

Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) is a collaboration between 13 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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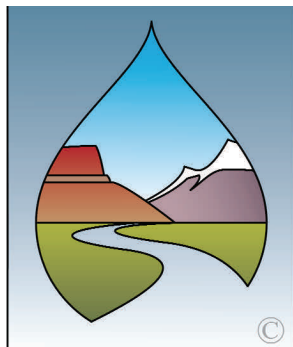


WSWC Priorities for New Administration

(WSWC/WestFAST 11/2/16)

The Western States Water Council (WSWC) has created a document outlining the WSWC's priorities for the incoming Administration.

It addresses general topics based on current WSWC Vision Statement. The WSWC has tried to incorporate comments received subsequent to our request at our last meeting in St. George, but some of those comments were much more program and regulation specific than the scope of this document. However, they could be used to inform future interactions with the new Administration.



Key Focus Areas Include:

Western Water Policy, State Primacy, and Cooperative Federalism – Western water law and policy are based on scarcity and the need to use water wisely. States are primarily responsible for water resources planning and management, protection, as well as the allocation of rights to develop and use water. Substantive consultations with state governments should proceed any federal water-related initiatives, or regulatory actions, and promote cooperative federalism.

The Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) – Created in 2008, is an effective, critical forum for addressing water resources needs and coordinating related federal and state efforts, with a dozen representatives from as many federal agencies.

Reliable Water Data – Sound decision-making depends on our ability to understand, monitor, predict, and adapt to changing water supplies and demands, as well as minimize the impact of droughts, floods and other extreme

events. All levels of government must prioritize the collection, analysis and open sharing of reliable data regarding water availability, use and quality.

Federal Water Rights Claims – The adjudication of water rights claims is absolutely essential for the orderly allocation and administration of water rights. This includes waters claimed by the United States on behalf of tribes, parks, forests, military bases, or for other federal purposes, under either state or federal law.

Indian Water Rights Settlements – Tribes throughout the West have water right claims that could potentially displace state water rights, and tribes often lack the resources to quantify and subsequently develop valid water rights, creating uncertainty that hinders effective water management and planning to the detriment of both Indian and non-Indian communities, States and the federal government.

Water Infrastructure Needs – Hundreds of federal dams, reservoirs, levees and related infrastructure are the primary source of water for numerous regions and communities throughout the West, providing essential benefits such as drinking water, irrigation for food and fiber, hydropower, flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat. Much of this infrastructure is aging and in dire need of maintenance, repair or replacement to protect public safety and promote public welfare.

Funding Western Water Needs – Addressing the water needs of the West will require higher and more consistent levels of federal investments, including greater appropriation of Reclamation Fund revenues, to finance federal western water and power projects.

Hard Rock Mine Remediation – Numerous abandoned hard rock mines impact water quality across the West and clean-up efforts need to be supported. Further, potential "Good Samaritan" liability concerns must be addressed.

For further information, please contact the WSWC office at (801) 685-2555.

EPA Releases Plan to Improve Drinking Water



(EPA 11/30/16)

On November 30, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a plan that serves as a national call to action, urging all levels of government, utilities, community organizations, and other stakeholders to work together to increase the safety and reliability of drinking water.

“Ensuring that all Americans have access to safe drinking water is an absolute top priority for EPA,” said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. “We must work collectively to seize opportunities for progress, partnership, and innovation in order to continue to provide our citizens with the safest drinking water in the world.”

The plan includes six priority areas and identifies proposed actions for each area:



Water Fountain – USA Today

- *Building capacity for water infrastructure financing and management in disadvantaged, small, and environmental justice communities;
- *Advancing oversight of the Safe Drinking Water Act;
- *Strengthening source water protection and resilience of drinking water supplies;
- *Addressing unregulated contaminants;
- *Improving transparency, public education, and risk communication on drinking water safety; and
- *Reducing lead risks.

The plan reflects input from state, local, and tribal government officials; drinking water utilities; community groups; and environmental organizations. While EPA and partners have already begun to take some actions, others will require additional resources and further stakeholder engagement. EPA recognizes that partnership and collaboration across all levels of government, utilities, the private sector, and the public will be essential to the success of the plan. In tandem with the development of the plan, the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) undertook a study on science and technology for drinking water safety. The PCAST’s recommendations complement and support EPA’s plan.

