

PUBLIC SCOPING REPORT

FOLSOM DAM ROAD RESTRICTED ACCESS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOLSOM, CALIFORNIA



Bureau of Reclamation
7794 Folsom Dam Road
Folsom, CA 95630

July 2004

Project No. 18600807

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SECTION 1 - Preface

On February 28, 2003 Folsom Dam Road was closed indefinitely for national security reasons. The purpose and need for that action was to control access to Folsom Dam, primarily vehicular traffic on Folsom Dam Road, in order to minimize the security risks and maximize the safety not only of Folsom Dam but that of the entire Sacramento metropolitan area downstream of the dam. Following the closure of the road, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was needed to examine the effect of a long-term decision to restrict road access on the natural and human environment.

The EIS will assess and compare the impacts of various access alternatives, and will provide decision makers with information associated with the long-term decision for the road. The draft EIS will be available for public review in the fall of 2004, and a Final EIS is planned for completion in March 2005.

This **Scoping Report** documents agency and public comments that were received on the scope of the EIS, and describes the planned approach to the environmental review process.

SCOPING PROCESS

Reclamation is preparing an EIS that will assess and compare the environmental impacts of Folsom Dam Road access alternatives.

This scoping report documents public and agency comments received on the scope of the EIS, and describes the planned approach to the environmental review process.

What is scoping?

Scoping provides a method for public and agency comment on the environmental impacts of a proposed action and alternatives. It allows stakeholders to suggest potential issues that may require environmental review, reasonable alternatives to consider, and potential mitigation (ways to reduce or avoid environmental impacts) in the event that significant impacts are identified.

Project scoping helps set the parameters of the EIS process by helping to determine which issues will be addressed, those that should be addressed, and those that will not. Scoping also provides decision-makers with an understanding of the analysis the public and others believe should be considered within the environmental review process.

Scoping process

Reclamation initiated the NEPA process by issuing a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in March 2004. Following the Notice of Intent, Reclamation convened two public scoping open houses during the last week of May 2004 (May 26, Sacramento and May 27, Folsom) to inform interested groups and individuals about the project and to solicit their ideas and comments. Stakeholder input has been significant, including numerous written and oral comments. These comments will be considered and, as appropriate, integrated into the project approach and analysis of the Draft EIS.

This report describes the nature and disposition of comments received throughout the scoping process. Reclamation will continue to consult with the public at key milestones during the EIS process providing project updates and soliciting stakeholder comments.

SECTION 2 - Overview of Comments

Comments were received by mail and email, and at each of the two public scoping meetings. Each of the comments was reviewed and specific concerns and issues were identified and tabulated. Each time a comment addressed an identifiable concern or issue, it was added to the summary of comments. Similar comments, or comments that addressed similar issues, were combined, and the resulting summary is shown in Table 2-1.

During each of the two scoping meetings, concerns and comments were also noted on flip charts by either an individual or a member of the project team. Each of the issues noted on the flip charts was summarized, and again similar concerns were grouped together for purposes of ease of reference and tabulation. Table 2-1 reflects project-related comments that were recorded on the flip charts.

As expected the focus of each comment tracked closely with the commenters address. Stakeholders living in Folsom cited a variety of environmental and economic impacts associated with the displaced traffic the commenter attributed to the road closure. Many residents stated the City of Folsom's traffic issues are a result of closing Folsom Dam Road, and consistently requested that Reclamation and the City should look for ways to ease traffic impacts within Folsom by providing limited access (typically during commute hours) to Folsom Dam Road. Stakeholders living downstream from Folsom Dam voiced concerns about public safety, dam failure warning systems, and favored maintaining appropriate facility security to help ensure the protection of life and property downstream.

