National Levee Safety Program (NLSP)

Collaboration of Professional Organizations in Support of National Levee Safety

Presented by: Steve Verigin, P.E., G.E.
GEI Consultants, Inc.
Organizations Involved

- ASCE
- DFI
- NAFSMA
- USSD
- ACEC
- FEMA
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Department of Homeland Security
Creation of the National Committee on Levee Safety

National Levee Safety Act Of 2007
WRDA Title IX
Section 9000

Section 9003:
Levee Safety Committee

Section 9004:
Inventory, Inspection, Database and Assessment
NCLS Recommendations

Comprehensive and consistent national leadership

1. Establish a national levee safety commission  
2. Expand and maintain the national levee database  
3. Adopt a hazard potential classification system  
4. Develop & adopt national levee safety standards  
5. Develop tolerable risk guidelines  
6. Change “Certification” to “Compliance Determination”  
7. Require peer review of levee compliance determinations  
8. Swiftly address emerging levee liability issues  
9. Develop & implement a public involvement and education/awareness campaign  
10. Provide technical materials and technical assistance  
11. Develop a national levee safety training program  
12. Harmonize safety and environmental concerns  
13. Conduct a research & development program
NCLS Recommendations

Building and sustaining levee safety program in all states

14. Design and delegate program responsibilities to states
    Phase II
15. Establish a levee safety grant program
    Phase II
16. Establish the national levee rehabilitation, improvement, and flood mitigation fund
    Phase II
NCLS Recommendations

Aligning existing federal programs

17. Explore potential incentives and disincentives for good levee behavior
   Phase II

18. Mandate purchase of risk-based flood insurance in leveed areas
   Phase I

19. Augment FEMA’s mapping program
   Phase I

20. Align FEMA’s community rating system to reward safety programs that exceed requirements
   Phase I
Inventory of ≈ 15,000 Miles of Federal Levees

Source: ASCE / FEMA

Note: A national levee inventory project is underway. Information shown on this map is current as of August 2009 but may change in the future.
What is Left

100,000 miles of Non-Federal Levees
NCLS Funding Suspended
January 2012
What Do We Do?
DRAFT Resolution Number 1-2012

WHEREAS, ASDSO has advocated for and led efforts to improve the safety of dams and levees for the protection of life and property; and

WHEREAS, ASDSO has been a national leader in dam safety, and a large portion of the ASDSO membership are professional leaders and experts in both dam and levee safety; and

WHEREAS, inadequate levees continue to pose a significant public risk as experienced in national disasters following the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and the Missouri River flooding of 2011; and

WHEREAS, both levee safety and dam safety programs are critical to public safety and protection of the environment; and

WHEREAS, ASDSO has endorsed the establishment of a National Levee Safety Program (Resolution 1-2006), and

WHEREAS, The National Committee on Levee Safety completed a strategic plan for implementing a National Levee Safety Program in January 2009 and the ASDSO Board of Directors voted to support the recommendations of that plan in March 2009,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Directors and the State Representatives of the Association of State Dam Safety Officials, meeting on September 15, 2012, that the Association of State Dam Safety Officials continues to support the establishment of a National Levee Safety Program, which will enhance the efforts to improve the conditions of levees that protect lives and property.

May, 2013
Levee Safety Meeting
Denver, Colorado
August 28 & 29, 2013

AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Purpose of meeting - To bring together professional groups with a shared interest in levee safety to explore the potential for collectively advancing levee safety and supporting a National Levee Safety Program.
3. Review agenda
4. Review status of WRDA and National Levee Safety Program
5. Review of charters and action plans of ASADO and USACE levee safety committees
7. Discuss potential formation of a framework or structure for interested groups to work together to support levee safety and a National Levee Safety Program (including who should be included in the group)
8. Pending a consensus of interest in working together, discuss and begin development of a high-level strategic and action plan

PROMOTING LEVEE SAFETY
INITIAL COORDINATION MEETING

DRAFT AGENDA

GEI Offices
4601 DTC Boulevard, Suite 900
Denver, CO 80237
303.662.1000 phone

August 28-29, 2013

Purpose of Meeting: To bring together professional groups with a shared interest in levee safety to explore the potential for collectively advancing levee safety and supporting a National Levee Safety Program.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2013

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.  Introductions & Meeting Purpose Overview
Facilitator, Linda Manning, will convene the meeting and facilitate introductions. Steve Vengren, ASADO Levee Safety Committee Chair, will review with the attendees the overall purpose of the meeting, objectives and desired outcomes.

