

**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

June 2018

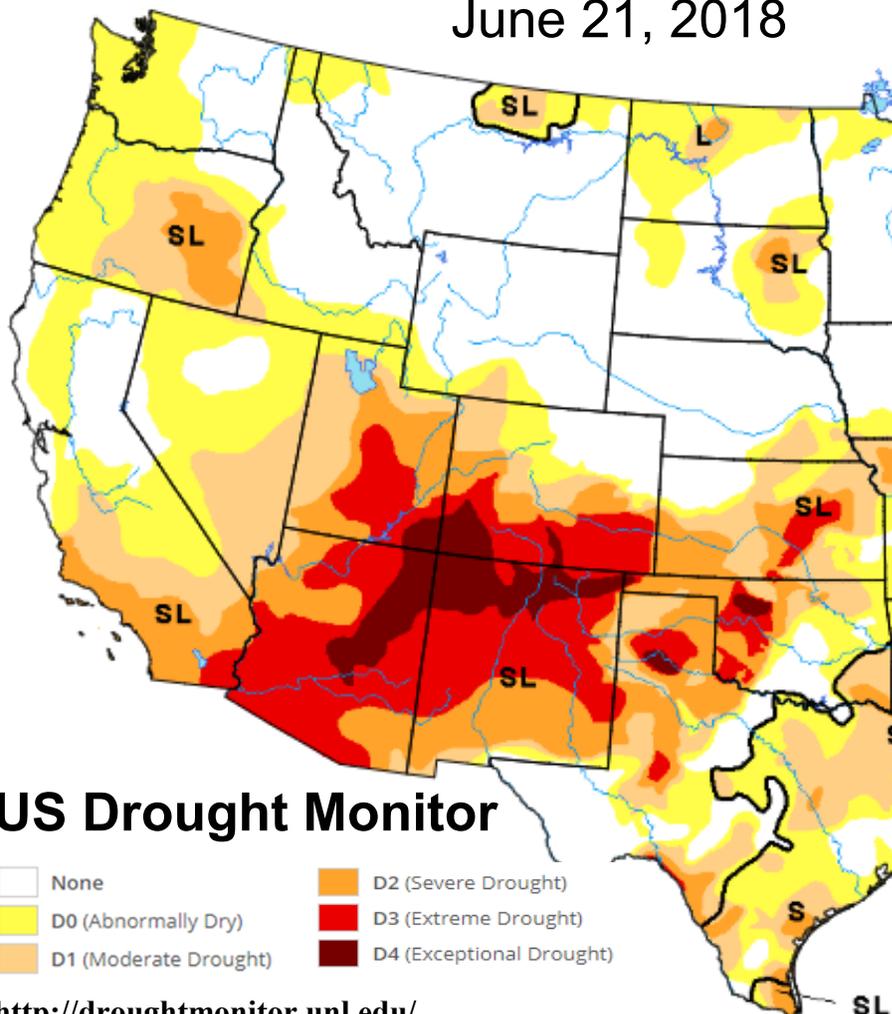
## 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Full Summer of Fun – Help Prevent Wildfires! *(BLM/USFS/NPS/ WestFAST 06/25/18)*

Dryer than average to drought conditions plague a good deal of the west. For those areas that received precipitation that has brought an abundance of grass and other fine fuels, including cheatgrass, to public lands. In addition to last year's dried grasses, these fine fuels can ignite readily and burn easily once they dry out. As things heat up, please follow these simple tips on how you can do your part to prevent wildfires on your public lands. Doing so will assist the Bu-

reau of Land Management, National Park Service, and The U.S. Forest Service in our commitment to keep public landscapes healthy and productive through shared conservation stewardship.

- Prior to departing on your summer adventure, please take a moment to check your tires and ensure they are properly maintained. One of the many causes of roadside fires is tire wires from the tread of vehicle tires.
- If towing a boat or trailer, ensure your safety chains are properly secure and not dragging on the ground producing sparks.
- Never park your vehicle over dead grass and avoid driving through tall grass—your vehicle can ignite the fuels and start a fire.