Table 2-1
Summary of Written and Email Comments Received

Comment Summary	Total Number of Times Issue was Identified During Scoping	Comment Source		
		Email / mail-in	Sacramento Open House	Folsom Open House
<i>Safety & Security</i>				
Allow limited access (at a minimum); Open Folsom Dam Road to commuters (autos, SUVs) during daylight rush hours and perhaps require special security or stickers displayed on vehicles. (A few suggested that people may be willing to pay a fee for a Fastrak-type of system, or the City may provide some security. Concerned citizens may also be willing to volunteer their time to provide security. The road closures could also vary based on varying water levels in the dam and the potential for downstream damage.)	85	48	4	33
If the security of Folsom Dam is at risk, it is unclear why the Folsom Dam Road is closed, but measures are not being taken to safeguard the dam from boat or air access, which seem to be higher-risk access points. (According to one commenter, new developments are also coming up in the area). Given the context, the rationale for road closure on the basis of security risk is not convincing. Not being able to understand why a selective action was taken to restrict dam access magnifies the local effects of road closure (i.e. traffic increase).	55	31		24
Road closure is a greater risk to physical and/or emotional public safety than the claims of terrorism concerns.	31	18		13
Hoover Dam is a larger dam with a road over it. Its road continues to be open to traffic, with some precautionary measures. Other landmarks used by vehicles such as the Golden Gate Bridge and Bay Bridge also remain open, although they appear to pose greater risks than Folsom Dam Road. Folsom Dam should use the precautionary measures in place at Hoover Dam as a guide and be open.	30	16	1	13
Re-open the road to pre-February 2003 conditions; select the No Action Alternative.	27	24		3

Comment Summary	Total Number of Times Issue was Identified During Scoping	Comment Source		
		Email / mail-in	Sacramento Open House	Folsom Open House
The road should not be permanently closed at least until a viable alternate transport route is designated and constructed – quickly.	22	9		13
Keep Folsom Dam Road closed permanently.	15	15		
Historically, it has been proven that even a large explosion directly on top of a concrete dam would not cause collapse. It is unclear why dam destruction is considered a potential effect of opening the road to traffic.	12	6		6
Re-open the road fully, but maintain patrols and other precautionary measures, at least until a more thorough EIS is conducted, evaluating all alternatives carefully. As the permanent decision has implications for the entire region, the region should bear the responsibility and cost of the Bureau's actions.	10	7		3
There is concern about the consequences of opening the road and it may have to remain permanently closed; the cost and devastation would be too great to risk re-opening. Better alternatives, such as building a new bridge or adding light rail or new bus routes, are needed to mitigate the effects.	7	7		
Provide information and a protection plan for residents potentially affected by dam destruction: identify evacuation routes, how high the water could get, and time it would take for inundation in the event of flood before reopening the road (possibly with utility bills). Potential threat of flooding from earth dam destruction should also be covered in the EIS.	5	1	2	2
While it would be nice to have the road open during peak, daylight hours, the possible dam destruction is a valid reason for great caution. But, the road could be opened to cyclists and pedestrians during daylight hours.	3	2		1
I do not believe that Folsom Dam Road was designed for the heavy traffic it was receiving before the road was closed. From a safety/design perspective, it should remain closed.	3	2		1

Comment Summary	Total Number of Times Issue was Identified During Scoping	Comment Source		
		Email / mail-in	Sacramento Open House	Folsom Open House
While a potential threat to Folsom Dam exists, the likelihood of dam destruction is remote. There are also more police officers in the area due to the proximity of the Folsom prison. The permanent closure of Folsom Dam Road is an unnecessary burden for citizens directly affected by the closure.	2	2		
It is perplexing as to why the Bureau of Reclamation assigns high risk to the dam as a potential terrorist target, while state homeland security does not.	1			1
Traffic				
Open Folsom Dam Road (fully or partially) to alleviate inconveniences of traffic congestion. Commute time to and from work impose an economic cost (such as gasoline costs and lost work time). These should be quantified in the EIS.	59	44		15
Traffic impacts affect community activities, including schoolchildren and their teacher traveling to school / after-school activities, area residents going to church, making doctors' appointments, or spending time with nearby friends and family (includes 20 letters submitted from a class of 3 rd graders).	41	41		
Traffic congestion has led to ancillary effects of dangerous driving (frustrated drivers / speeding), increased littering (particularly in residential areas), lost wages, increased gasoline consumption, higher risk of accidents, poorer emergency access for police and paramedics, and deteriorating roadways as traffic is diverted onto streets that were not designed for that capacity.	36	22		14
The Folsom Dam Road closure put thousands of cars per day onto residential / neighborhood streets, which in turn caused the city to barricade numerous streets to divert traffic - making matters still worse. (Folsom Blvd. and Bidwell are now being nicknamed 'parking lots'.)	25	13		12