9:30 – 9:45 a.m.  Agenda Review

9:45 – 11:00 a.m.  Status of WRDA & Proposed National Levee Safety Program
Susan Gibson, National Association of Flood and Stormwater Manager Association, will review the status of proposed or anticipated Senate and House activities associated with levee safety including efforts to create a National Levee Safety Program. Key discussion questions include:
- What actions could be anticipated in September when Congress reconvenes?
- What challenges are we hearing related to promotion of levee safety activities and/or a National Levee Safety Program?
- Who do we know that is advocating for a National Levee Safety Program with Congress?
- Who do we know is opposed or advocating for something different from the National Committee on Levee Safety recommendations?

11:00 – 11:15 a.m.  Break
Supporting National Levee Safety
Primary Focus on Infrastructure

- Public Safety
- National Levee Safety Program
- Alignment with USACE and FEMA (National Leaders)
Initial Interests

- Promotion of the International Levee Handbook
- Dissemination of the ASCE Review of IPET Recommendations
- Promotion of “So You Live Behind a Levee” brochure
- Inventory of Research and Development Related to Levees
- Coordination of Technical Review
- Research to Understand Current State of Levee Organization and Management
- 2014 Levee Conference
- Training
- Development of Strawmen of Key Levee Technical Documents
National Levee Safety
With or Without WRRDA
AGENDA

PROMOTING LEVEE SAFETY
2nd COORDINATION MEETING

San Francisco Airport Hyatt Regency
Sandpebble B Room
1:30 – 5:30 p.m.
April 7, 2014

Meeting Objectives:
• Formally adopt vision, mission and operating procedures.
• Discuss future membership rules of the road.
• Determine way forward for action items list.

1:30 – 1:45 p.m.
Opening & Meeting Purpose
Steve Verlgin will convene the meeting, provide a quick overview of action items since the last meeting. Linda Manning (facilitator) will review meeting objectives.

1:45 – 2:30 p.m.
Discussion/Confirmation of Vision
In August of 2013 this group developed a draft vision and action plan to guide the way forward. Since that time, efforts began in the International arena to develop an International Community of Practice related to levee issues and/or flood risk management.

Bill Empson will brief the group on international efforts and a facilitated discussion will be conducted based on the following discussion questions:

1. The high level mission and vision of the August meeting was to focus the group on the infrastructure component (levees) of flood risk management. What does that specifically entail? What should the boundaries be on this effort? Why?
2. How does the “Federation” relate to other groups? Domestic water resources and flood risk management efforts/groups? International Community of Practice? Other?

At the conclusion of this session, the group will strive for agreement of a final vision and mission of the group as well as a clarified relationship to other entities in the flood risk management/levee safety domestic and international arenas.

Handouts:
• International Communities of Practice (CoP) for Levees, March 31, 2014
• UK and Ireland Community of Practice for Levees
• Meeting Summary from August Organizational Meeting for “Levee Federation”
• Notes and Proposal from Meeting with DFI in Miami

2:30 – 3:00 p.m.
Membership and Meetings
The group will discuss and agree on protocols for inviting and including future members. The group will discuss possible membership models, then discuss protocols for inviting new members or accepting membership from interested parties.

Key discussion questions include:
• What type of membership model should the group have?
• Will there be any requirements for membership (dues, conflict of interest)?
• What are the decision-making protocols for adding members?
• At what frequency should this group meet? How should agendas be determined?

3:00 – 3:15 p.m.
Break

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.
Operationalizing the Action Plan
Attendees will share updates and information about topics of interest to the group including but not limited to:
• Water Resources Development Act – Susan Gilson
• International Levee Handbook – Elena Sossenkina
• St. Louis Meeting in October 2014 – Elena Sossenkina
• USACE Research & Development – Bill Empson

In addition to the items discussed in the update section, attendees will review the action plan and be prepared to talk about items their organizations are interested in supporting over the next 6 months. The lead for each action item should be prepared to report on progress and plans.

