

Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) is a collaboration between 13 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 (WGA) in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water issues.

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WestFAST News

July 2017

Clean Water Act/ Waters of the United States

(WSWC 7/31/17)

On July 27, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) proposed a rule to rescind the Clean Water Rule and re-codify the regulatory text that existed prior to 2015, defining "waters of the United States" or WOTUS, which currently governs administration of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The agencies' action is intended to provide certainty while a second rulemaking is pending to substantively engage state and local governments, tribes and stakeholders in a re-evaluation of the WOTUS definition. The proposed rule would be implemented in accordance with Supreme Court decisions, agency guidance, and longstanding practice, according to EPA.

"We are taking significant action to return power to the states and provide regulatory certainty to our nation's farmers and businesses," said Administrator Scott Pruitt. "This is the first step in the two-step process to redefine 'waters of the U.S.' and we are committed to moving through this re-evaluation to quickly provide regulatory certainty, in a way that is thoughtful, transparent and collaborative with other agencies and the public."

The 2015 rule is currently on hold as a result of a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit stay. The new rule, when final, would not change current practice with respect to the WOTUS definition.

EPA and the Corps have begun outreach on the second rulemaking step involving a re-evaluation and revision of the WOTUS definition, in accordance with President Trump's Executive Order entitled, "Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and

Economic Growth by Reviewing the 'Waters of the United States' Rule," issued on February 28, 2017.

"The Army, together with the Corps of Engineers, is committed to working closely with and supporting the EPA on these rulemakings. As we go through the rulemaking process, we will continue to make the implementation of the Clean Water Act Section 404 regulatory program as transparent as possible for the regulated public," said Mr. Douglas Lamont, senior official performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

The *Federal Register* notice and additional information are at: <http://www.epa.gov/wotus-rule>. The proposed rule will be open for public comment until August 28, 2017. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments at <http://www.regulations.gov> identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2017-0203.

Southwest Oklahoma Water Action Plan Team to Hold Water Summit

(WestFAST, 7/31/17)

The Southwest Oklahoma Water Action Plan Team in coordination with the Western State Federal Agency Support Team (WestFast) is sponsoring a Water Summit in Altus, Oklahoma on August 21-22, 2017. The focus of this meeting will be to work with local and state officials to continue moving forward with the enhancement of this existing plan to provide more stability to water availability to a wide range of users in the Southwest Oklahoma Region.

The Plan with further development in association with the State Water Board and the WestFAST Federal



Family technical and possible funding support should result in a robust plan that could be used as a template for other regions in the west to use.

For additional information, or if you would like to attend this Summit, contact Roger Pierce, WestFAST Liaison at rogervpierce@wswc.utah.gov, or Roger Gorke, EPA, at gorke.roger@epa.gov.

Heat, Fire, and Drought!

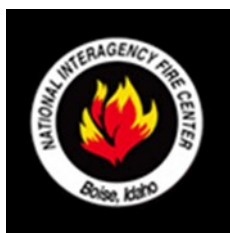
(WestFAST / NOAA / NIFC 0730/17)

The Heat is on as the latest data from NOAA indicate the average global temperature in June 2017 was 1.48 degrees F above the 20th-century average of 59.9 degrees. Scientists from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information indicate the average temperature was the third highest for June in the 1880-2017 record, behind June 2015 (second) and a record-breaking June 2016. June 2017 marks the 41st consecutive June and the 390th consecutive month with temperatures at least nominally above the 20th-century average.

The data also indicate three year-to-date (January – June 2017) average temperature was 1.64 degrees F above the 20th-century average of 56.3 degrees. This was the second-warmest for this period, 0.29 of a degree behind the record set in 2016.

The entire article may be found here at [HEAT](#).

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), located in Boise, Idaho, is the nation's support center for wildland firefighting. Eight different agencies and organizations are part of NIFC. On August 1, 2017, NIFC was reporting nearly 30 large uncontained wildfires with total of 15 type 1 and 2 Incident Meteorologists deployed. Click here for [NIFC page](#)



