Meeting Notes

Projec	t: Oroville and New Bullards Bar Water Control Manual Updates
Subjec	t: Informational Meeting
Dat	e: Tuesday, October 15, 2024
Locatio	n: Veterans Memorial Building, Yuba City CA

Presentation:

USACE gave an update on the WCM update process and how stakeholders can share comments and ask questions. The presentation included the following items:

- General terminology
- Watershed details
- WCM update process, including NEPA (though NEPA is not yet starting)
- Key issues
- Questions to consider
- Purpose and needs statements
- Next steps and timeline (What to expect next)

Yuba-Feather FIRO Program web page link: <u>FIRO_Yuba_Feather - Center for Western</u> Weather and Water Extremes (ucsd.edu)

The New Bullards Bar & Oroville Dams Water Control Manual Update web page link: <u>New</u> <u>Bullards Bar and Oroville Dams Water Control Manual Update (army.mil)</u>

<u>Q & A:</u>

Commenter 1. Angie Mannel – Butte County Office of Emergency Management

- Question: NEPA takes a long time for our office. How long will the NEPA process take for the WCM Updates?
 - Answer: It depends on the level of NEPA. For an EA, the process takes 1 year.
 For an EIS, the process takes 2 years.
- Follow up question: Is CEQA needed?
 - \circ $\,$ Answer: CEQA is not needed, since this is a Federal Action $\,$

Commenter 2. Mat Conant – Supervisor for South Sutter County. Oroville Citizens Advisory Committee. Water Rights Advisory

- The comments generally noted an appreciation for transparency in the WCM update process, and noted the importance of getting a good handle on operations.
- Comments drew parallels with Folsom, noting that Folsom was built considering the 100 years of prior hydrology, and would have been able to handle all of those hydrologic conditions. However, the comments noted that in the time since, 6 to 7 large events occurred because of climate change, and the manual [Folsom's WCM] needs to be updated to account for events that were not in the record for the 100 years prior to the dam being built. The comments noted that Oroville is the same.
- The comments noted that operations are a "three-legged stool" the reservoir is operated for flood, water supply, and power. The commenter noted that it is important to update the WCM accounting for all of these needs.
- Comments concluded noting that these comments are intended to provide groundwork and context for where the Oroville Citizens Advisory Committee is coming from.

Commenter 3 – Richard Thompson, Feather River Recovery Alliance, Oroville Resident.

- Question: How will the WCM Update affect dam safety and integrity?
 - $\circ~$ Answer: Dam safety will be evaluated as a part of the WCM process.
- Question: What kind of control does the WCM provide as far as operating the dam?
 - Answer: The WCM has rules and regulations per Section 7 of the Flood Control Act of 1944. The USACE has authority over how the flood space is operated, but operations are done in coordination with the dam owner.
- Question: What is the reason for updating the WCM?
 - Answer: WCMs should be routinely updated, but there was previously a drought of funding. Recently the district received funding from Congress (in 2020) in order to modernize reservoir operations.
- Question: Did 2017 play a role in updating the WCM?
 - Answer: The primary reason is funding. In addition, we are currently updating 10 WCMS in addition to Oroville and New Bullards Bar. WCMs should be periodically updated.
- Concluding comments expressed a desire to work together and an appreciation for the chance to provide input.

Commenter 4. Robert Bateman, Feather River Recovery Alliance, Butte County, Oroville Citizens Advisory.

- Question: What do you do with modeling and what does that mean? Have you modeled how 150,000 cfs will affect the system? Will you model levee failure likelihood? What about evaluating scenarios of higher releases, increasing to where it will fail?
 - Answer: We will look at the effects of releasing 150,000 cfs, levee failures, and will evaluate higher releases that are specified by the Emergency Spillway Release Diagram (ESRD).
- Comment noted a preference not to use the Emergency Spillway. SPK clarified that the ESRD guides the emergency operations of the gated spillway, not the emergency spillway.