



July 2019

WestFAST News

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Chair – Kevin Werner; Vice Chair – Patrick Lambert; Federal Liaison – Deborah Lawler

NRCS, UC Davis Launch Improved SoilWeb Smartphone App

NRCS 07/08/19. PORTLAND, Ore. - Wondering about the best place to build a pond, where to dig post holes, or the crop production capability of your land? Now there's an app for that!

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the University of California at Davis Soil Resource Laboratory have launched the SoilWeb app version 2.0 for Android and iOS devices. SoilWeb delivers GPS-based soil information for the exact soil the user is standing on, allowing users to access over 120 years of soils data from the world's largest soils database.

SoilWeb is available as a free download on Google Play [offsite link image](#) and the Apple App Store [offsite link image](#).

“SoilWeb reached a new milestone this year when it was integrated with Google Maps and designed to scale across any device, desktop, tablet or smart phone,” said NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr. “SoilWeb app is a portable interface to authoritative digital soil survey data from NRCS, giving users access to practical detailed scientific soil information on the go.”

Newest tool in the shed

The app provides gardeners, landscapers and realtors with information relating to soil types and how to optimally use the soil. Although soil survey information can be used for general farm, local, and wider area planning, a professional onsite evaluation may be needed to supplement this information in some cases.

SoilWeb provides users with information relating to soil types that are associated with their location. The images are then linked to information about the different types of soil profiles, soil taxonomy, land classification, hydraulic and erosion ratings and soil suitability ratings.

“SoilWeb is a great way to understand the landscape you live in,” said Anthony O’Geen, UC Davis Professor and Cooperative Extension Specialist in the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources. “Producing food, constructing structures and maintaining landscapes all depend on this little understood, but critical outermost layer of the earth’s crust, the soil.”

Deep knowledge

All the soil information in SoilWeb was collected from the National Cooperative Soil Survey, organized by NRCS, and accesses soil survey information the agency has been collecting since the 1890s. The resulting database, the largest such in

the world, makes it possible for soil scientists to generate specialized maps using computer-aided techniques.

O'Geen developed SoilWeb with NRCS Soil Scientist Dylan Beaudette, in 2010 when Beaudette was a Ph.D. student at UC Davis. The app was a popular download, but by 2017 was no longer in compliance with requirements set by Apple and Google. Frequent users of SoilWeb had to rely on the web-based version from 2017 to June 2019.

Any users with the older version on their phone can do a simple update to access the newest version. The app is a product of a 14-year partnership between NRCS and UC Davis College of Land, Air and Water Resources.

NOAA seeks public input on future priorities for research and development

Draft research and development plan is open for public comment until August 26

NOAA 07/12/19. NOAA is asking the general public and our stakeholders for comments on a new draft plan that outlines agency priorities for research and development from 2020 to 2026.

The draft was written based on input from across NOAA as well public comments received earlier this year to a request for public suggestions prior to the plan being written.

The draft outlines three key overarching priorities, which are:

--Reducing societal impacts from severe weather and other environmental phenomena

--Sustainable use and stewardship of ocean and coastal resources

--A robust and effective research, development, and transition enterprise

Within each of these priorities, there are multiple objectives.

Some examples include producing reliable and timely forecasts of seasonal and two-to-four week conditions for droughts, tornadoes, fires, coastal inundation, sea ice conditions and heat waves; developing next-generation fisheries and protected species assessments that incorporate the effects of climate change; and developing and implementing procedures to improve the public perception of and decisions in response to NOAA bulletins and warnings for severe weather, harmful algal blooms and safe maritime navigation.

The plan is designed to help NOAA and the public identify priorities and evaluate progress toward anticipated outcomes that will benefit the American public.

To read the draft, visit NOAA's website or please see the Federal Register Notice.

Public comments will be welcomed until August 26, 2019. You can submit your comments by email to noaa.rdplan@noaa.gov. Please include the subject line "NOAA R&D Plan Public Comment."

