

West Region Technology Workgroup and Technical Discipline Consortia FY2011-2012 Business Plan

Updated 6/6/11



West Region Technology Workgroup (WRTWG) Members:

Helen Denniston, SRC - Alaska
Steve Barker, SRC – Arizona - Chair
Diane Holcomb, SRC – California – Chair elect
Gene Backhaus, SRC – Colorado
Eugene Schock, ASTC Technical Services – Idaho
Rob Sampson, SCE - Idaho
Ron Nadwornick, SRC – Montana
Chuck Gordon, SSS - Montana
George Chavez, SRC – New Mexico
Roger Ford, SCE – New Mexico
Mike Odegard, SRC – Nevada
Bill White, SRC – Oregon
Anthony Ingersoll, Assistant Director for Technology - Pacific Islands
Elise Boeke, SRC – Utah
Bonda Habets, SRC – Washington
Astrid Martinez, SSS – Wyoming
Casey Sheley, SRC – Wyoming

WRTWG Advisor:

Jeff Burwell, State Conservationist – Idaho

WRTWG Coordinator:

Russ Hatz, NTS, WNTSC – Portland

West Region Technical Consortia Chairperson/Mentor:

Agronomists – Rita Bickel and Bob Fry (CA) – Elise Boeke (UT)
Biologist – Peter Husby (MT) – George Chavez (NM)
Cultural Resource Specialists/Coordinators– Chair (Vacant) – Mike Odegard (NV)
Economists – Julie Pierce (UT) – Bill White (OR)
Engineers – Roger Ford (NM) - Rob Sampson (ID)
Foresters – Misty Seaboldt (OR) – Ron Nadwornick (MT)
Geographic Information Systems - Randy Wiggins, GIS Coordinator (WY) & Scott Splean (CA)
– Diane Holcomb (CA)
Grazing Lands Specialists – Patti Novak-Echenique (NV) – Gene Schock (ID)
Plant Material Specialists/PMC Managers – Joe Scianna (MT) – Gene Backhaus (CO)
Soil Scientists – Levi Steptoe (NV) – Chuck Gordon (MT)
Water Quality Specialists – Jennifer Zwicke (OR) – Anthony Ingersoll (PIA)

Past Chairpersons:

FY2005-2006 – Ron Nadwornick, SRC, Montana
FY2007 – Mark Weatherstone, ASTC Technical Services, Idaho
FY2008 – Russ Hatz, SRC – Oregon
FY2009 – Jerry Jasmer, SRC – Wyoming
FY2010 – Eugene Schock - Alaska

Role of the West Region Technology Work Group:

- Coordinate technology transfer at the state level
- Coordinate technology needs across state lines
- Coordinate technical support activities
- Assist in determining technology transfer and training needs
- Assure that available and needed technology is delivered to specialists and field staffs
- Coordinate technology needs at the field level
- Facilitate the development of high priority and mission critical technology

Role of the West Region Discipline Consortia:

- Communicate with other State Technical Specialists and identify opportunities for collaboration
- Work together on projects assigned by the WRTWG to find favorable solutions to problems or develop requested products and eliminate duplication of efforts
- Strive for consistent and compatible technical information being utilized in the field.
- Identify research and technology development needs among the states.
- Work to eliminate inconsistencies in the implementation of technology and technical processes across state lines.
- Forward information and technology needs to the West Region Technology Work Group.
- Forward information and regional technology needs to leadership within the consortium.
- Function as a two-way communications mechanism between the WRTWG and the Field, including Technical Discipline Specialists.

Relationship to the West National Technology Support Center:

This business plan focuses on coordinating the activities of the Western States to reduce duplication and improve technology delivery. The activities listed in this plan reflect efforts to be carried out by the States working in partnership with the WNTSC. The WNTSC is supporting most of the activities in this plan and, for those items for which the WNTSC is providing support, the name of the WNTSC specialist is shown and a reference number to the WNTSC business plan may also be included.

Action items that require a budget have been approved by the WRTWG and are highlighted in green. Many of the action items will be accomplished by state staff with no additional expenditure of funds. It is understood that all consortia would benefit from an annual meeting if budgets allow.

