

**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

February 2014

## DoD, Idaho Collaborate Proactively to Resolve Federal Water Issues

The state of Idaho is working with the Department of Defense to acquire some long-term water rights for Mountain Home Air Force Base. This effort, led by Led by Gary Spackman who is head of the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), involves \$4 million in state funding to acquire some priority senior surface water rights (from 1963 and 1965), that would be “banked” until the base needs them in about three decades from now.

Although the base doesn't need any water right now, anticipated growth in the area and a declining aquifer mean the base will need additional water rights in the future.

Recently, the base commissioned the Army Corps of Engineers to study its long-term water needs. The study concluded that a water shortage could develop about 30 years from now. It also indicated that \$40 to \$50 million in infrastructure improvements—pumps, pipelines and filtration systems—would be needed to utilize those water rights.

Because of the importance of the base, Idaho officials wanted it to have long-term rights to help secure the base's future. State and local officials began to explore the possibility of the state acquiring the rights. “I told (the state water board) that they need to step up to this responsibility,” Spackman said. “If we go through another BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure process), and they say we don't have enough water rights to justify keeping the base long term, we'd have failed in our responsibility.”

Thus, at the recommendation of the IDWR board and local officials, Gov. Otter set aside \$4 million to acquire the water rights for eventual use by the base, with some restrictions, so the rights won't be lost. While held in the state's name, they will be dedicated for future use by the base.

See the Mountain Home News article, “State Seeks Water for Base” from Wednesday, 29 January 2014; follow this [link](#) for more information.

## Idaho Uses Adjudications to Preemptively Defend Against Out-of-State Water Claims

Idaho Water Resource Board chairman Roger Chase referred to predictions that work is scheduled to wrap up before the end of 2014 at southern Idaho's water rights court, leaving only the North Idaho cases for adjudication.

Chairman Chase further explained why North Idaho will shortly become the state's hotbed for water rights adjudication cases: “People often ask us, ‘Why do we have problems in North Idaho? Why are you worried about water in North Idaho?’ Well, the reason we're worried about water in North Idaho, number one, in my mind, is because the states of Washington and Oregon would love to have that water to help them,” Chase noted.

See this [link](#) for more information, “Water Rights Focus Set to Shift North.”

## WestFAST Prepares for DC Roundtable

Various speakers from WestFAST agencies are being invited to participate in the upcoming WSWC-ICWP Roundtable Meetings in Washington DC during the week of 1-4 April 2014.

On Tuesday, April 1, there will be a Water Planning Conference, featuring an overview of the state and interstate water plans, the progress that water agencies are making with help from federal and private sector experts. The Roundtable events on April 2, 2013 will feature extended, informal discussion of water program priorities and policy opportunities with Administration leadership from the principal agencies that have water responsibilities, and with key Congressional committee experts. On Thursday, April 3, the WSWC will hold Committee meetings (Water Resources, Water Quality, and Legal). These discussions will lead to the identification of highest-value federal functions and ideas for engaging new sources of implementation capacity and funding. That same day, ICWP Committees will meet and host a discussion with USGS and NOAA/NWS leaders and with

many state, interstate and tribal water community experts to examine options for assuring strong water data and science programs in a shrinking budget. See these [WSWC](#) and [ICWP](#) links for more information.