South Dakota Wild fire - credit State of South Dakota

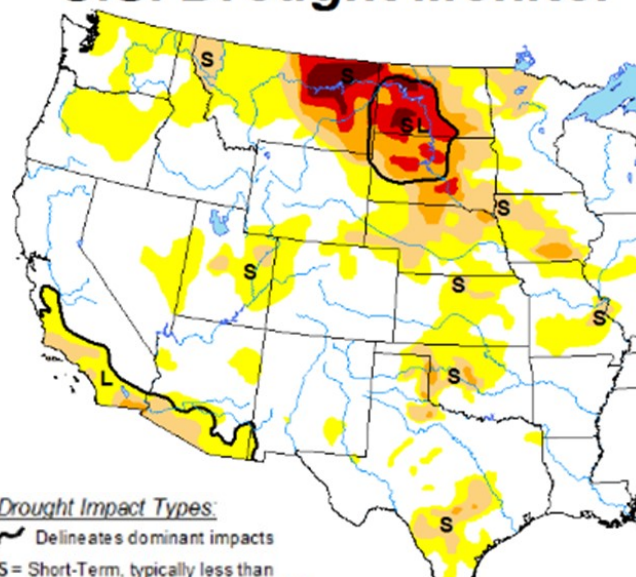
Below is the outlook for August. For additional outlooks that go on into the Fall click [here](#)



Drought

Very warm conditions have been observed, especially in the west and portions of the Western High Plains this summer. Dry conditions from over the winter are now evolving into extreme to exceptional drought conditions in portions of the Dakotas, Montana and into Wyoming.

U.S. Drought Monitor



Drought Impact Types:

~ Delineates dominant impacts

S = Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)

L = Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

August 1, 2017 update

**U.S. Drought Outlook
issued July 20, 2017**

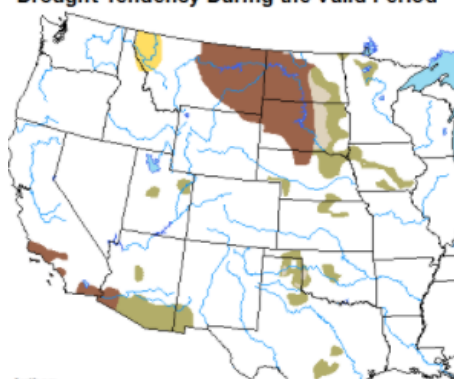


The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>



U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period



- Drought persists
- Drought remains but improve
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely



<http://go.usa.gov/3eZ73>

The current trends, if you watch the evolving dry conditions in portions of the plains over the past few months, are pointing

at the drought conditions expanding in portions of the high plains. The official forecasts, above also indicate this, but with recent weather model runs of the past few days, the far southern high plains may be in for some relief. This is the latest outlook valid **July 20—October 31, 2017**.

Secretary Zinke and Colorado Senator Gardner Announce More Than \$50 Million for National Parks Infrastructure (NPS 7/24/17)

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Colorado Senator Cory Gardner announced today that the National Park Service is teaming up with partners across the nation to distribute nearly \$50 million in high priority maintenance and infrastructure projects at 42 parks in 29 states. Congress provided \$20 million for the projects as part of the [Centennial Challenge](#) program which will be matched by \$33 million from more than 50 park partners to improve trails, restore buildings, and increase visitor access to parks.

Secretary Zinke and Senator Gardner made the announcement while visiting Rocky Mountain National Park, which will receive \$200,000 in federal funds matched by \$200,000 from the Rocky Mountain Conservancy to reduce deferred maintenance on the Alluvial Fan Trail.

“Our national parks span twelve time zones and attract more than 330 million visitors every year. Some locations, like Rocky Mountain National Park, attract millions of visitors alone. This puts an incredible stress on the

aging infrastructure at our parks and thanks to Centennial Grants and the generosity of public-private partners, we are able to distribute funds to rebuild our parks,” said Secretary Zinke. “Using public-private partnerships to help address the deferred maintenance backlog remains a priority for the Department and the



National Park Service Photo

Trump Administration. Park infrastructure includes trails, signage, restrooms, lodges, roads, bridges and waterlines. These funds will help us continue to provide a world-class experience to visitors and ensure that these amazing places are around for future generations.”

“Today, I stood alongside Secretary Zinke as he announced critical funding grants for Colorado’s Rocky Mountain National Park,” said **Senator Cory Gardner**. “We must continue to be good stewards of our National Parks and protect these treasures for future generations. I want to thank Secretary Zinke for highlighting a crown jewel of Colorado’s public lands, Rocky Mountain National Park, and the dedicated Park employees that care for this land every day.” Article, click [here](#)

The San Francisco District Corps of Engineers Produced an interesting YouTube Video [Securing the Region's Future Through Water](#) These types of informational video are becoming more popular within the Federal Family. If your agency has one you would like to have highlighted, let me know and I’ll put it in the newsletter.