Action	When	Responsible Consortium/Person	Status	Budget	NTSC Technical Contact
Obtain and Develop Technology					
Objective: Obtain and develop technology needed to promote productive soils, clean air and water, healthy plant and animal communities and energy conservation.					
Develop consistent Pest Management specifications/ job sheets based on the new national policy concerning pest management and NRCS responsibility toward assisting producers	Sept. 2011	Agronomists	Being prepared by Eric and Giulio. Nov 8, PM 595 presentation by Giulio. AZ & PIA received 595 training. 595 national template finished and sent to agronomists.		Ferruzzi/Hesketh
Plan a potential FY12 National Agronomy meeting	FY12	Agronomists	Coordinate w/ training need. Regional WRAC request was no. Possible hosting national in California. Giulio is working on this. Training needs NM 590 & PM 595, policy on 590& 595, Organic, energy, payment schedules, High tunnel. As of may 9, 2011 Giulio reported that there would be no National meeting scheduled in 2011.		Fasching/Ferruzzi
Coordinate with federal and state partner agencies for sage grouse planning on public lands CA, NV, OR, WA	2011	Biologists	MOU with BLM signed		Wendell Gilgert
Coordinate with Cultural Resource staff to streamline compliance process during fish and wildlife project planning and implementation	2011-2012	Biologists			Tom Moore/Meg Bishop
Continue to develop guidance for integrating fish and wildlife considerations into ESDs, including Riparian Complex ESDs	2011-2012	Biologists			Kathryn Boyer/Wendell Gilgert
Enhance and increase capacity for biological Technical Assistance by working with partners to place more biologists on the ground; insure	2011-	Biologists	ongoing		Kathryn Boyer/Wendell Gilgert

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new hires have adequate training and resources thru mentoring, training, and technical assistance					
Clarify policy regarding job approval authority for field office biologists throughout the western states	2011	Biologists			Terrell Erickson, Tom Moore, Pete Husby, Bill Wood
Convene WRBC Meeting in Davis, CA to develop region-wide templates for Biology standard specifications, state supplements, technical notes, and job sheets.	March 2011	Biologists	WRBC Meeting request denied due to budget and travel cost concerns.		Wendell Gilgert , Kathryn Boyer
Create a Catalogue of Low-Cost Fish Screens for Surface Water Diversions (document and website) to illustrate the range of low-cost options for screening diversions where regulatory criteria are not involved	2011-2012	Biologists	In progress through interagency agreement with BoR.	\$9000	Kathryn Boyer
Develop GPS surveying policy and an associated tech note dealing with survey grade and other GPS technology	Sept 2011	Engineers/ Chuck Schmitt (WY)/ Bronson Smart (UT)	20% complete		Peter Robinson
Jointly with the WFC and WFLC: Develop a fact sheet outlining the ecosystem service opportunities on private forest land citing specific examples occurring in the West. (target audience: agencies, planners).	FY 2011	Foresters	High Priority <u>50%</u> complete		Geoff McNaughton (USFS-Utah)
Convene a west region GIS consortium meeting in Denver or Salt Lake City to help meet our objectives	FY2011	GIS/ Scott Splean & Randy Wiggins			Steve Campbell
Work with other Consortia, state specialists, regional specialists and Lane Price on the "Integrated Grazinglands Tool".	October 2011	Grazing Lands Specialists / Brendan Brazee, Jon Siddoway, Shane Green, Bob Gillaspay			Jeff Repp, Gene Fults, Pat Shaver
Advance a list of research support needs that will enhance the data gathered for ecological site descriptions (eg, hydrology section of ESDs can use data from RHEM model).	Feb 2011	Grazing Lands Specialists / Jon Gustafson, Herman Garcia/ Grazing Lands Specialists Consortium	Working with Ken Spaeth and Grazing land Technology team with development. In progress.		Pat Shaver, Jeff Repp
Develop Forage Preference tables by MLRA/LRU to replace individual state lists.	Feb 2011	Grazing Lands Specialists / John Tunberg (NM)/ Bob	Suggested that this be posted on the consortium		Jeff Repp, Gene Fults

