

WestFAST Plans and Future Directions

Western States Water Council,
Water Resources Committee
Meeting
Tulsa, Oklahoma – April 16, 2015

Over-Arching Objectives of WestFAST Activity

- To support the WSWC and the WGA through coordinating federal efforts regarding water resources
- To promote, encourage, facilitate, and improve coordination among federal agencies, and between states and federal agencies

Sources of Direction

- WestFAST will continue work in the general themes of the six focus areas from the *Next Steps Report*
- And in support of collaborative efforts outlined in more recent WGA resolutions and WSWC committee work plans
- WestFAST will engage directly with WSWC and their committees

Key task groups in the WestFAST Work Plan

- Conducting case studies of most efficient and productive collaboration practices between state and federal agencies
- Better enabling the exchange of federal and state water data
- Enhancing the visibility of WestFAST and WestFAST member agency water-resource programs that support WSWC resource management goals

Best Practices in Collaboration

WestFAST agencies support the WSWC goal of developing “*integrated approaches and greater partnerships among state, local and federal agencies*” to find “*optimal solutions*” to the increasing challenges associated with water management in the west (quotes from *Next Steps Report*). This is also a priority objective of the WSWC Chair.

In 2015-16, WestFAST will study cases of successful collaborative federal-state activities and evaluate for common attributes supporting productive and efficient engagement.

What's the scope of this review?

- **Expectations and Obstacles**
 - Knowledge and understanding of proactive collaboration opportunities
 - Knowledge and understanding of rules and limitations to collaboration
 - Understanding of who to talk to and how to talk to them?
 - Communication opportunities and limitations
- **Best Practices – What are they and understanding the benefits**
- **How do best practices become common practices**

- Better enabling the exchange of federal and state water data.

- ◉ National Water Census
- ◉ Open Water Data Initiative
- ◉ Drought

Enhancing the Visibility of WestFAST and WestFAST Agency Programs

- WestFAST has begun sponsoring regular “Informational Meetings”, held mainly via webinar, on topics of interest to WestFAST member agencies and other water-resource managers, scientists, and stake holders.
- Participate in cross-agency groups with objective and activities intersecting with WestFAST goals.
- Enhance lines of communication with WSWC committees and committee leadership

Draft WSWC Water Resources Committee Work Plan – Water Availability

- *The Council will continue working with member states, USGS and various federal agencies to gather and disseminate water resources data using WaDE and other resources. The Council will continue to participate with USGS efforts to advance a National Water Assessment. (Draft Water Resources Committee Work Plan 2014/15)*
- WestFAST will aid in coordination of National Water Census programs and actions with WSWC priorities and M3.
 - Provide updates on Water Census progress, products, and plans, and begin structured discussion and planning that improve data exchange (Fed-State) for Census components beyond WaDE
 - WestFAST Facilitate the objectives (through outreach and coordination) of integrating Water Census data and products into state water resources planning
 - Brief WSWC on the results and data from completed Water Census Geographic Focus Area Studies.
 - Engage WSWC and its Committee in planning and coordination of new Focus Area Studies in the west - the Rio Grande River Basin, and the Red River Basin.

Draft WestFAST Plan

- WestFAST will aid in coordination of National Water Census programs and actions with WSWC priorities and M3
 - Provide updates on Water Census progress, products, and plans, and begin structured discussion and planning that improve data exchange (Fed-State) for Census components beyond WaDE
 - Facilitate the objectives (through outreach and coordination) of integrating Water Census data and products into state water resources planning
 - Brief WSWC on the results and data from completed Water Census Geographic Focus Area Studies and engage them in coordination of new Focus Area Studies in the west - the Rio Grande River Basin, and the Red River Basin.

Draft WSWC Water Resources Committee Work Plan - Data

- *Data collection, management, distribution and visualization are critical for sound decisionmaking... The Council, in an attempt to better communicate the critical need for water data, will develop a “M3 Initiative,” revising and renewing its message to better bring attention to water data needs and develop strategies to meet those needs... Part of this effort will be to highlight critical measuring and monitoring “tools,” for any water management “toolbox,” and communicating their value for enhancing our ability to wisely manage water resources. (Draft Water Resources Committee Work Plan 2014/2015)*
- *The Council will consider development of an appropriate groundwater component for its M3 Initiative, as well as working collaboratively with other state and federal interests and non-governmental organizations. The Council will also promote the use of existing state information on groundwater resources. (Draft Water Resources Committee Work Plan 2014/2015)*

Draft WSWC Water Resources Committee Work Plan -Infrastructure

- WestFAST will assist WSWC in their continued development of the M3 initiative including providing information water availability in federal data bases related to priority state information needs, ongoing programs that are collecting defined priority hydrologic data, and federal assessments of data gaps. WestFAST will consult with WSWC on the objectives and potential scope of a groundwater component to the WSWC M3 initiative.