



Western States Water

Addressing Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future

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ADMINISTRATION

U.S. Census/Population Growth

On August 12, a U.S. Census Bureau summary noted that between 2010-2020, the U.S. population grew by 22.7M people, reaching nearly 331.5M, but that was the Nation's slowest rate since the 1930s (7.4%). The greatest gains were in the South 11.7M (10.2%) and West 6.6M (9.2%). Texas (15.9%) added nearly 4M people, the largest increase, followed by Florida 2.74M (14.6%), California 2.28M (6.1%), Georgia 1M (10.6%), and Washington with 980,741 (14.6%). These five states accounted for nearly half of the total numeric population increase.

California was the most populous state in 2020 (39.5M), followed by Texas (29.1M), Florida (21.5M), New York (20.2M) and Pennsylvania (13M). Overall, 10 states had a population of 10M or more, which together contain more than half of the U.S. population. The fastest growing western states included Arizona (11.9%), Colorado (14.8%), Idaho (17.3%), Nevada (15%), North Dakota (15.8%), Oregon (10.6%), and Utah with the highest percentage increase of any state (18.4%).

Metropolitan areas grew. In 2020, 86% of the U.S. population lived in metropolitan statistical areas, up from 85% in 2010. Another 8% lived in often adjacent micropolitan statistical areas, down from 9% in 2010. Among the decade's most notable fast-growing areas were counties in western North Dakota, led by McKenzie County (131%), and Williams County (83%).

The 10 largest metro areas all grew, led by two in Texas: Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington and Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land. Each grew by approximately 20%. Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston were also two of the Nation's three metro areas to gain at least 1.2M people over the decade. New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA was the third. Five western metro areas crossed the 1.0M person threshold including: Tucson, Arizona; Honolulu, Hawaii; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Fresno and San Jose, California.

Greeley, Colorado; Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, Texas; and St. George, Utah were among the fastest growing metropolitan areas. The two fastest-growing U.S. micro areas were in Williston and Dickinson, North

Dakota; followed by Bozeman, Montana; Rexburg, Idaho; and Heber City, Utah. Williston, Bozeman, Rexburg and Heber City all gained at least 15,000 people.

ADMINISTRATION/WATER RESOURCES

Reclamation/Drought

On July 29, the Bureau of Reclamation launched a new web portal to provide real-time drought information. Addressing Drought Across the West includes tabs for collaboration, drought actions, current conditions, and climate change. "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."

Deputy Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton said: "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. 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." See <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/#/news-release/3927>.

CONGRESS

House/Infrastructure

On August 12, nine House Democrats wrote Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) noting Senate passage of an "historic bipartisan infrastructure package, with a super majority" and President Biden's call to send it to his desk as soon as possible (see Special Report). "The House of Representatives should heed his call and immediately pass the legislation. We urge our House colleagues to follow the same path as the Senate: vote

first on the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and then consider the budget resolution.... Some have suggested that we hold off on considering the Senate infrastructure bill for months until the reconciliation process is completed. We disagree. With the livelihoods of hardworking American families at stake, we simply can't afford months of unnecessary delays and risk squandering this once-in-a-century, bipartisan infrastructure package. It is time to get shovels in the ground and people to work. We will not consider voting for a budget resolution until the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passes the House and is signed into law. The nine signatories are Representatives Carolyn Bourdeaux (GA), Ed Case (HI), Jim Costa (CA), Henry Cuellar (TX), Jared Golden (ME), Josh Gotthiemer (NJ), Vicente Gonzalez (TX), Kurt Schrader (OR) and Filemon Vela (TX).

The letter declared, "The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is a bipartisan victory for our nation the largest investment in infrastructure in a century. As the President noted following Senate passage, the legislation will help create millions of good-paying jobs a year across the nation and lead to continued strong economic growth. It includes major investments to fix America's crumbling roads, bridges, tunnels, mass transit, railways, and water systems; it also allocates significant resources to electric vehicles, broadband buildout, climate resiliency, and environmental clean-up. The country is clamoring for infrastructure investment and common sense, bipartisan solutions. This legislation does both, and will help us compete with China and others in the global economy. There is a reason why the bipartisan bill has the strong support of groups ranging from the AFL-CIO to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce."

WATER RESOURCES **Infrastructure/Utah/Water Supply**

St. George, Utah in Washington County is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the Nation, in the fastest growing State. There were an estimated 165,662 people in 2017, and by 2065, estimates place the population at over 500,000. Located in the southwest corner of Utah, St. George is in the arid Mojave basin and range ecoregion, as is Las Vegas, Nevada. The serious drought gripping Utah and much of the West is not a surprise to water supply planners. Washington County's water infrastructure system was planned and built to work reliably especially during drought with five reservoirs - Sand Hollow, Quail Creek, Gunlock, Kolob and Ivins - able to store more than 100,000 acre-feet of water. Reservoir storage is a "savings account" that is a critical part of the area's water supply strategy.

The Virgin River is the only water source for the St. George metropolitan area. Following the driest year on record, the Virgin River is at record low flow levels. With a drainage area of 12,250 square miles, it is a small desert tributary of the much larger Colorado River

watershed that covers nearly 250,000 square miles. The Colorado River is a more reliable water supply even though susceptible to drought and climate change.

The planned Lake Powell Pipeline (LLP), constructed with state and local money, will allow Washington County to deliver a portion of Utah's allocation of the Colorado River water to Sand Hollow Reservoir. The LLP is the only option local communities have to diversify their water supply, while also pursuing conservation measures to significantly cut water use, reuse water, and tap all remaining local supplies, including agricultural water transfers. However, these strategies will not supply enough water to meet the demands of the growing population and economy. The LLP will transport water through 140-miles of buried pipe with five pump stations partially powered by six hydroelectric facilities using water in the pipeline. At full capacity, the project will deliver up to 83,756 acre-feet of water per year.

St. George City Manager Adam Lenhard notes that growth has created a "...boom in residential and commercial construction all of which requires significant infrastructure.... Since we live in a desert, water has become one of if not the most important natural resource that we have to manage.... For that reason, I believe we have an obligation to protect and conserve and responsibly use our water resources and also try to find cost effective alternatives. The issue of water that we face is not just one that is necessary to solve to accommodate new growth. This is an issue that affects all of us. If we want Washington County to continue to be a place where our children and grandchildren live happy and healthy lives and raise their own families, then we have an obligation to solve this water challenge...."

Washington City Council Member Kress Staheli once considered a secondary water supply a luxury, but he now views it as a "...necessity just to sustain life and [the] livelihood of those that currently live here.... This year more than ever was eye opening to me because of the drought that we have been in.... The water that we are collecting in our reservoirs is not replacing what we are using currently, and that's a big concern.... We are going to need more than we currently have." He emphasized Utah's rights to the use of Colorado River water.

MEETINGS

A Southwest Drought Briefing being held on Tuesday, August 24, at 1 pm - 1:30 pm MT (12 pm PT) will focus on how the monsoon is impacting drought conditions and provide a general update of current conditions and forecasts for Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah. Ben McMahan and Mike Crimmins, University of Arizona, will present. See: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7605614815925146384>.

The WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL is a government entity of representatives appointed by the Governors of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.