EPA Receives 51 Requests Totaling Over \$6 Billion for Third Round of WIFIA Funding

EPA 07/19/19. WASHINGTON – In response to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) third Notice of Funding Availability, the agency received 51 letters of interest, collectively

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requesting \$6.6 billion in Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding. This exceeds the \$6 billion that EPA is offering, demonstrating the critical need for investment in our nation's water infrastructure and strong interest in the WIFIA program.

“Since the WIFIA program's inception in 2017, EPA has received requests totaling \$21.7 billion for water infrastructure projects across the country – evidence of the urgent need to modernize our nation's infrastructure,” said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. “Through WIFIA, EPA is playing a critical role in President Trump's efforts to upgrade our nation's infrastructure in a manner that improves public health and environmental protections while creating good, local jobs. In 2019 alone, WIFIA could support the creation of up to 180,000 jobs and improve water quality for millions of Americans.”

Following a landmark 2018 program year, in which EPA received 62 letters of interest and invited 39 projects to apply for WIFIA loans, the agency received 51 new letters of interest for 2019. EPA is offering \$6 billion in loans that would help fund approximately \$12 billion in water infrastructure projects. The agency received letters from prospective borrowers located in 21 states, including 6 states for which no borrower had previously sought WIFIA loans. This brings the total number of states where WIFIA loans have been requested to 35, plus the District of Columbia and Guam.

For the first time, EPA announced water reuse and recycling as a WIFIA priority and several prospective borrowers submitted letters of interest to implement such projects. The funding requests also cover a wide variety of other topics, including wastewater, drinking water, desalination, stormwater management and combined approaches. The majority of prospective borrowers are municipal government agencies, while other

prospective borrowers include small communities, public-private partnerships and corporations. As the next step in this competitive process, EPA will evaluate the letters for project eligibility, credit worthiness, engineering feasibility and alignment with WIFIA's statutory and regulatory criteria. The agency will then identify projects it intends to finance and invite those selected entities to submit formal applications this fall. See the full list of letters of interest submitted.

Background

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014, the WIFIA program is a federal loan and guarantee program at EPA that aims to accelerate investment in the nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance for regionally and nationally significant projects. EPA's WIFIA program plays an important part in President Trump's infrastructure plan, which calls for expanding project eligibility.

To date EPA has issued nine loans totaling over \$2 billion in WIFIA credit assistance to help finance over \$5 billion for water infrastructure projects and create over 6,000 jobs. The WIFIA program has an active pipeline of pending applications and projects that will lead to billions of dollars invested in additional construction and create thousands of jobs. To learn more the 2019 WIFIA letters of interest submitted, visit <https://www.epa.gov/wifia/wifia-letters-interest>.

For more information about the WIFIA program, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wifia>.

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AWWA Manual on Drought Preparedness and Response

NOAA/NIDIS 07/24/19. There are many factors that contribute to water shortages in the United States. While some are not directly related to climate, such as population growth or aging infrastructure, a number of causes can be attributed to heat and drought. Since, 2012, many areas of the United States have experienced their hottest and driest years on record. According to NOAA, 2012 was the warmest year since 1895, and the four warmest years have occurred since 2012 (NOAA 2019). In dry years, many areas increase their reliance on groundwater, reducing the future availability of those supplies. The reliability of water deliveries has also diminished as uncertainty increases, whether related to climate change, regulatory actions, delivery system security, and other factors.

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) has published the second edition of the M60 manual, Drought Preparedness and Response, to help water managers facing water shortages. The manual illustrates how to employ tried-and-true strategies and tactics of drought mitigation, as well as introducing new tools and methods.

Drought and water shortage planning is not just a best management practice for a water supplier; it is a requirement in a growing number of states and water management districts. A water shortage plan (WSP) enables a water supplier to assess the risks and reduce the vulnerability of a community to water shortage impacts and to establish priorities that will provide water for public health and safety and minimize impacts on economic activity, environmental resources, and the region's lifestyle.