June 21, 2018



### US Drought Monitor

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>



- All off-highway vehicles are required to have a Society of Automotive Engineers approved spark arrestor. Maintain your spark arrestor and keep it free of carbon buildup.
- Carry a shovel and fire extinguisher in your vehicle or off-road vehicle.
- If using equipment to weld, grind or mow that could generate sparks, have firefighting equipment—shovels, rakes, water and garden hoses, and an ABC-rated fire extinguisher—available for use.
- When camping on public lands, never leave your campfire unattended. Ensure your campfire is “dead” out before leaving or turning in for the night. If your campfire is too hot to touch, it’s too hot to leave. Drown with water, stir and repeat until it’s cold. Each year, firefighters respond to several escaped campfires throughout west. Don’t let yours be one of them.
- If target shooting, please take all the proper precaution measures to be fire-safe—select an area that is free of flammable materials and bring a fire extinguisher or water to extinguish any flames. Exploding targets are one of the major causes of wildfires on public lands.

Remember—one small spark can start a wildfire!

Look at web pages for Special 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebrations:

[National Park Service](#)

[US Forest Service](#)

[Bureau of Land Management](#)

## EPA and Army Take Next Step in Joint Efforts to Redefine “Waters of the United States” (EPA 06/15/18)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will be sending a proposed “Step 2” rule that would redefine “waters of the United States” (WOTUS) to the Office of Management and Budget for interagency review. The agencies will issue the proposal for public comment after the interagency review process is complete.

“Farmers, ranchers, landowners, and other stakeholders are counting on EPA to listen to their input when it comes to defining ‘waters of the United States,’” said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. “Today, we are taking an important step toward issuing a new WOTUS defini-

tion and answering President Trump’s call to ensure that our waters are kept free from pollution, while promoting economic growth, minimizing regulatory uncertainty, and showing due regard for the roles of the federal government and the states under the statutory framework of the Clean Water Act.”

“From day one we have been focused on bringing common sense and fairness back to the rulemaking process,” said Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works R.D. James. “Today’s action highlights our commitment to listening to public input, providing clear and transparent rules, and ensuring that our waters remain clean and our economy can continue to thrive.”

EPA and the Army are working through a two-step process to consider revisions to the definition of “waters of the United States,” consistent with the February 2017 Presidential Executive Order 13778.

## USACE Releases Work Plan for FY18 (USACE 6/11/18)

The USACE delivered to Congress its Fiscal Year 2018 (FY2018) work plan for the Army Civil Works program on Thursday, June 7, 2018.

On March 23, 2018, President Trump signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, Public Law 115-141, of which Division D is the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (the Act) for FY 2018. The Act provides



*Feesability Study at Kotzebue Small Boat Harbor, AK - Image provided by City of Kotzebue*

\$6.827 billion in FY2018 appropriations for the Army Civil Works program, of which \$6.402 billion is appropriated in five accounts: Investigations; Construction; Operation and Maintenance; Mississippi River and



Tributaries; and Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program(FUSRAP).

The Act's accompanying Statement of Managers report allocates approximately \$4.630 billion of the total for these five accounts to specific programs, projects and activities (PPA). USACE is responsible for allocating the remainder in these accounts, approximately \$1.772 billion, to specific PPAs, consistent with the categories, subcategories, and other direction provided in the Statement of Managers. The allocation of these additional funds is presented in the work plan.

The remaining \$425 million in the FY2018 Civil Works appropriations provides funding for USACE in the Expenses, Regulatory, Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE), and Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works accounts. "The Army's Civil Works FY 2018 workplan provides



*Feasibility Study— Little Colorado River near Winslow—  
Image NWS Advanced Hydrologic Predictive Services*

funding to start, continue, and complete studies and construction projects that will get dirt moving to better the lives of Americans, their infrastructure, economy and environment," said The Honorable R. D. James, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

For the first time, the workplan provides funds for two projects where the local sponsor could use Section 1043 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 to complete project construction. This section authorizes USACE to provide its share of a project's construction cost directly to a non-federal sponsor who is able to assume responsibility for construction. The Army Civil Works budget funds the planning, design, construction, and operation and maintenance of

water resources projects, with a focus on the highest performing work within the three main Civil Works mission areas: commercial navigation, flood and storm damage reduction, and aquatic ecosystem restoration. It also funds programs that contribute to the protection of the nation's waters and wetlands; the generation of low-cost renewable hydropower; the restoration of certain sites contaminated as a result of the nation's early atomic weapons development program; and emergency preparedness and training to respond to natural disasters.

