

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 (WGA) in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water issues.

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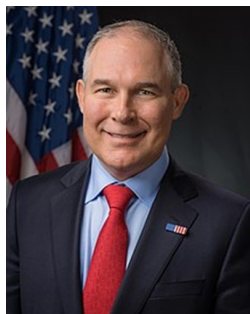
WestFAST News

February 2018

Administrator Pruitt Participates in White House Infrastructure Initiative Roundtable

(EPA 02/12/18)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt participated in the White House Infrastructure Initiative Roundtable alongside President Donald Trump, other members of the Cabinet and state and local officials from around the country.



"President Trump's infrastructure plan will revitalize our nation's once-great infrastructure and create a safer and stronger America," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

"Infrastructure includes more than roads and bridges; we will also rebuild our nation's crumbling water infrastructure and clean up contaminated land, both of which are critical to environmental protection and economic growth in our communities. Through regulatory reforms and targeted investments, EPA will play a leading role in this effort."

Background:

The President's infrastructure proposal includes three elements that directly impact EPA and its role in repairing and restoring the nation's water infrastructure and cleaning up contaminated land:

Funding:

The proposal seeks \$100 billion in competitive grant programs to incentivize investment in infrastructure that leverages federal investments, is financially sustainable or improves performance. Of this amount, EPA is expected to receive about \$20 billion

for grant programs to support drinking water, wastewater and stormwater facilities and for Brownfields and Superfund clean-up and land revitalization.

The proposal also requests \$50 billion to fund rural infrastructure, including state water facilities and cleanup programs. \$40 billion of this money would be provided to states in block grants according to a formula. The remaining \$10 billion would be for a new competitive grant program administered by EPA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Transportation for communities with less than 50,000 people.

Policy Reforms:

The President's infrastructure initiative would amend the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act and Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) to promote private investment and improved management of water infrastructure through expanded use of State Revolving Loan Funds. It also increases WIFIA funding authorizations and expands WIFIA eligibility to include certain Superfund, Brownfields and Army Corps flood projects.

Additionally, it would change the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act to authorize administrative settlements and to clarify provisions identified by the Superfund Task Force as barriers to private investment in cleanup projects.

Permitting:

Under the President's "One Agency, One Permit" concept, a lead federal agency would be responsible for issuing a single record of decision for a major project within two years. Duplicative environmental reviews and processes would be eliminated in favor of more cooperation and earlier engagement by all relevant agencies in order to achieve positive environmental outcomes, regulatory certainty, and public transparency. Among the changes needed to implement these reforms related to water are:



*Amend Clean Water Act section 401 to establish an administrative appeal process to resolve disputes involving a state's determination that a project would lead to a violation of its water quality standards.

*Amend Clean Water Act section 404(c) to eliminate EPA's ability to veto an Army Corps section 404 permit for infrastructure projects in order to implement the one federal permit decision.

*Amend the Clean Water Act to clarify the Army Corps' authority to construe the jurisdictional term "navigable waters" under section 404.

National Park System Sees More Than 330 Million Visits

(NPS 02/28/18)

The National Park Service (NPS) announced 330,882,751 recreation visits in 2017 – almost identical to the record-setting 330,971,689 recreation visits in 2016. While numbers were steady, visitors actually spent more time in parks during their 2017 visits compared to 2016.

Increased attendance at parks, 1.5 billion visits in the last five years, also means aging park facilities are incurring further wear and tear. President Trump has pro-

funded schools.

"Our National Parks are being loved to death," said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. "As visitor rates continue at a high level, we must prioritize much-needed deferred maintenance including aging facilities, roads and other critical infrastructure. President Trump's proposal to establish a Public Lands Infrastructure Fund is a step in the right direction. This is not a Republican or Democrat issue, this is an American issue, and the President and I remain ready to work with anyone in Congress who is willing to get the job done."

