

# Funding to preserve water resources ensures adequate supplies for agriculture

*...while sustaining clean, reliable water supplies for the future*



**A**cross the nation, droughts, flooding and pollution threaten the water supply we all depend on for daily use, growing food and sustaining ecosystems. Issues of water security have their headwaters in the Western United States, where 11 of the largest discharging rivers in the country get their start. Population growth, economic development, extreme weather fluctuations and expansive wildfires will continue to place challenges on future water resources.

## Increased funding to the Western Land-Grant Universities is needed to address current and emerging threats to water security.

- Floods and drought cost the nation \$46 billion and 138 lives in 2016, according to a report from the National Centers for Environmental Information
- In addition to the mitigation and management of natural disasters, ongoing resources are needed to find solutions and alternatives to failing infrastructure, inefficient agricultural irrigation systems, drought-prone crops and expanding needs for energy production
- The natural systems we depend on are also threatened by toxic algal blooms and nutrient-rich dead zones in surface waters and coastal estuaries, and lost diversity in our terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems



## With adequate funding, the Western Land-Grant Universities are uniquely positioned to:

- Develop innovative scientific techniques, products and processes to improve water use efficiency and water conservation management practices
- Prevent degradation of watersheds and water resources caused by pesticides, salinity, chemicals, animal wastes, nutrients, sediments and pathogens
- Help communities develop flexible and effective water policies and strategies
- Conduct research and educational outreach to address water issues in partnership with key stakeholders and regulatory entities

**The Western Perspective**  
*of the Land-Grant Universities*

**WAAESD**  
Western Association of Agricultural  
Experiment Station Directors  
<http://www.waesd.org>

**WEDA**  
Western Extension  
Directors Association  
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/weda>

# The Western Perspective & The Western Agenda

## What is the Western Perspective & Agenda?

The Western U.S. is facing unprecedented challenges maintaining sustainable urban communities and agricultural and natural resource economies. The Western Perspective & Western Agenda serves to inform policy responses and actions and demonstrates how Land-Grant Universities, Agricultural Experiment Stations, and Cooperative Extension support all Western Region communities sustained by agricultural and natural resources economies.

## What are the unique challenges and characteristics of the West?

Every state in the Western Region has densely populated urban areas juxtaposed with large expanses of sparsely populated rural areas. This creates pressure on natural resource and agriculture industries while increasing population brings new demands on local and regional economies—largely dependent on watersheds, ecosystems, infrastructure and federal lands.

The public owns 47% of the land in the West. The majority of Western Region agriculture depends on public lands for livestock and forestry production, and on strong partnerships with federal organizations to sustain the health of ecosystems, agriculture and communities.

Fire, water, climate change, population growth, and invasive pests and diseases are the primary threats to agriculture and communities in the Western Region.

## Synergy Between Units

Land-Grant Universities, the Cooperative Extension Service, and Agricultural Experiment Stations have a federal and state obligation to conduct research and outreach, and lead educational programs that address the greatest agricultural and natural challenges of their home state and region.

The collaborative nature between these entities in the Western Region ensure the programs, people and places of the Western Region are able to sustain and thrive with respect to their individual state needs and united regional challenges.

This collaboration is unique and powerful! No other institutions have the scope, resources or capacity to anticipate and respond to the current and future challenges facing the Western Region. The interaction between each entity produces timely information and research from experts at each institution. The depth and breadth of these programs reaches everyone, from the most vulnerable to the most prosperous.

## Agenda Priorities

- Sustainable Production Systems: Food Production, Food Safety, Food Security, Forestry and Horticulture
- Natural Resources: Water, Wildlife, Wildfire, Invasive Species, Ecosystem Services and Economic Opportunities
- Energy
- Community and Economic Development
- Youth Development: Agriculture, Nutrition and Natural Resources Science Literacy
- Nutrition and Health: Innovation in Foods for Health

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