

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

January 2013

President Obama Issues an Inaugural Call for Environmental Action

Washington DC—January 21, 2013

At his inaugural address, opening his second term as President of the United States of America, Barack Obama issued a call for increased government action to “respond to the threat of climate change,” explaining that “failure to do so would betray our children and future generations.” He warned that “none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires and crippling drought and more powerful storms.” He explained that “we will preserve our planet” by maintaining “our forests and waterways, our croplands, and snow-capped peaks.”

Later in his address he warned: “Progress does . . . require us to act in our time” because “we cannot afford delay.” He further warned, “We must act, knowing that our work will be imperfect.”

In conclusion, he mentioned the “power to set this country’s course” and the “obligation to shape the debates of our time.”

See full text of the [inaugural address](#).

Climate Change and Water Working Group Releases New Report

Washington DC—January 09, 2013

The federal Climate Change and Water Working Group (CCAWWG) released a new report entitled, “Short-Term Water Management Decisions: User Needs for Improved Climate, Weather, and Hydrologic Information.”

In drafting this report, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) described a critical need to identify potential enhancements in the development and use of monitoring and forecasting information within short-term water resources management beyond the use of current hydroclimatic



Photo: Frozen bend on the Provo River near the mouth at Utah Lake (Provo, Utah).

information (i.e. weather, climate, and water).

The report explains that its preparation is motivated by the potential impact that climate change may have on water resources. Furthermore, it explains that adapting to these impacts requires potential enhancements in short-term water resource management decisions through improvements in hydroclimate monitoring and prediction as well as in how information is utilized within management decision processes.

Also, the report identifies how Federal agencies, along with state, local, tribal and non-governmental organizations and agencies are working together to identify and respond to the needs of water resource managers in the face of changing climates. The report is broken into four categories: Monitoring Product Needs, Forecasting Product Needs, Understanding and Using Information Products in Water Management, and Information Services Enterprise.

See the full text of the [report](#) for more information.

Rulemaking to Define Clean Water Act Jurisdiction

Washington DC—January 2013

A recent Office of Management and Budget (OMB) listing shows that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are in the process of “developing a proposed rule for determining whether a water is protected by the Clean Water Act” (CWA).

Previous to the proposed rulemaking process, the agencies created draft guidance. In May 2011, EPA and USACE published for comment the “Draft Guidance Regarding Identification of Waters Protected by the Clean Water Act.” In February 2012, the EPA and USACE submitted the Final Guidance to the OMB for review. OMB has not released the Final Guidance but instead posted the listing for the proposed rulemaking.

The listing states: “After...SWANCC and Rapanos, the scope of ‘waters of the US’ protected under all CWA programs has been an issue of considerable debate and uncertainty. The Act has a single definition for ‘waters of the United States.’ As a result, these decisions affect the geographic scope of all CWA programs. SWANCC and Rapanos did not invalidate the current regulatory definition of ‘waters of the United States.’ However, the decisions established important considerations for how those regulations should be interpreted, and experience implementing the regulations has identified several areas that could benefit from additional clarification through rulemaking.”

See the [OMB listing](#) for more information. See also the [Draft Guidance](#) on the EPA website.

Western States Update

The Western States Water Council (WSWC) is in the process of preparing for visits to Washington DC during the week of March 4-8, 2013. WSWC members plan to meet with principals and representatives from individual agencies, and with members of Congress. Some issues on their agenda include: collecting and sharing water data; energy and water; extreme events (drought/flood); federal & state regulatory issues; state water rights; tribal water rights & federal water needs; and water infrastructure.

Agency News

01/02/2013: Service Identifies Important Habitat for Recovery of Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, see [link](#).

01/04/2013: Interior, Energy, EPA Commit to Cooperative Working Group to Achieve Shared Goals on Navajo Generating Station in Arizona, see [link](#).

01/08/2013: Army Corps of Engineers to Transform Civil Works Program, see [link](#).

01/09/2013: Interagency Report Published on Information Required for Short-Term Water Management Decisions, see [link](#).

01/10/2013: Federal Agencies Announce National Council to Build 21st Century Conservation Corps, see [link](#).

01/11/2013: BLM and Western States Land Commissioners Association Renew Commitment to Partnership, see [link](#).

01/14/2013: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Begins Commemoration of 40th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, see [link](#).

01/14/2013: NOAA Deploys High-tech Plane to Improve Winter Storm Forecasts, see [link](#).

01/16/2013: NOAA Gives \$3.5 Million to Help Two States Address Effects of Climate Change, see [link](#).

01/18/2013: Secretary Salazar Finalizes Plan to Establish Renewable Energy Zone on Public Lands in Arizona, see [link](#).

01/18/2013: EPA Proposal for Navajo Generating Station Cuts Harmful Emissions 84%, Improves Visibility at National Parks, Protects Public Health, see [link](#).

01/22/2013: USDA Appoints New Members to the Forest Resource Coordinating Committee, see [link](#).

01/22/2013: Less-than-Average Streamflow Possible for Some Drought-Affected States, see [link](#).

01/24/2013: EPA Details Results of \$100M Federal Effort to Clean up Navajo Uranium Contamination, see [link](#).

01/25/2013: EPA Releases New Report on Children's Health and the Environment in America, see [link](#).

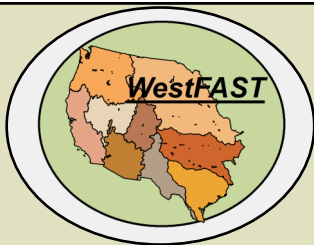
01/25/2013: Zuni Bluehead Sucker May Need Federal Protection, see [link](#).

01/25/2013: NASA Sets Media Events for Landsat Mission Launch From California, see [link](#).

01/28/2013: NOAA, USGS: Climate Change Impacts to U.S. Coasts Threaten Public Health, Safety and Economy, 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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