

USSD Resolution on Reservoir Sustainability

Background

Continued sedimentation threatens the project benefits for many of the Nation's reservoirs. In August of 2014, the Federal Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) approved a resolution prepared by the Subcommittee on Sedimentation (SOS) that encourages all Federal agencies to develop long-term reservoir sediment-management plans for the reservoirs that they own or manage by 2030 (attached) that would include either the implementation of sustainable sediment-management practices or eventual retirement of the reservoir. Based on this resolution, the USSD Committee on Hydraulics of Dams with its Subcommittee on Sedimentation of Reservoirs has prepared the following resolution for consideration by the USSD Board to encourage this forward thinking to all dams, not just those owned by the Federal Government.

Resolution

Continued sedimentation threatens the project benefits for many of the Nation's reservoirs. The U.S. Society on Dams encourages all dam owners to develop long-term reservoir sediment-management plans for the reservoirs that they own or manage by 2030. These management plans should include either the implementation of sustainable sediment-management practices or eventual retirement of the reservoir. Sustainable reservoir sediment-management practices are practices that enable continued reservoir function by reducing reservoir sedimentation and/or removing sediments through mechanisms that are functionally, environmentally, socially and economically feasible. The economic viability of such actions should be evaluated using current approaches to economic analysis assessing projects involving intergenerational equity. The costs for implementing either sustainable sediment management practices or retirement plans may be substantial, and sustainable methods to pay for these activities should also be identified.

Dam owners are encouraged to start developing sustainable reservoir sediment-management plans now on a pilot basis using state, federal and other guidelines as they become available.

Resolution on Reservoir Sustainability, Presented by the Subcommittee on Sedimentation, a Sub-group of the Advisory Committee on Water Information

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Federal agencies are encouraged to start developing sustainable reservoir sediment-management plans now for one or two reservoirs per year on a pilot basis. From this experience, interagency technical guidelines will be developed for preparing sustainable reservoir-sedimentation plans.

Prepared and approved by the USSD Committee on Hydraulics of Dams