Comment Summary	Total Number of Times Issue was Identified During Scoping	Comment Source		
		Email / mail-in	Sacramento Open House	Folsom Open House
Living on streets such as Cinnamon Circle, Randall St. or Cerrito Drive, it is impossible to get on Natoma Street to get out of Folsom. Natoma Street itself is very congested. Folsom-Auburn Rd. has also become extremely congested. These roads were previously easily accessible at any time of the day.	15	11		4
In the neighborhood street of Briggs Ranch Drive, the closure of Folsom Dam Road provides temporary reprieve from traffic that was previously almost unbearable. The present plan to expand the new bridge would once again increase the number of cars in the area and make traffic worse than it once had been.	4	3		1
The benefits of the new Natoma crossing are negated by the closure of the Folsom Dam Rd. People should be encouraged to use the crossing in lieu of the Rainbow Bridge.	3	1		2
The cumulative effect of road closure with continued growth and construction in town are likely to pose high risks. These impacts should be evaluated in the EIS.	2			2
<i>Business / Economic Impacts</i>				
Diversion of traffic, because of the Folsom Dam Road closure and the city's reaction of barricading local streets, is slowly strangling business in Folsom – on Sutter St., for example. Businesses, including those that are large employers and have been part of the local community for a long time, are being forced to shut down or relocate. Many businesses have lost 20-30% in revenues. There is no compensation plan for businesses. Economic / business impacts should be quantified in the EIS. Mitigation should also be addressed.	46	21		25
Area residents are changing their shopping patterns; they are avoiding visiting and shopping in Folsom on the weekends or in the early evenings as far as possible.	23	19		4
Long-term impacts such as reduction in growth and lower home values are likely to result. Property owners are finding it harder to rent units.	12	6		6

Comment Summary	Total Number of Times Issue was Identified During Scoping	Comment Source		
		Email / mail-in	Sacramento Open House	Folsom Open House
Old town businesses would rather risk dam destruction, even though they may be in the immediate path of possible flood waters, than have the road permanently closed and their businesses devastated.	3	1		2
<i>Air Quality Impacts</i>				
Congested traffic has caused deterioration of air quality in Folsom, particularly in residential neighborhoods and schools. Even the smell of exhaust is noticeable. Quality of life of residents is suffering.	21	12		9
<i>Noise Impacts</i>				
Noise in residential neighborhoods is affecting communities.	5	1		4
<i>Recreational Impacts</i>				
Recreation access lost or reduced; a household of 3 in the Lakeside Mobile Home Park located on Folsom Dam Road used the road to go to Folsom and to fish on the other side of Folsom Lake for 30 years. Road closure affects ability to continue to do this.	2	2		
The road closure would impact recreational uses of the Lake State Recreational Area, the future use of Observation Point, and future plans for concrete barriers on the dams and dikes placed at the lake.	1	1		
View of the lake is now gone; to get the view, residents have to enter the parks and pay a user fee.	2	2		
<i>Other</i>				
<i>People were commenting on their concerns with respect to the bridge project - those have been omitted.</i>	9	7		2

Total Number of Comments by Source:

Letters and emails: 242

Petition: 220 signatures

SECTION 3 – Public Notification, Information Sheets, and Meeting Displays

Public notification of the preparation of the EIS and announcement of the scoping meetings was made in through a Notice of Intent (NOI), press release, and newspaper advertisements. Copies of these announcements are shown in the following pages.

At the scoping meetings, there were displays that overviewed the project, and summarized security issues, the environmental review process, and environmental issues. Bureau of Reclamation staff and their consultants were on hand to address questions and provide information. Handout size copies of the displays were available to attendees, and are reproduced in the following pages.

The notification advertisements ran in the following papers on Monday, May 24th, 2004:

- Sacramento Bee
- Folsom Telegraph
- El Dorado Telegraph
- Roseville Tribune
- Granite Bay Tribune

NOTICE OF INTENT

4310-MN-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Reclamation

Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, California

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is planning to prepare an EIS for a proposed permanent restriction to public access to Folsom Dam. The Folsom Dam Road, which was closed indefinitely for security reasons on February 28, 2003, was closed to preserve and protect the core mission of the facility and for the ultimate safety of the public. The closure followed a series of security reviews, including a final review conducted by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and subsequent full-scale analysis and evaluation of DTRA's recommendations by Reclamation and the Department of the Interior. The evaluation determined that uncontrolled access to Folsom Dam presents a clear security risk to the facility.

DATES: Reclamation will seek public input on alternatives, concerns, and issues to be addressed in the EIS through scoping meetings through scoping meetings in May. The schedule and locations of the scoping meetings are as follows:

- Wednesday, May 26, 2004, 4:30-7:00 p.m, Sacramento, CA
- Thursday, May 27, 2004, 4:30-7:00 p.m., Folsom, CA

Written comments on the scope of alternatives and impacts to be considered should be sent to Mr. Robert Schroeder at the below address by June 10, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The meeting locations are:

- Sacramento at the Library Galleria – West Meeting Room, 828 I Street
- Folsom at the Folsom Community Center – West Room, 52 Natoma Street

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Robert Schroeder, Reclamation, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, California 95630; telephone number (916) 989-7274.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Controlled access by authorized Government personnel is necessary to minimize the security risks and maximize the safety not only of Folsom Dam, but that of the entire Sacramento metropolitan population downstream of the Dam. Reclamation determined that that an EIS is needed to examine the effect of the road closure on the natural and human environment.

