

**Western States Federal Agency Support Team
CY 2010 Work Plan**

We hereby declare that we as WESTFAST partners will collaborate with the Western States Water Council to guide the development of an appropriate action plan for this partnership.

- An excerpt from *Declaration of Cooperation, signed by 9 agencies in 2008*

The Western States Water Council (WSWC) and federal agencies having water resource responsibilities in the West (Bureau of Reclamation, Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) have formalized a collaborative partnership. Representatives from the federal agencies, collectively referred to as “Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) have proposed the following Work Plan which identifies actions which will provide support to the WSWC in implementing *Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: Next Steps (Next Steps.)*

This work plan is organized in three sections:

- I WestFAST Interagency Collaboration and Collaboration with the WSWC;
- II WestFAST Support to WSWC Committees; and
- III WestFAST Activities in Support of the *Next Steps* report.

Section I identifies the crucial role played by WestFAST to foster and support federal interagency collaboration and collaboration between WestFAST and the WSWC. Section II specifically identifies WestFAST support of WSWC’s Committee Work Plans; and Section III continues WestFAST’s work begun during 2009.

I. WestFAST Interagency Collaboration

Work to Date: Nine federal agencies created a dynamic, flexible team that provides the opportunity for interaction initiated by WSWC, individual states, or the federal government, and detailed a Federal Liaison Officer to WSWC. WestFAST members have engaged in on-going discussions within the WestFAST team, with other organizations, between WestFAST and WSWC, and with WSWC member states. In 2009, the WestFAST Liaison facilitated collaboration between WSWC and WestFAST including agency visits (March, 2009), scheduling conference calls on USACE’s *Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future*, facilitating WSWC engagement with advisory committees for EPA, the interagency Climate Change Adaption Working Group, assistance with the National Integrated Drought Information Systems western workshop, and on-going WSWC and federal initiatives.

2010: Develop an interagency, collaborative (i.e., “WestFAST”) template for use by federal, state, or local agencies in other geographic regions, state agencies, or regional groups. **Lead:** Federal Liaison Officer and WestFAST

Ensure inter-agency participation in Reclamation’s Basin Studies Program. **Lead:** Federal Liaison Officer and Reclamation

II. WestFAST Support to WSWC Committees

WestFAST will provide support to the Water Resources, Water Quality, and Legal Committees to implement their 2010 Work Plans. **Lead:** Federal Liaison Officer and WestFAST

Topics include:

1. Water Information and Data Collection and Management
2. Western Water Projects and Program Funding
3. Drought
4. Water Resources Research
5. Water Conservation and Reuse
6. Arid Waters Water Quality Policies and Positions
7. Ag-to-Urban Transfers

III. WestFAST Activities in support of the Next Steps report (Note: All items below were identified in the WestFAST 2009 Work Plan and are incorporated into this Work Plan.)

Climate Change Impacts

A. Objective “32. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration should take the lead in improving forecasts on multiple geographic and temporal scales and conduct additional research in collaboration with water management agencies so that forecasts can be incorporated into reservoir operations.” (*Next Steps, 2008; page VI*)

Work to Date: In 2004, the Western Governors’ Association developed a set of requirements, through a broad-based team of federal and non-federal partners, for a National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS.) To implement the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (PL109-430), the NIDIS has a national-level interagency Executive Council, which oversees an implementation team, comprised of representatives from more than 40 federal and state agencies, academic institutions, and tribal and private entities. A partnership has been developed between NOAA, (Colorado Basin River Forecast Center) and Reclamation to improve ensemble stream flow predictions on Colorado River. This partnership is providing assistance implementing the 2008 Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lakes Powell and Mead. WestFAST assisted to the Council and WGA for the Midwest NIDIS workshop.