4:15 – 4:30 p.m.
New Item: Soliciting Feedback on National Levee Database
The USACE is considering updates and revisions to the National Levee Database. As such they are interested in soliciting ideas from a broader set of stakeholders in order to identify key content and functionality of a revised NLD. Organizations will review the draft request letter and form and discuss methods and timing of dissemination. This is intended to be a follow on from discussion that started last fall.

4:30 – 5:00 p.m.
Next Steps and Review of Action Items
Supporting WRRDA Passage

May 13, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On behalf of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the Association of State Dam Safety Officials, the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies, and the United States Society on Dams, we urge you to support the introduction of a Levee Safety Initiative in Conference Report on H.R. 3081, Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014.

Erosion of our nation’s levees is a serious public safety threat. It represents a significant correlated nationwide effort to identify and reduce flood risk, especially in low-lying areas prone to severe storms. The Levee Safety Initiative is an important step in addressing the country’s needs for a comprehensive framework to identify and address levee safety. The initiative will provide a clear path forward for levees, improve infrastructure, and increase public safety.

We are writing to again request your support of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act. As the first major water resources legislation since 2007, this legislation provides important momentum to support the nation’s efforts to reduce the costs of future flood disasters. If we can provide any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

RANDALL S. OTTER, P.E., F.ASCE
President
American Society of Civil Engineers

LORE C. SPALDING
Executive Director
Association of State Dam Safety Officials

DUSTY WILLIAMS, P.E.
National President
National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies

KEITH A. FERGUSON, P.E., DWRE
President, United States Society on Dams
On behalf of the non-federal members of USSE

November 19, 2013

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
Chairman, House Committee on Environment and Public Works

Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Honorable Nick Rahall
Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On behalf of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO), the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies (NAFSMA) and the United States Society on Dams (USSE), we express our gratitude for all you are doing to move the Water Resources Reform and Development Act forward.

As you prepare for markup on this critical legislation, we urge you to include a comprehensive levee safety program as part of WRRDA 2013. All of our organizations have public safety as an integral mission focus and our members are responsible for operation and maintenance of much of our nation’s flood damage reduction infrastructure. We are well aware of the potentially devastating impacts that levee failures can have and urge you to take a comprehensive approach to address the nation’s levee safety needs.

A National Levee Safety Program is a long-overdue investment necessary to reduce the costs of future levee-related flood disasters. This investment will save the country from a worse and more expensive disaster scenario, and protect the lives and properties of the communities where the general public and governments are informed and participate in effective risk management.

Levee safety ensures a priority focus within national infrastructure needs. Levees protect much of the country’s vital infrastructure from flooding. Throughout the nation, homes, hospitals, roads, bridges, schools, power plants, and water and sewer treatment plants are protected by levees. The D-grade assigned to levees in ASCE’s 2013 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure serves as a call to action and provides evidence that we are in pay-as-you-go or pay-as-you-need much more later situation, with the pay-as-you-go scenario including the possibility of loss of lives due to flooding in the future.

September 9, 2013

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2160 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Nick Rahall
Ranking Member, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
WRRDA Passes!

H. R. 3080

One Hundred Thirteenth Congress
of the
United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Began and held at the City of Washington on Friday,
the third day of January, two thousand and fourteen.

An Act

To provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE. TITLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Definition of Secretary.

