

WestFAST News



The Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) is a collaboration between 11 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 resources.

Membership:

Jean Thomas (Chair), USFS
jathomas02@fs.fed.us
 Michael Fallon (Vice Chair), USACE
Michael.p.fallon@usace.army.mil
 Roger Gorke (Chair), US EPA
Gorke.roger@epa.gov
 Pixie Hamilton, USGS
pahamilt@usgs.gov
 Kira Finkler, Reclamation
kfinkler@usbr.gov
 Becky Fulkerson, Reclamation
rfulkerson@usbr.gov
 Robert Boyd, BLM
Robert_boyd@blm.gov
 Heidi Hadley, BLM
Heidi_hadley@blm.gov
 David Cottingham, USFWS
David_Cottingham@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
 Dwane Young, Federal Liaison
dayoung@wswc.utah.gov

WSWC Holds Summer Meeting

Bend, OR—July 27-29, 2011

The WSWC held their Summer Council meeting in Bend, Oregon on July 27-29. During the meeting, the Council adopted two new positions. The first position supports federal research and updating hydro-climate guidance for extreme events. The position encourages the federal government to revise its guidance documents for hydrologic data and methodologies, and it supports the development of an improved observing system to better monitor extreme precipitation events. The position also states the Council's intent to work with NOAA as part of the recently signed WGA-NOAA Memorandum of Understanding.

The second position that was adopted by the council reasserts the importance of state water law and encourages Congress to not pass any act that would affect or interfere in the way the states conduct water or watershed management, the control, use, appropriation, or distribution of water, or to interfere with any interstate compact, decree, or negotiated water settlement.

Following up on discussions at the Spring Council meeting, Weir Labatt (WSWC Chair) led a discussion on a 'Shared Water Vision.' Following a break-out session, the group determined to change the name of the Vision to a 'Western States Water Vision.' The discussion focused on the importance of water; the need to take a comprehensive, collaborative, and integrated approach to water management; the importance of state primacy in water planning and water management; and the importance of achieving a balance between economic and environmental needs for water. The Council plans to continue discussion of this vision at the next Council meeting.

Several federal representatives presented at the meeting. During the Water Resources Committee meeting Ada Benevides (USACE) presented on the 'Federal Toolbox,' which will be designed to be a one-stop shop for water planners to get access to pertinent information. Gary Carter (NOAA) presented on NOAA's Integrated



Water Resources Sciences and Services (IWRSS) tool, which is a NOAA tool meant to bring together science and data to support water management. Marty Ralph (NOAA) presented on innovative NOAA techniques for monitoring and predicting atmospheric rivers which can have significant impact on water availability in California and the western mountains. Mike Strobel (NRCS) gave a presentation on the western water supply outlook and provided insight into the 2010-2011 exceptional snowpack combined with an exceptionally wet and cool spring in the North along with an exceptionally hot and dry winter and spring in the South. Ellen Gilinsky (EPA) provided information to the Water Quality Committee on EPA's plans for addressing Nutrient pollution. Jean Thomas (USFS) provided an update to the Legal Committee on a combined WSWC/WestFAST effort to evaluate state/federal collaboration efforts on Federal non-tribal water needs. Anne Castle, Department of Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science provided an overview of activities that the WSWC may be interested in, including an update on WaterSMART, an update on the Water Census, an update on LandsAT, and a discussion on the Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Jean Thomas (USFS and WestFAST Chair) gave the WestFAST report in combination with Roger Pulwarty (NOAA) who gave a report on NIDIS, and Brad Doorn (NASA) who provided a briefing on some of the NASA capability that can support water resource managers.

Presentations from 166th WSWC meeting will be available at: <http://www.westgov.org/wswc/meetings.html>

Mountain West Water Institute Holds Inaugural Workshop

Salt Lake City, UT—July 18-19, 2011

The Mountain West Water Institute (MWWI), sponsored by the Idaho National Laboratory, hosted its inaugural ‘Waters of the West’ Workshop in Salt Lake City on July 18-19. The meeting brought together scientists, policy makers and water resource managers to help set direction for the MWWI as they look for ways to improve water and energy resource management, address water quality concerns, enable more accurate projections of water availability, increase water-use efficiency, and enhance understanding of climate change impacts and potential mitigation/adaptation strategies on water availability and energy production in the Mountain West region.

Presentations were given by several University and Federal representatives. Tony Willardson (Executive Director for WSWC) addressed the group and provided insight into state water research and policy needs. Tom Iseman (WGA) presented on State/Federal water-energy collaboration. Representatives from several of the western water research institutes also attended and provided insight into research efforts that are currently underway to help support water management. During the Workshop, INL announced availability of water research funding. To learn more about MWWI see: www.mwwi.org.

Western Governors’ Association Adopts Policies Related to Water Management

Coeur d’Alene, ID—June 29-30, 2011

At its 2011 annual meeting, the WGA adopted two new positions related to water management. WGA’s ‘[Water Resource Management in the West](#)’ policy outlines several key principles and needs (including information and data needs) to effectively manage water in the West. It also recognizes the importance of intergovernmental collaboration, with specific recognition of the importance of WestFAST. WGA’s ‘[Water Quality in the West](#)’ position outlines the importance of clean water to the west, and stresses the importance of federal grant programs (including the State Revolving Fund) to help the states in implementing Federal and State clean water policies. To see all the current WGA policies see: <http://www.westgov.org/policies>.

Agency Announcements

July 2011: WSWC releases report: “Water Reuse in the West: State Programs and Institutional Issues”, see [report](#).

July 7, 2011: U.S. Forest Service releases report on sustainable forests, see [news release](#).

July 12-13, 2011: Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) held annual meeting in Reston, VA, see [agenda and presentations](#).

July 18, 2011: NOAA, U.S. DOE, and private partners launch project to reduce the cost of energy, including wind energy, see [news release](#).

July 26, 2011: Reclamation announces recipients of the 2011 WaterSMART grants, see [news release](#).

July 27, 2011: Draft Nevada National Security Site EIS Statement released, see [news release](#).

July 31, 2011: Comment period closes on Clean Water Act Jurisdiction “Waters of the U.S.” Guidance. EPA and USACE received over 3,600 comments, more information on the guidance can be found at: <http://water.epa.gov/lawsregs/guidance/wetlands/CWAwaters.cfm>. Comments are available at www.regulations.gov or click [here](#).

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- **August 23-25, 2011:** Native American Rights Fund (NARF)/WSWC [Indian Water Rights Symposium](#), Billings, Montana
- **October 5-7, 2011:** Fall WSWC meeting, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- **October 12-13, 2011:** Remote Sensing of Evapotranspiration Applications in the Western U.S., Boise, Idaho
- **March 14-16, 2012:** Spring WSWC meeting, Washington, DC
- **April 30-May 4, 2012:** [National Monitoring Conference—Water: One Shared Effort—Common Future](#), Portland, Oregon



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

Dwane Young, WestFAST Federal Liaison

Email: dayoung@wswc.utah.gov

Phone: 801-685-2555

Check out the WestFAST Web Site: <http://www.westgov.org/wswc/WestFAST.htm>