



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

June 2011

Western Governor's Association and NOAA sign MOU on Climate Services

June 30, 2011

The Western Governor's Association (WGA) and NOAA signed an agreement that will 'improve the development, coordination and dissemination of climate information to support the adaptation priorities and resource management decisions of WGA members.'

Projects undertaken under the MOU will focus on disaster risk reduction from extreme events and better science and information to manage coastal, estuarine, and marine ecosystems.

"This agreement will assist Western state resource managers, agencies and businesses who manage or are affected by natural disasters and weather variability," said WGA Chairman, Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter.

WGA and NOAA will also assist one-another on other federal efforts that are also addressing climate information needs, services and adaptation strategies. The two parties will also work together to identify other key vulnerabilities or sectors that are affected by climate, such as forestry, agriculture, wildlife, biodiversity, and air quality. They will consider how to meet information needs at the appropriate scales, and they will identify options to increase capacity to conduct planning and implement strategies to address these issues.

"When it comes to climate, Western Governors know full well that access to timely and accurate information saves lives and property and helps local businesses. Today's agreement is about good government and good sciences coming together to help people and communities alike," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., NOAA administrator.

The MOU was signed at the WGA annual meeting in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. For a copy of the MOU see: http://www.westgov.org/component/joomdoc/doc_download/1450-wga-noaa-mou2011.



Council on Environmental Quality Releases Draft Plan to Protect Water Quality and Availability from Climate Change Impacts

June 2, 2011

The Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, under the Council on Environmental Quality released a draft National Action Plan for managing freshwater resources in light of potential climate change impacts.

The report outlines specific activities and responsibilities for federal agencies in managing information and setting strategies to protect human life, health, and property, while also protecting the quality of freshwater resources, habitats, and aquatic life.

This National Action Plan synthesizes the latest science on climate risks to freshwater resources and establishes the following national goal:

Government agencies and citizens collaboratively manage freshwater resources in response to a changing climate in order to assure adequate water supplies, to protect human life, health and property, and to protect water quality and aquatic ecosystems.

Comments on the draft plan must be received by July 15th. For more information on the task force see: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/adaptation>. A copy of the draft plan can be found at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/napdraft6_2_11_final.pdf

USFS Introduces a Framework and Map to Improve the Health of America's Watersheds

June 3, 2011

The U.S. Forest Service released its Watershed Condition Classification map as a first step in the development of the agency's Watershed Condition Framework, and is the agency's first national assessment across all 193 million acres of National Forest lands.

The Framework uses three watershed condition classifications, with classifications being made at the 12-digit Hydrologic Cataloging Unit (HUC) level:

- Class 1 watersheds are considered healthy.
- Class 2 watersheds are relatively healthy, but may require restoration work.
- Class 3 watersheds are those that are impaired, degraded or damaged.

The USFS will use these classifications as a baseline for determining progress in improving watershed condition and for targeting restoration efforts. For more information see the USFS [News Release](#).

New WestFAST Chair and Vice-Chair

June 2011

In June, Roger Gorke (EPA) successfully completed his two-year term as WestFAST Chair. Following the WestFAST operating guidelines, Jean Thomas (USFS) became the WestFAST Chair. The WestFAST team also elected Mike Fallon (USACE) as the new Vice-Chair to replace Thomas.

"Thanks very much for your confidence and trust in me! I'm humbled by this opportunity and am honored to serve. I'm truly looking forward to this challenge!" said Fallon in a email to the WestFAST team.

Both Thomas and Fallon will serve a 2-year term, and we all express our gratitude to Roger Gorke for his service as the Chair over the past two years.

Agency Announcements

June 6, 2011: Reclamation releases Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Report, see [news release](#).

June 7, 2011: USDA announces new projects designed to improve natural resources on agricultural operations in 11 states, see [news release](#).

June 9, 2011: USGS study finds recent snowpack declines in the Rocky Mountains unusual compared to past few centuries, see [news release](#).

June 10, 2011: NASA launches Aquarius Satellite to measure ocean salinity, see [news release](#).

June 21, 2011: Reclamation and USACE coordinate flood control operations, see [news release](#).

June 24, 2011: Federal agencies partner to revitalize urban waters, see [news release](#).

June 30, 2011: Dan Ashe confirmed as USFWS Director, see [news release](#).

July 1, 2011: WSWC releases findings from Water Infrastructure Needs Symposium, see [Report](#).

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- **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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