

**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

October 2013

## Shutdown Looms and Snow Falls on WSWC Fall Council Meeting in Deadwood, South Dakota

After a partial shutdown of the federal government prevented many federal agencies from sending presenters and representatives, Winter Storm Atlas (see [Weather Channel link](#)) brought an early closure to the Fall Council Meeting of the Western States Water Council (WSWC) in Deadwood, South Dakota. The WSWC shortened the meeting schedule to allow early departure on Thursday after the National Weather Service issued a severe storm warning. Fortunately, the condensed schedule still allowed for the discussion of important matters.

For example, on Wednesday, October 2, a panel from the Corps of Engineers responded to questions about the operation of dams along the Missouri River mainstem reservoir system. The panel included the following representatives from the Corps of Engineers: David Ponganis, Regional Director of Programs from the Northwestern Division (NWD); Jim Fredericks, Water Supply Business Line Manager from NWD; Christina Austin-Smith, Office of Council Attorney from NWD; and Tiffany Vanosdall, Planning Project Manager from the Omaha District.

On Thursday, October 3, the WSWC held the remainder of the meetings on a consolidated schedule. Mark Limbaugh, Managing Partner at the Ferguson Group, spoke about the Reclamation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2013 (RIFIA). On behalf of the North Bay Water Reuse Authority, he discussed application of RIFIA in the North Bay Water Reuse Program.

On behalf of Doug Kluck, Central Regional Climate Services Director for NOAA, Dennis Todey, the South Dakota State Climatologist, presented on the Enhanced Missouri River Monitoring System. He explained the value of the system in the context of the current cycles of drought and flooding. Other discussion items included:

- Upper Missouri Basin Soil Moisture & Snow Monitoring
- Drought Early Warning and Preparedness for the Missouri Basin (NIDIS)

- Missouri Basin Quarterly Climate Summary
- NOAA Tribal Engagement in the Missouri Basin

Ken Wolfenbarger, from the NASA JPL, discussed NASA remote sensing applications and research regarding groundwater, subsidence, and snow. As an illustration of capability, he demonstrated how an ASO time series of snow water equivalent from the Tuolumne Basin in 2013 can improve estimates for water management in California.

See this [link](#) for presentations and more information regarding the WSWC Fall Council Meeting in Deadwood, South Dakota.

## Partial Federal Government Shutdown Slows Federal News Releases

As a result of the federal budget impasse, there was a partial government shutdown of the federal government that impacted most of the twelve WestFAST agencies. During the partial shutdown, news releases from the various federal agencies slowed dramatically.

An agreement to end the partial shutdown extended funding of the federal government through 15 January 2014.

## Federal News

**10/01:** Bureau of Reclamation Shutdown Impacts; see [link](#).

**10/11:** National Park Service Enters Agreement with State of Utah to Re-open Eight National Parks; see [link](#).

**10/11:** National Park Service Enters Agreement with State of South Dakota to Re-open Mount Rushmore; see [link](#).

**10/11:** National Park Service Enters Agreement with State of Colorado to Re-open Rocky Mountain National Park; see [link](#).

**10/11:** National Park Service Enters Agreement with State of Arizona to Re-open Grand Canyon; see [link](#).

**10/17:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Re-Opens Following Government Shutdown; see [link](#).

**10/18:** U.S. Drought Monitor Update for October 15, 2013; see [link](#).

**10/21:** US Forest Service Seeks Comments on Year-Round Recreation Activities at Ski Areas; see [link](#).

**10/22:** BLM to Host First-Ever Competitive Auction to Develop Solar Energy on Public Lands; see [link](#).

**10/22:** Earthquake Swarm Continues in Central Oklahoma; see [link](#).

**10/23:** USDA Under Secretary Meets With South Dakota Farmers and Ranchers Impacted By Blizzard, Urges Farm Bill Passage; see [link](#).

**10/23:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endorses Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Lesser Prairie-Chicken Range-Wide Conservation Plan; see [link](#).

**10/24:** Service Extends Comment Periods for Gray and Mexican Wolf Proposals, Reschedules Public Hearings, Adds Hearing in Arizona; see [link](#).

**10/25:** EPA Awards \$400,000 to Communities to Reduce Water Pollution, Build Resilience to Climate Change / Communities in Rhode Island, Michigan, Nebraska, Indiana, Arizona, and South Carolina Will Receive Funding for Green Infrastructure; see [link](#).

**10/25:** The Effects of Space Weather on Aviation; see [link](#).

**10/28:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Protects Five Species of Birds in Colombia and Ecuador as Endangered; see [link](#).

**10/28:** Secretary Vilsack Highlights First-ever Report on USDA Efforts to Expand Agroforestry Practices on Farms, Ranches and Woodlands; see [link](#).

**10/28:** The People's Choice: Americans Would Pay to Help Monarch Butterflies; see [link](#).

**10/29:** Pilot Program Launched to Increase Public Involvement in USACE Flood Risk Management Activities; see [link](#).

**10/31:** Media Invited to View New Earth Science Satellite before Shipment to Japan; see [link](#).

**10/31:** NOAA: Primary GOES-R instrument Cleared for Installation Onto Spacecraft; see [link](#).

## State News

**10/02:** Life on the Range Examines Impact of Elk Complex Fire in Idaho; see [link](#).

**10/04:** Western States, Tribes Address Concerns about Army Corps Rulemaking on Surplus Water in Reservoirs; see [link](#).

**10/08:** South Dakota Digs Out After Massive Blizzard; see [link](#).

**10/09:** WGA Testifies at Endangered Species Act Forum in Washington; see [link](#).

**10/10:** Utah Reopening National Parks as Colorado, Arizona, South Dakota Consider Options; see [link](#).

**10/18:** WGA News: State Water Plan for Texas; Kansas Water Conference; 'Starting point' for Oregon Water Projects; see [link](#).

**10/23:** Western Governors support Congressional Reauthorization of Water Resources Reform and Development Act; see [link](#).

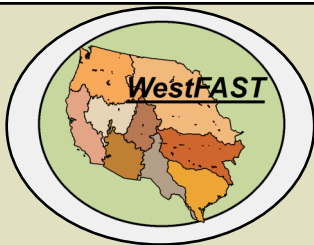
**10/28:** Fish & Wildlife Endorses Lesser Prairie Chicken Range-Wide Conservation Plan; see [link](#).

**10/29:** Western States Tops in Livability, Taxes, Business; see [link](#).

**10/30:** Interior Returns 'Sequestered' 2013 Mineral Royalty Payments to States; see [link](#).

## Upcoming WSWC Meetings & Events

- **April 1-4, 2014:** WSWC Spring Council Meeting and DC Roundtable, Washington DC.
- **July 2014:** WSWC Summer Council Meeting, Montana.
- **TBD:** WSWC Fall Council Meeting, Arizona.



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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