

Uncommon Dialogue on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety

Fall 2023 Update (October 2023)

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

Clean Currents

The National Hydropower Association (NHA) is hosting the Clean Currents (<https://cleancurrents.org/>) conference on October 10-13 in Cincinnati, Ohio. The conference will host many panels and workshops on topics related to the Uncommon Dialogue. Below is a summary of activities related to Uncommon Dialogue or hosted by Uncommon Dialogue participants:

Tuesday, 10/10:

+ 1:00 - 3:00 pm: Basin-Scale Planning and Licensing: What's In It for Me?

Wednesday, 10/11:

+ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm: FI: Reservoir Emissions: Demystifying the Discussion

+ 1:15 - 2:15 pm: G2: Dam Decommissioning and Project Surrender: Demystifying the Decision-Making Process, Part 1

+ 3:00 - 4:00 pm: G3: Dam Decommissioning and Project Surrender: Demystifying the Decision-Making Process, Part 2

+ 4:15 - 5:15 pm: D4: Workforce Management and Succession Planning - Properly Training New Hydro Generation Employees for Both Large and Small Organizations

Thursday, 10/12:

+ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm: Roadmap to 2050: The Hydropower Vision

+ 3:00 - 4:00 pm: Sustainable Rivers: How the Corps and the Nature Conservancy are Partnering, Making Progress

Check out the full program here: <https://cleancurrents.org/programs/schedule/>

Plenary Group and Planning Group

UCD Next Steps: The Planning Group meet bi-weekly to discuss working group activities, coordination between working groups, increasing UCD participation, and opportunities for

alignment with the Department of Energy's (DOE) Hydropower Vision. The Planning Group has been discussing the next Plenary Group meeting, which is tentatively planned for this winter.

WG 1 Accelerate Development of Hydropower Technologies and Practices to Improve Generation Efficiency, Environmental Performance, and Solar and Wind Integration

New Co-Chairs and a Three-Part Workshop: WG 1 welcomes Chris Hayes, National Hydropower Institute, as a representative from the hydropower industry community, and Maryalice Fischer, Low Impact Hydropower Institute, as a representative from the Environmental-NGO and Conservation community as Co-Chairs. Chris and Maryalice join Jose Zayas and Miles Hall on the Co-Chair team. Planning for a three-part workshop series beginning in January 2024 is underway focusing on technologies and innovations for safety, sustainability, and efficiency, optimization & asset management.

WG 2 Dam Safety

New Co-Chair and Dam Safety Gap Analysis Workshop: WG 2 welcomes Chris Hayes, National Hydropower Institute, as a representative from the hydropower industry community as Co-Chair. Chris joins Brian Graber and Thomas Fitzgerald on the Co-Chair team. Planning for a workshop addressing dam safety is underway. The workshop will focus on key research questions to inform a Gap Analysis Report to better understand which dams go unregulated or are under-regulated and why.

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 White Paper: Basin-scale subgroup members continue to revise the draft white paper, A Basin-Scale Approach: Options, Best Practices, and Recommendations to Advance Basin-Scale Planning and Licensing. WG 3&5 will reconvene after an updated draft has been shared for review.

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

EEP Policy Document and Methane Fact Sheet Underway: WG 4 members continue to expand and refine the draft policy document on qualifying hydropower projects for enhanced environmental performance. WG 4 anticipates the document will be ready to share more broadly in the coming months. Before the end of 2024, WG 4 members will reconvene to discuss grid valuation and determine next steps associated with developing a fact sheet to clarify the state of the science around methane emissions associated with hydropower operations.

Working Group (WG) 6 Improve Federal Hydropower Licensing, Relicensing, and License Surrender Processes

Community and Hydropower Improvement Act Revisions: The WG 6 Drafting Team (DT) responded to technical drafting assistance from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The DT awaits technical drafting assistance from the Department of Interior. The DT is also collaborating with the Tribal and Conservation caucuses on clarifying certain Tribal provisions and Federal Power Act Section 18 language.

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

NDSP Reauthorization, 21st CDA Reintroduction, and IJJA Implementation: WG 7 meets bi-weekly to discuss legislative priorities, including reintroduction of the 21st Century Dams Act (CDA), reauthorization of the National Dam Safety Program (NDSP), and tracking implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The group is working with legislators to include the NDSP in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), as well as topics like improvements to the disposition process, and streamlining the 408 application process.

If you are interested in participating in WG 7, please reach out to Katy Kennedy (kkennedy@kearnswest.com (<mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com>)).

WG 8 Workforce Development

First Steps: The co-chairs for WG 8, Linda Ciocci (The Hydro Foundation), Dr. Mel Lewis (American Rivers), and Kristina Mahler McMillan (Hatch), have met to prepare for the next WG 8 meeting, in late fall. The co-chairs are preparing a mission statement for the working group and are identifying potential subgroups. If you are interested in participating in WG 8, please reach out to Katy Kennedy (kkennedy@kearnswest.com (<mailto:kkennedy@kearnswest.com>)).

Tribal Engagement

Tribes, Hydropower, and Co-producing Results: Preliminary planning is underway for “Tribes and Hydropower” workshops. Ridges to Riffles of Northern California will lead tribal engagement strategies for the workshops and will advise on how to include tribes in other working groups, including WG 8.

UCD in the News

Dan Reicher (Stanford University), Tom Kiernan (American Rivers), and Malcolm Woolf (National Hydropower Association) prepared an op-ed that was published to The Hill. The article discusses recent floods, dams, and the Uncommon Dialogue. The article can be found here: <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/4188635-why-you-should-give-a-damn-about->

americas-dams/ or on the Stanford Uncommon Dialogue website:
<https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower/hydropower-ucd-media-press>.

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!