## Federal News

**02/03:** Pre-Proposals Sought for Desalination and Water Purification Research Grant Opportunity; see [link](#).  
**02/03:** Reclamation Announces Funding for Bay-Delta Restoration Program: CALFED Water Use Efficiency Grants; see [link](#).  
**02/04:** Oregon Chub Proposed as First Fish to be Removed from Endangered Species List Due to Recovery; see [link](#).  
**02/04:** EPA Recognizes Seven Communities for Smart Growth Achievement; see [link](#).  
**02/04:** U.S. Drought Monitor Update for February 4, 2014; see [link](#).  
**02/04:** Product Update: Climate Data Online 3.1; see [link](#).  
**02/05:** Federal Agencies and State of California Coordinating Response to Drought; see [link](#).  
**02/05:** Federal Agencies Collaborate to Fund Projects for Improved Agricultural Water Use Efficiencies in Drought-Stricken Areas of California; see [link](#).  
**02/05:** EPA Launches WaterSense H2Otel Challenge to Encourage Water Savings; see [link](#).  
**02/05:** Senior Obama Administration Officials to Join Governor Brown, Mayor Garcetti, Other Leaders in L.A. for Climate Task Force Meeting; see [link](#).  
**02/06:** Publicly Available Tool Reports On Different Types of Pollution; see [link](#).  
**02/06:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Sandia National Laboratories Issue Upper Rio Grande Impact Assessment Report; see [link](#).  
**02/06:** NRCS and Forest Service Partner to Improve Forest Health; see [link](#).  
**02/07:** Energy Department Announces Funding to Improve the Resiliency of the Electric Grid; see [link](#).  
**02/07:** Annual EPA Enforcement Results Highlight Focus on Major Environmental Violations; see [link](#).  
**02/07:** Service Reopens Comment Period on Wolf Proposal; see [link](#).  
**02/07:** U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Discuss Collaborative Efforts at Joint Meeting; see [link](#).  
**02/07:** California Drought (Imagery); see [link](#).  
**02/07:** Energy Department Announces Funding to Improve the Resiliency of the Electric Grid; see [link](#).  
**02/07:** Service Reopens Comment Period on Wolf Proposal; see [link](#).  
**02/11:** EPA Revises Permitting Guidance for Using Diesel Fuel in Oil and Gas Hydraulic Fracturing; see [link](#).  
**02/11:** EPA Administrator Reaffirms Commitment to Environmen-

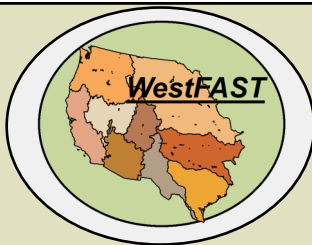
tal Justice on 20th Anniversary of Executive Order; see [link](#).  
**02/14:** February Forecast: Limited Water Supply in Westernmost States; see [link](#).  
**02/14:** Obama Administration Announces Additional Assistance to Californians Impacted by Drought; see [link](#).  
**02/18:** EPA Protects Wetlands in Calif. and Ariz. with \$1.5 Million in Grants; see [link](#).  
**02/20:** Reclamation, State of California Announce Negotiations with Cross Valley Contractors for Conveyance Service; see [link](#).  
**02/20:** Interior Department Appoints 17 Members to National Geospatial Advisory Committee; see [link](#).  
**02/24:** Service Requests Public Comment on Managing Oil and Gas Development on National Wildlife Refuge System Lands; see [link](#).  
**02/25:** NASA Responds to California's Evolving Drought; see [link](#).  
**02/25:** U.S. Drought Monitor Update for February 25, 2014; see [link](#).  
**02/25:** Agriculture Secretary Announces \$3 Million for a New Program to Improve Pollinator Health; see [link](#).  
**02/27:** EPA Improves U.S.—Mexico Border with Environmental Projects; More Than \$720,000 for Improving Air Monitoring, Expanding Waste Collection, Improving Water Quality and Other Priorities; see [link](#).  
**02/27:** NASA and JAXA Launch New Satellite to Measure Global Rain and Snow; see [link](#).  
**02/27:** Secretary Jewell Applauds Confirmation of Mike Connor as Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior; see [link](#).

## State News

**02/04:** Farm Bill Delivers Wins for Western Governors, from PILT Funding to Forest Management; see [link](#).  
**02/10:** Western Governors Salute House, Senate Reauthorization of NIDIS to Battle Drought; see [link](#).  
**02/12:** WGA News: Drones in Nevada, Pipeline in Alaska, Sage-grouse in Colorado and More; see [link](#).  
**02/18:** Western Governors Urge Federal Cooperation on Invasive Species Plan; see [link](#).  
**02/20:** California a Reminder the Western Region is Battling Drought; see [link](#).  
**02/26:** Western Governors Urge Support of "Fire-borrowing" Bill Proposed in Senate, House; see [link](#).

## Upcoming WSWC Meetings & Events

- **April 1-4, 2014:** [WSWC Spring Council Meeting and DC Roundtable](#), Washington DC (Crystal Gateway Marriott).
- **July 14-18, 2014:** [WSWC Summer Council Meeting](#), Helena, Montana (Holiday Inn Downtown).



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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