



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 (WGA) in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water resources.

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WestFAST News

USGS Releases New Science to Help Direct Action on Excessive Nutrients in Rivers and Estuaries

September 6, 2011

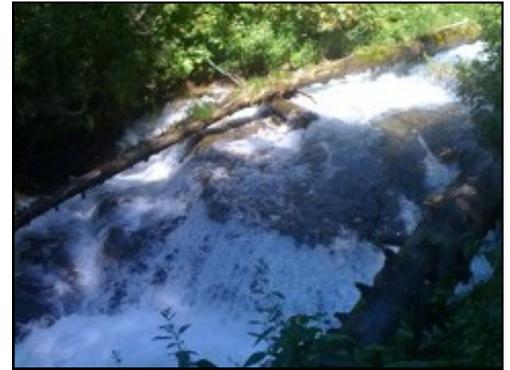
The USGS released an online, interactive decision support system that provides easy access to six newly-developed regional models describing how rivers receive and transport nutrients from natural and human sources to sensitive waters, such as the Gulf of Mexico.

These models are based on USGS's SPARROW (SPATIally Referenced Regressions On Watershed attributes) modeling framework.

Based on the six regional model results, waste-water effluent and urban runoff are significant sources of nutrients in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic, while agricultural sources like farm fertilizers and animal manure contribute heavily to nutrient concentrations in the Midwest and central regions of the nation. Atmospheric deposition is the largest contributor of nitrogen in many streams in the eastern United States, and naturally occurring geologic sources are a major source of phosphorus in many areas.

Additionally, the six models used in the decision support system show that the amounts of nutrients transported varies greatly among the regions, because nutrients can be removed in reservoirs or used by plants before they reach downstream waters. Temperature and precipitation variation across the country also affect the rates of nutrient movement and loss on the land and in streams and reservoirs.

Excessive nutrients in the nation's rivers, streams and coastal areas are a major issue for water managers, because they cause algal blooms that increase costs to treat drinking water, limit recreational activities, threaten valuable fisheries, and can be toxic to humans and wildlife. The Decision Support System based on these analyses can be found at: <http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/sparrow/mrb/>



EPA Releases Report on the Decision-Making Process: Evaluation of Where Land Protection Planning Can Incorporate Climate Change Information

September 22, 2011

EPA's National Center for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) released a report that reviews existing land-management decision making processes with the goal of determining where and how climate change considerations can be incorporated into those processes.

The assessment focused on a sample of 19 local and regional programs with goals to protect wildlife and watersheds. The analysis revealed several strategies that might be useful for incorporating climate change into decision making, including new decision-support tools for advisory committees, promulgation of different land protection models (e.g., purchase as opposed to transfer of development rights), and educational outreach on the potential use of land protection within a portfolio of adaptation and mitigation strategies. As jurisdictions learn more about possible climate change impacts, certain land protection strategies may become more desirable and feasible as part of a portfolio of adaptation strategies that ameliorate impacts on watersheds and wildlife.

The full report is available at: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/global/recordisplay.cfm?deid=238091>.

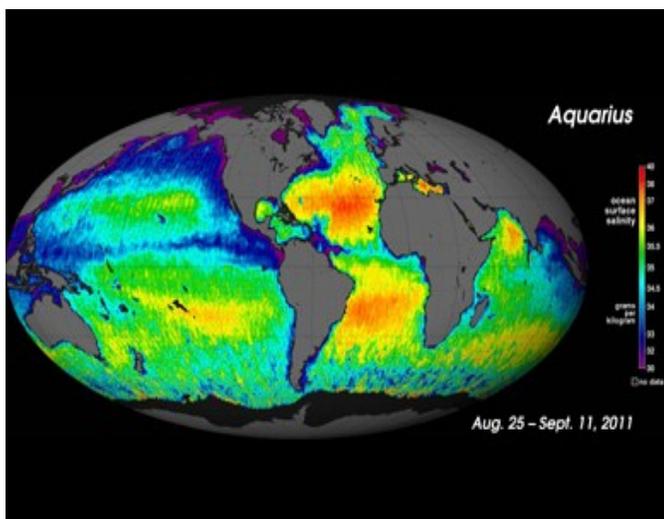
Aquarius Yields NASA's First Global Map of Ocean Salinity

September 22, 2011

NASA's new Aquarius instrument has produced its first global map of the salinity of the ocean surface. The new map, which shows a tapestry of salinity patterns, demonstrates Aquarius' ability to detect large-scale salinity distribution features clearly and with sharp contrast. The map is a composite of the data since Aquarius became operational on August 25th. Aquarius was launched on June 10, 2011.

"Aquarius/SAC-D already is advancing our understanding of ocean surface salinity and Earth's water cycle," said Michael Freilich, director of NASA's Earth Science Division at agency headquarters in Washington.

The map shows several well-known ocean salinity features such as higher salinity in the subtropics; higher average salinity in the Atlantic Ocean compared to the Pacific and Indian Oceans; and lower salinity in rainy belts near the equator, in the northernmost Pacific Ocean and elsewhere. These features are related to large-scale patterns of rainfall and evaporation over the ocean, river outflow and ocean circulation. Aquarius will monitor how these features change and study their link to climate and weather variations. For more information see: http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2011/sep/HQ_11-317_Aquarius_Map.html



Agency Announcements

- September 6, 2011:** Reclamation scientist Levi Brekke Co-authors Article Outlining Guidelines for Constructing Climate Change Scenarios, see [news release](#).
- September 6, 2011:** Reclamation and DOE Announce 16 Projects to Advance Hydropower Technology, see [news release](#).
- September 12, 2011:** Landscape Conservation Cooperative Science Projects Receive \$1.2 Million Through WaterSMART Program, see [news release](#).
- September 15, 2011:** EPA Announces the Availability of the Class VI UIC Program for CO² Sequestration, see [Federal Register Notice](#).
- September 17, 2011:** Secretary Salazar Applauds Beginning of Restoration of Elwha River, see [news release](#).
- September 19, 2011:** EPA Releases Draft U.S./Mexico Environmental Program: Border 2020, see [news release](#).
- September 21, 2011:** DOE Releases the Nevada National Security Site Environmental Report 2012, see [news release](#).
- September 21, 2011:** Secretary Salazar Announces Release of Klamath Dam Removal Studies, see [news release](#).
- September 22, 2011:** Reclamation Seeks Comments on Requirements for Water Feasibility Studies, see [news release](#).
- September 22, 2011:** NOAA Announces Contract to Construct National Water Center, see [news release](#).

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- October 5-7, 2011:** [Fall WSWC meeting](#), Idaho Falls, Idaho
- October 12-13, 2011:** [Remote Sensing of Evapotranspiration Applications in the Western U.S.](#), Boise, Idaho
- March 14-16, 2012:** Spring WSWC meeting, Washington, DC
- 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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