

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

March 2018

WestFAST, WSWC, and ICWP Meeting

(WestFAST 03/16/18)

On March 16, the Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST), Western States Water Council (WSWC), and the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) met at the Department of Commerce (DOC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) headquarters in Washington, DC.

The meeting provided an opportunity for both organizations to get to know members of the WestFAST agencies and for the WestFAST agencies to hear about things impacting the states related to "All Things Water" across the country. The meeting was hosted by NOAA and kicked off by Kevin

Werner, WestFAST Chair, who introduced the Acting Director of NOAA, Rear-Admiral Timothy Gallaudet Ph.D., who welcomed all those in attendance. Admiral

Gallaudet discussed some of the issues facing NOAA in being able to perform its water missions and where some of the priorities were from the Administration, such as increasing private public partnerships, reducing regulations, and listening to problems with a focus on finding easier solutions and collaborations.

Jerry Rigby, Chairman and Tony Willardson, Executive Director of the WSWC provided opening remarks expressing



Jerry Rigby,
Chairman,
WSWC

their appreciation to the federal agencies for their support over the years for WestFAST and for the collaborative efforts it has been able to accomplish. Additional members of the WSWC expressed their support and appreciation for the collaboration efforts as well. Sue Lowry, Executive Director, ICWP expressed her thanks for being able to attend the meetings and her interest in considering the development of a similar organization as WestFAST for the ICWP.



Kevin Werner, Chair
-man, WestFAST

The Waters of the United States (WOTUS) ruling was one of the topics discussed. David Ross, Assistant Administrator for Water, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided a presentation followed by a questions and answers session on EPA's work in collecting state input for the development of the ruling. In addition to WOTUS, hydrometeorological data collection and dissemination, improved precipitation forecasting, the National Water Model, and current snow conditions in the West were among some of the other topics discussed.



Tony Willardson,
Executive Director
WSWC

Western States Federal Agency Principals Meeting

(WestFAST 03/16/18)

Following the WSWC, ICWP and WestFAST Joint Meeting, the Federal Principals, the appointed leadership for the Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) held a stand-alone meeting.

This was the first WestFAST Principals meeting under the Trump Administration, with many members still new in their positions, or in an acting capacity representing their agency. The meeting was hosted by NOAA and was led by Kevin Werner, WestFAST Chair.

Some of the key issues that were brought up for discussion included the following:

*The WestFAST Federal Liaison position to the WSWC, which is supported through funding by the 12 WestFAST agencies and has a two-year term. The term will expire the end of 2018. Finding the right person with the correct experience and willingness to be detailed away from home for two years is always a challenge. In recent years, adding to this challenge is working through many hurdles getting the funding mechanisms in place to help each of the 12 agencies pay their share of this



cost. A recruitment effort is underway, and a team has been formed within the WestFAST to help facilitate improvements in the funding process for this position.

*There was a lot of discussion on data and its importance to states and the federal agencies. Particularly, on our abilities to perform our water missions. Without state support, through funding, personnel, experience, expertise, and insight to local issues the work going on in the West would not be as successful as it has been. It was noted that when federal agencies are referring to stakeholders and partners, that states are pretty much beyond both of those descriptions and should be highlighted as such when conducting business and doing briefings. Years of collaboration and coordination has been performed to get the optimum mix of agencies and states data collection efforts in place to perform water resource monitoring and supply forecasting. It was noted that some type of flow chart on data collections and distribution might be helpful to better explain this collaboration. Roger Pierce, WestFAST Liaison, will work with other states and agencies to construct a chart.



NRCS Snotel Data Site

*Several collaboration successes were mentioned. The working relationship between the WSWC and the WestFAST in particular. It was noted that the leadership within the WSWC and its willingness to host the WestFAST Federal Liaison in their office was very beneficial in keeping this collaboration effort in place and functioning well. In fact, it was noted that other organizations have asked how a "WestFAST type" arrangement might be supported for their individual organization.

*The Southwest Oklahoma Action Plan (SWAP) was discussed as an example of great collaboration work among the agencies to help regional efforts in becoming more resilient against drought conditions. This work which includes the Oklahoma Water Resources Board has a great potential to be a project that can be replicated not only across Oklahoma, but in a large part of the West.

*Tony Willardson, Executive Director, WSWC expressed an interest in making improvements on collaboration efforts for helping the federal agencies develop positions and rulings, support briefings - such as those going to Congress, and general overarching support for critical data collection efforts. It was agreed the liaison, where possible, will help engage the WSWC further with agency needs and the agencies will attempt to provide more feedback on any positions the WSWC is adopting.



