

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.

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WestFAST News

August 2014

Welcome to the Incoming Federal Liaison for WestFAST

WestFAST welcomes Pat Lambert as the incoming Federal Liaison.

Patrick is a Hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey and the Director of the USGS Utah Water Science Center. Pat's academic background includes a Bachelors of Science degree in Geophysics from the University of Utah and post-graduate study in hydrogeology at the University of Utah and Boise State University. He has been involved in USGS science as a principal investigator or science program manager since 1985. As a principal investigator, his work has focused on the development of conceptual and computer models of hydrologic systems including the transport of chemical contaminants in groundwater, and groundwater--surface water interaction. Since 1996 he has led and managed USGS science programs and staffs in Idaho, Nevada, and Utah Water Science Centers. During that time he has led numerous technical teams of varied disciplines working on significant and broad-scope USGS programs including local National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Units and focused studies of the Department of Interior's WaterSmart program; and has represented the organization to key leaders, working with groups within and outside of the organization, developing programs and partnerships to solve critical water-resource problems.

WGA Sends Letter to EPA and USACE Regarding Clean Water Act Rule

On August 27, Western Governors' Association (WGA) Chair Brian Sandoval (R-NV) (and Vice-Chair John Kitzhaber (D-OR)) wrote the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, asking the agencies to extend the public comment period for their proposed Clean Water Act (CWA) jurisdiction rule by an additional 89 days. "Western Governors originally requested a 180-day extension of the comment period," the letter said. "While we appreciate the 91-day extension of the comment period announced on June 9, the

time frame remains insufficient for states to formulate thorough and thoughtful commentary on the rule's extensive impacts, effects and implications."

The letter also references newly released national and state maps from EPA that classify streams, water bodies, and wetlands within each state as perennial, intermittent, "canal/ditch," lake/pond/reservoir, swamp/marsh, playa, wash, or unclassified. EPA released the maps following a hearing last month before the House Science, Space and Technology Committee in which EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe confirmed the maps' existence and agreed to release them in response to questions from the Committee. "[O]ur states need more time to review the streams and water bodies and wetlands maps recently released by [EPA]," the letter said. "The additional extension of the comment period will provide states with adequate time to review these resources." To read the letter, see this [link](#).

WestFAST Anniversary— Looking Back at the Roots

Rarely does a great undertaking spring fully developed from the minds of its creators. It generally takes shape through a process of discussion and refinement. Such was the beginning of the Western States Federal Agency Support Team ("WestFAST"), a bold experiment to encourage collaboration between various states and federal agencies. No one really remembers exactly when – and under exactly what circumstances – the idea for WestFAST leapt into the minds of state and federal officials. At least three individuals may have independently developing the concept within state and federal agencies (e.g. USACE). Although the minutes from the Western States Water Council reflect discussion about this concept during 2004, there is no definitive record of who should receive the credit. However, Tony Willardson (WSWC Executive Director) credits former WSWC Executive Director Craig Bell with the idea.

Regarding the formation of WestFAST, Jonne Hower (Federal Liaison, 2008 to 2010) recalled: "I remember Craig, who passed away unexpectedly in the summer of 2008, joining a WestFAST meeting to thank us for our service and commitment to collaboration. We were in a small, over-heated conference room, at the



end of a long week of meetings in Washington, DC. Craig encouraged us to persevere; he inspired us with his perspective. And, he humbled us as he looked at each of us and quietly observed that WestFAST would be remembered as a group that helped change the history of water management in the West during the first part of the 21st century.”

Federal News

08/01: EPA Hosts a Municipal Wet Weather Stormwater Conference with the International Erosion Control Association; see [link](#).

08/01: Service Proposes Liberal Waterfowl Hunting Season Frameworks; see [link](#).

08/04: NOAA-EPA-Supported Scientists Find Average but Large Gulf Dead Zone; see [link](#).

08/04: New USDA Conservation Partnership Program Receives Nearly 600 Initial Proposals; see [link](#).

08/06: U.S. Forest Service Will Award \$14 Million for Working Forests; see [link](#).