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		Gallaspy (OR)	sharepoint site.		
Develop naming conventions for Forest Ecological Site Descriptions	FY11	Foresters			Craig Ziegler
Obtain plant attribute data for use in Almanac and other models.	Sept 2011	Plant Material Specialists / ID, WA, CA, AZ, NV, MT, CO	1st round completed in 2010. Begin 2nd round of species		Jim Briggs
Plan and implement multi-PMC study of basin wildrye for potential biomass/biofuel application.	March 2011	Plant Material Specialists / WA, ID, MT, NV PMCs			Jim Briggs
Conduct multi-PMC study and develop region report: ➤ Alkali sacaton	Sept 2011	Plant Material Specialists/ AZ, CA, NM, TX PMC'S	30% complete. Final report expected 2012		Jim Briggs
Conduct multi PMC study and develop region reports: ➤ Squirreltail	Sept 2011	Plant Material Specialists/ ID, CO, NM, NV PMC'S	40% complete Final report expected 2012		Jim Briggs
Adopt California e-veg guide and work to populate database for use in other western states.	Sept 2011	Plant Materials Specialists			Jim Briggs
Develop common strategies and goals for soil mapping and ecological site correlation on National Forests in the West. In conjunction with the USFS Regional Offices, develop possible Regional and MLRA wide approaches for mapping and interpretations. Conduct a workshop with the USFS and those states with significant National Forest mapping.	Oct 2011	Soil Scientists/ Colorado, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, and New Mexico in an initial group with full findings discussed through the Soil Scientists. State Range Cons and MO/MLRA range cons as appropriate and needed. Foresters	Meeting scheduled to discuss data integration with USFS Region 3 (AZ-NM) for October 29 in Albuquerque, NM.		Jeff Repp, Ziegler, Campbell
Inventory the available benchmark soil characterization data for each state to analyze for potential enhancements. Develop a report of existing data and identify possible data gaps and possible additional benchmark soils.	FY 2011	Soil Scientists	50% complete		Campbell

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Refine and Deliver Technology					
Objective: Ensure that field personnel have technology that is up to date, easily accessible, and designed to meet user needs.					
Provide input to CDSI automated jobsheet process for new business tools	FY 2011	Agronomists	Completed. Shawn, gave a presentation about the streamlining process.		Fasching/ Ferruzzi
Facilitate RUSLE 2 Grazing Model implementation a) Database work b) Training c) Rollout	FY 2011	Agronomists	Database work complete. Reviewing current version. Not many people showing interest in the West.		Ferruzzi
Review common conservation practices and proposed revisions.	FY 2011	Agronomists	Ongoing, states have been working on / adopting Interim High Tunnel 798		Fasching/ Ferruzzi
Ensure Job sheet consistency between states. Coordinate and discuss six standards and associated job sheets and spec sheets. Selected Spec sheets to be discussed at each quarterly meeting.	FY 2011	Agronomists	On going. Several states have shared High Tunnel 798. Use WRAC as a sounding board for discussion of new standards /spec sheets.		Fasching/ Ferruzzi
Develop a web page that has all habitat assessment models used in the West Region	Sept 2011	Biologists	~50% of states have entered models in SharePoint site.		Wendell Gilgert
Continue to evaluate cost and need for incorporation of new technology for state cultural resource specialists for use in cultural resource inventories	2011	Cultural Resource Specialists			Meg Bishop
Revision of Design Note #12, NEH 636.52 – This was initially developed by Dave Thackeray and will be pursued by this team.	Sept. 2011	Engineers/ Schmitt, Becker, Sampson			Peter Robinson
Write White Paper for Consortiums – This will entail establishing consortiums similar to irrigation specialist but will include Ag Waste, Energy, and other teams.	Sept 2011	Engineers/ Sampson, Johnson	Completed and delivered to WRTWG 4/2011. Sampson and Ford to work on setting up four new engineering consortia.		Peter Robinson
White Paper for Design Services using Regional Design Units	Sept 2011	Engineers/ Johnson, Durgin			Kip Yasumiishi