Today, nearly every American depends on 152,000 public drinking water systems and consumes more than one billion glasses of tap water a day. EPA has established drinking water standards for more than 90 contaminants, and compliance data show that more than 90 percent of the nation’s water systems consistently meet those standards. While America’s drinking water remains among the safest in the world, the drinking water sector faces a growing array of challenges including aging infrastructure, limited funding and management capacity, emerging contaminants, pollution of source water, and the impacts from drought and other climate events.

For further information on the plan see: <https://www.epa.gov/>

[ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-action-plan.](#)

Stormwater Management Importance Underscored in Los Angeles Basin Study

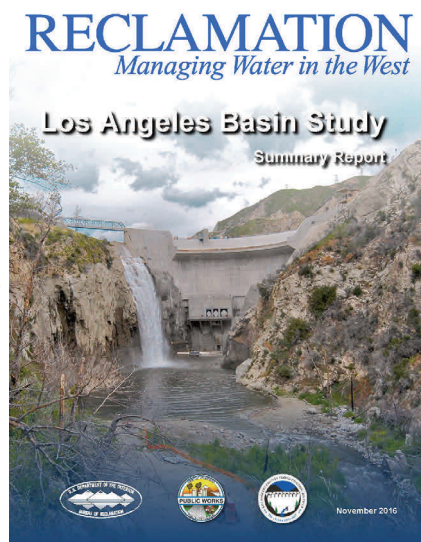
(BOR 11/17/16)

Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Estevan López has released the Los Angeles Basin Study that looks at the changing demographics, climate change and competing interests for available water supplies and identifies options to meet the water needs of the Los Angeles area into the future. The study found that there is a potential water supply deficit for the region of approximately 160,000 acre-feet per year by 2035 and 440,000 acre-feet-per-year or 25-percent less water than the region is projected to need in 2095.

“Reclamation and our partners in the Los Angeles area are working to assure a sustainable water supply now and into the future,” Commissioner López said. “The basin study provides our partners the information that they need to further study the various alternatives for future water supplies while reducing their reliance on the state water project and the Colorado River Aqueduct.”

The study compiled and assessed the potential impacts of climate change in the Los Angeles area. These impacts include possible variations in precipitation and changes in the timing and intensity of storms through 2095, temperature increases of 3.5 degrees to 4 degrees Fahrenheit along the coast and 4.5 degrees to 5.5 degrees Fahrenheit in the mountains and desert, an increase in sea-level of 5-24 inches by 2050 and 17-66 inches by 2100, and an increased wildfire risk. The Los Angeles area relies on imported water from the state water project and the Colorado River for about 57 percent of its current water supply.

These imported supplies may be negatively impacted in the future by climate change, drought, and increasing demands. To address this increased uncertainty, the study focused on local water supply sources such as groundwater, which is an important component of the area’s overall water supply portfolio.



<https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/bsp/docs/fy2017/LABasinStudySummaryReport.pdf>



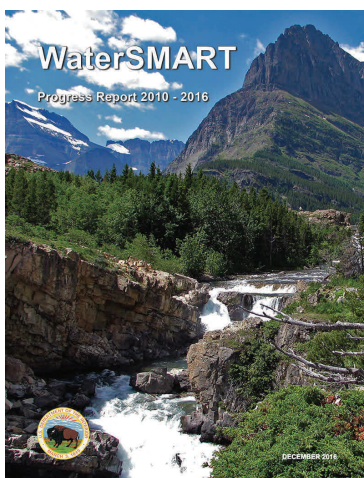
The Los Angeles County Flood Control District, a partner in this study with Reclamation, placed a strong emphasis on stormwater capture for groundwater recharge. In addition, recycled water and other local supplies were studied to assist with groundwater recharge. These adaptive concepts were divided among local, regional, storage solutions and management solutions.

The Los Angeles Basin covers approximately 2,040 square miles and features a population of 9.9 million people that is projected to increase to more than 11 million through the next several decades. Nearly 92 percent of Los Angeles County's population resides within the basin, more than one-fourth of the State of California's 38.8 million residents.

This basin study was conducted as part of Reclamation's WaterSMART Program and was cost-shared between Reclamation, Los Angeles County Flood Control District and 20 local project partners. It is available on Reclamation's Basin Study Program website at <http://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/bsp/>.

WaterSMART is the Department of the Interior's sustainable water initiative that uses the best available science to improve water conservation and help water resource managers identify strategies to narrow the gap between supply and demand.

For more information on the WaterSMART program, visit www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART. Media Contact: Jack Simes, (951) 695-5310 and Peter Soeth, (303) 445-3615.



