

Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST)

Nine federal agencies signed a Declaration of Cooperation in 2008 to provide assistance to the Western States Water Council (WSWC). The WestFAST team is comprised of representatives appointed by each agency. An interagency-funded Federal Liaison Officer is assigned to the WSWC office, located near Salt Lake City, UT,

WestFAST members include: Department of Agriculture (NRCS and U.S. Forest Service), Department of Army (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), Department of Commerce (NOAA), Department of the Interior (Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

One year after signing the historic Declaration of Cooperation, the WestFAST has developed a strong and unique presence at the WSWC. The Federal Liaison effectively represents all nine WestFAST agencies and serves as a point-of-contact for both agency leadership and WSWC.

During 2009, the WestFAST Liaison Officer and WestFAST members facilitated the WSWC's interaction with a year-long initiative - Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future – with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. WestFAST participated in both the western regional workshop, as well as the national workshop. In addition, WestFAST provided direct support and assistance for a workshop sponsored by the WSWC and the Western Governors' Association focused on determining user's needs with respect to the National Integrated Drought Information System. Finally, WestFAST began work to provide direct support on 12 of the 42 objectives listed in the Western Governors' Association 2008 report, *Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future: Next Steps*.

In 2010, WestFAST will provide assistance to the WSWCS as it plans and holds the first biennial symposium focused on water infrastructure financing needs. WestFAST anticipates significant involvement in identification of topics and speakers as well as logistics support.

Each federal agency has been engaged with the WSWC individually for many years. However, this is the first time that there is a coordinated effort to respond to the unique needs of the western states and to assist in the implementation of their comprehensive report. The WestFAST chair is Roger Gorke (EPA); the vice-chair is Ward Staubitz (USGS). Jonne Hower is the Federal Liaison to WSWC.

The WestFAST Federal Liaison Officer is funded by WestFAST member agencies.

Prepared by: Jonne Hower, Federal Liaison Officer, 801-685-2555



January 2010