

JULY 2021



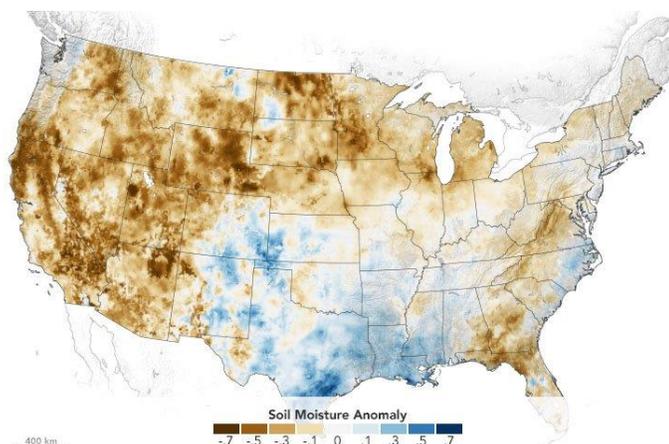
# WestFAST News

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Chair – Roger Gorke; Federal Liaison Officer – Heather Hofman

## [NASA Strengthens Our Resilience to Drought](#)

NASA 7/7/21



The USDA-NASA Crop-CASMA product, co-developed by NASA's Western Water Applications Office, shows [soil moisture anomalies](#) — where moisture was above or below normal — across the continental U.S. in early June 2021.

The American west is in the grip of an [exceptional drought](#). Following one of the planet's [hottest years on record](#), and with rainfall and snowfall in the western U.S. well below average, water managers, policy makers, government agencies and scientists are facing strapped water supplies and anticipating potentially devastating wildfires.

Using its satellites, aircraft and computer models, NASA is helping water managers respond to these increasingly dry times. Our new [drought resource page](#) highlights some of NASA's eyes on the drought, which are helping farmers, reservoir managers and decision makers [track and monitor the ongoing drought](#), [predict how much water will](#)

[be available](#), and [help improve how we use the water we have](#). The page will be updated as new insights emerge.

Underpinning all of this is NASA's [expertise in water science](#), our [partnerships](#) with water managers across the country, and our leadership in space and remote-sensing technology.

*By Amber Jenkins*

## [New NOAA Climate Council to enhance delivery of climate science and services](#)

NOAA 7/21/21



A collage of typical climate and weather-related events: heatwaves, drought, hurricanes, wildfires and changes in sea ice coverage. (NOAA)

Today NOAA announced the creation of a new NOAA Climate Council, which will leverage the agency's resources and expertise in support of the whole-of-government approach to addressing the climate crisis.

The Climate Council is composed of senior leaders at the highest levels from across the agency, and provides recommendations to the NOAA Administrator on the agency's climate-related mission, resource, and policy priorities. By coordinating climate work across NOAA and partners, the Council will strengthen NOAA's climate services and bolster existing coordination activities. The Council will ensure that critical environmental information and services provided by NOAA to the American people keep pace with increasing demand and are delivered effectively and equitably to all communities.

“Addressing the climate crisis is a top priority for me and is critical for our nation's economic success,” said Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo. “The NOAA Climate Council is a critical component of meeting the urgency of this moment. Ultimately, the entire nation will be better positioned to respond to our changing climate as a result of NOAA's efforts.”

“The climate crisis raises the urgency to ensure all of NOAA's climate-related activities are well-coordinated and provide maximum value to every person, community, and business,” said Rick Spinrad, Ph.D., NOAA Administrator. “By closely coordinating NOAA's climate science and services, we can more effectively help communities adapt to a changing climate, while also creating conditions for economic growth and innovation.”

The NOAA Climate Council will address the following initial priorities:

- Ensuring NOAA's trusted and authoritative climate science and services are foundational to the nation's adaptation, mitigation, and resilience efforts;
- Advancing the equitable delivery of NOAA's climate products and services to all communities, especially those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; and

- Coordinating NOAA's climate portfolio within the Department of Commerce and with other agencies and partners to leverage one another's expertise and enhance the value of collaboration and innovation toward a climate-ready nation.

From NOAA's early roots in coastal mapping, weather prediction, and marine conservation in the 1800s, to the agency's current mission to observe, predict, and communicate environmental change, NOAA science drives the decisions Americans make every day. NOAA's climate and environmental experts work with communities and businesses across the country — including helping coastal communities [adapt to sea level rise](#); providing critical early warnings about [drought](#) to farmers, rural residents and tribal and indigenous communities; working with communities to [map heat inequities](#) in urban areas; and collecting and storing the authoritative record of [greenhouse gas measurements](#) and [historical weather, ocean, and climate data](#).

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## [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers releases Natural Resources Management Strategic Plan](#)

ACOE 7/28/21



**WASHINGTON** - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers today released a Natural Resources Management Strategic Plan that provides a framework for the future of the USACE Natural Resources Management (NRM) program. The plan ensures wise management of public access to USACE lands and waters in a manner that protects all project purposes and mission areas through responsible outdoor recreation, environmental conservation and land use management while partnering with communities to serve the American people.

USACE averages more than 262 million visits annually to its more than 400 lake and river projects in 43 states. These projects provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities for people of all ages along with significant economic benefits to surrounding communities and the nation. Visitors to USACE projects spent approximately \$12.7 billion and supported 210,000 jobs in 2019. In addition to recreation, USACE projects protect, preserve and restore significant ecological and cultural resources on 12 million acres of lands and waters nationwide while balancing land use activities.

The 2021-2031 NRM Strategic Plan provides field managers with a roadmap for the next decade of natural resources management within the USACE Recreation and Environmental Stewardship programs.