The nearly \$1.772 billion in additional funding not allocated to specified projects in the five appropriations by the Statement of Managers is subdivided into numerous categories and subcategories within these broad areas:

- Navigation: \$956 million
- Flood Risk Management: \$541 million
- Other Authorized Project Purposes: \$254 million
- FUSRAP: \$21 million

For the full press release and list of details link [here](#)

## Our Drinking Water and Forest Service Research

*(USFS 06/06/18)*

Behind every drop of water from the tap is an entire forest ecosystem. While it's easy to take drinking water for granted, you might be surprised to learn that the nation's largest [single source of water](#) is the National Forest System, the network of national forests stewarded by the USDA [Forest Service](#). Many of these national forest lands overlay the source areas for important rivers and aquifer systems, and more than 60 million Americans rely on them for drinking water.

Scientists from [Forest Service Research and Development](#), or R&D, investigate the quality and quantity of water from forests and conduct research that informs water stewardship and reduces costs.

For example, one R&D study showed that nearly 21 million [people in the South](#) receive their drinking water from national forest lands – roughly equivalent to the population of Florida!

These study results can support efforts to conserve the forests that protect the area's clean water supplies. Sustaining forests both on and off national forest lands



is an efficient and cost-effective way to protect critical water infrastructure compared to investing in flood control, water purification, and other man-made infrastructure.

In partnership with NASA on the [SnowEx project](#), R&D is helping improve forecasting of the production of water from spring snowmelt. This research is significant because much of the western U.S.'s water supply is derived from mountain snow. Better information about this water supply can improve hazard forecasting, water availability predictions, and agricultural forecasting.

Whether developing camp sites for visitors or restoring stream habitats, work on national forests sometimes involves disturbing the ground. In these, and



*A riparian buffer lines a waterway. (Courtesy photo from the USDA National Agroforestry Center.)*

similar projects, care must be taken to avoid sedimentation and other negative water quality impacts.

In fact, R&D pioneered the first national program to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of [Best Management Practices, or BMPs](#), which are techniques that help control and reduce water pollution and protect aquatic ecosystems. The resulting consistency and streamlined approaches of BMPs throughout the National Forest System promise to improve water quality and save millions of dollars.

For instance, forest buffers are strips of vegetation along streams, lakes, and wetlands that stabilize banks and filter pesticides, animal waste, and sediment from agricultural runoff. A software [tool](#) produced by R&D helps land managers design buffers that are wider along banks where pollution inputs are higher. Such variable-width buffers

can more effectively and cost-efficiently trap pollutants than standard, uniform-width buffers.

By investigating how forested landscapes foster watershed health and contribute to water supplies, R&D continues to build a solid scientific foundation for informed forest management decisions, including



*Research and Development played a key role in developing Best Management Practices (BMPs) protocols and has trained hundreds of Forest Service employees in how to implement these protocols. (Courtesy photo by USDA Forest Service.)*

those designed to protect U.S. water supplies. We must understand the forest's role in supporting life on Earth so it can continue to sustain us.

#### Links:

- [USDA Forest Service research and development](#)
- [Snow Ex](#)
- [NASA](#)

## Reductions in Water Use Beginning 2010 Continue

(USGS 06/19/18)

Water use across the country reached its lowest recorded level in 45 years. According to a new [USGS report](#), 322 billion gallons of water per day (Bgal/d) were withdrawn for use in the United States during 2015.

This represents a 9 percent reduction of [water use from 2010](#) when about 354 Bgal/d were withdrawn and the lowest level since before 1970 (370 Bgal/d).



A beautiful lake lies below the Minarets in the Ansel Adam Wilderness Inyo National Forest, California. To learn more about where much of our drinking water come from, watch "Your Best Waters," a video produced through a FS/ Freshwaters Illustrated partnership. (Courtesy photo by Ediza Lake.)

"The downward trend in water use shows a continued effort towards efficient use of critical water resources, which is encouraging," said Tim Petty, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of the Interior. "Water is the one resource we cannot live without, and when it is used wisely, it helps to ensure there will be enough to sustain human needs, as well as ecological and environmental needs."

