



## ▶ WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

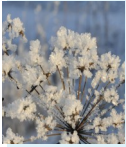
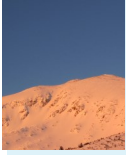
▶ ADVISING WESTERN GOVERNORS ON WATER POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND LAWS

▶ RAISING WATER AS A HIGHER, PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITY

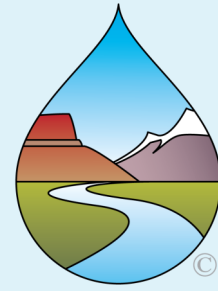
▶ PROTECTING STATES' WATER RIGHTS AND MANAGEMENT PREROGATIVES

▶ FOSTERING STATE AND FEDERAL COOPERATION

▶ PROMOTING SOUND SCIENCE AND DATA SHARING AND NETWORKS



# 2023



# WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL

*Since its creation in 1965, the Western States Water Council (WSWC) has served as a resource and advisor on water policy issues for the governors. The Council includes 18 western states. The governors are ex-officio WSWC members and appoint members to represent their individual states. Members serve at the pleasure of their respective governors and include state natural resource department directors, water resource agency directors, state engineers, state water quality managers, assistant attorneys general, private practice attorneys, and other western water experts. WSWC members are key decision-makers with access to their governor.*

**Water in the West** is an increasingly scarce and precious resource. Population growth, competing economic and ecological demands, and changing social values have left surface and ground water supplies stressed in many areas. This has increased the number and complexity of conflicts among users and uses. A secure water future is becoming more costly and increasingly uncertain given our unpredictable climate, aging and often inadequate infrastructure, data limitations regarding water supplies and demands, competing or poorly defined water rights, and a constantly evolving regulatory landscape. Effectively addressing these challenges requires stronger collaboration and cooperation that transcends political and geographic boundaries between states, federal agencies, tribes, and local communities.

adequate, sustainable supply of water of suitable quality to meet its diverse economic and environmental needs now and in the future. The Council fosters cooperation among member states and provides a forum for expressing a collective voice on federal water issues. It also facilitates the exchange of state views and experiences, fostering better state laws, management practices and policies. It assists states in monitoring and evaluating the impact of federal laws, programs and policies. It strives to elevate water as a higher public policy priority, impacting the economy, environment, public health, and the West's way of life.

State primacy is fundamental to a sustainable water future. States should be engaged early in meaningful consultation on federal policies and regulations, and federal actions should support state water laws, plans, policies, programs, water rights adjudications, court decrees, compacts and settlements.

The Council serves a number of governmental purposes on behalf of western states, with members advising the governors on planning, conservation, development, management, and protection of their water resources — to ensure that the West has an

**Drought Management** The WSWC promotes coordinated drought planning and preparedness, with an emphasis on sharing data and improving drought forecasting. The National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), was created to develop an inter-agency, multi-partner approach to improving drought monitoring, early warning systems and forecasting. The WSWC has been an integral partner in helping implement NIDIS, as well as supporting NOAA's efforts to improve earth observations, drought prediction, and seasonal forecasting.



## What We Do...



- **STATE WATER RIGHTS:** Numerous WSWC activities are designed to preserve the primary authority of the states to allocate and manage their waters, protect private property rights, and maintain water quality.
- **WATER TRANSFERS:** The WSWC supports voluntary, intrastate water rights transfers and has identified tools that states and others can use to avoid or mitigate the impacts of transfers on agricultural economies, rural communities, and the environment.
- **INDIAN WATER RIGHTS:** For over 40 years, the WSWC and the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) have worked together as part of an Ad Hoc Group on Indian Water Rights with Congress and the Administration to settle Indian reserved water rights claims through negotiation. The WSWC and NARF hold a biennial symposium on settlements, and the WSWC maintains a summary table of Congressionally-authorized settlements. Frequent interactions build relationships and trust, leading to results.
- **WATER REUSE:** Working with its members, the WSWC has published a comprehensive reference report describing the water reuse programs in 17 western states.
- **GROUNDWATER:** The WSWC has actively worked to protect the role of the States in allocating, managing and protecting groundwater resources and promoting recharge and conjunctive use.
- **WATER-RELATED DATA:** The WSWC has long worked with Congress and the Administration to secure adequate federal funding for data programs that support state water management, such as U.S. Geological Survey' stream-gaging system, Natural Resources Conservation Service' Snow Survey program, National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Landsat satellites, and various National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration programs.

agement, such as U.S. Geological Survey' stream-gaging system, Natural Resources Conservation Service' Snow Survey program, National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Landsat satellites, and various National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration programs.

- **INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES:** The WSWC has sponsored symposia on strategies to meet our present and future water infrastructure needs. The WSWC has promoted the expenditure of Reclamation Fund receipts for their authorized purposes, as well as EPA's State Revolving Funds and other federal water infrastructure development programs.
- **SYMPOSIA AND WORKSHOPS:** The WSWC sponsors a variety of symposia and workshops to bring together stakeholders from around the West to discuss water challenges. The WSWC has held meetings on improving and advancing sub-seasonal to seasonal precipitation forecasting, drought planning and preparedness, Federal water rights/needs, the energy/water nexus, water quality and water quantity protection and management, and other topics.
- **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:** The WSWC collaborates with many academic, public and private, state and interstate organizations, and coordinates with a Western Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST).

Demands on the West's limited water resources are growing and are complicated by population growth, extreme weather, and increasingly complex federal laws and regulations. These forces magnify the importance of regional cooperation to address common water problems and achieve solutions.

## THE WATER DATA EXCHANGE (WADE) PROGRAM: TRANSFORMING WESTERN WATER PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, AND POLICY BY SHARING STATES' WATER DATA SINCE 2011

States allocate and administer rights to the use of water in the West and are therefore in the best position to provide data on water rights and water use. Water rights, uses, and associated data are managed separately and distinctly by each state which makes regional analysis cumbersome. Analyses across regions and multi-state basins are becoming increasingly relevant, especially given the unprecedented drought and population growth that the West is experiencing. The WSWC Water Data Exchange (WaDE) Program is designed to share WSWC member states' water rights, allocation, supply, and use data through a common streamlined, and standardized service. It enables regional and local analyses to transform water resources planning, management, and policies.

Thanks to the support of Western Governors, state natural resource and water agency directors, state engineers, and their staff, the WaDE Program is making progress in its third phase (2022-2026). During this phase, WaDE is focused on developing the Western States Water Data Access and Analysis Tool (WestDAAT) as a user-friendly interface for water data. The first stage of WestDAAT supports water rights data and will be publicly available in May 2023.



The WaDE Program's initial concept and creation phase (2011-2018) established working relationships with states agencies and created data sharing protocols while building and populating a collaborative data management system, in response to interest and funding from the WSWC States, federal agencies (DOE, EPA), and philanthropic groups. In its second phase (2019-2021), the WaDE Data System has been upgraded to a cloud-based database that shares a variety of water data for WSWC's eighteen member states and has become one of the major data hubs within the Internet of Water project <https://internetofwater.org/resources/hubs/>.

682 East Vine Street, Suite 7  
Murray, UT 84107  
Phone: 801-685-2555  
Fax: 801-685-2559

<http://www.westernstateswater.org>

For more information about WaDE, please visit  
<https://westernstateswater.org/wade>