American Fisheries Society Image

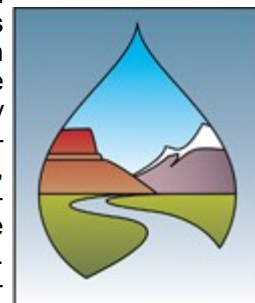
*The Department of Energy's (DOE) absence from the WestFAST meeting was noted. Many federal agencies, states, and other related organizations are going to be facing a lot of hydropower issues soon with several facilities up for reauthorization. It was agreed that some work should be done to encourage DOE, or possibly the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), to engage with the WestFAST. Related hydropower article—Thanks to Marc Kodack **AgAlert** –[A California Farm Bureau Federation article](#)

*Invited guest Stephen Bartell, Department of Justice (DOJ), was in attendance. Stephen oversees and participates in many water related legal issues with several of the WestFAST agencies. This was Stephen's first opportunity to participate in the WSWC and the WestFAST meetings. It was Stephens desire to get a better understanding of what the meetings usually entail and to see if it may be appropriate for DOJ to be a regular participating member in WestFAST.

Efforts are underway to consider having a webinar, or other type of coordination meeting in the Fall of 2018 or in the Spring of 2019. Thanks to Julie Groat, WSWC for help in editing the last two articles.

WSWC Spring Meeting Highlights *(WSWC/WestFAST 03/22/19)*

The Western States Water Council (WSWC) held its Spring 2018 meetings in Arlington, Virginia on March 14, in conjunction with the meetings of the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP). Abbreviated WSWC Committee meetings were held consecutively, addressing newly proposed and sunsetting policy positions, followed the same day by the Full Council meeting. The Council readopted a position presenting numerous considerations for



integrating western water and energy planning and policy. Another position, revised and readopted, supports state and federal applied research and hydroclimate data collection programs, to assist water agencies and all levels of government to make sound scientific decisions and adapt to climate variability. Similarly, a position statement emphasizing State primacy over groundwater was readopted with few changes that declares States have exclusive authority over the allocation and administration of rights to the use of groundwater, and States are primarily responsible for protecting and managing groundwater.

Three new positions were approved. The first supports the development and use of forecast informed reservoir operations (FIRO) using innovative technologies to maximize the effective and efficient use of existing and future water resources infrastructure to meet myriad and growing economic needs for water, as well as balance and protect public health, safety and the environment. The second addresses the urgent need to invest in water-related infrastructure at



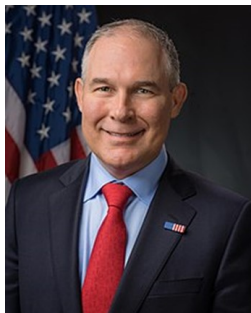
the federal state and local level, to meet both water supply and water quality challenges, while also seeking assistance from the private sector. It notes the need for leadership at all levels to establish water infrastructure investments as a public policy priority, as well as streamline permitting processes, coordinate environmental and other regulatory reviews, and eliminate duplicative requirements to reduce costs and promote timely project completion, maintenance and relicensing. The third new position recognizes the importance of weather station networks, many under-funded and in eminent danger of failure. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Agrimet network is one example. These network observations of temperature, precipitation, wind, and other parameters are critical in estimating crop water needs and evapotranspiration, which in turn are the foundation for better management and conservation of water resources, as well as warning of extreme events and protecting public health and safety.

Other topics discussed in the Committee meetings included improving state-federal relations, with updates on WGA's State Federal Relationship Summit and EPA's State outreach efforts. The federal agencies were reminded to treat states as government partners rather than stakeholders. Federal agencies should make a concerted effort to consult with states in substantive ways. States can provide meaningful information and use their respective authorities and regulations. Both sides must learn how they can work together to achieve common goals with limited government resources.

WSWC and ICWP met jointly on March 14-15, for a Water Planners' Conference and Roundtable with multiple federal agency representatives and hosted a reception for Congressional staff. Leadership from several WestFAST agencies participated in these very informative discussions. For additional information on this meeting and other past meetings, please refer to the WSWC webpage <http://www.westernstateswater.org/> or WSWC Newsletter 2287 on March 20, 2018 e-mail. The WSWC Summer Meeting will be held in Newport, OR August 1-3, 2018.

