

USSD COMMITTEE ON TAILINGS DAMS CHARTER

Approved by the Board of Directors on 7/22/15

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

The Committee on Tailings Dams contributes to the USSD Vision of a world class organization dedicated to advancing the role of dams in society and building the community of practice. The committee engages in activities that contribute to and support the USSD Mission imperatives of advocating, educating, collaborating and cultivating. Specifically, the Committee on Tailings Dams:

- Advocates the engineering, construction, operation, and reclamation of tailings dams and coal combustion impoundments in a safe, environmentally and socially responsible manner.
- Educates by providing a forum for exchange of knowledge and experience in tailings dams and coal combustion impoundments design, construction, operational performance, and reclamation within the community of practice. We also disseminate information from the committee through workshops and by contributing to documents published by USSD or ICOLD.
- Collaborates by providing a forum for exchange of information between members of the committee, by interacting and participating in activities with other USSD committees as well as providing a liaison with the ICOLD Committee on Tailings Dams and Waste Lagoons.
- Cultivates by providing a community of practice related to tailings dams and coal combustion impoundments.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee on Tailings Dams was established by the Board of Directors of USCOLD (the predecessor of USSD) in the 1980s as a representative US committee to the Committee on Tailings Dams and Waste Lagoons of ICOLD. The Committee on Tailings Dams is charged with (a) promoting safe, environmentally and socially responsible practices for tailings dams and coal combustion impoundments through design, construction, operational performance, and reclamation; and, (b) collaborating with other national and international professional organizations involved with tailings dams and coal combustion impoundments, such as the Committee on Tailings Dams and Waste Lagoons of ICOLD. The Committee keeps the general membership informed through timely publication of reports and white papers, announcements in the USSD Newsletter, input to the committees section of the USSD website, and in the organization and execution of periodic workshops. The Committee collaborates and/or assists with other committees in developing and promoting education and training activities under the four imperatives of the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan – Advocate, Educate, Collaborate, and Cultivate.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The initial focus of the committee when it was formed was public education, i.e., explaining the differences between tailings dams and water dams. However, this initial focus was broadened to encompass the need for a professional forum to address tailings dam safety and design, as there was no such body active in the US at the time. The need to bring understanding of tailings dam technology and safety to a level commensurate with water dams was recognized, and USCOLD was the logical focal point for these efforts. The committee experienced significant activity in the 1980s under the chairmanship of Steven G. Vick, then committee chair. A major accomplishment of the committee was the preparation of a document on tailings dam failures, which was published by USCOLD in 1994 (*Tailings Dam Incidents*).

Since then, the committee has been involved in organizing workshops, publishing papers and its members participated in a range of professional activities. More recently, the committee organized several well-attended workshops, as follows:

- Tailings Dams 2000 (organized with jointly with ASDSO in Las Vegas),
- Tailings Dams 2002 (organized with jointly with ASDSO in Las Vegas),
- Dam Break Analysis Applied to Tailings Dams (standalone workshop, Denver, 2011),
- Closure of Tailings Dams (USSD Conference, Phoenix, 2013),
- Closure of Tailings Dams (ICOLD Conference, Seattle, 2013), and
- Seismic Design of Tailings Dams (San Francisco, 2014).

The topics discussed in the 2011 workshop were summarized in a paper that was presented at the 33rd USSD Annual Conference and Meeting in Phoenix.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The direction from the BOD has been to participate with the Committee on Tailings Dams and Waste Lagoons of ICOLD, and be active within USSD by publishing documents and organizing workshops or symposiums.

CHAIR, AND VICE CHAIRS AND RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES

Chair: José L.M. Clemente

Vice Chair: Tatyana Alexieva

Vice Chair: Amanda Adams

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the committee are consistent with the current Terms of Reference for the ICOLD Committee on Tailings Dams and Waste Lagoons. Currently planned projects for a 3-year period beginning in 2015 are listed below. Action items associated with each goal are outlined in the attached file.

Advocate:

1. Reach out to owners and regulators of tailings dams and coal combustion residuals impoundments to encourage their involvement in committee activities and programs.
2. Prepare letter containing technical information and established facts to be sent to Congress and policy makers by USSD Board to prepare them to make informed decisions about coal combustion residuals impoundments.

Educate:

1. The committee is planning the preparation of a white paper on the state of engineering practice in the U.S. for design of the reclamation and closure of tailings storage facilities.
2. The committee is planning the preparation of a workshop that will likely be offered during the 36th USSD Annual Conference and Meeting in Denver, CO (April 2016).

Collaborate:

1. The committee is collaborating with the Subcommittee on Risk Assessment (Committee on Dam Safety and Dam Security) to offer a Risk workshop that will likely be offered in the fall of 2015 at a location to be determined.

Cultivate:

1. The Committee is represented at the ICOLD Committee on Tailing Dams and Waste Lagoons and actively participates in its work.
2. Increase committee membership to include involvement of young professionals

MEMBERSHIP

The current membership of the USSD Technical Committee on Tailings Dams is provided below.

José L. M. Clemente, Chair

Tatyana Alexieva, Vice Chair

Amanda E. Adams, YP Vice Chair

Carmen Bernedo

James Daly

Benjamin J. Gallagher

Stuart Ryan Harris

Christopher N. Hatton

Dean K. Korri

Richard Lech Kulesza

Robert E. Snow

Clinton L. Strachan

Steven G. Vick

Michael J. Wheeler

Christina Winkler

Lisa R. Yenne