Western States Federal Agency Support Team

WestFAST supports a continued commitment on the part of Federal, and State organizations; working with local, Tribal, and other stakeholders; to improve the effectiveness of collaboration to seek solution to water issues in the Western States.
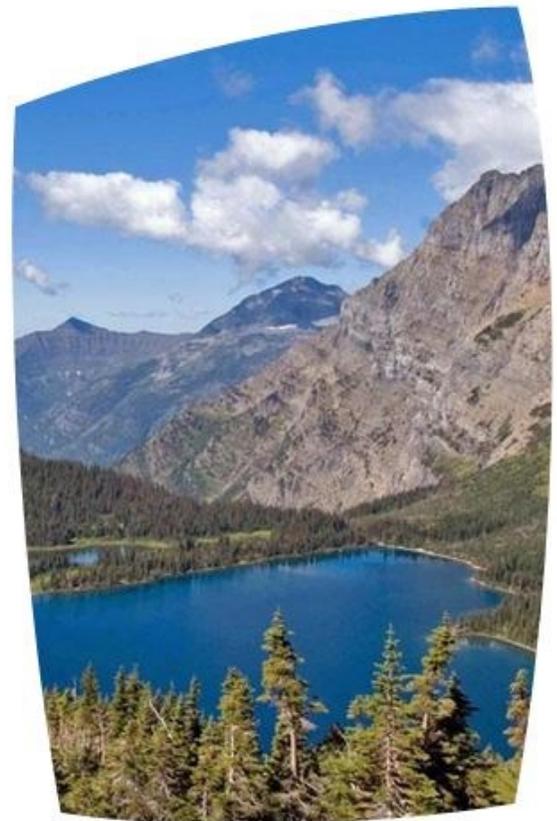
Why WestFAST?

The Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) was formally organized in 2008 in response to the Western Governors' Association's recommendation to facilitate coordination of federal activities, and to develop and enhance collaborative partnerships among state and federal agencies working on priority water-resource issues.
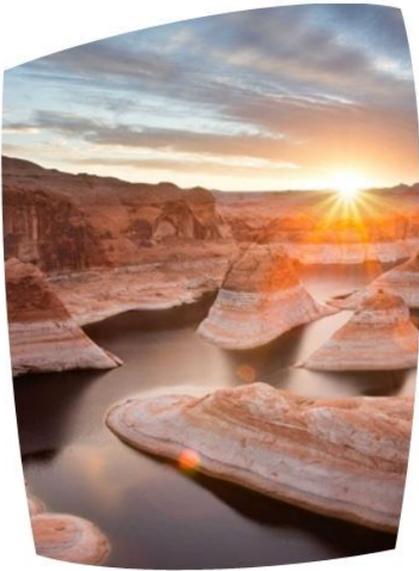
Today, WestFAST is a collaboration of more than 16 Federal agencies with water management responsibilities in the West.

WestFAST works closely with the Western States Water Council (WSWC), an organization consisting of representatives appointed by the governors of 18 western states striving to accomplish effective cooperation among western states, and their partners, in the conservation, development and management of water resources. The WestFAST federal agencies form a dynamic, flexible team that provides the opportunity for interaction initiated by WSWC, individual states, or the federal government.

The federal agencies that make up WestFAST all have unique roles within western water management. West-FAST provides a means for those agencies to collaborate among themselves and with partner states in ways.

Our State Partners and the Western States Water Council

"WestFAST has been a great success and the concept of WestFAST has made the Western States Water Council a greater success." - Hal Simpson, past WSWC Chair and Colorado State Engineer

As states continue to carry out their traditional role with regard to water allocation and management, the challenges are increasing. With changing and increasing demands on limited water resources, combined with a new and changing overlay of federal laws and regulations, the WSWC and our western water-resource management partners view the importance of cooperative efforts and exchanges by and among states as being likewise magnified. Concerning Federal and State collaboration the Western Governors' Association has declared that "Developing optimal solutions to [water resource] challenges… will require an integrated approach and greater partnerships among state, local and federal agencies."

Priority efforts of WestFAST with the WSWC, WGA, and local partners -

- *Provide excellent opportunities for cross-agency discussions and leveraging of shared knowledge.*
- *Formulate and promote new concepts and practices to improve the planning and execution of Federal and State water policies and programs to better preserve and manage water in the West.*
- *Identify and promote efficient and productive cooperation and collaboration practices between state and federal agencies*
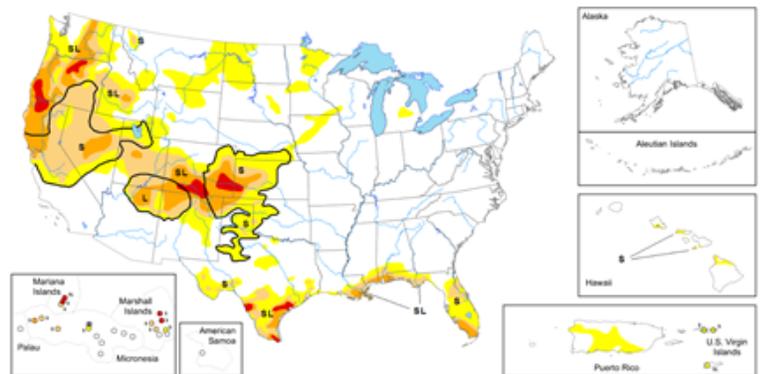
WestFAST facilitates collaboration

Drought

WestFAST member agencies strive to improve services related to drought in the areas of monitoring and information dissemination, projection tools and decision support system development, and the development of resiliency and response plans among others.

WestFAST is working closely within a National Drought Resilience Partnership to promote drought resilience in support of and to complement state, regional, tribal and local drought preparedness, planning and implementation efforts.

WestFAST is assisting to mobilize our Federal agencies in western watersheds toward providing improved information and data, emergency and planning assistance, landscape-scale land management improvements, and investments in new approaches to water resource management.