TITLE I—PROGRAM REFORMS AND STREAMLINING

Sec. 101. Vertical integration and acceleration of studies.
Sec. 102. Consolidation of studies.
Sec. 103. Expedited completion of reports.
Sec. 104. Removal of duplicative analysis.
Sec. 105. Project acceleration.
Sec. 106. Expediting the evaluation and processing of permits.
Sec. 107. Expediting approval of modifications and alterations of projects by non-Federal interests.
Sec. 108. Expediting hydropower at Corps of Engineers facilities.
Sec. 109. Enhanced use of electronic resources in Federal procurement.
Sec. 110. Determination of project completion.
Sec. 111. Prioritization.
Sec. 112. Transparency in accounting and administrative expenses.
Sec. 113. Evaluation of project partnerships agreements.
Sec. 114. Study and demonstration of water resources development projects by non-Federal interests.
Sec. 115. Contributions by non-Federal interests.
Sec. 116. Operation and maintenance of certain projects.
Sec. 117. Acceptance of conditional funds to increase project operations.
Sec. 118. Credit for in-kind contributions.
Sec. 119. Classification of in-kind credit authority.
Sec. 120. Transfer of excess credits.
Sec. 121. Crediting authority for federally authorized navigation projects.
Sec. 122. Credit in lieu of reimbursement.
Sec. 123. Additional contributions by non-Federal interests.
Sec. 124. Authority to accept and use materials and services.
Sec. 125. Water resources projects on Federal land.
Sec. 126. Classification of airports to other Federal facilities.
Sec. 127. Classification of non-Federal airports.
Sec. 128. Classification of navigation authority.
Sec. 129. Classification of interagency support authorities.
Sec. 130. Eliminating authority.
Sec. 131. Tribal partnership programs.
Sec. 132. Territories of the United States.
Sec. 133. Corridor designation.
Sec. 134. Advanced modeling technologies.
Sec. 135. Recreational access.
Sec. 136. Non-Federal plans to provide additional flood risk reduction.

WRRDA PASSED THE HOUSE!

417 3
Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 - WRRDA

Title 3 – Safety Improvements and Addressing Extreme Weather Events

Subtitle B – Levee Safety

- Sec 3011: System-wide improvement framework
- Sec 3012: Management of flood risk reduction projects
- Sec 3013: Vegetation Management policy
- Sec 3014: Levee Certifications
- Sec 3015: Planning assistance to States
- Sec 3016: Levee Safety
- Sec 3017: Rehabilitation of existing levees
- Sec 9005: Levee Safety Initiative
WRRDA Levee Safety - Authorizations

- 9003, 9005(c), 9005(d), 9005(e), 9005(f) National Committee – Levee Safety Initiative
  $4,000,000 2015-2019
- 9004 Inventory
  $20,000,000 2015-2019
- 9005(h) Levee Rehabilitation
  $30,000,000 2015-2019
Third Meeting

• WRRDA has passed

• Check Back in with Initial Strategies

• Discuss Greater Formalization of “Collaborative Group”
Next Steps

• Adopt Charter

• Develop Strategic Plan and Action Plan

• Set to work through Professional Organization Committees
What Can You Do to Get it Rolling?
United States Levee Safety Coalition
– Charter –

Charter

For
United States Levee Safety Coalition

Preamble
The United States Levee Safety Coalition (Coalition) is a group of professional organizations that have joined together to support and enhance levee safety in the United States of America. This coalition is committed to the common cause of preserving and protecting public safety, life and property through the responsible engineering design, construction, operation, maintenance, management and removal of parts or portions of the existing and future existing levee infrastructure system in the United States.

Mission
The mission of the Coalition is the advancement of levee safety across the country through:
- Good engineering practice;
- Sound public policy; and,
- Increased awareness and education within communities of practice and the public.

It is envisioned that the Coalition will pursue its mission through support of a National Levee Safety Program and working with other professionals, local, state and federal government flood management agencies such as the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and other interested parties.

Goals
The Coalition goals will change with time and will need to be updated periodically. As an initial set of goals the founding members have identified the following:
- The existence of a National Levee Safety Program;
- Improvement in the quality of leadership in levee safety;
- Improvement in the level of professional expertise, experience and qualifications of levee professionals;
- Levee safety professionals from organizations, government, and the private sector working together and maximizing resources and efficiency;
- An aligned vision of levee safety across the Coalition’s member organizations;
- Widespread use of risk-based approaches for levee safety engineering and management.

Authority
The Coalition is a collaborative organization formed for the purpose of supporting and advancing levee safety. As such, the Coalition has no formal authority other than the expressed commitment of the members to pursue these common goals and mission. No action of the Coalition is binding on any of the member organizations in any way other than that those organizations are voluntarily committing their efforts to the common cause of the group. Any of the member organizations are free to discontinue membership in the Coalition at any time and/or limit their participation in any given activity. It is the intent of the Coalition to operate in harmony with the member organizations.

Membership
The original members of the Coalition, as undersigned below, are: American Society of Civil Engineers, Association of State Dam Safety Officials, Deep Foundations Institute, National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies, the United States Society on Dams and the American Council of Engineering Companies. New members may be added to the coalition through consensus agreement of the existing members.