2010: WestFAST will assist the Council and WGA with additional NIDIS workshops. **Lead:** Federal Liaison Officer and NOAA

B. Objective “33. The USGS, in cooperation with states, should improve monitoring and data collection to identify and respond to changing regional and local trends, and allow for better early warning systems that (a) focus on critical or vulnerable systems; (b) deliver real-time data; (c) improve data access, storage and retrieval; (d) allow for real-time ‘smart’ analysis; and (e) provide feedback and evaluation.” *(Next Steps, 2008; page VI)*

Work to Date: USGS has been involved in research focused on effects of climate change on wildlife, changes in snowmelt, temperatures in the Colorado River, and groundwater recharge. To better understand the range of climate change programs being conducted by WestFAST agencies and to identify opportunities for developing adaptive management strategies to utilize climate change research, WestFAST conducted an inventory of climate change programs underway in WestFAST agencies

2010: This inventory will be delivered to the Western States Water council in 2010 and will include, but not be limited to, identification of climate research and development programs and programs designed to facilitate information and technology transfer from researchers to on-the-ground managers. **Lead:** USGS and BLM

C. Objective “35. Water managers should take the initiative to clearly communicate their needs for applied science to the climate research community, and must seek opportunities to guide hydroclimate research in directions that will support real-world problem solving.” *(Next Steps, 2008; page VII)*

Work to Date: WestFAST and the Climate Change and Western Water Group (CCAWWG – formed by Reclamation, NOAA, USGS and USACE) met during the Nov, 2009 WIMS symposium. Jeanine Jones serves as the Council’s representative on an advisory committee for this group.

2010: CCAWWG is following through on implementing recommendations from USGS Circular 1331 by currently working to identify data gaps and research that water managers need to improve their adaptive management strategies for climate variability and change. USGS and NOAA will use this strategy document being produced by the Army Corps and Reclamation to guide future research efforts. **Lead:** NOAA, Reclamation, USACE

D. Objective “37. More water storage should be considered, accompanied by an extensive risk and cost-benefit analysis, together with an analysis of the potential for reducing demand and increasing water use efficiency.” *(Next Steps, 2008; page VII)*

Work to Date: WestFAST viewed this objective as a means to increasing water storage through innovative or nontraditional ways and not merely relying on the typical or historical meaning of “storage,” e.g., more dams or reservoirs.

2010: WestFAST will complete and distribute the inventory of agency programs that could provide technical, policy, and or/planning assistance to the States. **Lead:** Forest Service

WATER to MEET FUTURE DEMANDS, Water Planning and Management

A. Objective “8 (c). Ensure there is an accurate assessment of the Nation’s water availability and water demands, with the goal of integrating the information into state water resources planning, recognizing that a truly national assessment must begin at the state and local level with appropriate technical and financial support from the federal government.” (*Next Steps, 2008; page IV*)

Work to Date: Working in collaboration with WSWC, USACE completed the Western States Watershed Study, that provided an opportunity to demonstrate how federal agencies could collaboratively work together to help support regional planning activities of the western states. WSWC has been actively engaged with USACE in “Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future” that will provide an inventory of state water plans, the scope of water resources planning and management, and the opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

2010: Continue to work with WSWC in development of the “federal toolbox” to support state water plans. USGS will work on developing an implementation plan for a National Water Census (water use and availability assessment). The draft implementation plan will be reviewed by the Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable of the Advisory Committee on Water Information (of which the Western States Water Council is a member) for stakeholder input and finalized by September 2010. **Lead:** Federal Liaison Officer and USACE

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS and STRATEGIES, Water and Wastewater Treatment

Objective “20. All levels of government, along with appropriate private sector involvement, should cooperate in the development and implementation of appropriate criteria for prioritizing infrastructure needs, asset management strategies, policies, standards, techniques and technologies.” (*Next Steps, 2008; page V*)

Work to Date: USACE worked with WestFAST members in cooperation with WSWC, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, the Texas Water Development Board, the WestFAST Liaison and others in a Society of American Military Engineers Regional Conference session on “Water Resources and Associated Infrastructure Challenges.”

2010: Identify a pilot project to demonstrate collaborative federal agency support to state water planning. WestFAST members will work collaboratively with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB), the Kansas State Water Office, and others as requested to develop a WestFAST Project Management Plan. Note: Also, see item identified above in “I. WestFAST interagency Collaboration.” **Lead:** Federal Liaison Officer and USACE