regions; see [link](#).

03/04/2013: NOAA Assumes Full Operational Responsibilities of Environmental Satellite; see [link](#).

03/04/2013: ICI-RAFT Developed to Estimate Frequency and Intensity of Rainfall Events; see [link](#).

03/04/2013: Prepare for Severe Weather, Urge NOAA and FEMA; see [link](#).

03/05/2013: CEQ Releases Handbooks on Improving Efficiency of Federal Environmental Reviews; see [link](#).

03/10/2013: Amplified Greenhouse Effect Shifts North's Growing Seasons; see [link](#).

03/13/2013: Forest Service Management Protects Rural Economies and Communities; see [link](#).

03/13/2013: Approaches and Issues for Financing Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure; see [link](#).

03/14/2013: Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and NACo Renew Public Lands Management Partnership; see [link](#).

03/14/2013: Interior Finalizes Historic Aamodt Water Rights Settlement in New Mexico; see [link](#).

03/15/2013: U.S. EPA Orders NASA to Clean Up Soils Threatening Sensitive Habitat; see [link](#).

03/15/2013: Dry Spring and Summer Forecast for Western States; see [link](#).

03/18/2013: EPA Marks March 18-24 as Fifth Annual Fix a Leak Week/One in Every 10 Homes Has a Leak that is Wasting at Least 90 Gallons of Water per Day; see [link](#).

03/20/2013: Measuring the Flow: The Importance of Streamgages; see [link](#).

03/21/2013: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces \$882.4 Million in User-Generated Funding to State Wildlife Agencies; see [link](#).

03/21/2013: NOAA Predicts Mixed Bag of Drought, Flooding and Warm Weather for Spring; see [link](#).

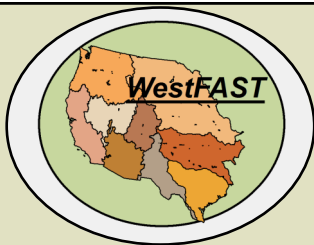
03/25/2013: EPA's Announces Independent Panel to Peer Review Agency's Hydraulic Fracturing Research; see [link](#).

03/26/2013: Forest Service Rule Governing Predecisional Objection Process Published; see [link](#).

03/26/2013: Drought Monitor Update Shows 52% of US in Drought; see [link](#).

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- **April 29-May 1, 2013:** Drought Prediction Workshop, San Diego, California, Doubletree San Diego Downtown.
- **June 24-26, 2013:** Summer Council Meeting; Casper, Wyoming; Hilton Garden Inn.
- **October 2-4, 2013:** Fall Council Meeting; Deadwood, South Dakota; The Lodge at Deadwood.
- **August 13-15, 2013:** Indian Water Rights Settlement Symposium; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Hilton Santa Fe at Buffalo Thunder.



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

Eric Stevens, WestFAST Federal Liaison

Email: ericstevens@wswc.utah.gov

Phone: 801-685-2555

Check out the WestFAST Web Site: <http://www.westernstateswater.org/westfast>