EPA Releases Administrator Pruitt's Year One Accomplishments Report *(EPA 03/05/18)*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a report of accomplishments spearheaded by Administrator Scott Pruitt during his first year in office. "In just one year, we have made tremendous progress implementing President Trump's agenda by refocusing the Agency to its core mission, restoring power to the states through cooperative federalism, and adhering to the rule of law," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. "The American people can now trust that states and stakeholders will be treated as partners,



EPA's Scott Pruitt

and regulations will provide clarity, not confusion." This report details EPA's accomplishments and what they mean for the American people and the environment. The sum of these actions is monumental: In year one, *EPA finalized 22 deregulatory actions, which could save Americans more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs.*

Some of Administrator Pruitt's accomplishments include:

- *Eliminated, substantially or entirely, seven sites from the National Priorities List of contaminated sites; only two sites were removed the previous year. EPA also awarded \$60 million in Brownfields cleanup grants to local communities.

- *Acted on 322 State Implementation Plans (SIPs) and turned one Federal Implementation Plan into a SIP each month, since March 1, 2017.

- *Approved 3,000 Total Maximum Daily Loads and cut the amount of time it took the Agency to review state water quality standards in half (from 120 days to 60).

- *Awarded \$25 million in water infrastructure loans; disbursed \$1.4 billion in State Revolving Funds to improve our nation's water quality; and, awarded \$100 million to Flint, Mich. for water infrastructure upgrades.

- *Cleared the Agency's backlog of new chemical submissions — containing 600 new submissions as of January 2017 — and ensured that all new chemicals coming to market received a safety determination within about 90 days.

To view the full report, click [here](#).

USGS Celebrating Women in Science *(EPA 03/08/18)*

A recent [study](#) found that about 30 percent of children drew a female when asked to draw a scientist — an increase from less than one percent in the 1960s and 70s. Are you in the picture?

How to Identify a Scientist

While portrayals of scientists as a skinny guy with thick glasses, a bad haircut, and no fashion sense are classic, they no longer fit the bill.

Women now are increasingly the ones doing, managing, and running cutting-edge science. Because it's Women's History Month, we provide a few examples of successful USGS women scientists who offer advice for anyone interested in a career in the sciences.



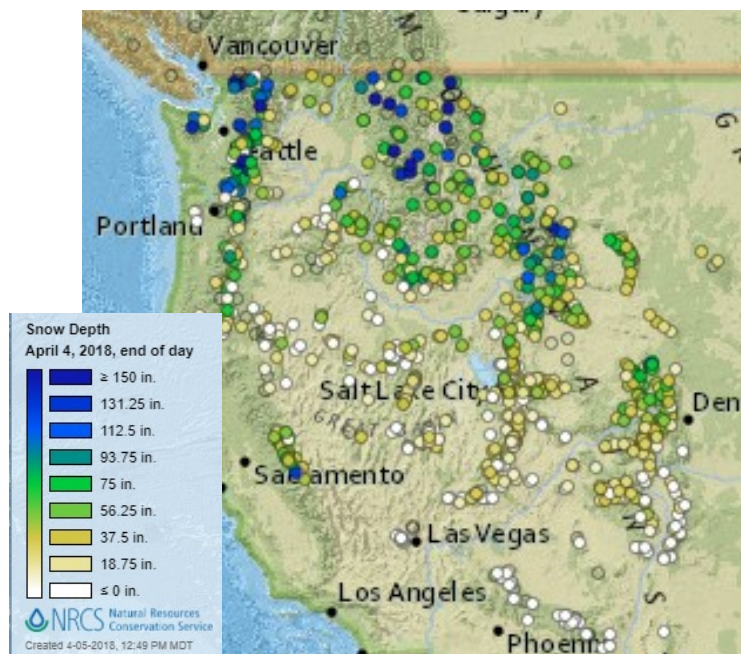
Amanda Demopoulos
Biological Oceanographer USGS image

The article goes on to highlight women in the USGS, but is done so with a reminder to everyone in the sciences we should encourage women and minorities to become engaged in science efforts and support their education. The full article can be found here: <https://www.usgs.gov/news/could-you-be-a-scientist>



