**D-R-A-F-T**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

 **WORK PLAN**

 **2014/2015**

**1. NEWSLETTER**

**Work to date:** *Western States Water* provides members and others with accurate and timely information on various water resources topics at state, regional and national levels. It is provided as a free service to members, governors and their staff, member state water resource agencies, state water users associations, selected multi‑state organizations, key Congressmen and their staffs, and top federal administration officials. Other public and private agencies and individuals may subscribe for a fee. It is primarily distributed via email, and is posted on our website, with password protection (for recent issues).

**2014/15:** Along with the Council’s regular meetings, the newsletter requires our most significant commitment of staff resources, though that is usually ancillary to other efforts. The response from members and others receiving the newsletter has been consistently positive. The Council will continue to provide this service weekly via email, except for those who request a hard copy.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing

**2. REGULAR MEETINGS**

**Work to Date**: The first meeting of the Council was held in Stateline, Nevada in 1965, and regular meetings have been held since. Currently, the Council meets three times per year, rotating among the member states, which host the meetings at a location of their choice. Guest speakers and topics for discussion are scheduled according to members’ interests and needs. External policy positions for consideration are noticed 30-days before the Council meets and are distributed not only to members, but also to WGA staff and the governors’ staff. Any position statement not noticed may be brought before the Council for consideration at a meeting by unanimous consent, but if approved, must be sent to WGA for review prior to distribution consistent with mutually agreed upon procedures for policy coordination between WGA and WSWC.

**2014/15:** Montana will host the Summer 2014 meetings in Helena, and Arizona will host the Fall 2014 meetings in Phoenix.

**3. 50th ANNIVERSARY MEETING**

**2014/15:** The Council will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2015.  The first meeting was held in Stateline, Nevada on August 3, 1965.  The Council’s 40th Anniversary Commemoration was held there in 2005.  Council members and staff will recognize and commemorate the 50th anniversary at the WSWC Summer 2015 meetings.

**Subcommittee:**Roland Westergard, Hal Simpson, and Phil Ward

**4. 2015 DC ADMINISTRATION and CONGRESSIONAL VISITS**

**Work to date**: In March 2013, Council officers, members and staff traveled to Washington, D.C. and had over 30 visits with Administration and Congressional officials in support of WSWC and WGA positions and priorities. Native American Rights Fund (NARF) staff joined in many of the visits. WSWC members and staff presented a briefing for congressional staff on the importance of Indian water rights settlements (attended by 16 staffers). Some of the feedback from these meetings suggested a need for greater contact and communication between the Council and federal policymakers.

**2014/15:** The Council’s Officers and staff will again plan visits in the Spring of 2015 to make Administration and Congressional contacts and advise them on major national water issues from the perspective of western states. WSWC members and staff will also schedule visits with individual congressional offices, as well as visits with WestFAST principals. The WestFAST Liaison Officer and WestFAST members will participate in these visits with Executive Branch agencies.

**Time frame**: Spring 2015

**4. WGA/WSWC COORDINATION and COLLABORATION**

**Work to Date**: The publication of the WGA/WSWC report(s) entitled “Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future,” raised awareness of the challenges facing the West. The WGA adopted the 2006 and 2008 reports as policy, and the Council has worked to implement their recommendations, many of which have been completed. In June 2010, the Council completed and the WGA accepted a Progress Report summarizing implementation activities. In 2011, WGA adopted two comprehensive policy statements, one focused on water quantity and the other on water quality, and WGA revised and readopted these in December 2013.

Of particular note, a priority recommendation was establishment of the Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) and the hiring of a liaison officer in the Council’s offices.

**2014/15**: The Committee will continue to assist in the implementation of WGA policy in consultation with WGA.

As in the past, the Council may propose policy resolutions for WGA consideration. Further, the WSWC Chair and/or Executive Director will participate in WGA meetings as appropriate. Working with the WGA, the Council will also coordinate WestFAST activities and needs.

**Time Frame:** ongoing

**5. WESTFAST**

**Work to date:** WestFAST’s creation has had many benefits. It is a unique forum for addressing western (and national) water issues that has brought together a dozen federal agencies to collaborate with each other and state agencies with water-related responsibilities. WestFAST addresses issues raised and discussed with the Council and WGA (which in turn support development and implementation of related federal policies and programs). WestFAST and the Council have also discussed development of a set of collaborative principles to guide federal/state working relationships. WestFAST is in its sixth year of existence.

**2014/15**: The Committee will continue to oversee the Council’s work with WestFAST. Further, the Committee will work to ensure participating agencies realize the real and potential benefits of WestFAST, and work to build a sound foundation for continuing collaboration. The Council will also seek to build closer ties with WestFAST principals.

**Time Frame:** Ongoing

**6. WATER MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIA**

**Work to date:** An annual WSWC Water Management Symposium has traditionally been held under the auspices of the Executive Committee. However, the Committee has usually asked one of the other committees to take the lead. In odd numbered years, an Indian Water Rights Settlement Symposia has been held.

In 2012, the Council held a symposium in November in Phoenix, Arizona in collaboration with relevant federal agencies, multiple stakeholders, and public and private experts on Western State Water Resources Infrastructure Needs & Strategies. It explored state financing authorities, policies, programs and projects, as well as public-private financing and cost sharing resources, with a goal of identifying common interests and promoting partnerships.

**2014/15**: The Council will again sponsor a Water Infrastructure Symposium focused on streamlining regulatory requirements to facilitate timely construction of projects in an environmentally responsible manner.

**Time Frame** – July – December 2014

**7. ANNUAL REPORT**

Since its organization in 1965, the Council has prepared and published an annual report. The annual report includes a brief discussion of the Council’s formation and a detailed summary of its current membership and activities. It is a report of the Council’s meetings, and provides an explanation of resolutions and positions and other actions taken by the Council. Further, it includes a description of other important activities and events, as well as workshops, seminars and symposia sponsored by the Council. It also describes the Council’s involvement in major current water policy issues. Lastly, biennially, it includes an audit of the Council’s finances, and current rules of organization. Recently, electronic copies have been distributed.

**Time frame**: July – September (for the 2013 calendar year).