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CAD Drawings (1) Text fill structural drawings, (2) Structural Design of Flex Conduits.	Sept 2011	Engineers			Kip Yasumiishi
Western Joint Forestry Team – Collaboration a) Continued participation with the WJFC: - Winter teleconference – Jan. 2010 - Summer meeting - June teleconference - Fall meeting – Nov. 2010, Riverside, CA b) Development of a charter with WJFT - completed - determine liaisons with WJFT c) Develop materials (fact sheets/brochures) for agencies that result in coordinated interagency delivery of forestry and conservation assistance on forest lands – completed by NACD	FY11 - 12	Foresters	b) completed		Ziegler
Review and comment on ranking criteria and evaluations of conservation programs		Foresters			Craig Ziegler
Improve overall GIS architecture, geodata, and coordination strategies with national geospatial and CDSI leadership.	FY2011	GIS/ Scott Splean & Randy Wiggins			Steve Campbell
Develop a strategy to advance implementation of viable mobile GIS technologies	FY2011	GIS/ Scott Splean & Randy Wiggins			Steve Campbell
Develop a strategy for what NutBal should be (and be used for) in the West Region. Training, implementation, outreach and Program utility.	Dec 2010	Grazing Lands Specialists / Loretta Metz	Sent to all Tech Centers. WRSRCs need to review. Lori Metz will do final draft after comments have been submitted.		Jeff Repp, Stefanie Aschmann
ESD and FSG benefit:cost assessment. Develop peer reviewed paper for Rangelands.	Sept 2011	Grazing Lands Specialists / Hal Gordon, Loretta Metz, Jon Siddoway, Homer Sanchez	Have draft copy from Hal Gordon. Will review/comment. 09-29-09.		Hal Gordon, Dennis Thompson
Develop decision support template (for individual states) relative to sagebrush ecosystem	Sept 2011	Grazing Lands Specialists / John Tunberg, Bob Gillaspay,			Pat Shaver

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health and treatment of sagebrush. Establish a joint committee (with Grazing and Biology Consortia) to draft such a document with NTSC specialist assistance.		Shane Green			
Convene WRGLC meeting in Billings, MT in association with SRM meeting.	Feb 2011	Grazing Lands Specialists / Jon Siddoway			Pat Shaver
Partner with the BLM on including appropriate rangeland and pastureland interpretations in Soil Data Mart uploads of soil survey tabular data. States will include field office BLM input and jointly report findings to the National Soil Survey Center.	Oct 2011	Grazing Lands Specialists Soil Scientists/ Loretta Metz, Shane Green Foresters	Completed		Pat Shaver Steve Campbell Craig Ziegler
Evaluate in collaboration with appropriate state specialists consistency of plant materials related state conservation practice standards and specifications across state boundaries. Practices undergoing National revision will be selected*.	Sept 2011	Plant Material Specialists			Jim Briggs
Develop a report for use by PMCs which summarizes project(s) (funding amounts, funding sources, partners, trial results, etc.) regarding invasive species work by PMCs to improve collaboration and identify potential reimbursable funding sources.	Sept 2011	Plant Material Specialists/Williams			Jim Briggs
Develop Access based seed calculator tool for western state FO.	Sept 2011	Plant Materials Specialists			Jim Briggs
Develop or update all plant release fact sheets/brochures at each PMC	Sept 2011	Plant Materials Specialists			Jim Briggs
Begin planning for 2012 Consortium meeting	August 2011	Water Quality Specialists/ Nephi Cole (WY), Norm.Evenstad (UT)			Shaun McKinney
Revise old SCS tech note: Water Quality Tech Note 1.	Sept. 2011	Water Quality Specialists/ Jason Peel (CO)			Shaun McKinney
Work cooperatively to assist initiative with coral reef efforts in Pacific	Sept. 2011	Water Quality Specialists/ Adam Reed (HI)			Shaun McKinney

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Review the CSP 2008 enhancements and the "CMT" for adequacy in addressing and documenting water quality concerns, and make recommendations to improve in future. The CMT tool doesn't adequately address water quality concerns in the west.	Sept. 2011	Water Quality Specialists/ Dee Carlson (ID)			Shaun McKinney
Provide timely reviews and comments on water quality models, tools, and materials under development	Sept. 2011	Water Quality Specialists			Shaun McKinney