M60 can help a water supplier meet regulatory requirements for a water shortage plan (WSP). The manual provides a step-by-step process to anticipate

and respond to water shortages through the following structured planning process:

- Step 1: Form a water shortage response team
- Step 2: Forecast supply in relation to demand
- Step 3: Balance supply and demand and assess mitigation options
- Step 4: Establish triggering levels
- Step 5: Develop a staged demand reduction program
- Step 6: Adopt the plan
- Step 7: Implement the plan

The manual was written by water professionals experienced with drought, including Veva Deheza, Executive Director with NIDIS. The manual is available on awwa.org.

Federal Officials Announce Priority Actions Supporting Long-Term Drought Resilience

RECLAMATION, EPA 07/31/19. WASHINGTON — Today, senior administration officials participated in the Second National Drought Forum where they announced Priority Actions Supporting Long-Term Drought Resilience. This document outlines key ways in which federal agencies support state, tribal and local efforts to protect the security of our food supply, the integrity of critical infrastructure, the resilience of our economy, and the health and safety of our people and ecosystems.

The document was developed by the National Drought Resilience Partnership (NDRP), a federal collaborative formed to promote long-term drought resilience nationwide. While authority lies with the states to manage water resources, federal agencies play a key role in supporting states, tribes, communities, agriculture, industry, and the private sector owners and operators of critical national

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infrastructure to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from drought.

The following statements were released after today's panel:

"Under the leadership of President Trump, we are taking unprecedented steps at the federal level to coordinate and empower states, tribes, local communities, and water users to promote drought preparedness and resiliency and ensure reliable water supply throughout the West. The U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Reclamation play integral parts in this, whether it's the science or infrastructure piece of this equation," said U.S. Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Dr. Tim Petty.

"The Western states have experienced intense drought with the potential to severely impact agriculture, municipal water supplies and hydropower production. We've demonstrated that infrastructure investments, innovative approaches to conservation, and collaboration build drought resiliency and reduces risks," said Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman.

"We know we can accomplish more when we work together, and the National Drought Resilience Partnership facilitates collaboration among federal partners to help the country respond to drought and to prepare for the future" said U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey. "These priorities are a large part of our game plan to how we can protect our food and water supply, and to build resilience on our farms and ranches and in our communities and businesses"

"The impact of drought on public health and the environment is far reaching because it reduces both water quantity and water quality," said U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Assistant Administrator for Water David Ross. "Through EPA initiatives, such as the National Water Reuse

Action Plan, we are working to ensure a sufficient supply of clean water for the American people."

"Water quality and availability is a national issue and it is one that affects every American. Through this partnership, the data produced by the U.S. Geological Survey will be integrated into a comprehensive framework of information sharing that is flexible and responsive to the nation's decision-makers, ensuring every community understands drought preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency," said U.S. Geological Survey Director James Reilly.

"The National Drought Resilience Partnership is essential to the continued collaboration amongst federal agencies regarding the nation's water resources. I am committed to this partnership and will ensure the Corps' support to other agencies as they work drought-related issues and coordinate to reduce duplicative and redundant efforts," said U.S. Department of Army Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Ricky "R.D." James.

"The National Drought Resilience Partnership is inspiring action across the federal government. DOE is pleased to collaborate with other agencies to stimulate American innovation and technology solutions that address drought resilience through the Water Security Grand Challenge and other activities," said U.S. Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Daniel Simmons.

The NDRP and the document released today focus on fostering a national dialogue about how federal agencies can support these entities in building a more drought-resilient nation for sufficient water quality and quantity and a vibrant economy at the local level. NDRP categorizes its drought resilience efforts along six goal areas, which provide a framework to systematically address how the federal government supports building long-term drought resilience:

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- 1.Data Collection and Integration
- 2.Communicating Drought Risk to Critical Infrastructure
- 3.Drought Planning and Capacity Building
- 4.Coordination of Drought Activity
- 5.Market-based Approaches for Infrastructure and Efficiency
- 6.Innovative Water Use, Efficiency, and Technology

