

# Uncommon Dialogue on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety

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## March 2023 Update

The following email provides updates on recent and upcoming activities within the Uncommon Dialogue (UCD) on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety.

### Department of Energy Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Update

The Water Power Technologies Office within the Department of Energy (DOE) has completed its evaluation of the Uncommon Dialogue's application submitted in response to the FOA titled Stakeholder Insights into Hydropower R&D Issues, and has selected the Uncommon Dialogue's application! Key organizations within the Uncommon Dialogue will work together through the next phase of negotiations with DOE. If you'd like more information, please reach out to your caucus leads.

### Plenary Group and Planning Group

**Agenda Setting for 2023 and Beyond:** During January, the Planning Group met bi-weekly to discuss the path forward for 2023 and prepare for the Plenary Group meeting on February 1. The Plenary Group convened on February 1 to discuss Uncommon Dialogue accomplishments and progress from 2022, consider next steps for ongoing efforts, and share input on Uncommon Dialogue engagement and potential future topics for 2023 and beyond. The Plenary Group discussed the following potential future topics: impacts of climate change, 3R's guidance for agencies and dam owners, tribal participation, reform of the water rights system, incentives for hydropower, and an improved decommissioning process.

### Working Group (WG) 1 Accelerate Development of Hydropower Technologies and Practices to Improve Generation Efficiency, Environmental Performance, and Solar and Wind Integration

**An Updated or New Concept Paper Further Advancing Hydropower, River Restoration, and Dam Safety/Dam Removal:** WG1 welcomes Miles Hall, Natel, to represent Industry as an additional Co-Chair. WG1 is considering topics for an updated or new white paper on technology: modernizing the U.S. Hydropower fleet, river restoration and dam safety/removal as potential topics. They are also considering additional participants based on the topics to be addressed. Beginning in February 2023, the Co-Chairs are meeting every four weeks to refine their goals and prepare for convening the full WG.

## WG 2 Dam Safety

Improving Dam Safety, including Dam Rehabilitation and Dam Removal: WG2 Co-Chairs recently met to develop a shared understanding of WG2 goals, refine WG2 leadership and composition, and identify short- and long-term actions to advance WG2. The goal of WG2 is to focus on identifying and addressing barriers to effective dam safety in the U.S.; develop recommendations for how dam safety can be improved, including through dam rehabilitation and dam removal; and increase resources available to owners, operators, and state and federal regulatory agencies. Co-Chairs for WG2 are thinking through next steps for the group and exploring needs and opportunities with FEMA and DOE.

## WG 3&5 Increase Basin-Scale Decision-Making and Access to River-Related Data and Advance Effective River Restoration through Improved Off-site Mitigation Strategies

Basin-Scale Subgroup Members Continue to Revise the Draft White Paper, A Basin-Scale Approach to Planning and Licensing: Operations, Considerations, and Recommendations: The next WG3&5 meeting will be scheduled for later in Q1 once an updated draft of the white paper has been shared with the full WG for their review.

## WG 4 Improve the Measurement, Valuation of, and Compensation for Hydropower Flexibility and Reliability Services and Support for Enhanced Environmental Performance

Policies to Incentivize Enhanced Environmental Performance, Hydropower Evaluation Tool, and Methane: WG4 met on January 30 to discuss attributes of enhanced environmental performance to include in a policy document. WG4 will meet regularly over the coming months to draft a policy document defining mechanisms for incentivizing enhanced environmental performance. WG4 members will also continue to track developments related to Idaho National Lab's Hydropower Valuation Flexibility Tool and draft a memo outlining what is currently known and unknown about methane emissions from hydropower reservoirs.

## WG 6 Improve Federal Hydropower Licensing, Relicensing, and License Surrender Processes

Draft Legislation in Progress: The Licensing Reform Group, which includes members from WG6 and WG7, is meeting regularly to coordinate the technical assistance solicitation from FERC on the Licensing Reform Package (<https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower/hydropower-ucd-core-documents>) . Having completed two iterations of language edits with Senate Legislative Counsel, the group continues to coordinate with legislative partners and the drafting team to finalize bill text for introduction.

## WG 7 Policy, Strategy, and Implementation of the 3 Rs (Rehabilitation, Retrofit, and Removal)

Policies in Active Consideration; Input on DOE's Hydropower Incentives Program: WG7 continues to meet every other week, with a focus on tracking and supporting agency implementation of the \$2.3 billion for the 3R's included in the 2023 infrastructure bill. The group is also coordinating with legislative leaders on reintroducing 21st Century Dams legislation, and reauthorization of the National Dam Safety Program (NDSP). Priorities for WG7 include the potential reintroduction of the 21st Century Dams Act, and preparing feedback on the Department of Energy's Maintaining and Enhancing Hydroelectricity Incentives program draft application guidance (<https://www.energy.gov/gdo/maintaining-and-enhancing-hydroelectricity-incentives-draft-application-guidance-comment>) , which was released February 8.

If you are interested in participating in WG7, please reach out to Katy Kennedy at [kkennedy@kearnswest.com](mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com) (mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com) .

## Tribal Engagement

Building a Roadmap for Deepening and Broadening Tribal Engagement in 2023: The Tribal Engagement Group met in January to develop a shared understanding of Tribal engagement goals for 2023 and discuss potential Tribal engagement efforts in 2023. The UCD is likely to host a series of listening sessions to ask Tribes what is of importance to them within the context of the UCD, and relay that information back to the Planning Group for incorporation into working groups.

## WG 8 Workforce Development

A New WG on Workforce Development: The Uncommon Dialogue is exploring convening a new Working Group in 2023 that will focus on the future hydropower workforce, driven in part by the coming wave of retirements in the hydropower industry. The future workforce will be more diverse than today's, thus a major focus of this WG will be on diversity, equity, and inclusion within the hydropower, river restoration, and public safety workforce. The WG will start by focusing on education and capacity building before assessing gaps between the existing workforce and a workforce that reflects diversity and attracts young professionals to and from remote, and often underserved, communities.

WG8 outcomes may include developing concept papers, plans, and training materials related to creating an inclusive workplace; developing a diverse, technically knowledgeable workforce; connecting a modern workforce with job opportunities; and connecting open positions with diverse candidates. Everyone is welcome to join the WG, and we are specifically looking for equity and environmental justice experts who can lead the establishment of the WG over the next several months. Please reach out to Katy Kennedy ([kkennedy@kearnswest.com](mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com) (mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com) ) with any questions and to share ideas for WG participants.

If there are others you think would like to get engaged with the Uncommon Dialogue, please forward their contact information to Katy Kennedy (kkennedy@kearnswest.com (mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com) ).

For more information on the Uncommon Dialogue, refer to Stanford's Uncommon Dialogue website: <https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower>.

Please feel free to contact Dan Reicher (dreicher@stanford.edu (mailto:dreicher@stanford.edu) ) or Kelsey Rugani (krugani@kearnswest.com (mailto:krugani@kearnswest.com) ) if you have any questions!