Alternatives to the proposed action of a permanent restriction to public access include ending the indefinite road closure at some as yet to be determined time, reopening the road on a partial basis, and a no action alternative which would reopen the road to the level of access in place prior to the February 2003 indefinite closure. That level of access

included restrictions such as closing the road overnight and allowing no trucks at any time.

If special assistance is required at the scoping meetings, contact Mr. Robert Schroeder, Reclamation, at (916) 989-7274. Please notify Mr. Schroeder as far in advance of the meetings as possible to enable Reclamation to secure the needed services. If a request cannot be honored, the requestor will be notified. A telephone device for the hearing impaired (TDD) is available at (916) 989-7285.

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from public disclosure, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold a respondent's identity from public disclosure, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure in their entirety.

Dated: March 10, 2004.

Signed: /s/ Frank Michny.

Frank Michny

Regional Environmental Officer

Mid-Pacific Region

Notice of Public Open Houses for the Folsom Dam Road Environmental Impact Statement



The Bureau of Reclamation is holding two open houses to receive public scoping comments on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared on the Folsom Dam Road. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, the Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on April 5, 2004.

Folsom Dam Road was closed indefinitely for security reasons on February 28, 2003. The action followed a series of security reviews, including a final review conducted by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. The evaluations determined that uncontrolled access to Folsom Dam presents a clear and present security risk to the facility and the safety of the people and property downstream. More than 700,000 people live in the Sacramento metropolitan region below Folsom Dam.

The EIS will address impacts to the communities, businesses, and individuals in and around the City of Folsom and the potential impacts to communities downstream of Folsom Dam. Alternatives studied may include: the proposed permanent restriction of public access; ending the indefinite road closure at a yet to be determined time; reopening the road on a partial basis; and a no action alternative with the road at the level of access in place before February 2003.

Public Open Houses

The public may provide comments on the scope of the analysis, including alternatives and the significant issues and impacts, at open houses scheduled in:

Sacramento

Wednesday, May 26, 2004
4:30 – 7 p.m.
Library Galleria West Meeting Room
828 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95825

Folsom

Thursday, May 27, 2004
4:30 – 7 p.m.
Folsom Community Center West Room
52 Natoma Street, Folsom, CA 95354

Comment by Mail

Written comments are due by June 10, 2004. Submit them by mail to Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630; by fax to 916-989-7208; or via the web site at:

www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/roadeis

Additional Information

If assistance is required to attend these meetings, please call 916-978-5105.



SCOPING OPEN HOUSES

The Bureau of Reclamation is holding two open houses to receive public scoping comments on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared on the Folsom Dam Road.

Folsom Dam Road was closed indefinitely for security reasons on February 28, 2003, to preserve and protect the facility and for the public's safety. The action followed a series of security reviews, including a final review conducted by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. The evaluations determined that uncontrolled access to Folsom Dam presents a clear and present security risk to the facility and the safety of the people and property downstream. More than 700,000 people live in the Sacramento metropolitan region below Folsom Dam.

SACRAMENTO

Wednesday, May 26, 2004
4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Library Galleria West Room
828 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95825
(public parking at J St between 8th and 9th)

FOLSOM

Thursday, May 27, 2004
4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Folsom Community Center West Room
52 Natoma Street
Folsom, CA 95354

At these open houses Reclamation will provide information about the environmental documentation process, security and safety concerns, and the human and environmental impacts to be evaluated. The public is invited to provide comments on the alternatives and the significant issues and impacts.

In the EIS, alternatives studied may include: the proposed permanent restriction of public access; ending the indefinite road closure at a yet to be determined time; reopening the road on a partial basis; and a no action alternative with the road at the level of access in place before the February 2003.

Can't attend the meeting? Your written comments are welcome. Please mail the enclosed comment card to the address below, or fax to 916-989-7208, or e-mail us via the web site at www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/roadeis. Scoping comments are due by June 10, 2004.

If you need assistance to attend, please contact Reclamation's Public Affairs Office at 916-978-5105. (Please note that this EIS process is not related to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers new Folsom bridge project.)