Background

Established in 2016, the NDRP is comprised of federal agencies that work together to leverage technical and financial federal resources, strengthen communication, and foster collaboration among its members to productively support state, tribal, and local efforts to build, protect, and sustain drought resilience capacity at regional and basin scales. The NDRP co-chairs are the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Agency. The additional interagency NDRP Member Agencies and offices include the Department of Defense; the Department of the Interior (DOI); the Department of Commerce; the Department of Energy; the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; the Office of Management and Budget; the Office of Science and Technology Policy; the National Economic Council; the Council on Environmental Quality; the National Security Council staff; and such other agencies or offices as the agencies set forth above, by consensus, deem appropriate. Currently, other offices include: the Office of Water Prediction, the National Weather Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Integrated Drought Information System, which all are within the Department of Commerce; the Bureau of Reclamation and the United States Geological Survey, within the DOI; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency – National Risk Management Center; the Centers for Disease Control; and the Federal Emergency Management

Agency. Member agencies collaborate to ensure successful outcomes with maximum efficiency and minimal duplication.

Upcoming Meetings

[WSWC Fall \(191st\) Meetings](#)

Breckenridge, CO

Beaver Run Resort & Conference Center

October 16-18, 2019

[Western Governors Association 2019 Winter Meeting](#)

Las Vegas, NV

December 13-14, 2019

[Western Governors Association 2020 Annual Meeting](#)

Medora, ND

June 29-July 2, 2020

Upcoming Workshops

[WSWC/NASA Technology Transfer for Water Management in the Western United States](#)

Irvine, CA

Embassy Suites by Hilton – Irvine Orange County Airport

August 7-9

[Symposium on the Settlement of Indian Reserved Water Rights Claims](#)

Funner, CA

Harrah's Resort Southern California

August 13-15, 2019

[Water Information Management Systems \(WIMS\) Workshop](#)

Fort Collins, CO

Hilton Fort Collins,

Sept. 16-19, 2019

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Other Federal News

NASA 06/26/19. [The Water Future of Earth's 'Third Pole'](#)

EPA 06/27/19. [U.S. EPA awards \\$175,000 to Nevada Division of Environmental Protection for abandoned mines program](#)

DOI 06/28/19. [Secretary Bernhardt Applauds Confirmation of Robert Wallace for Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks](#)

NOAA NCEI 07/01/19. [Recording Global Precipitation: CMORPH](#). A new Climate Data Record provides operational global precipitation data.

NOAA 07/01/19. [ENSO forecast mash-ups: What's the best way to combine human expertise with models?](#)

NRCS 07/01/19. [NRCS has received \\$150 million for nationwide obligation of WFPO funds in FY2019: draft proposals due July 15](#)

RECLAMATION 07/01/19. [Reclamation announces \\$29.1 million in WaterSMART grants to use water more efficiently](#). Projects will help communities bolster water supply

NOAA 07/02/19. [July 4th weekend forecast: Typical summer heat and humidity for most of U.S. Beware of excessive heat in parts of the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic and even Alaska](#)

RECLAMATION 07/02/19. [Janet White named Engineering & Laboratory Services Division Chief](#)

EPA 07/02/19. [EPA Releases Cyanobacteria Assessment Network \(CyAN\) Mobile Application in the Google Play™ Store](#)

NPS 07/03/19. [Jenny Lake Renewal Project](#)

WHITE HOUSE 07/08/19. [Remarks by President Trump on America's Environmental Leadership](#)

WHITE HOUSE 07/08/19. [President Donald J. Trump is Promoting a Clean and Healthy Environment for All Americans](#)

EPA 07/08/19. [U.S. EPA issues emergency order to Elk Creek, California, drinking water system](#)

WHITE HOUSE 07/09/19. [President Donald J. Trump Approves Oregon Disaster Declaration](#)

EPA 07/09/19. [Wheeler Highlights America's Environmental Progress](#)