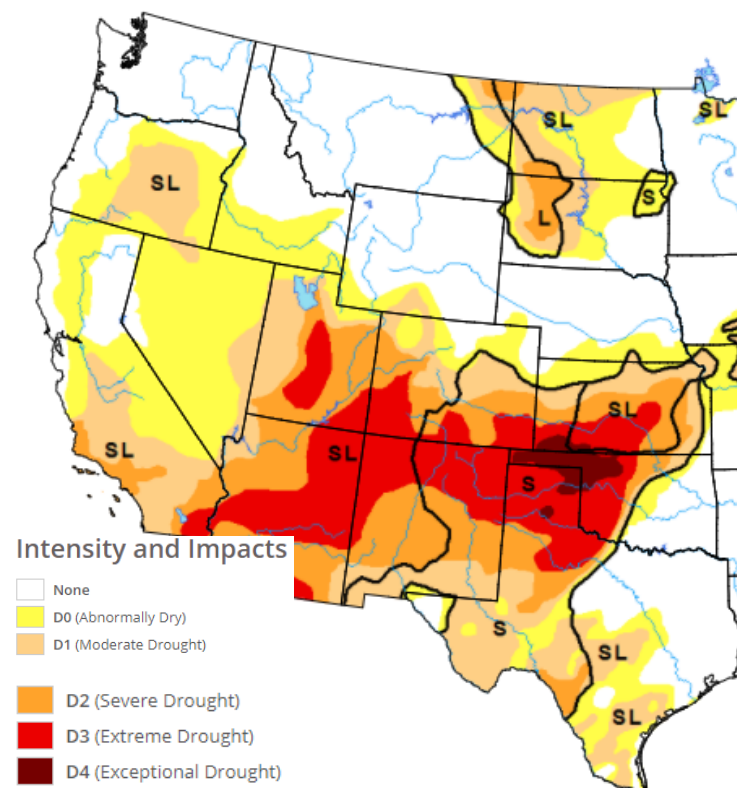
The Latest NRCS Snow Depth Map (NRCS April 4, 2018)

For more details go to [LINK](#)



The Latest Drought Monitor

Map for April 5, 2018 For more details go to [LINK](#)



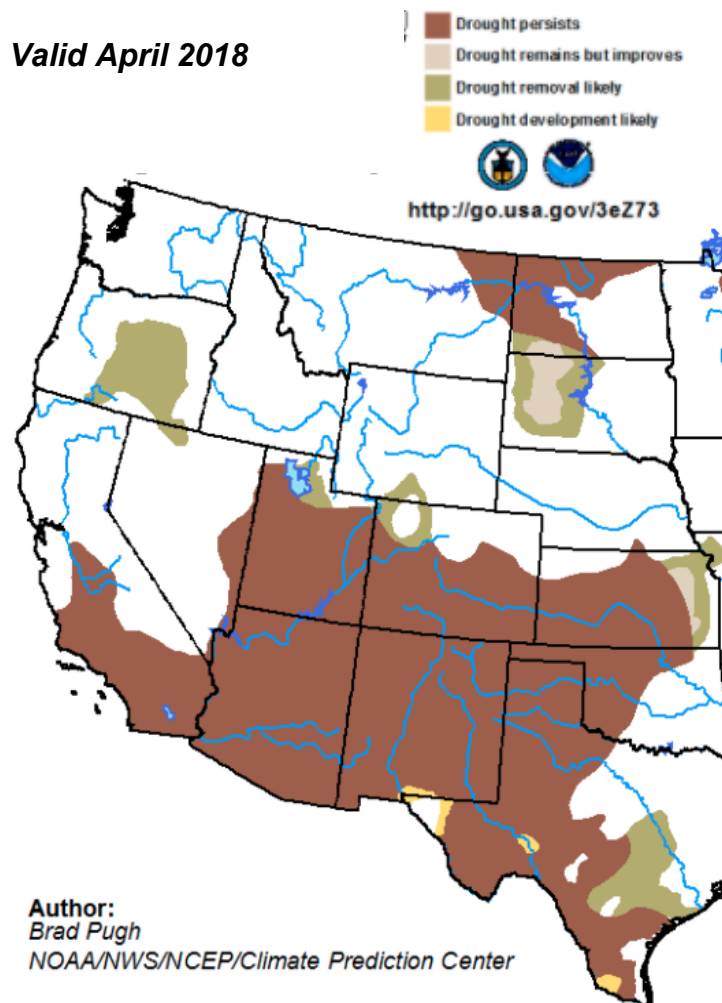
April 1, 2018 Water Situation (WestFAST 03/31/18)

The Three maps displayed on this page sums up the water supply situation in the West right at April 1, 2018. The La Nina event of this winter displayed generally a typical La Nina pattern through most of the winter/wet season with storms coming into the Pacific Northwest and moving south-east through the Northern Rockies where decent snow packs combined with last winters generous snows through much of the west has most areas in reasonably good situations for the upcoming growing and dryer season. Some generous late season snow in part of California has also help ease some of the dry conditions in California and Nevada. However very few storms have entered the Southwestern United States, typical of La Nina and the drought persists in those areas and not much relief is expected anytime soon.

