



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 in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water resources.

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# WestFAST News

May 2011

## USGS, USACE, and NOAA Sign MOU on Water Resource Planning

May 11, 2011

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to agree to work together to address water resource challenges.

The MOU was signed by Marcia McNutt (USGS), Dr. Jane Lubchenco (NOAA), and Terrance (Rock) Salt (USACE) in Washington, D.C.

The MOU will help the three agencies coordinate their efforts in collecting and sharing water information, as well as identifying information needs. This information will allow for better forecasts and planning, and will help the Nation better meet the water resource needs for drinking water, industrial use, and ecosystems. Additionally, the MOU outlines the creation of a one-stop portal where managers can access water resource information.

The MOU also sets up opportunities for the three agencies to collaborate in developing project plans, exchanging technical information, conducting joint studies, engaging in research and development activities of mutual interest, and conducting joint education and communication activities. The MOU also promotes staff exchanges via work details that will promote further integration between the three agencies.

The partnership will address the goals of the Integrated Water Resources Science and Services (IWRSS) initiative and the objective of the Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future initiative to build a Federal Support Toolbox for Integrated Water Resources Management. The MOU also sets the framework for additional federal agency participation.

For more information see: <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=2797>



## DOE Surpasses Cleanup Target Ahead of Schedule

May 12, 2011

Thanks in part to a \$6 Billion investment through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, the U.S. Department of Energy has reduced its overall clean-up footprint by 45% (from 931 square miles to 516 square miles). This puts DOE approximately 5 months ahead of the schedule set by the Obama administration. For more information see: <http://www.energy.gov/news/10325.htm>

Part of that clean-up includes restoring groundwater at the Hanford site in Richland, Washington. DOE and their contractors have drilled 305 wells allowing them to treat as much as 150 million gallons of contaminated groundwater a month by as early as 2012. This is an increase from a prior treatment capacity of 30 million gallons a month in 2009.

DOE is responsible for clean-up activities at the Hanford site in cooperation with the Washington Department of Ecology, and U.S. EPA. The Hanford site was used for the production of plutonium from 1943-1987. The resultant liquid and solid waste from that production has contaminated the land and the groundwater.

The Department of Energy's goal is to restore groundwater to its highest beneficial use, either drinking water standards or stricter aquatic standards near the Columbia River, which flows through the site.

More information on the Hanford site can be found at: <http://www.hanford.gov/>

## USFWS Releases Work Plan for Improving ESA Implementation

May 11, 2011

In an effort to improve implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has submitted to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia a listing work plan that will enable the agency to systematically, over a period of six years, review and address the needs of more than 250 species listed on the 2010 Candidate Notice of Review, to determine if they should be added to the Federal Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

This work plan is part of a settlement agreement with WildEarth Guardians in which the USFWS would make initial petition findings for over 600 species and issue proposed listing rules or not warranted findings for at least 251 species by 2017 and WildEarth Guardians agrees to not file any further lawsuit regarding the statutory requirements that USFWS make a listing decision on these candidate species for the period of the agreement. For more information on the work plan or the agreement see: [http://www.fws.gov/angered/improving\\_ESA/listing\\_workplan.html](http://www.fws.gov/angered/improving_ESA/listing_workplan.html).

## USFS Closes Comment Period on Forest Planning Rule

May 16, 2011

The U.S. Forest Service received over 150,000 comments on their proposed forest planning rule. The comment period was open from February 10, 2011 to May 16, 2011.

Comments were received from a wide range of individuals, groups and organizations as well as state, county, Tribal and federal governments. The Forest Service will now review and analyze these comments to help develop the final rule and final environmental impact statement. Publication of the final rule is anticipated in late 2011.

For more information on the proposed rule see: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>

To see the comments received on the proposed rule see: <http://contentanalysisgroup.com/fsrd/>

## Agency Announcements

**May 5, 2011:** Kathryn Sullivan Confirmed by Senate as Deputy Administrator for NOAA, see: [http://www.noanews.noaa.gov/stories2011/20110504\\_sullivan.html](http://www.noanews.noaa.gov/stories2011/20110504_sullivan.html)

**May 9, 2011:** Reclamation Provides Funding for Water Recycling and Reuse Studies (Title XVI) in Three Western States, see: <http://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/newsrelease/detail.cfm?RecordID=36184>

**May 16, 2011:** EPA Releases Drinking Water Violations Reporting System, see: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/5116771C5AE44EDF852578920063DBBF>

**May 19, 2011:** Reclamation Announces 54 New Projects to Receive \$24 Million in WaterSMART Grants, Saving Enough Water for 400,000 People, see: <http://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/newsrelease/detail.cfm?RecordID=36305>

**May 31, 2011:** EPA Seeks Public Comment on the Draft National Coastal Condition Report IV, see: [http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail:D=EPA\\_FRDOC\\_0001-10492](http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail:D=EPA_FRDOC_0001-10492)

**May 2011:** USFWS and NOAA Launch Effort to Improve Implementation of the Endangered Species Act, see: [http://www.fws.gov/angered/improving\\_ESA/improving\\_ESA.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/angered/improving_ESA/improving_ESA.pdf)

## Upcoming Meetings/Events

- **June 29-July 1, 2011:** [Summer Western Governors' Association Meeting](#), Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
- **July 18-19, 2011:** [Mountain West Water Institute Meeting](#), Salt Lake City, UT
- **July 27-29, 2011:** [Summer WSWC meeting](#), Bend, Oregon
- **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
- **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:

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