

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

July 2014

WSWC Summer Council Meetings in Helena

The WSWC held its Summer Council Meetings July 15-18 at the Holiday Inn Conference Center Downtown in Helena, Montana.

At the Water Resources Committee Meeting, Mike Norris, USGS National Streamflow Information Program Coordinator, discussed the need to have regional assessments by expert teams to define National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) regional assessments and priorities for the 4,700 USGS streamgages around the United States. Also, during the Water Resources Committee Meeting, Doug Kluck (NOAA Central Regional Climate Services Director) discussed the Proposal for a Missouri River Basin Interagency Expanded Plains Snow and Soil Condition Network, explaining that the goal of the proposal is to present a framework for the establishment of an interagency, usable and sustainable network that will enhance the forecasting of runoff and act as an indicator for early warning.

During the Water Quality Committee Meeting, Peter Nichols, Special Assistant Attorney General for the States of Colorado and New Mexico, discussed the implications of the recent S.D.N.Y. Water Transfers Decision. He explained that more than 60 million residents in the arid west rely on water transfers daily; every major municipality relies on transfers for some water. He said that it may be economically, technically, and environmentally impossible to meet NPDES requirements for all water transfers. He concluded by saying that a critical legal issue for resolving such issues is the continuation of traditional federal deference to the states' water law and water rights.

During the Legal Committee meeting, Alf Brandt, Executive Director of the Dividing the Waters Initiative at the National Judicial College, discussed the relevance and importance of preserving the Dividing the Waters Initiative. There are growing numbers of water conflicts in the West with newly emerging issues. There are more new judges in water courts with limited experience in civil-water law. There is increased dependence on foundation and private funding with dwindling foundation interest in judicial education. This creates an opportunity for the

WSWC and its members to support and promote continued judicial education on water-related issues in the West.

At the "Full Council" Meeting, John Tubbs, Director of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, spoke about the economic connection of the DNRC in the State of Montana.

Also, the WSWC and WestFAST sponsored a pre-meeting workshop on Federal Non-Tribal Water Rights Claims. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together state and federal officials to discuss ways states and federal agencies can improve the process used to resolve federal non-tribal water rights claims, including the possible development of a clearinghouse of relevant information that states and federal agencies can use when working to address these claims. Participants addressed: (1) water issues associated with general stream adjudications; (2) water issues associated with permitted activities on federal land; and (3) ways to accommodate federal water needs within state legal frameworks.

Federal News

07/01: U.S. Drought Monitor Update for July 1, 2014; see [link](#).

07/01: USACE Commander Urges U.S. Infrastructure Improvement; see [link](#).

07/01: Report Shows Declining Trend in Prairie Pothole Wetlands; see [link](#).

07/01: Congress Authorizes Eight Jacksonville District Projects; see [link](#).

07/01: Interior Transfers Nearly \$3 Million from Land Buy-Back Program to Cobell Education Scholarship Fund; see [link](#).

07/02: North American Duck Populations Remain Strong, Wetland Pond Conditions Good, According to 2014 Duck Survey; see [link](#).

07/02: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Trail Designated as a National Recreation Trail; see [link](#).

07/03: USACE IWR – ICIWaRM Supports U.S. at International Hydrological Programme's 21st Session of the Intergovernmental Council; see [link](#).



07/07: USGS Release: Large Rivers in U.S. are Becoming Less Acidic; see [link](#).

07/07: EPA Provides Tool to Help Communities Become More Flood Resilient /Smart Growth Approaches Can Help Communities Prepare For And Recover From Disaster; see [link](#).

07/08: Lake Mead Levels to Drop to Historic Lows; see [link](#).

07/08: Secretary Jewell Announces \$43 Million to States for Parks, Outdoor Recreation through Land Water Conservation Fund; see [link](#).

07/09: EPA Awards over \$144,000 to New Mexico to Reduce Water Pollution; see [link](#).

07/10: New Longwave Radiation Climate Record; see [link](#).

07/15: Service Awards \$16.6 Million in Grants to Support Recreational Boating and Clean Water in 21 States; see [link](#).

07/16: EPA Administrator McCarthy to Attend Commission on Environmental Cooperation; see [link](#).

07/16: Secretary Jewell Announces New Tribal Climate Resilience Program; see [link](#).

07/17: EPA Awarding \$2.1 Million to Revitalize Urban Waters; see [link](#).

07/17: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Provides \$5.6 Million in Grants to 12 States for Conservation Projects; see [link](#).

07/17: New Policy Proposed to Benefit At-Risk Wildlife, Provide Credits to Landowners Taking Voluntary Conservation Actions; see [link](#).

07/17: USGS Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Water Resources Research Act; see [link](#).

07/17: What's the Deal with 3DEP?; see [link](#).

07/18: Bureau of Land Management Fire Program to Focus on Sage-Grouse Conservation; see [link](#).

07/22: Reclamation and Partners Release New Hydrologic Projections for Contiguous United States; see [link](#).

07/24: EPA Kicks Off Third-Annual Campus RainWorks Challenge to Develop Innovative Approaches to Stormwater Management; see

[link](#).

07/24: Satellite Study Reveals Parched U.S. West Using Up Underground Water; see [link](#).

07/24: Deputy Secretary Connor Announces Additional Funding for Colorado Projects Designed to Reduce Risk to Local Water Supplies from Wildland Fires; see [link](#).

07/25: Colorado Projects to Help Reduce Risk to Water Supplies from Wildland Fires; see [link](#).

07/28: Historic Clean Water Act Settlement Will Prevent Millions of Gallons of Sewage Discharges into San Francisco Bay; see [link](#).

07/28: Streamflow Increasing in Eastern Missouri River Basin, Decreasing Elsewhere; see [link](#).

07/29: U.S. Drought Monitor Update for July 29, 2014; see [link](#).

07/30: EPA Awards Oklahoma \$1.3 Million to Reduce Water Contamination Risk in Underground Tanks; see [link](#).

07/30: NASA Selects Instruments to Track Climate Impact on Vegetation; see [link](#).

07/30: Slowing the Spread of New Invasives; see [link](#).

07/31: U.S. Department of the Interior and Western Municipal Water Suppliers Reach Landmark Collaborative Agreement; see [link](#).

State News

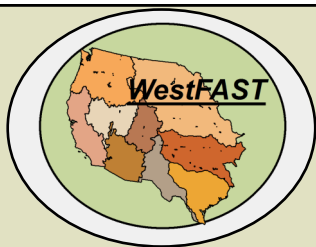
07/03: Forest Service 'Groundwater Directive' Prompts Questions from Western Governors on State Authority, Science; see [link](#).

07/15: California Drought Study Shows Statewide Cost of \$2.2 Billion, Loss of 17,100 Agricultural Jobs; see [link](#).

07/15: Western Governors support 'Protecting Lakes Against Quagga Act'; 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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