

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Folsom Dam Safety and Flood Damage Reduction (DS/FDR) Action

Background and Authorized Purposes

In 2006, the Bureau of Reclamation celebrated the 50th anniversary of Folsom Dam, constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) between 1948 and 1956. Upon completion, ownership of Folsom Dam transferred to the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region, to become a component of the massive Central Valley Project.

Operated by the Central California Area Office, the 'Folsom Facility' comprises Folsom Dam and Reservoir, left and right earthfill wing dams, Mormon Island Auxiliary Dam, and eight earthfill dikes that protect the surrounding communities, the City of Folsom and Granite Bay. The Sacramento metropolitan area sits in a valley at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers; the valley is actually a huge floodplain which has flooded countless times over the centuries, and Folsom Dam is the area's key flood control feature.

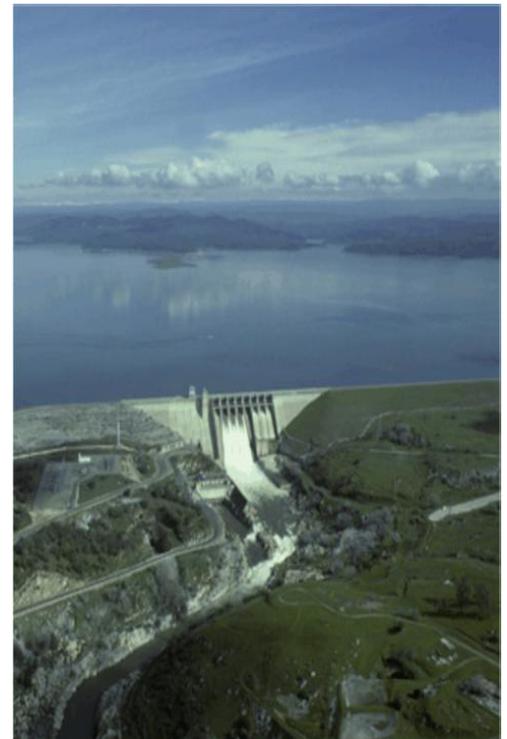
In addition to flood protection – particularly during floods in 1964, 1986, and 1997 – the Folsom Facility provides water for municipal and industrial use and agriculture; generates 10 percent of local hydropower needs; maintains flows and water temperatures to support fish and wildlife; provides flows for Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta water quality; and offers recreation for 2 million visitors annually.

Objectives of the Folsom DS/FDR Action

Maintaining the security, safety, and structural integrity of the Folsom Facility is crucial for these many authorized purposes. Since Folsom Dam was built 50 years ago, science and engineering have evolved significantly. Studies have concluded that improvements to all 12 dams and dikes are necessary to further protect the area from flooding and ensure the Folsom Facility will better withstand certain high-magnitude earthquakes and unprecedented storm events.

With the support of the local Congressional delegation, Reclamation, the Corps, the California Department of Water Resources' Reclamation Board, and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency – the partner agencies – are expediting completion of these major flood control and dam safety projects, better known as the Joint Federal Project (JFP). Final approval of key aspects of the JFP is expected by June, and excavation for a new gated auxiliary spillway should begin in October 2007.

When completed in 7 years, the JFP will provide 200-year flood protection and greatly reduce the potential for overtopping the dikes and dams during an extreme storm. Dam safety work will also be done at Mormon Island Auxiliary Dam and eventually at other facilities, with construction possibly extending another 5 years or more... and this is in addition to a new bridge being built near the dam!



Project Scope and Community Impacts

The scope of this project is massive. The work requires excavation, transportation, and placement of more than 3.5 million cubic yards of material. Batch plants must be constructed to meet the enormous demands for concrete. Drill rigs and large-scale processing equipment must be hauled in and installed. Areas must be set aside for staging, forming, and materials stockpiling. Total cost of the project will approach \$2 billion. All this work over the next 10-15 years will unavoidably impact the surrounding communities and lake visitors. Construction impacts may include increased truck traffic, noise, dust, and temporary disruption to some recreation areas. The partner agencies are working together with the local government and the public to ensure that everything possible is done to plan for and minimize these impacts.

Public Participation

Public participation is invaluable to the JFP. Since project planning began in 2005, seven press releases have been distributed; two scoping meetings, a month-long public review period, and two public hearings were held; some 60 newspaper articles have discussed the project; and the JFP mailing list now contains some 2,100 names.

Additionally, the first of a series of public neighbor-to-neighbor information meetings was held on February 20, 2007. The meetings are continuing on April 4 and 5, 2007, and future meetings will be held as needed to ensure the community is kept aware of and involved in project planning and implementation.

The public is encouraged to continue providing their comments and ideas, which are being carefully considered and accommodated to the greatest extent possible. As progress is made on the JFP, additional updates will be provided to keep the public in-the-know on a project so crucial to all those who rely on Folsom Dam and Reservoir for the water, power, recreation, and flood protection it provides.

Questions?

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Helpful Websites

Bureau of Reclamation: <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/jfp/index.html>
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/index.html>
Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency: <http://www.safca.org/>
State of California, Reclamation Board: <http://recbd.ca.gov/>

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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation