

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

February 2013

EPA Releases “Equitable Development” Report As Part of its Sustainability Program

Under its Smart Growth initiative, EPA recently released a report entitled *Creating Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable Communities: Strategies for Advancing Smart Growth, Environmental Justice, and Equitable Development*. This report describes seven potential methods for connecting environmental justice, smart growth, and equitable development:

1. Facilitate Meaningful Community Engagement in Planning and Land Use Decisions
2. Promote Public Health and a Clean and Safe Environment
3. Strengthen Existing Communities
4. Provide Housing Choices
5. Provide Transportation Options
6. Improve Access to Opportunities and Daily Necessities
7. Preserve and Build on the Features That Make a Community Distinctive

It also provides recommendations for land use and community design strategies with the goal of bringing together smart growth, environmental justice, and equitable development principles and that community-based organizations, local and regional decision-makers, developers, and others to revitalize their communities.

Other EPA Sustainable Development Programs

The EPA operates a program entitled, “[Smart Growth Implementation Assistance](#).” Under this program, communities receive direct technical assistance from a team of national experts in one of two areas: policy analysis (e.g., reviewing state and local codes, school siting guidelines, transportation policies) or public participatory processes (e.g., visioning, design workshops, alternative analysis, build-out analysis). EPA provides the assistance through a federally-funded contractor team, not a direct grant to the community. Through a multiple-day site visit and a detailed final report, the multi-disciplinary teams provide information to help the community achieve its goal of encouraging growth that fosters economic progress and environmental protection.

Another EPA initiative entitled “[Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities](#)” provides technical assistance to selected local or tribal governments, using a variety of tools. The purpose of delivering these tools is to stimulate a discussion about growth and development and strengthen local capacity to implement sustainable approaches. Each “tool” includes the following:

- An agenda, presentations, or exercises that help facilitate discussion around a series of inputs and outputs.
- Data or information from the community that can be analyzed, resulting in potential next steps for policy change.
- An action-oriented process that leads to a set of potential next steps.

Each technical assistance project in a community includes:

- Public engagement through a one or two-day workshop.
- Direct consultation with relevant decision-makers.
- A memo outlining specific steps the community could take to implement the ideas generated during the site visit.
- Technical assistance will be delivered by EPA staff and EPA-hired consultant teams.

As part of this initiative, EPA provides grants to four nonprofit organizations with extensive expertise in sustainable communities: Forterra, Global Green USA, Project for Public Spaces, and Smart Growth America. These grantees offer assistance to communities using the “tools” that the grantees have chosen or developed themselves. In 2012, EPA’s Building Blocks grantees provided assistance to 54 communities. In 2013, at least 40 additional communities are expected to receive assistance.

Another EPA sustainability initiative is the “[Partnership for Sustainable Communities](#).” On June 16, 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the EPA joined together to help communities nationwide improve access to low-cost housing, increase transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities works to coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments. Further, the partnership agencies incorporate principals of sus-

tainable development into federal funding programs, policies, and future legislative proposals.

Western States Update

On February 4, the WSWC joined 51 other water policy, industry, and environmental organizations in a letter to leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, urging them to enable the USGS to fully implement the National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) and restore the USGS' capacity to fully match non-federal cost-share investments in the Cooperative Water Program (CWP). The letter furthers longstanding WSWC positions that support NSIP and CSP. It notes 275 of the 4,750 stream and tidal gages needed to fully implement NSIP have not been installed, while almost 1,000 that were installed have been discontinued. Further, "87% of the active NSIP streamgages still do not have reliable NSIP funding and depend upon a patchwork of less predictable funds."

Agency News

02/01/2013: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes to List Wolverines as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act; see [link](#).

02/04/2013: Secretary of the Interior Appoints 13 Members to National Geospatial Advisory Committee; see [link](#).

02/05/2013: 7th Annual USACE Report on the Use of Environmental Conflict Resolution Published; see [link](#).

02/06/2013: New Smart Phone App Lets Public Report Rain, Hail, Sleet and Snow to NOAA; see [link](#).

02/07/2013: NOAA Research Finds New Way to Identify Which El Niño Events Will Have Biggest Impact on U.S. Winter Weather; see [link](#).

02/07/2013: Interior Department Releases Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan; see [link](#).

02/11/2013: NASA Launches New Earth Observation Satellite to Continue 40-Year Legacy; see [link](#).

02/11/2013: Interior Prepares to Conduct Landsat 8 Scientific Programs After Successful Launch of Latest Earth-Observing Satellite; see [link](#).

02/11/2013: President Signed Bill Making Monument 59th National Park; see [link](#).

02/12/2013: NOAA Fisheries Finds ESA Listing of Alaska Cold-Water Corals is Not Warranted; see [link](#).

02/12/2013: USBR - Federal, California Agencies Confer on Short-term, Long-term Measures to Address Protection of Threatened Species and Reduced Water Deliveries from Bay Delta; see [link](#).

02/13/2013: EPA Invites Communities to Apply for Smart Growth Assistance; see [link](#).

02/13/2013: Forecasts Predict Continued Dry Conditions in Western States; see [link](#).

02/14/2013: Potential Benefits and Drawbacks of Merging the National Marine Fisheries Service into the Fish and Wildlife Service; see [link](#).

02/14/2013: U.S. Department of the Interior Hosts First Meeting of the U.S. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Multi-Stakeholder Group; see [link](#).

02/15/2013: Forest Service Seeks Public Input on Planning Rule Directives; see [link](#).

02/18/2013: Salazar, LaHood, Hickenlooper Announce \$1.7 Million Grant for Key Portion of Rocky Mountain Greenway; see [link](#).

02/19/2013: New Maps Provide Crucial Information for Water Managers; see [link](#).

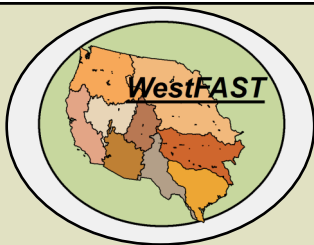
02/20/2013: Earthquake Catastrophes and Fatalities Projected to Rise in Populous 21st Century; see [link](#).

02/20/2013: Message to the Department from Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta on the Preparations for Potential Sequestration on March 1 and Furlough Notifications; see [link](#).

02/26/2013: USGS Estimates 162 Billion Short Tons of Recoverable Coal in the Powder River Basin; see [link](#).

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- **March 6, 2013:** WestFAST Principals' Meeting, Washington DC.
- **April 3-5, 2013:** WSWC Spring Council Meeting, Denver, CO.
- **June 24-26, 2013:** WSWC Summer Council Meeting, Casper, WY.
- **October 2-4, 2013:** WSWC Fall Council Meeting, Deadwood, SD.



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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