

WestFAST News



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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Colorado River Water Science Stakeholders' Roundtable

Salt Lake City, UT
 February 8-9, 2012

The Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP), the WSWC, the Upper Colorado River Basin Commission, and the USGS held a joint meeting for USGS Cooperative Water Program Partners in Salt Lake City.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide a forum by which partners could provide input to USGS on the future development of the USGS water data and science programs. This meeting was one of several regional roundtables that ICWP has hosted over the past several years.

Pixie Hamilton, the USGS lead on the Cooperative Water Program, and WestFAST member, discussed the importance of the cooperative water program and the USGS's commitment to continuing to support state science needs. Eric Evenson, National Coordinator for USGS's WaterSMART program discussed WaterSMART and the National Water Census.

During the second day, the USGS and ICWP facilitated a series of break-out sessions where participants were able to provide input on the Cooperative Program, the National Stream Information Program (NSIP), and WaterSMART. Some of the concerns expressed by the attendees included the increasing costs for streamgages, leveraging state data, and insufficient federal funding for NSIP and the Cooperative Program. The groups also discussed ways to balance the priorities of the WaterSMART program with the needs of the NSIP and Cooperative Program.

At the close of the meeting, Tony Willardson, Executive Director for the WSWC, spoke about the importance of the Cooperative Program and NSIP to the western states. The WSWC has been a long-time supporter of both of these programs and has worked closely with the USGS on the development of the Water Census.



WestFAST Releases 2011 Accomplishments Report

February 29, 2012

WestFAST has finalized the 2011 WestFAST Accomplishments Report. At the end of every year, the WestFAST team evaluates the activities that WestFAST has engaged in. WestFAST was formed to support the WSWC in implementing the recommendations from the 2008 Western Governors' Association Report titled *Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: Next Steps Report*. In 2011, WestFAST made progress on 6 of the recommendations from the Next Steps report.

Some highlights from 2011 include:

- Developing a *Data Strategy* for the WSWC.
- NASA continuing preparation for the launch of LandsAT 8.
- NASA hosting meetings on Evapotranspiration and Drought.
- Continuing to support NIDIS.
- Collaborating on the Water Census.
- Providing numerous briefings and informational sessions to the WSWC.
- Beginning designing the [Water Use Data Exchange](#).

Additionally, WestFAST continued to promote interagency collaboration. The WestFAST Newsletter is now received by 126 federal, state, and private sector recipients. The complete 2011 WestFAST Accomplishments Report is available on the WestFAST website at: <http://www.westgov.org/wswc/westfast/workplan/>.

NOAA's National Water Center Coming to Alabama

Tuscaloosa, AL
February 21, 2012

Construction has begun on NOAA's National Water Center on the campus of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. In addition to NOAA employees, the National Water Center will house staff from other federal agencies involved in water services, including the USGS.

The National Water Center will be the first-ever U.S. center for water forecast operations, research and collaboration across federal agencies. The new collaborative water program carried out in the building will enable the National Weather Service, in partnership with other federal agencies, to provide emergency managers and the public with detailed maps that explicitly show forecasted locations and effects of flooding for faster and more effective evacuations. It will also support the development of new forecasts for water supply and availability, thereby helping communities become more resilient to floods. The center will deliver a new generation of information and services to mitigate water-related disasters, inform routine decision-making about water, and address competing demands for increasingly limited water availability. Construction is expected to be completed in 2013. For more information, see the [news release](#).

North Idaho's Yellowdog Creek Nursed Back to Health by Local, State and Federal Partnership

Coeur d'Alene, ID
February 28, 2012

Through collaboration between EPA, the USFS, and Idaho DEQ, Northern Idaho's [Yellowdog Creek](#), impaired for decades by eroding forest road sediment, is beginning to recover.

USFS's restoration activities have stabilized erosion-prone areas, and provided cover to help reduce stream temperature. As a result, native cutthroat trout are beginning to return to the stream.

Intensive timber harvest and road building occurred through much of the area from 1890 until the early 2000s. Over the years, runoff and floodwaters continued to erode and wash out roads, particularly those near or adjacent to streams.

To address the stream's poor health, Idaho DEQ developed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or "pollution budget" for Yellowdog Creek and nearby streams. The TMDL helped guide restoration by creating tangible targets for sediment reduction.

The USFS conducted a multi-pronged restoration campaign between 2000 and 2006, dramatically reducing sediment in the stream. For more information, see the [news release](#).

Agency Announcements

February 1, 2012: NASA Receives Final National Research Council Report on Space Technology Roadmaps, see [news release](#).

February 2, 2012: Reclamation Releases Yakima River Basin Study, First One Completed Under Reclamation's WaterSMART Program, see [news release](#).

February 2, 2012: U.S. Forest Service Highlights Expansion of Restoration of National Forest and Funding for Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Projects, see [news release](#).

February 3, 2012: Reclamation's Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study Releases Updated Technical Reports, see [news release](#).

February 8, 2012: Salazar Announces \$50 Million in Funding for Water Infrastructure Projects in the Western United States, see [news release](#).

February 8, 2012: NASA Mission Takes Stock of Earth's Melting Land Ice, see [news release](#).

February 8, 2012: New Satellite Instrument for Improved Weather Forecasts Put Into Service, see [news release](#).

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- **March 13-16, 2012:** [Spring ICWP/WSWC meeting](#), Washington, DC
- **April 30-May 4, 2012:** [National Monitoring Conference—Water: One Shared Effort—Common Future](#), Portland, Oregon
- **June 6-8, 2012:** [Summer WSWC meeting](#), Seattle, Washington



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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