The plan identifies four main strategic priorities:

- **Workforce** – Build and cultivate a world-class team equipped to deliver high-quality solutions.
- **Communication** – Effectively communicate the Natural Resources Management mission to enhance understanding, support and appreciation of the program by internal and external audiences.
- **Resourcing** – Apply consistently informed decision-making practices, adaptive approaches and efficient use of available

resources to deliver a quality Natural Resources Management program.

- **Program Delivery** – Support and deliver innovations that sustain the Natural Resources Management program to meet current demands and future challenges.

The plan encompasses all NRM programs and activities. Its goals and strategic priorities consider economic, social, environmental, financial and utilization trends as well as examine existing program capabilities and limitations to ensure the plan is adaptable, responsive and able to be implemented across the NRM program both geographically and functionally. Stakeholders and partners will be engaged throughout implementation of the plan.

“We are proud of the long history of recreation services and environmental stewardship that USACE has provided the public. In order to continue to provide these services as a world class organization, we have developed a plan that builds on the strengths of our program and provides a focused vision for the future.” said Thomas P. Smith, chief, Operations & Regulatory Community of Practice, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

For more information on the NRM Strategic Plan, visit <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/nrmstrategicplan/index.cfm>

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**[Reclamation launches website with real-time information, interactive resources on drought](#)**

**BOR 7/29/21**



New drought website: real time information and interactive resources

**WASHINGTON** — The Bureau of Reclamation launched a [new web portal today](#) that provides real-time drought-related information and details of drought actions taken in collaboration with stakeholders and partners. The science-based web portal is designed to increase public and media understanding of drought conditions and the all-of-government efforts to mitigate these conditions by the Biden-Harris administration.

The features of the interactive multi-page platform highlight Reclamation’s efforts and investments to mitigate drought impacts, increase drought resiliency, reduce reliance on declining water sources and increase the efficiency of water deliveries. The portal is user friendly and provides easy-to-understand features, explanations and current information on cutting-edge science, drought actions, current conditions and climate change visualizations that will help the public understand the complex drought conditions in the West.

“Reclamation recognizes the 2021 water year is a historically difficult year for the 17 Western states and for Tribes, fisheries, wildlife, farmers and ranchers, and communities. We hope this tool will be a helpful resource for viewing real-time updates on drought conditions and learn more about what’s being done to combat this challenging drought situation,” said **Deputy Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton**. “Users of this web portal will be able to explore data-driven mapping visualizations and delve into the new science and forecasting tools used to conduct water supply planning and optimization of water reservoir operations.”

The Department of the Interior is helping lead the Biden-Harris administration’s [Drought Relief Interagency Working Group](#), which is marshaling existing resources and working in partnership with state, local and Tribal governments to address the needs of communities suffering from drought-related impacts. The Working Group is actively working to identify and disburse immediate financial and technical assistance for impacted irrigators and Tribes. It is also developing longer-term measures to respond to climate change, including building more resilient communities and protecting the natural environment.

A series of online public briefings will be announced to introduce its major interactive features.

Information on the web portal is available at [www.usbr.gov/addressing-drought/](http://www.usbr.gov/addressing-drought/).

## Upcoming Meetings

[Wild and Scenic Rivers Act Webinar](#)

WestFAST 8/11/21 10:00 am – 11:00 am MDT

[2021 Symposium on the Settlement of Indian Reserved Water Rights Claims](#)

WSWC/NARF 8/24-25/21

[Zoom Webinar Registration](#)

[WSWC Fall 2021 \(197th\) Meetings](#)

WSWC 9/14-16/21

## Other Federal News

BOR 7/1/21. [Reclamation provides \\$1.14 million to help communities develop water marketing strategies](#)

USDA 7/7/21. [Biden-Harris Administration Invests \\$307 Million in Rural Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements in 34 States and Puerto Rico](#)

NOAA 7/9/21. [June 2021 was the hottest June on record for U.S.](#)

NOAA 7/13/21. [June 2021 was the 5th warmest June on record for the globe](#)

NOAA 7/14/21. [U.S. high-tide flooding breaks records](#)

NASA 7/15/21. [Satellites Track Searing Heat Over U.S. Southwest](#)

BOR 7/15/21. [Reclamation awards \\$125,000 in first phase of prize competition seeking new inland purification methods to increase usable water](#)

NASA 7/19/21. [Call For Abstracts: Data-Driven Water Management](#)

ACOE 7/21/21. [Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works updates Water Resources Development Act of 2020 implementation guidance](#)

EPA 7/21/21. [EPA Releases Cyanobacteria Assessment Network \(CyAN\) Web Tool to Help Monitor Water Quality](#)

FWS 7/26/21. [Service Completes Initial Reviews on Endangered Species Act Petitions for Three Species](#)

EPA 7/26/21. [EPA Announces Intent to Bolster Limits on Water Pollution from Power Plants](#)

DOI 7/26/21. [Assistant Secretary Tanya Trujillo Travels Across Colorado to Hear Directly From Water Users, Scientists About Drought Effects](#)

NRCS 7/30/21. [USDA Seeks New Partnerships to Safeguard, Restore Wetland Ecosystems](#)

## People

DOI 7/9/21. [Interior Department Welcomes Additional Biden-Harris Appointees](#)

DOI 7/12/21. [Shannon Estenoz Sworn In as Interior Department Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks](#)

NOAA 7/13/21. [Nicole LeBoeuf named director of NOAA's National Ocean Service](#)

USFS 7/22/21. [Forest Service Announces Key Appointment to Executive Leadership Team](#)

USFS 7/22/21. [Forest Service Chief Announces New Regional Forester for Pacific Southwest Region](#)

The 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 in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water resources.