In 2015, more than 50 percent of the total withdrawals in the United States were accounted for by 12 states (in order of withdrawal amounts): California, Texas, Idaho, Florida, Arkansas, New York, Illinois, Colorado, North Carolina, Michigan, Montana, and Nebraska. California accounted for almost 9 percent of the total withdrawals for all categories and 9 percent of total freshwater withdrawals. Texas accounted for about 7 percent of total withdrawals for all categories, predominantly for thermoelectric power generation, irrigation, and public supply.

Florida had the largest share of saline withdrawals, accounting for 23 percent of the total in the country, mostly saline surface-water withdrawals for thermoelectric power generation. Texas and California accounted for 59 percent of the total saline groundwater withdrawals in

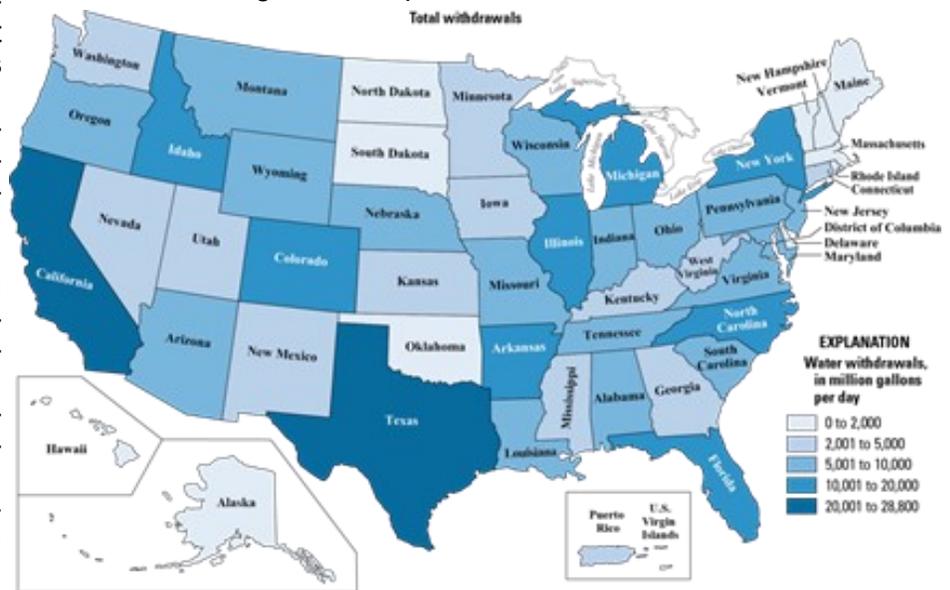
the United States, mostly for mining.

"The USGS is committed to providing comprehensive reports of water use in the country to ensure that resource managers and decision makers have the information they need to manage it well," said USGS director Jim Reilly. "These data are vital for understanding water budgets in the different climatic settings across the country."

For the first time since 1995, the USGS estimated consumptive use for two categories — thermoelectric power generation and irrigation. Consumptive use is the fraction of total water withdrawals that is unavailable for immediate use because it is evaporated, transpired by plants, or incorporated into a product.

"Consumptive use is a key component of the water budget. It's important to not only know how much water is being withdrawn from a source, but how much water is no longer available for other immediate uses," said USGS hydrologist Cheryl Dieter.

The USGS estimated a consumptive use of 4.31 Bgal/d, or 3 percent of total water use for thermoe-



Total water withdrawals by State, 2015 [1 Bgal/d = 1,000 million gallons per

day]. California accounted for almost 9 percent of the total withdrawals for all categories and 9 percent of total freshwater withdrawals. Texas accounted for about 7 percent of total withdrawals for all categories, predominantly for thermoelectric power generation, irrigation, and public supply.

lectric power generation in 2015. In comparison, consumptive use was 73.2 Bgal/d, 62 percent of water use for irrigation in 2015. Water withdrawn for thermoelectric power generation was the largest use nationally at 133 Bgal/d, with the other leading uses being irrigation and public supply, respectively. Withdrawals declined for thermoelectric



power generation and public supply, but increased for irrigation. Collectively, these three uses represented 90 percent of total withdrawals.