NOAA 07/09/19. [Calculating the Cost of Weather and Climate Disasters. Seven things to know about NCEI's U.S. billion-dollar disasters data](#)

NOAA 07/09/19. [U.S. has its wettest 12 months on record – again](#)

NOAA 07/10/19. [Prepare for more downpours: Heavy rain has increased across most of the United States, and is likely to increase further](#)

NOAA 07/10/19. [U.S. ties record for number of high tide flooding days in 2018. New report cites El Nino and sea level rise as factors for expected increase in 2019](#)

RECLAMATION 07/11/19. [Reclamation seeks comment on proposed changes to its operations in California](#)

NPS 07/11/19. [July 18 Cooke City event to celebrate ecological restoration of Soda Butte Creek; Decade-long project brought together agency and community partners to restore creek flowing into Yellowstone](#)

BLM 07/15/19. [Rankin Basin Road closed due to flash flood damage](#)

RECLAMATION 07/15/19. [Reclamation awards \\$5.1 million in research for new ways to desalinate and treat water](#)

RECLAMATION 07/15/19. [Reclamation tests Friant Dam spillway](#)

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NPS 07/15/19. [Lake Mead 2019 Photo Contest - Love Your Lakes](#)

EPA 07/16/19. [EPA requires Forest Service to close 15 cesspools in Arizona's national forests](#)

NPS 07/16/19. [Dogs to raise awareness about Aquatic Invasive Species in Grand Teton and Yellowstone](#)

WHITE HOUSE 07/17/19. [President Donald J. Trump Approves Texas Disaster Declaration](#)

WHITE HOUSE 07/17/19. [Seven Nominations Sent to the Senate \(Aurelia Skipwith – Director, USFWS\)](#)

RECLAMATION 07/17/19. [Brent C. Esplin named director for Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region](#)

EPA 07/17/19. [EPA awards South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources over \\$2.5 million to improve water quality and watershed health throughout the state](#)

EPA 07/17/19. [U.S. EPA requires U.S. Lubricants Inc. to protect Los Angeles waterways from oil spills](#)

DOI 07/17/19. [Secretary Bernhardt Applauds Nomination of Aurelia Skipwith to be Director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If confirmed, Skipwith would be the first African American to hold the position](#)

NPS 07/17/19. [Drainfield Reconstruction at Heart O' the Hills Campground to Begin July 29 for Two Weeks](#)

NOAA 07/18/19. [June 2019 was hottest on record for the globe. Antarctic sea ice coverage shrank to new record low](#)

NPS 07/18/19. [Duane Bubac selected as Yellowstone's next Chief of Facility Management and Operations](#)

RECLAMATION 07/18/19. [Reclamation reduces duration of Guernsey silt run](#)

RECLAMATION 07/22/19. [Reclamation seeks public input to reduce salinity and improve water quality on the Gould Canal](#)

NRCS 07/24/19. [NRCS Offers more than \\$200 Million in Emergency Funding to Restore Flood-Prone Lands: 11 states identified to invest in floodplain easements](#)

EPA 07/24/19. [EPA awards Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality \\$859,000 grant to protect water quality. EPA partners with the state to protect and restore watersheds, streams and groundwater](#)

NOAA 07/25/19. [Coming to pay per view: Reigning champ ocean vs. the scrappy land](#)

RECLAMATION 07/25/19. [Reclamation advances water delivery project for Navajo and Jicarilla Apache Nations with contract negotiations for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project's Cutter Lateral](#)

RECLAMATION 07/25/19. [Reclamation seeks comments on plan to ensure San Luis Reservoir water reliability. Proposed Pacheco Reservoir expansion to address algae-related impacts on water supply and delivery](#)

NOAA 07/29/19. [At a California oyster hatchery, farming native seaweed improved water quality](#)

EPA 07/30/19. [U.S. EPA Orders Sutter County Public Water System \(CA\) to Reduce Arsenic in Drinking Water](#)

EPA 07/31/19. [Federal Officials Announce Priority Actions Supporting Long-Term Drought Resilience](#)

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