



Western States Water

Addressing Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future

682 East Vine Street / Suite 7 / Murray, UT 84107 / (801) 685-2555 / Fax 685-2559 / www.westernstateswater.org

Chair - Jon Niermann; Executive Director - Tony Willardson; Editor - Michelle Bushman; Subscriptions - Julie Groat

WESTERN GOVERNORS/CONGRESS **WGA/Water Data Improvement Act**

On September 3, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) sent a letter to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, voicing support for streamgauge networks in the Water Monitoring and Tracking Essential Resources (WATER) Data Improvement Act (H.R. 5770), passed by the House in July. The bill would reauthorize the Federal Priority Streamgauge (FPS) Network and the National Groundwater Monitoring Network (NGWMN) through FY2028. WGA said that these two programs are critical resources for water management, and urged the Committee to consider the legislation.

The letter included WGA's Policy Resolution 2024-07 on Water Resource Management in the West: "Western Governors support federal programs dedicated to the improvement of data on water use, snowpack, streamflow, soil moisture, groundwater levels, evapotranspiration, and water-related forecasts, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting Program; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather and hydrology-related data collection, monitoring, and drought information programs, including the National Integrated Drought Information System; the U.S. Geological Survey's Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program, and its five-year surveys of estimated use of water in the United States; and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's National Land Imaging (Landsat) Program. Western Governors further support federal efforts to coordinate water data gathering and information programs across multiple agencies."

WGA/Weather Act Reauthorization

On August 28, WGA sent a letter to Senate leadership and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, expressing support for aspects of the Weather Act Reauthorization Act (Weather Act), including the reauthorization of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) and a sub-seasonal to seasonal (S2S) forecasting pilot

program. They said: "Western states need reliable water resource information and weather forecasting to support sound water management and minimize the detrimental effects of extreme weather events. We encourage the Senate to pass comprehensive weather legislation that addresses these needs." <https://westgov.org/letters/category/water>

WATER RESOURCES **USBR-Facilitated Adoption Program**

On September 4, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) announced a \$2M investment in nine new projects and continued funding for nine ongoing multi-year projects to support adoption of promising research. The funding is part of Reclamation's Facilitated Adoption Program which provides funding for implementation of water management solutions which have demonstrated promise or success. Projects awarded funding include: (1) Development and Refinement of Rotor Turning Device for Safer and More Efficient Maintenance and Diagnostic Tasks; (2) Evaporation Monitoring at Lemon Reservoir and Lake Nighthorse in Colorado; (3) Demonstration and Use of Advanced 3D Measuring Techniques Using Portable Laser and Arm Technology; (4) Evaporation Monitoring on Lake Powell for Water Management; (5) Turbine Air Injection Testing and Implementation; (6) Evaluation and Validation of Fatigue on Aging Hydro Mechanical Components using Finite Element Analysis; (7) Demonstration of Robotic Vehicles for Inaccessible Metallic Pipe; and (8) Utilizing Satellite Imagery to Document Increasing Sedimentation at Reclamation Reservoirs. Ken Nowak, Research and Development Program Manager said: "With a rich legacy of leadership and expertise in water management, these projects build upon the pioneering efforts of innovators. These projects demonstrate Reclamation's commitments to addressing challenges faced by water managers in the West with cutting-edge solutions." <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/news-release/4950>

USBR/Integrated Water Resources

On August 29, the USBR announced that it was joining the Integrated Water Resources Science and

Services (IWRSS). The IWRSS is a consortium of federal agencies with complementary missions in water science, observation, management, prediction, and response to water hazards. Partner federal agencies include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Participating agencies will work together on sharing water information, developing water estimation and mapping, reducing water management risk, and increasing resilience and water resources adaptation. The partnership is meant to: (1) better coordinate water resources programs within current authorities; (2) enhance interagency and stakeholder communications; (3) increase the exchange and availability of releasable data and information; (4) enhance collaboration on water resources mapping and modeling; and (5) establish opportunities for joint projects, programs, facilities, and other collaborative science, services, and tools to support integrative and adaptive water resources management.