- Thermoelectric power decreased 18 % from 2010, the largest percent decline of all categories.
- Irrigation withdrawals (all freshwater) increased 2%
- Public-supply withdrawals decreased 7 %.

[Link here For the full article including some great graphics](#)

## Recent Meetings:

**The Western Governors' Association - 2018 Annual meeting** will be held in Rapid City, South Dakota is the last week of June. Chair and South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard will host his colleagues, administration officials and special guests along with Governors Doug Burgum (North Dakota), Matt Mead (Wyoming), John Hickenlooper (Colorado), Butch Otter (Idaho) Gary Herbert (Utah) and Steve Bullock (Montana) will join Gov. Daugaard in public conversations on critical issues facing the West such as the environmental challenges of wildfire and the opioid epidemic. For more information from this meeting link to their [homepage](#).

## Upcoming Meetings:

**The WSWC Summer (187<sup>th</sup>) Meeting** will be held in Newport, Oregon on August 1-3, 2018. For further information, please see:

<http://www.westernstateswater.org/upcoming-meetings/>.

## Federal News *(Control click to articles)*

5/31: [USGS Hurricane Response Met Challenges in 2017, Prepares for 2018](#)

6/01: [USFS June: Provide Abundant, Clean Water](#)

6/07: [Rapid snowmelt, dry spring indicate critically low summer water supply](#)

6/07: [Montana: Rapid Snowmelt Caused Record-Breaking Stream Flows Across the State in May](#)

6/07: [U.S. EPA awards \\$5 million grant to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality](#)

6/07: [EPA Administrator Proposes Cost-Benefit Analysis Reform](#)

6/08: [Idaho Water Supply Expected to Be Adequate](#)

6/12: [Administrator Pruitt Talks with Kansas Farmers](#)

6/12: [Field work complete in Consolidated Debris Removal](#)

6/13: [Funds Available for RCPP Verde River Flow and Habitat Restoration](#)

6/14: [Driving Home, Service Fire Crew Comes Across and Helps Fight Five Small Fires](#)

6/15: [Reclamation updates 2018 Central Valley Project water allocations South-of-Delta](#)

6/18: [USGS It's National Pollinator Week! Get the buzz on USGS pollinator research](#)

6/18: [USFWS Have a Mouthwatering Pollinator Week](#)

6/20: [USFS Want to help bees? Take a break from the lawn](#)

6/20: [NRCS Financial Assistance Now Available for Colorado Landowners Impacted by Recent Wildfires](#)

6/20: [USDA Funding Available to Help Control Erosion on Cropland](#)

6/21: [EPA Provides Nearly \\$70 Million Loan for Omaha Water Infrastructure Upgrades](#)

6/21: [EPA to host Smart Sectors meeting with North Dakota agriculture leaders in Minot on June 25](#)

6/21: [Administrator Pruitt Proposes Rule to Provide Regulatory Certainty on Spill Prevention](#)

6/22: [NRCS Where Wildflowers Will Always Bee](#)

6/22: [Bureau of Reclamation awards \\$8.3 Million to 15 drought resiliency projects](#)

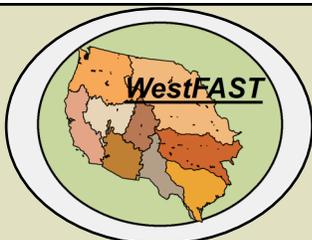
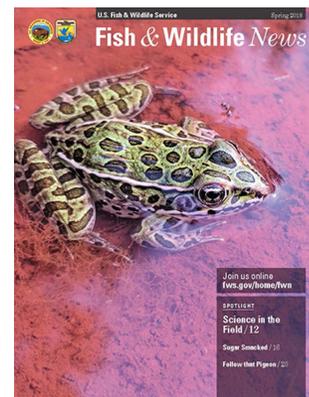
6/22: [Nature's Good Neighbors: Grazing Operation at Refuge is a 'Cud' Above](#)

6/22: [Hikers celebrate 50th anniversary of National Trails System](#)

6/27: [Administrator Pruitt Issues Memo to Increase Regulatory Certainty in Permitting Process](#)

**Note: the June Edition was published early. A few articles from the end of the month may not appear, but will be added July 10, 2018 and will also appear in the July Edition.**

*Here is a link (control click on image) to the latest Fish and Wildlife News!*



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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