Building Resilience to Climate Change One Landscape at a Time

(NOAA 11/17/17)

A *Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative* report and companion [website](#) were released today highlighting the efforts of seven partnerships to build resilience of natural resources in the United States. These partnerships demonstrate the benefits of using existing collaborative, landscape-scale conservation approaches to address climate change and other resource management challenges.

The Initiative is a key part of the President's Interagency Council on Climate Preparedness and Resilience's Priority Agenda for Enhancing the Climate Resilience of America's Natural Resources ([Priority Agenda](#)), a first of its kind, comprehensive commitment across the Federal Government to support resilience of America's vital natural resources.

The Priority Agenda directs federal agencies to work with states, tribes and other partners to select flagship large-scale geographic regions and identify priority areas for conservation, restoration, or other investments to build resilience in vulnerable regions, enhance carbon storage capacity, and support management needs. It also directed the agencies and their partners to identify and map an initial list of priority areas within each of the selected geographic landscapes or regions.



"America's natural resources are vulnerable to many threats, including invasive species, habitat loss, pollution, and extreme weather. Climate change is compounding the impacts from these challenges," said Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director of White House Council on Environmental Quality. "The Resilient Lands and Water Initiative provides our nation's natural resource managers with lessons learned and tools that can help them prepare their own landscapes for a rapidly changing future."

The culmination of this nearly two-year effort is highlighted in the final report and website, which feature the accomplishments of the seven partnerships and describes overarching challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations. The website also provides links to decision support tools, maps, and related websites developed by the individual partnerships.

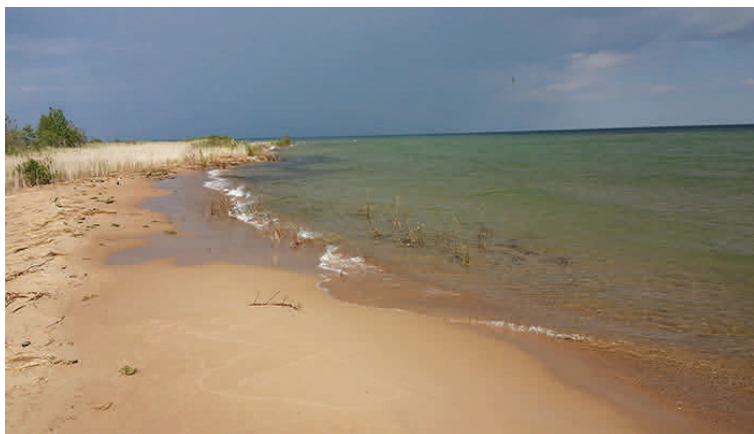
Sierra Nevada snowpack from the California Headwaters Partnership. (Sierra Nevada Conservancy)

"This initiative demonstrates the power of partnerships across state, federal, and private organizations that are stronger together in developing solutions that will build resilience in our natural resources and communities and adapt to a changing climate," said Kevin Hunting, Chief Deputy Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.



By sharing successes and lessons learned, the Initiative will encourage the development of similar resilience efforts in other areas across the country. Collectively, these will help build the resilience of our nation's valuable natural resources and the people, businesses and communities that depend on them in regions vulnerable to climate change and related challenges.

"The Resilient Lands and Waters effort has helped federal and state partners focus on the concrete and practical needs of local partners, and to start building the kind of trusting relationships we need to make progress on really challenging natural resource issues," said Monte Marti, District Manager of the Snohomish Conservation District.



The Lake Huron shoreline at Tawas Point, Michigan. This area is part of the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Resilient Lands and Water Partnership. (NOAA-Heather Stirratt)

The Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative supports the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy (NFWPCAS) whose first goal is to build and maintain an ecologically connected network of terrestrial, coastal and marine conservation areas that are likely to be resilient to climate change and support a broad range of fish, wildlife and plants under changing conditions.