08/06: Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters; see [link](#).

08/07: USDA Partners with States, Tribes to Improve Public Access on Private Lands; see [link](#).

08/08: PacificCorp Agrees to Reservoir Drawdown to Lessen Impacts of Water Shortage in Reclamation’s Klamath Project; see [link](#).

08/08: Secretary Jewell Announces Completion of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, First Urban Refuge in Southwest; see [link](#).

08/11: Nine Desalination and Water Purification Research Projects and Pilot Studies Receive \$1.4 million from the Bureau of Reclamation; see [link](#).

08/11: USGS Science at Ecological Society of America’s Conference: From Climate Change to Fire, Drought, and Wind Energy; see [link](#).

08/12: Service Determines Wolverine Does Not Warrant Protection Under Endangered Species Act; see [link](#).

08/12: NOAA Economic Study Shows Marine Debris Costs California Residents Millions of Dollars; see [link](#).

08/12: USDA Announces Selection of Advisory Committee Members to Help Guide Management of Public Forests and Grasslands; see [link](#).

08/13: Arizona’s Santa Cruz River Chronicled in New Environmental History; see [link](#).

08/13: 2015 Lake Powell Water Release to Lake Mead Will Increase; see [link](#).

08/13: Reclamation Provides \$779,200 for Two Emergency Drought Projects; see [link](#).

08/13: Secretary Jewell Announces Additional \$1 Million to Fund Urban Engagement Efforts at Southern California Wildlife Refuges; see [link](#).

08/14: U.S. EPA Settles Case over Destruction of Rare Central Valley Wetlands—Agreement Will Preserve Unique California Habitat; see [link](#).

08/14: NASA to Investigate Climate Impacts of Arctic Sea Ice Loss; see [link](#).

08/15: Procedures to Evaluate Sea Level Change: Impacts, Responses and Adaptation; see [link](#).

08/19: U.S. Drought Monitor Update for August 19, 2014; see [link](#).

08/19: USACE IWR-ICIWaRM Participates in the Annual Meeting of the North American Network of Basin Organizations (NANBO); see [link](#).

08/20: Secretary Jewell Issues Secretarial Order Affirming American Indian Trust Responsibilities; see [link](#).

08/21: Six Organizations to Establish or Expand Watershed Activities Using Key Funding Assistance from Reclamation; see [link](#).

08/22: Yakima Project "Flip-Flop" Operation Underway; see [link](#).

08/22: NASA Picks Top Earth Data Challenge Ideas, Opens Call for Climate Apps; see [link](#).

08/22: Waterborne Commerce Monthly Indicators Available to Public; see [link](#).

08/26: U.S. Drought Monitor Update for August 26, 2014; see [link](#).

08/27: Federal Land Purchase Secures Recreation and Wildlife Habitat in Montana’s Crown of the Continent; see [link](#).

08/27: Settlement Will Result in Completion of Nationwide ESA Consultations on Effects of Five Pesticides on Threatened and Endangered Species; see [link](#).

08/27: Interior, USDA Partnership Protects and Restores Important Central Arizona Watershed; see [link](#).

08/28: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Expands Urban Conservation Program; see [link](#).

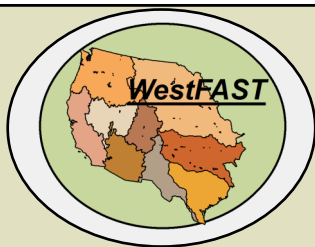
State News

08/21: 63 Trillion Gallons of Groundwater Lost in Drought, Study Finds; see [link](#).

08/25: Drought Update: Lake Mead Getting a Boost; Monsoon Rain Doesn't Fill Utah Reservoirs; California to Vote On Water Bond; see [link](#).

Upcoming WSWC Meetings & Events

- **August 25-27, 2014:** [Remote Sensing Applications Workshop](#), Pasadena, California (Sheraton Pasadena Hotel).
- **October 7-10, 2014:** WSWC Fall Council Meeting, Scottsdale, Arizona (Talking Stick Resort).



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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