Chief Engineer David Raff said: "We are always looking to use the latest and best scientific information in our water management decisions. This memorandum of understanding will enable collaboration as we all seek to adapt to a changing climate and the ever-increasing demands placed upon our flood-risk reduction and water supply." FEMA Sr. Official Performing the Duties of Deputy Administrator Victoria Salinas said: "We warmly welcome the Bureau of Reclamation to the IWRSS partnership and look forward to enhanced collaboration among our agencies. Partnerships like IWRSS play a powerful role in developing more comprehensive, accessible, and easy-to-use information about water-related hazards, such as coastal and inland flooding, that our nation needs for decision making." Bill Werkheiser, USGS Associate Director for Water Resources said: "The USGS is excited to see our colleagues from the Bureau of Reclamation joining the IWRSS partnership. Together, all five agencies can leverage our unique strengths to solve complex water resources challenges--all for the benefit of our Nation." <https://www.usbr.gov/newsroom/news-release/4942>

Oregon/Klamath River Dam Removal

On July 30, the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) breached the John C. Boyle Dam, the final breach of four dams to be removed for the project. The breach returned the Klamath River to its historic channel and restored fish passage for Chinook and coho salmon. Deconstruction work for John C. Boyle, Copco 1, and Iron Gate Dams are expected to be completed in November, in time for the fall run of Chinook. Copco No. 2 was removed last summer. Restoration of the former reservoir footprints will continue for several years until vegetation is successfully established and water clarity has returned to baseline conditions. Representatives and

elders from the Klamath Tribes and Modoc Nation were in attendance.

Mark Branson, CEO of KRRC, said: "While there is still work to be done, today is a historic day for this reach of the Klamath River. It was an honor to be able to witness this reach of river coming back to life alongside area Tribes. Each milestone brings the river into a healthier state." Klamath Tribes Chairman William Ray Jr. said: "Today, for the Klamath Tribes, marks another culturally significant accomplishment with the breaching of the JC Boyle Dam, which helps further the eventual return of the c'iyaa'l's (salmon), taken away from the Tribes in 1907. The Tribal Nation gives Sepk'eeec'a (Thanks) to our Creator, the Lower River Tribes, the Dam Removal Advocates, Collaborators, and all the Personnel who have performed such an instrumental job in making the Klamath River, a natural, free-flowing River again! We have much more essential restoration work to complete on the Upper Klamath Basin headwaters, watershed, wetlands, and Riparian areas to produce cold, clean, clear water in order to support all fisheries, aquatic species, subsistence, and medicinal plants and roots all critically important to continue supporting the Tribes Culture and Traditional lifeways." <https://klamathrenewal.org/klamath-river-flows-return-e-d-to-historic-path-at-jc-boyle-dam-site/>

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

On August 14, the California Department of Water Resources (CDWR) announced its celebration of the official ten-year anniversary of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). CDWR said: "So far, local and state agencies have met every SGMA milestone, and have made tremendous progress towards a sustainable groundwater future for California. Over the next few months, DWR is looking back on the accomplishments of the first decade of SGMA and looking ahead to the future as groundwater management in California moves into the next phase of SGMA implementation." CDWR also announced plans for a SGMA 10-year Anniversary event on November 18, featuring local groundwater sustainability agencies, community organizations, state leaders, and other SGMA experts. <https://water.ca.gov/News/Events/2024/Nov-24/SGMA-10-Year-Anniversary>

PEOPLE

On August 19, New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham announced her appointment of **Elizabeth Anderson** as the new State Engineer. Anderson previously served as Chief Planning Officer for the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, the New Mexico Water Operations Manager for CH2M HILL Engineers, and most recently as Senior Advisor to the State Engineer.

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.