

News from WestFAST

During 2008, federal agencies began work on the one over-arching recommendation in the WGA 2008 *Next Steps* Report, the creation of the Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST). In 2009, WestFAST – or individual agencies - initiated work on 19 of the 42 objectives listed in the 2008 *Next Steps* Report. In developing the 2010 work plan, WestFAST team members looked at the broadest scope for interagency collaboration, integration, and economies of scale. In addition, WestFAST team members continue to seek opportunities for horizontal integration among or between agencies. WestFAST team members identified activities that provided an opportunity for collaboration and synergy.

Highlights of WestFAST work this year include:

USGS is working with the WSWC, states, and others to develop a Water Census to provide clear information about the status of water resources and trends in water availability and use.

WestFAST members developed an inventory of federal water science and water management climate change activities.

Ward Staubitz
WestFAST Vice-Chairman
Remarks to WSWC, July 22, 2010

Report from the 163rd Western States Water Council (WSWC) Meeting

On July 21-23, 2010, the WSWC commemorated its 45th anniversary by holding its 163rd meeting in Stateline, Nevada, where it first met in 1965. The meetings also honored past WSWC chairs and long-time members, including former Nevada State Engineer Roland Westergard, who received a plaque for 42 years of service to the WSWC.

Anne Castle, the Department of Interior's (DOI) Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, discussed DOI's water activities including the WaterSMART (*Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow*) program and the USGS' National Water Census. Castle noted that WaterSMART "maps very closely" with the Western Governors' Association's (WGA) *Next Steps* report, which was an "...important guide to

the efforts of the new Administration in the water policy arena." She further challenged states to enact the report's land use planning recommendations and to regulate ground water withdrawals. Castle reaffirmed DOI's commitment to USGS' Streamgaging program. In addition, Castle said DOI requested increased funding of \$13.4M for the ground system requirements for Landsat 8 and its thermal infrared imager.

New WSWC officers were elected, with Weir Labatt of Texas selected as Chairman; Phil Ward of Oregon, Vice Chairman; and Pat Tyrrell of Wyoming, Secretary/Treasurer. Herb Guenther of Arizona was named as the Chair of the Water Resources Committee and Maria O'Brien of New Mexico as Legal Committee Chair. Walt Baker of Utah will remain as Water Quality Committee Chair.

Western Governors' Association (WGA) Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: 2010 Progress Report

The 2010 Progress report, prepared by WSWC and accepted by the WGA, summarizes activities and events implementing the recommendations in the 2006 WGA *Water Report* and the 2008 WGA *Next Steps* report. The report is focused on six policy areas: Water Policy and Growth, Water to Meet Future Demands, Water Infrastructure Needs, Indian Water Rights, Climate Change Impacts, and Endangered Species Act. The WestFAST Declaration of Cooperation is a featured highlight. To read the entire 2010 report, go to www.westgov.org/wswc/wswc_2010_complete%20-compressed.pdf

In addition, WestFAST completed a report on federal activities that complements WSWC 2010 Report. To read the federal report, go to <http://www.westgov.org/wswc/WestFAST/westfast%20summary%2010jun18.pdf>.

WestFAST Completes Water-Climate Change Program Inventory

In support of one of the major policy areas in the 2008 WGA *Next Steps* Report, WestFAST members conducted an inventory of the current water science and water management climate change activities of its member agencies. The Inventory shares a "snapshot" of information on Federal climate change programs that are relevant to western water managers. To read the entire report, go to www.westgov.org/wswc/WestFAST/climate%20change%20inventory%20june%202010%20final.pdf

NASA and DOE Join WestFAST

WestFAST welcomes two new members to the team: the Department of Energy and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The agencies are currently in the process of appointing WestFAST representatives.

Drought/Climate Services Workshop

Over the last two years, the WGA and the WSWC have worked with a diverse group of federal, tribal, state, and local partners from the public and private sectors to solicit decision-makers' priority needs for drought and water information. A national workshop is scheduled for September 14-15, 2010 in Washington, DC. Invited speakers include Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer, NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco, Representative Grace Napolitano, and state, federal, NGO, and academic drought and climate experts. The meeting will focus particular attention on coordinating drought and related climate services and response among federal agencies and at federal, state, tribal, and non-governmental intersections in order to meet priority needs.

WGA plans to submit information gathered during this and two previous workshops to NOAA as they continue to work on development of the National Integrated Drought System and the National Climate Service.

Save the Date

Western Water Resources Infrastructure Strategies Symposium is scheduled for Nov. 8-10, 2010, in San Antonio, TX. Details and agenda will soon be available as a link from the WSWC website <http://www.westgov.org/wswc/meetings.html>.

WestFAST

Eleven federal agencies comprise WestFAST. The Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have signed a Declaration of Cooperation to assist the WSWC.



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