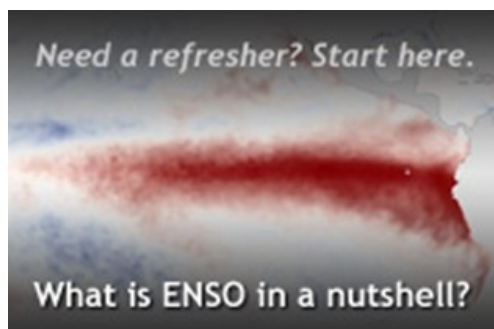
Some Drought Improvement Expected in the Plains and Oregon (WestFAST 03/31/18)

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

Valid April 2018



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Science Report Highlights NOAA 2017 Research Accomplishments—For more information: [2017 NOAA Science Report](#)

Relicensing: Hydro Projects Face Hurdles From Agencies—This topic came up in the WestFAST Principals' Meeting—More details may be found at **AgAlert** —[A California Farm Bureau Federation article](#)

Upcoming Meetings:

The WSWC Summer (187th) Meeting will be held in Newport, Oregon on August 1-3, 2018. 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/>

Federal News (Control click to articles)

March USFS: [Build on Caring for Land and Serving People](#)

03/01: [‘Spring Aboard’ – Boaters urged to get educated before boating season](#)

3/06: [Media Advisory: Low-flying Helicopter to Survey Groundwater near Grand Canyon West and Peach Springs, Arizona](#)

3/06: [Arizona Snowpack Levels Well Below Average](#)

3/07: [Weather Satellites Aid Search and Rescue Capabilities](#)

3/07: [Oregon State Snowpack remains below normal despite](#)

[late month accumulation](#)

3/7: [Montana Snowpack and Coming Spring Weather Critical to Summer Water Supplies](#)

3/08: [Modern Perspective on Gas Hydrates](#)

3/8: [March 2018 ENSO update: come on in, the water's fine](#)

3/12: [Media Advisory: Water Levels to be Measured in 1,300 Southern Idaho Wells](#)

3/12: [California Ranchers Safeguard Agriculture and Sage-Grouse Habitat](#)

3/13: [Calling All Cloud Gazers: NASA Needs Your Help!](#)

3/13: [USDA and Local Partners Offer Opportunities to Reduce Wildfire Risk](#)

3/14: [NASA Remembers Dr. Stephen Hawking](#)

3/15: [Spring Outlook: U.S. to See Moderate Flooding and Warmer Than Normal Temperatures](#)

3/16: [Wildfire Season in the Southern Plains Off to a Strong Start After a Dry Winter](#)

3/19: [Globe Had its Coolest February Since 2014](#)

3/19: [Climate Change Soon to be Main Cause for Heatwaves in the West and Great Lakes](#)

3/19: [BOR announces 2018 WaterSMART Program funding opportunities for water and energy efficiency projects](#)

3/20: [Grazing Lands focus of Upcoming National Conference](#)

3/20: [NRCS Celebrates National Ag Week and Farmers.gov](#)

3/20: [NRCS Seeks Partners for Easement Restoration](#)

3/21: [USDA Offers Renewal Options for Expiring Conservation Stewardship Contracts](#)

3/22: [New NASA Model Finds Landslide Threats in Near Real-Time During Heavy Rains](#)

3/23: [NRCS holding signup for the National Water Quality Initiative \(NWQI\)](#)

3/23: [NRCS to Expand Targeted Conservation Effort for Wildlife on Agricultural Lands](#)

3/23: [Arctic Wintertime Sea Ice Extent Is Among Lowest On Record](#)

3/23: [NRCS to Expand Targeted Conservation Effort for Wildlife on Agricultural Lands](#)

3/26: [Mapping Beach Changes After Devastating Montecito Debris Flows](#)

3/26: [Corps taking safety from reactive to proactive](#)

3/26: [W. Charles McIntosh Nominated to Lead EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs](#)

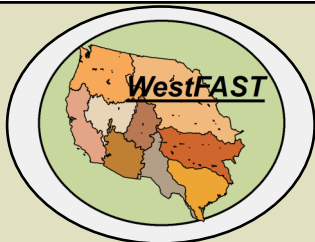
3/26: [The Oklahoman: Ban On “Secret Science” In EPA Regulation Makes Sense](#)

3/27: [NRCS, Partners Seek to Assist Bi-State Sage-Grouse Area Ranchers With Conservation Through Partnership Project Applications due April 27, 2018](#)

3/29: [Arctic sea ice extent at 2018 winter maximum was second smallest on record](#)

3/30: [Bear Lake to Receive Water Quality and Weather Monitoring Equipment](#)

March USFS: [Cost of Fire Operations](#)



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