National Park System 2017 visitation highlights include:

- More than 1.44 billion recreation hours in 2017, an increase of 19 million hours over 2016
 - Most – 385 of 417 parks in the National Park System – count park visitors
 - 61 of the 385 reporting parks set new visitation records (about 16 percent of reporting parks)
 - 42 parks broke a record they set in 2016
 - 3 parks had more than 10 million recreation visits – Blue Ridge Parkway, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park
 - 10 parks had more than 5 million recreation visits
 - 81 parks had more than 1 million recreation visits – one more million-visitor park than 2016
 - Half of national park visitation occurred in 27 parks
- The total solar eclipse last August brought visitors in record numbers to several parks

Full Article: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/02-28-2018-visitation-certified.htm>

NOAA/NASA Effort Launches GOES-S

(NOAA 03/01/18)

NOAA's [GOES-S](#), the second in a new series of four highly advanced geostationary weather satellites, [blasted into orbit at 5:02 p.m. EST March 1 from Cape Canaveral, Florida](#). GOES-S mission managers confirmed that its solar arrays successfully deployed at 8:58 p.m. EST and the spacecraft was operating on its own power. The satellite will provide faster, more accurate, and more detailed data in near real-time to track storm systems, lightning, wildfires, coastal fog, and other hazards that affect the western U.S., Hawaii and Alaska.

"The Department of Commerce and NOAA are making good on our commitment to position the most sophisticated technology available in space



Sunrise on the Teton Range from Moose Junction (January 19, 2007). KFinch Photo

posed legislation to establish a Public Lands Infrastructure Fund that would help address the \$11.6 billion maintenance backlog in the National Park System. The fund would take new revenue from federal energy leasing and development and provide up to \$18 billion to help pay for repairs and improvements in national parks, national wildlife refuges and Bureau of Indian Education



NOAA Photo

to provide rapid, accurate, life-saving weather forecasts,” said Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. “Along with its easterly partner GOES-16, GOES-S will help communities and businesses prepare for potentially dangerous weather events and minimize the hazard to American families and economies.” Once GOES-S is positioned in geostationary orbit 22,300 miles above the Earth, after approximately two weeks, it will be renamed GOES-17. Later this year, after undergoing a full checkout and validation of its six high-tech instruments, the new satellite will move to the GOES-West position and become operational. From there, it will constantly provide advanced imagery and atmospheric measurements, real-time mapping of lightning activity, and improved monitoring of solar activity and space weather.

In addition to improving weather forecasts, GOES-17 will help forecasters locate and track wildfires – invaluable information that emergency response teams need to fight fires and evacuate people who find themselves in harm’s way. GOES-17 will also be an important tool for forecasters to track and predict the formation and dissipation of fog, which can disrupt airport operations.

“The advanced capabilities of this new satellite will provide vital data to improve forecasts for all weather hazards across the West and downstream across the remainder of the continental U.S.,” said retired Navy Rear Adm. Tim Gallaudet, Ph.D., USN Ret., Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans

and Atmosphere and Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere. GOES-17 will work in tandem with GOES-16, the first satellite in NOAA’s new geostationary series, now at the GOES-East position. GOES-17 will extend observational high-resolution satellite coverage utilizing the revolutionary new technology aboard GOES-16 to most of the Western Hemisphere, from the west coast of Africa to New Zealand, and from near the Arctic Circle to near the Antarctic Circle. The satellite will provide more and better data than currently available over the northeastern Pacific Ocean, the birthplace of many weather systems that affect the continental United States.

Military Protects Natural Landscapes *(USFS 02/2/18)*

Home to the premier restricted military airspace for unmanned aircraft system training in the western U.S., Army base [Fort Huachuca](#) ([link is external](#)) supports training for personnel from the Air Force, Marine Corps, and U.S. Border Patrol. But it also serves as an example of successful mixed-use wildlands conservation, including healthy forests and grasslands, sustainable water resources, rural communities and economies, wildlife habitat, and recreation and tourism.



This mixed use is a result of [Fort Huachuca](#) becoming part of the Sentinel Landscape Partnership, making it one of only six designated [Sentinel Landscapes](#)([link is external](#)) in the country.



The Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape is used by the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps, and Border Patrol for training. (Photo Credit: U.S. Army/Lara Poirrier.)