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Train and Support the Field					
Objective: Ensure that our employees acquire and maintain the knowledge and skills needed to be successful.					
Develop a White Paper addressing the need, feasibility, and options for developing Job Approval Authority for non-engineering practices.	2011	WRTWG/ Steve Barker			Russ Hatz
Facilitate WEPS implementation a) File Management b) Training c) Rollout	FY10-11	Agronomists	1) File Mgt done 2) Train the Trainer complete Aug, 2010 3) State list of training dates done 4) States completed training as of Feb 2011. AK, AZ, CA, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY, ID, MT, HI		Fasching
Encourage and facilitate training in communication between planners and producers	FY2011	Agronomists	Many states use the "Art of Communication" in planning courses.		Fasching/ Ferruzzi
Training on Organic Production	FY 11/ FY12	Agronomists	Sarah providing training opportunities this year		S. Brown /Ferruzzi
Training on NM 590. P-Index and Leaching Index	FY 11	Agronomists	Rick will provide training via video teleconference by end of FY 11.		Fasching
Video Teleconference training	FY 11- 12	Agronomists	Giulio will provide ideas for video training for WRAC members		Ferruzzi
Deliver three Wetland Delineation training sessions in 2011 – one in each region.	2011	Biologists/ Tim Dring (WA)/ Terri Skadeland (CO)			Wendell Gilgert
Develop and implement an agreed-to process and templates for state biology practice standards, job sheets, specifications, technical notes, and state supplements., integrated with CSI	2011	Biologists/ Stu Tuttle, Tim Dring, Pete Husby, Tom Moore, Karen Fullen	To be addressed during WRBC meeting in winter 2011		Kathryn Boyer/ Wendell Gilgert
Hold state sponsored pollinator workshops. Workshops planned for Nevada, New Mexico, and likely Arizona and Idaho, in addition to continued outreach across California. Opportunities	2011	Biologists/Karen Fullen (UT)/ Terri Skadeland (CO)/ Tim Dring (WA)	Colorado held 2 pollinator workshops in October 2008, Utah held 2 Pollinator		Wendell Gilgert/ Mace Vaughn

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also available for full day trainings in Montana, Wyoming, and Utah.			Workshops in July 2009, WA held 2 workshops in 2009/10 for western state staff. Other trainings and field days are ongoing across Oregon, California, and Washington.		
Select new Cultural Resources Chair for WRTWG	2011	Cultural Resource Specialists			Meg Bishop
Continue to explore potential for implementing time frames for cultural resources training and refresher courses for NRCS staff in Western States	2011	Cultural Resource Specialists			Meg Bishop
Conduct Statewide Training Sessions for compliance with Section 106, state, and local laws pertinent to historic preservation	2011	Cultural Resource Specialists			Meg Bishop
Training: 1) Windbreak technology – NEDS and/or other. 2) Forest ecological site inventory and description. 3) Forest practices: field staff training – thinning, treating slash, tree planting, firebreak establishment. 4) Joint Forestry Training: field staff of NRCS and State Forestry trained in policy, procedures, planning & technology. 5) Forest Habitat Training 6) Attend Association of State Foresters Pacific Island Committee annual meeting	FY11- FY12	Foresters	3) 50% complete 5) complete 6) complete	(States will need to support travel and per diem costs to sessions; \$1000 per session for meeting rooms and incidental expenses for WFC/WRT WG approved sessions)	Ziegler
Review and comment on forestry conservation practice standards: • Slash Treatment (384) • Firebreak (394) • Fuel Break (383) • Forest Stand Improvement (666) • Access Control (472) • Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)	FY11- FY12	Foresters			Ziegler
Review and comment on state	FY11-	Foresters			Ziegler

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specifications, technical notes, job sheets, etc.	FY12				
Continue to conduct training opportunities at SRM and NGLC/GLCI meetings in the form of breakout sessions. Topics for training include: GSAT Basic; GSAT Advanced; ESD course; Rangeland Health course and/or updates; NUTBAL; etc.	March 2011	Grazing Lands Specialists / Any state specialists.			Pat Shaver, Jeff Repp, Gene Fults, Hal Gordon
Coordinate with the new WERA committee in the west focusing on water quality BMPs for pesticides.	Sept 2011	Water Quality Specialists/ Rebecca Challender (CA)			Shaun McKinney
Provide input to the CDSI to assure water quality concerns are adequately addressed for western US	Sept 2011	Water Quality Specialists/ Norm Evenstad (UT)			Shaun McKinney
Coordinate with other Western Resource Consortia on interdisciplinary issues; provide networking mechanisms	Sept 2011	Water Quality Specialists/ Jennifer Zwicke (OR)			Shaun McKinney