

BOARD REPORT

Committee Name: Dam Decommissioning
Submitted by: Pete Haug, Chair
Report Date: February 7, 2022

Committee Mission/Purpose

The USSD Dam Decommissioning Committee (“Committee” hereafter) provides a forum to discuss, develop, and share technical information to help guide decision-making when considering dam decommissioning as a project alternative. More-detailed responsibilities, goals, and objectives are listed in the Committee Charter.

The Committee focus (specific mission) for 2021 and 2022 is to publish information on how decision-makers can better estimate dam decommissioning costs (especially those related partial or full dam removal). The 2015 USSD Guidelines for Dam Decommissioning Projects published by the Committee include a thorough explanation for the overall process and key considerations of dam decommissioning, but the case studies and cost estimating sections can be improved with updated information.

2021 Goals/Accomplishments

The 2021 Committee administrative goals included:

- Updating the Charter – still in progress, but USSD Board approval is expected by April 2022
- Transitioning to new leadership – accomplished

The 2021 Committee specific goals and objectives included:

- Maintaining a list of recent and planned dam decommissioning projects and recruiting papers for these – in process, not fully accomplished
- Developing a list of important cost drivers related to dam decommissioning – accomplished
- Convening workshops related to the 2015 USSD Guidelines for Dam Decommissioning Projects – in process, not fully accomplished
- Identifying and reporting on new trends and issues related to dam decommissioning – accomplished with regard to the large influx of federal money for dam decommissioning opportunities but in process as to how the Committee can guide decision-makers in allocating funds for dam decommissioning

Three formal Committee meetings were held in 2021.

- The May 3rd meeting was conducted virtually as part of the annual conference. The May 3rd meeting included a presentation by Jennifer Bountry (assisted by USGS Jeff Duda, USBR Tim Randle, and USACE Susan Bailey) about dam decommissioning cost estimation hypotheses.
- The August 30th meeting included updates for our Committee’s conference planning responsibilities and considerable discussion (guided by James Demby of FEMA) about the 21st Century infrastructure bill’s impact on decommissioning opportunities related to full dam removal.
- The November 15th meeting included a presentation on third-party cost research that the USBR had funded (Jennifer Bountry and Tim Randle presented), an extended planning discussion for how to complete a whitepaper on cost estimating for dam removals, a commitment to start the whitepaper outline, and an assignment to develop a case study for a \$10M dam decommissioning project.

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In 2020, only one dam decommissioning paper was submitted for the 2021 annual conference. In 2021, four papers were accepted for the 2022 annual conference.

In December 2020, the Committee had 16 members participating. In December 2021, the Committee included 21 participants.

In 2021, the Committee transitioned to a new Chair (Pete Haug of Ayres), Vice Chair (Stephen Whiteside of CDM Smith), and Young Professional Vice Chair (Jared Vegrzyn of West Consultants).

2022 Goals

The Committee's 2022 Goals include:

1. Publishing a white paper on cost estimating for dam decommissioning activities;
2. Presenting a new case study on a middle-size dam decommissioning (\$10M) either as a Bulletin article, webinar, or a presentation as part of our regular Committee meeting;
3. Supporting the 2022 annual conference by attending in person, moderating a session on dam decommissioning presentations, and actively recruiting new members to our committee;
4. Working toward a 2023 update of the 2015 USSD Guidelines for Dam Decommissioning Projects; and
5. Actively soliciting new papers to achieve two moderated sessions (ideally one on case studies and another focused on cost estimating) at the 2023 conference.

What do you need to accomplish your 2022 goals?

To achieve our 2022 goals, the Committee needs:

1. Increased participation within our Committee to take on the subtasks of writing/presenting case studies, reviewing cost estimating sections, preparing the whitepaper sections, and delivering a final 2023 guidelines update; and
2. Increased recruitment beyond our Committee to find other industry leaders in dam decommissioning and incorporate their knowledge into the Committee's work products.

Respectfully Authored and Reviewed this 7th of February, 2022, by:

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