Thomas W. Smith, III
Executive Director
American Society of Civil Engineers

Lori C. Speegle
Executive Director
Association of State Dam Safety Officials

Theresa Engler
Executive Director
Deep Foundations Institute

Susan Gilsou
Executive Director
National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies

John S. Wolfhaue
President
United States Society on Dams

David A. Raymond
President and CEO
American Council of Engineering Companies
United States Levee Safety Coalition
Committee Meeting
September 16, 2015
ASCE Annual Conference
New Orleans, LA

AGENDA

1000—1015  Introductions
1015—1030  Review and Discussion of USLSC Charter
1030—1045  Review and Documentation of USLSC Activities
  • Formulation of USLSC Strategic Documents and Action Plan
  • Support of passage of WRIA 2015
  • Coordination Meetings with USACE
  • Conference Presentations
  • ILH Webinars
  • Levee Policy and Practice Workshops (ASCEO and USID)
1045—1115  Restatement of USLSC Action Plans by Participating Organizations
1115—1130  2016 Meetings and Governance Structure
1130—1200  Invitation for Comments from International Guests and General Discussion
1200         Adjourn
Fourth Meeting Notes

U.S. Levee Safety Coalition Meeting at ASCE Annual Conference
September 15, 2015 Meeting Notes
New Orleans, LA

Introduction

The meeting followed the attached agenda and was begun with introductions and a brief welcome message by Coalition Chair, Steve Verigin. Following introductions there was a short discussion regarding the completion and signing of the coalition charter by all member organizations. It was also acknowledged by all that a significant amount of progress had been achieved through passage of WRRA and the provisions that USACE and FEMA are working under in the early stages of formation of a national levee safety program. The major emphasis and effort of the members of the coalition in 2014 were devoted to supporting national levee safety and the passage of WRRA. The member organizations gave support through their individual and collective efforts of visiting key members of Congress and submission of formal letters of support. The coalition considers the passage of this legislation to be a major first step and accomplishment toward improved national levee safety.

The bulk of the rest of the meeting was spent on discussing activities and actions that the member organizations would plan to pursue in calendar year 2016. Steve Verigin stated that while getting to this point of actually having national legislation is a huge accomplishment, we now have the very exciting opportunity to begin initiating actions that will support specific aspects of levee safety. Steve further stated that while there may be initiatives that the coalition may choose to pursue as a collective, there are also many aspects of levee safety that the member organizations can pursue individually. It was mentioned that a founding principal of the coalition is that all members are committed to work together in support of national levee safety, but are not limited to be limited in their individual efforts by the requirement of consensus of the entire organization.

A number of the most well-defined and planned future activities of the coalition and its members are listed as action items below:

Action Items

Post approved charter on each organization’s website.

Start properly documenting the actions that the coalition takes. Start a webpage on the ASCE website, and each coalition member organization will mimic it on their sites. Keep any important documentation there.

Identify coalition organizations to take the lead on each coalition action plan objective.

Legislative Advocacy—ASCE Government Relations will take the lead. Thoughts included creating a list of key messages for each coalition member to use when communicating with lawmakers. It was agreed that a message worksheet would be drafted by November 2. All coalition members will continue to do individual advocacy for levee safety as appropriate under each organization’s strategic plan.

Understanding how levees are managed and/or regulated across the U.S. — Steve Verigin agreed to take the lead. It is unclear what the parameters of this task are just yet. It could become clearer after the USACE unveils an implementation plan for the levee initiative.

Training—USACE agreed to take the lead.

Raising Awareness — this was discussed but no particular organization agreed to take the lead.

Establish Filing/Archiving Plan for Coalition Materials/Notes — All executive directors agreed to organize this effort. It was agreed that a plan would be put together by the directors by November 2.

Create a plan to rotate chair of coalition. Steve V. agreed to stay on one more year as chair.

Future meetings. The next meeting will be held in conjunction with the next levee workshop in Oakland, CA in November. It was agreed that a standing conference call should be held starting in January. The group agreed to the second Monday of each month at 10 am Eastern. Susan Gilson agreed to organize this call.
Support of the National Levee Safety Program

Professional organizations can support the cause

ACEC  ASCE  ASDSO  DFI  NAFSMA  USSD