

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
WORK PLAN
2015/2016**

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).

2015/16: 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. 50th ANNIVERSARY and 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.

2015/16: Nevada will host the 50th Anniversary Summer 2015 meetings in Stateline, on July 8-10. It will include a dinner cruise on Lake Tahoe as part of a field trip prior to the meetings and special commemorative social hour. Past members have been invited, as well as numerous guest dignitaries.

Various commemorative activities may also be undertaken from time to time during the year, as well as special newsletter articles to mark the 50th Anniversary of the creation of the Council.

Kansas will host the Fall 2015 meetings in Manhattan, on October 7-9. The Spring 2016 meetings will be held in Washington, D.C.

Subcommittee: Roland Westergard, Jason King, Dave Barfield and Tracy Streeter

3. WESTERN WATER CONFERENCE - STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING LONG-TERM DROUGHT AND CLIMATE UNCERTAINTY

Work to date: The Council has been invited to participate in a conference with western academic interests from the Western Region Multistate Coordinating Committee on Water Resources and the Western Committee on Management and Policy Challenges in a Water-Scarce World, both supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The planning committee includes representatives from Colorado State University, Utah State University and the University of Wyoming, among others. WGA has also been invited to participate. A number of preliminary scoping and planning calls have been held to determine appropriate topics and potential speakers. WSWC members and staff will participate in the planning and preparations, but there is no financial commitment.

2015/2016: The Conference is planned for October 28-29, 2015 in Salt Lake City.

Subcommittee:

4. 2016 DC ADMINISTRATION and CONGRESSIONAL VISITS/CONTACTS

Work to date: In an ongoing effort to promote WSWC and WGA positions and priorities, in March 2015, Council officers, members and staff traveled to Washington, D.C. and made over 30 visits with Administration and Congressional officials. Native American Rights Fund (NARF) staff joined in many of the visits. WSWC members and staff have also previously hosted or presented at briefings for congressional staff on the importance federal data gathering activities, including the Landsat thermal data, U.S. Geological Survey streamgaging programs, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration programs, including the National Integrated Drought Information System, River Forecast Centers, and Regional Integrated Science and Assessments, as well as Indian water rights settlements. Some of the feedback from these meetings suggested a need for greater contact and communication between the Council and federal and congressional policymakers.

Of note, the Council was also invited to testify in support of S. 1365, the Authorized Rural Water Projects Completion Act, at a June 18 hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee's Water & Power Subcommittee. WSWC staff also contacted and visited a number of congressional offices while in Washington, D.C. Further, the Council also distributed three policy positions adopted at its April meetings to all House and Senate members of western state delegations, related to (1) integrating water and energy policy and planning; (2) supporting state and federal applied research and hydroclimate data collection programs; and (3) recognizing the importance of state primacy over groundwater management.

2015/16: The Council's Officers and staff will again plan visits during the Council's Spring 2016 meetings in the Washington, D. C. area 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. Other trips and visits may be made as needed. The Council staff and members will also communicate our external positions as the

need arises and continue to respond to requests for testimony, briefings and information from the Congress and the Administration.

Time frame: Spring 2016/Ongoing

Subcommittee: Management Subcommittee, J.D. Strong (OK), and others

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. Both of which were accomplished in 2008.

The Council has worked closely with WGA on regulatory issues, especially the EPA’s proposed and final rules related to Clean Water Act jurisdiction and the definition of Waters of the United States, as well as the U.S. Forest Service’s proposed groundwater directive, which was subsequently withdrawn in part due to the Council’s concerns.

2015/16: The Council and the Committee will continue to coordinate and consult with the WGA on matters that come before the Council and assist in the development and implementation of WGA water-related policies. WGA staff will be invited to attend and participate in our meetings, workshops and symposia.

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

Subcommittee: Management Subcommittee

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 seventh year of existence.

2015/16: 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, Indian Water Rights Settlement Symposia have 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.

2015/16: The Council will again sponsor an Indian Water Rights Settlement Symposium in Reno, Nevada on August 25-27, and the Committee will consider hosting a 2016 Water Infrastructure Symposium focused on streamlining regulatory requirements to facilitate timely construction of projects in an environmentally responsible manner.

Time Frame – Summer 2015/Spring 2016

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-December