Here is a great Aspen Institute data resource link sent to me from Mark Kodack (DoD) [INTERNET OF WATER: Sharing and Integrating Water Data for Sustainability](#)



WSWC Upcoming Meetings

Symposium on the Settlement of Indian Reserved Water Rights Claims will be held in Great Falls, Montana on August 8-10.

Federal Non-Tribal Water Claims Workshop will be held on October 18, in conjunction with the WSWC Fall Meetings in Albuquerque, New Mexico on October 18-20.

WSWC Spring Meeting will be held in the Washington, DC area with dates to be determined. WestFAST will also hold a WestFAST Principals Meeting in conjunction with this meeting.

For further information, please see:

<http://www.westernstateswater.org/upcoming-meetings/>.

Federal News *(Control click to access articles)*

7/5: [Return of the Yellowstone Grizzly Bear](#)

7/5: [Updated USGS digital topographic maps feature more trails and other recreation points of interest](#)

7/6: [Zinke Signs Secretarial Order to Streamline Process for Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Permits](#)

7/7: [Forests through the Ages: the Importance of Young Forests](#)

7/7: [\\$30 Million in Service Grants Supports Boating, Clean Water, Local Communities](#)

7/7: [Winds Trigger Pond Growth\(LandSat\)](#)

7/9: [NASA Data Suggest Future May Be Rainier Than Expected](#)

7/10: [Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's Statement on the End of the Monuments Review Public Comment Period](#)

7/11: [Warm Winter Events in Arctic Becoming More Frequent, Lasting Longer](#)

7/11: [Songbirds, Shorebirds and Other Migratory Birds to Benefit from Nearly \\$18 Million in Funding Throughout the Americas](#)

7/11: [Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns](#)

7/11: [Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's Statement on the End of the Monuments Review Public Comment Period](#)

07/12: [How Cold Climate Communities Eat and Heat Locally](#)

7/12: [New Warning System Identifies Flash Drought Quickly](#)

7/12: [Wetland delineation in the arid Southwest, we can do that!](#)

7/12: [Multi-Generation Family Forest Stewardship](#)

7/13: [U.S. EPA Requires Southern California Plastic Manufacturers to Protect L.A. River from Pollution](#)

7/14: [NOAA Announces \\$13 Million in Coastal Resilience Grants](#)

7/14: [Federal, State Officials Chart Next Steps in Sage-grouse Conservation](#)

7/14: [From Classroom to Watershed: Lower Colorado River Serves as a Dynamic Outdoor Learning Experience](#)

7/14: [Apply by October 20 for Fiscal Year 2018 EQIP Funding](#)

7/15: [Federal, State Officials Chart Next Steps in Sage-grouse Conservation](#)

7/17: [SD Help for Grassland Drought Planning](#)

7/17: [New Study Shows the Amazon Makes Its Own Rainy Season](#)

7/17: [USFS Strengthen Ties to the Community](#)

7/19: [EPA Selects 12 Projects to Apply for Water Infrastructure Loans](#)

7/19: [EPA Selects San Francisco Project to Apply for Water Infrastructure Loan](#)

7/20: [New 'Healthy Sagebrush Communities' Poster Highlights How Efforts for Sage Grouse Have Come Full Circle](#)

7/21: [NRCS Idaho Accepting Applications for Flood Recovery Funds](#)

7/21: [NRCS Announces Watershed and Flood Prevention Funding Opportunities](#)

7/25: [BLM Proposes to Rescind Rule on Hydraulic Fracturing](#)

7/25: [NASA Solves a Drizzle Riddle](#)

7/25: [Landsat 'Sees in the Dark' the Evolution of Antarctica's Delaware-sized Iceberg](#)

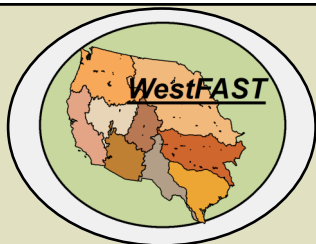
7/26: [New EPA Tool Helps Communities Access More Than \\$10 Billion in Water Infrastructure Financing](#)

7/27: [Exploring the Nation's waterways through the National Hydrography Dataset Plus](#)

7/27: [Division leaders tour Tijuana River Valley](#)

8/1: [History of the hottest summer day at thousands of U.S. locations](#)

8/2: [Total Solar Eclipse and Wildlife: More than a Dozen Wildlife Refuges in the Path](#)



WestFAST News is published monthly. To get an Agency Announcement published or to get added to the WestFAST News distribution list contact:

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Check out the WestFAST Web Site: <http://www.westernstateswater.org/westfast>