

Modernizing Our Aging Dams

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District owns and operates 17 dams and reservoirs in California's Central Valley, which provide multiple benefits including flood risk management, navigation, water supply, hydropower, environmental stewardship, fish and wildlife conservation, and recreation.

USACE dams avoid over \$250 billion in direct damages and preserve \$25 billion annually in economic benefits.

USACE owns approximately 740 dams nationwide, 95 percent of which are more than 30 years old and over 50 percent have reached or exceeded the 50-year service lives for which they were designed. This does not mean they will fail after 50 years, but they may require additional maintenance and modifications to ensure they meet current safety standards and continue to provide multiple benefits for decades to come.

USACE continually evaluates the condition and safety of its dams through the dam safety program. Inspections and assessments of each dam identify potential risks and their severity, allowing us to prioritize, using the dam safety action classification system, which dams are in the most urgent need of modernization using limited federal funding.





Mariposa Dam and Reservoir (1948)

Some safety concerns. Interim measures implemented.

Buchanan Dam, Eastman Lake (1975)

Safety concerns minimal.

Pine Flat Dam and Lake (1954)

Safety concerns minimal.

1. Dam name and year built.

2. Dam safety action classification color.

- (1) Very High Urgency.
- (2) High Urgency.
- (3) Moderate Urgency.
- (4) Low Urgency.
- (5) Normal.
- 3. Age most dams are designed with a 50-year service life; some older dams may require more maintenance or modifications to meet current safety standards.

4. Safety risks.

- Earthquake sudden, violent shaking may cause the dam to crack or collapse.
- Overtopping a huge, rare flood fills the reservoir and overtops the dam causing erosion.
- Seepage seepage of water through the dam may become excessive, causing erosion.
- 5. Current status and modernization plan.

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Current as of: June 18, 2024