Established in 2013 by [USDA](#) in partnership with the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Interior, the Sentinel Landscapes partnership promotes federal, private and local teamwork to support natural resource sustainability while facilitating military test and training needs. Enhancing this partnership, the [USDA Forest Service Cooperative Forestry](#) programs provide technical assistance and support for wetlands restoration and protected species.

The Fort has reduced its groundwater usage by nearly two-thirds over the last 20 years by working with partners across jurisdictions to manage and restore adjacent lands. To date, 66,500 acres within Fort Huachuca have been conserved through conservation agreements. Now, by participating in the Sentinel Landscape program, DOD is ensuring the longevity of its water supply while increasing forest health and improving habitat for threatened and endangered species. In addition to supporting military goals, this innovative partnership also advances multiple Forest Service objectives, including open space preservation, strong rural communities, and strategic partnerships that foster water conservation and the restoration of high priority landscapes.

The [Coronado National Forest](#) is a lead partner in the Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape effort in southeastern Arizona. According to Coronado National Forest Supervisor Kerwin Dewberry, partnerships have been incredibly important to the success of this project. "This Sentinel Landscape is made up of land stewarded by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, DOD, and the state," he said. "This mix of ownership

has fostered great partnerships, which have been key to our success."

The Forest Service's Cooperative Forestry programs, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and DOD will continue to work with private landowners to support working ranches, restore habitat, and manage land and water resources at Fort Huachuca.



Alpha Company, 40th Expeditionary Signal Battalion conducts a live fire exercise at Fort Huachuca. U.S. (Photo Cred-

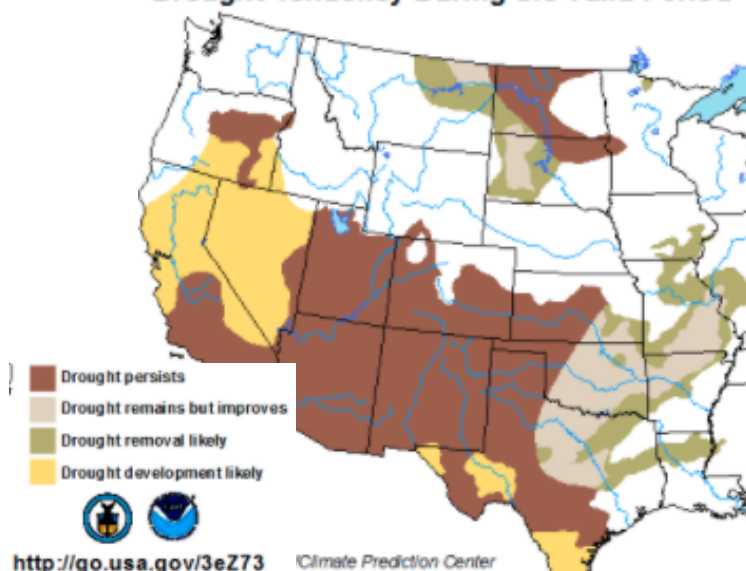
Some Drought Improvement Expected in the Plains

(WestFAST 02/28/18)

For more details go to www.cpc.noaa.gov

Valid March 2018

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





Upcoming Meetings:

The WSWC Spring (186th) Meetings and Washington, DC Roundtable, cosponsored with the Interstate Council on Water Policy will be held in Arlington, Virginia on March 14-15, 2018. A meeting with the WestFAST Principals is scheduled for March 16th at NOAA Headquarters in Washington, DC.