Some of the partnerships' key deliverables include:
(control click on [LINK](#))

***California Headwaters** – U.S. Forest Service and Sierra Nevada Conservancy

***California's North-Central Coast and Russian River Watershed** – includes the Russian River Estuary and adjacent coastal areas [LINK](#)

***Crown of the Continent (northern Rocky Mountains)** - Crown Managers Partnership Creation [LINK](#)

***Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands (Lakes Huron & Erie)** – NOAA, states of Michigan and Ohio [LINK](#) and the upper Great Lakes Landscape Conservation, and Design Development of new coastal wetland [LINK](#)

***Hawaii (West Hawaii, West Maui, and He'eia (O'ahu) NO-**

AA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State of Hawaii and ESRI [LINK](#)

***Puget Sound's Snohomish River Watershed** – NOAA, USDA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service University of Washington and the State of Washington [flood control benefits of regional restoration link](#), and [Snohomish Estuary link](#), and [local climate risk analysis offsite link](#)

***Southwest Florida** – NOAA, Peninsular Florida LCC partners in a SW Florida landscape conservation design [LINK](#).

[Click here](#) for additional information on the Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative.

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More than 100 Million Trees Dead in CA (FS 11/18/16)

Millions of trees in the Sierras and Central Coast forests are stressed from higher temperatures, competition for water resources during this historic drought, and multiplying bark beetles. They simply can't withstand this deadly combination of stressors and are rapidly turning orange and dying. Even with the increased rainfall this past year, stressed trees will continue to die because while green, they have been invaded by bark beetles.

For further information, including pictures see: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/catreemortality/trees>.

Federal News

11/01: [Some Early 20th Century Earthquakes in Los Angeles Area Might Have Been Man-Made](#)

11/02: [EPA awards \\$3.9M to University of Texas for Water Infrastructure Modeling Research Center](#)

11/03: [Bureau of Reclamation Seeks Applicants for Four Water Treatment Research Funding Opportunities](#)

11/04: [Reclamation Releases Environmental Documents for Temporary Delivery of Central Valley Project Water to Property in Colusa County](#)

11/04: [Reclamation Extends Public Comment Period for Left and Right Powerhouses Modernization at Grand Coulee Dam](#)

11/07: [Reclamation Releases Draft Environmental Document for the Central California Irrigation District Water and](#)



Dead Trees in the Sierra – CNN.com

- [11/30: EPA Action Plan Outlines Ways to Improve Safety, Reliability of Nation's Drinking Water](#)
- [11/30: Navajo Tribal Utility Authority spending \\$6 million to bring six wastewater facilities into compliance](#)
- [11/29: EPA, BIA, and Choctaw Nation Celebrate Safer Drinking Water at Jones Academy](#)
- [11/29: EPA Provides \\$149,000 for Environmental Improvements in San Juan Community](#)

Energy Efficiency Grant Project

[11/09: Reclamation Commissioner Names Max Spiker as Senior Advisor for Hydropower and Electric Reliability Officer](#)

[11/16: Small Alpine Insects are Big Messengers of Climate Change](#)

[11/16: USGS Study Reveals Interactive Effects of Climate Change, Invasive Species on Native Fish](#)

[11/15: SF Bay-Delta Conference: Science for Solutions](#)

[11/15: Pacific coast marshes more resistant to rising seas than Atlantic](#)

[11/15: EPA updates standards for toxic pollutants in Washington waters](#)

[11/15: Bureau of Reclamation Releases Funding Opportunities for Drought Contingency Planning and Drought Resiliency Projects](#)

[11/16: Bureau of Reclamation Selects Three Projects to Receive Nearly \\$300,000 for Innovative Water Treatment Research Projects](#)

[11/17: The Bureau of Reclamation Releases Two WaterSMART Grants Funding Opportunities for Water Conservation and Energy Efficiency Projects](#)

[11/17: U.S. EPA awards \\$90,000 to San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy for hands on environmental education in Escondido Elementary Schools](#)

[11/17: Escambia County Board of Commissioners Receives \\$295,500 to Improve Water Quality](#)

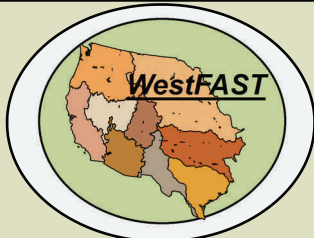
[11/19: Launch Day: Forecast Remains 90 Percent go](#)

[11/22: NASA Selects Launch Services for Global Surface Water Survey Mission](#)

[11/29: Reclamation Releases Environmental Documents for Horsefly Irrigation District's WaterSMART Grant Project](#)

[11/29: Reclamation Seeks Comments on Draft Criteria for New WaterSMART Water Marketing Funding Opportunity](#)

[11/29: Reclamation Releases Progress Report on Meeting Climate Change Adaptation Strategy](#)



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Check out the WestFAST Web Site: <http://www.westernstateswater.org/westfast>