


## Western U.S. Region: Water Resource Management Challenges and Opportunities



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## Management Challenges and Opportunities

- Western Themes and Water Resources Needs
- Water Resources Challenges
- Opportunities
- A Path Forward....

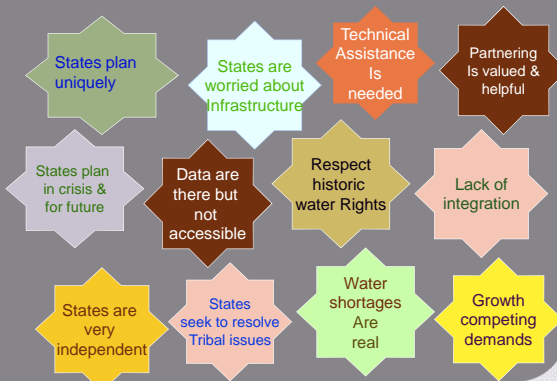



## Western Governors' Association



- WGA represents the Governors of 19 States and 3 U.S. Flag Pacific Islands
- Address important policy and governance issues in the West and advance the role of the Western states in the federal system
- Focuses on natural resources, the environment, human services, economic development, international relations and state governance.

### An array of themes emerge from the West...



- States plan uniquely
- States are worried about Infrastructure
- Technical Assistance Is needed
- Partnering Is valued & helpful
- States plan in crisis & for future
- Data are there but not accessible
- Respect historic water Rights
- Lack of integration
- States are very independent
- States seek to resolve Tribal issues
- Water shortages Are real
- Growth competing demands

### Water Resources Needs


WESTERN REGION		
State Summaries	Interviews	Workshop
Funding	Funding	Data and information
Infrastructure	Data and information	Balancing competing demands
Technical assistance	Water supply	Infrastructure
Data and information	Technical assistance	Water rights
Improved project planning	Planning and policy	IWRM
Statewide assessments	Structure and management Authorities/regulatory/legislation	Federal assistance (implementing state plans)
Climate change data		Streamflow gaging

### Key themes to remember...

**We are facing increased demands for population, energy, and the environment, in a highly variable and predominantly arid climate, and where the resource is nearly fully allocated.**


**The Federal Government should respect the states' role as primary planners for their resources and collaborate with states on water resources planning as they request.**

**We need funding and improved mechanisms for planning and plan implementation. (That is, you can't drink a plan.)**



### Water Resource Challenges in the West

- Providing consistent data and technical information—stream gages, snowpack, groundwater, and climate impacts
- Developing effective and widely supported plans – to balance competing uses and address multitude of changes
- Building or rehabilitating infrastructure – we deal with aging infrastructure and our demands don't match supplies
- Funding, permitting, and implementing State Plans
  
- All while respecting existing water rights and addressing native American water right claims.



### Opportunities for Collaboration and Partnerships

- Cross-boundary partnerships and collaboration
- Coordinated science and greater data-sharing
- Building flexibility into water management systems
- Adaptive resource management
- Federal agency support and engagement
- Improved state and tribal coordination
- Data portal for aggregated/integrated data
- LIDAR mapping





### Successful Collaborations and Partnerships

- Colorado River 7 Basin State Agreement and Endangered Species Program
- Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC)
- Bureau of Land Management-Idaho Federal Liaison
- WestFAST - Western States Water Council
- National Integrated Drought Information System



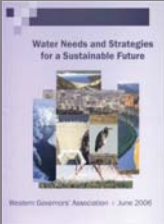
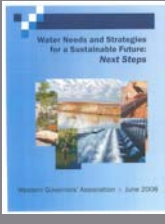

### Workshop Participant Thoughts.....

- *Federal and state agencies even with divergent or conflicting goals can find common ground to reach consensus and develop water resources that provide for public safety and environmental stewardship.*
- *Look for ways to turn competition over limited water resources (win-lose) into collaboration (win-win).*
- *Though water does not respect political boundaries, people do respect each other through collaboration in sharing of its shortage and abundance.*




### WGA Perspectives

- Western States Water Council - Western Governors Association:  
See Water Strategies and Next Steps Reports:





available at: [www.westgov.org](http://www.westgov.org)



### WGA Perspectives


- *The success...will depend in large part on state initiative and innovation, since states have the pivotal role in water planning, as well as allocating and protecting the resource. But in the West, the Federal role is also critical. Cooperation among the states and the Federal government continues to be vital.*
- *To support the state leadership role, the Federal government should help by providing a rational Federal regulatory framework, together with technical and appropriate financial assistance. It will be paramount to move state and local government participation back into the process of Federal decision making, before too much momentum has been built towards policy decisions.*



### Strategies to Address Needs


- Collaborate and coordinate with Federal agencies, states, Tribes, NGOs, and local interests.
- Secure more funding and better funding mechanisms
- Collect and share data and information for water resource management

“It would be good to have a coordinated effort at data collection with good availability of the data. We have many agencies collecting data and very little data sharing.”

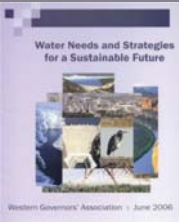


### Strategies to Address Needs (Cont'd)

- Plan for changing needs by engaging stakeholders to shape a secure water future for the West
  - Work from the ground up and across boundaries
  - Incorporate multiple objectives, evaluate alternative scenarios, and establish performance measures that articulate outcomes
  - Breakdown administrative barriers that limit integrated management
  - Identify risks to the public and environment and develop a joint State-Federal communication strategy to convey to public
- Implement our plans.



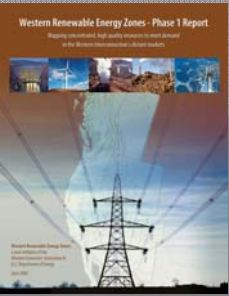
### A Path Forward



“...A new paradigm has emerged which moves away from a top down approach to identifying problems, projecting needs and suggesting projects and programs towards a bottom up approach that relies on local stakeholders, often on a watershed level, coming together to define and bring to state and federal governments their perceived needs and most likely solutions to their water supply problems.”

-- *Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future*, WGA 2006.

### A Path Forward




- The [Western Governors' Association](#) and [U.S. Department of Energy](#) launched in May 2008.
- identify those areas in the West with vast renewable resources to expedite the development and delivery to where it is needed.
- 11 states, two Canadian provinces, and areas in Mexico that are part of the Western Interconnection.

### A Path Forward

- **One Vision:** “The WSWG has long recognized the importance of protecting and wisely managing our national water resources for the benefit of present and future generations, including our environment”
- **Benefits:**
  - Reduce inefficiency, contradiction, and crisis mode
  - Implement solutions
  - Bring attention and resources to the importance of water

### Water Resources Challenges in the West



Impetus for Planning

Diversity

Scarcity

Extremes

**CONTEXT**

- Increased demand from population and economic growth
- Changes in how people use water
- Declines in ecosystem function, water quality, and habitat for species
- Increased variability, including flooding and droughts

So how do we adapt and cope with these significant changes?