For further information, please see:

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

Instream Flow Council Flow 2018 Conference: Managing Rivers, Reservoirs, and Lakes in the Face of Drought - Practical Tools and Strategies for Sustaining and Protecting Ecological Values of Water Fort Collins, Colorado April 24-26, 2018

LINK: <https://www.instreamflowcouncil.org/conferences-flow-2018/>

Advisory Committee on Water Information – 2017

Annual Meeting was on January 17-18, 2018—[here is a link to minutes](#)

Federal News (Control click to articles)

1/29: [Tracking forest sustainability to meet U.S. and international goals](#)

1/30: [BLM and Forest Service Announce 2018 Grazing Fees](#)

2/01: [Ducks Unlimited Unveils New Working Lands Conservation Program](#)

2/02: [Bureau of Reclamation seeks public comment on project use power draft directive and standard](#)

2/02: [USDA Investing Millions in Wildfire Mitigation and Water Quality Projects: Joint Chiefs' Partnership](#)

2/02: [Cost of Fire Operations](#)

2/05: [Tool helps California managers predict tree mortality](#)

2/06: [Reclamation selects Ali Forsythe as Deputy Regional Director for the Mid-Pacific Region](#)

2/07: [January Brought Largest Drought Footprint in 4 Years](#)

2/07: [Warm temps and meager snow hurts water supply outlook](#)

2/07: [Jet Stream Divides Idaho](#)

2/07: [Snowpack Experts Have Cautious Optimism for Montana Water Supply](#)

2/07: [African American History Month: Sorority Embraces Environmental Stewardship](#)

2/08: [Private lands sage grouse conservation goes beyond the bird](#)

2/08: [NASA Seeks the Gold in Winter Olympics Snow](#)

2/08: [Not All Arsenic Tests are Created Equal](#)

2/09: [USACE publishes request for proposals for beneficial use of dredged materials](#)

2/12: [President's Fiscal 2019 Budget for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program released](#)

2/12: [President Requests \\$1.2 Billion Budget for Fish and Wildlife Service in FY19, Improve Infrastructure](#)

2/12: [International Partners in the Sky: Satellite Partnerships](#)

2/12: [EPA FY 2019 Budget Proposal Released](#)

2/13: [U.S. EPA awards \\$173.5 million for California drinking water and wastewater projects](#)

2/13: [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers supports the administration's Infrastructure Initiative](#)

2/13: [New Study Finds Sea Level Rise Accelerating](#)

2/15: [Explore and Download Reusable Maps of Climate Conditions and Outlooks](#)

2/16: [USDA Secretary Announces Infrastructure Improvements for Forest System Trails](#)

2/16: [Interior Seeks Comment on List of 35 Minerals Deemed Critical to National Security & Economy](#)

2/20: [Reclamation announces initial water supply allocation for the Central Valley Project](#)

2/20: [New Study Brings Antarctic Ice Loss Into Sharper Focus](#)

2/20: [January was the 5th Warmest on Record for the Globe](#)

2/21: [Grants will Help Boost Angler and Boater Numbers, Create Recreational Access on Nation's Waters](#)

2/21: [Grants available to spur innovative conservation technologies in Oregon](#)

2/22: [Partnership Aids Sustainable Growth with Earth Obs.](#)

2/22: [BOR Releases Draft Environmental Documents: Platte River Recovery Implementation Program](#)

2/22: [BOR announces Desalination and Water Purification Research Program funding opportunity](#)

2/22: [Farming in Water](#)

2/23: [Time for River Recreation on National Wildlife Refuges Celebrate Wild and Scenic Rivers Act](#)

2/23: [Setting the Record Straight: USACE, Galveston District, informed the Public about Harvey](#)

2/26: [NASA Looks at Midwest Rain and Melting Snow that Contributed to Flooding](#)

2/27: [Making your Mark on a Map: Volunteer map editors contribute more than 300,000 map points](#)

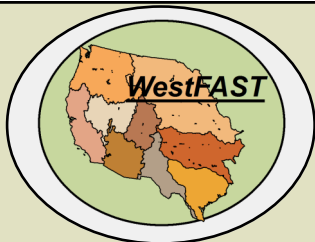
2/27: [Reservoir Sediment Can be Used as Fracking Proppant](#)

2/27: [Learn to Prepare for Spring Weather](#)

2/28: [USDA Helps SW Montana Ag Producers Conserve Water, Improve Drought Resiliency](#)

2/28: [NRCS Announces FY2018 Sign-Up for Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership Projects](#)

2/28: [Share Scientific Breakthroughs, New Technologies USDA Strategic Goals](#)



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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