

Uncommon Dialogue on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety

December 2021 Update

Happy New Year! The following email provides updates from December 2021 on recent and upcoming activities within the Uncommon Dialogue (UCD) on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety.

Steering Committee (SC)

Agenda topics for the December 14 SC meeting included: discussion of 2021 accomplishments and plans for the UCD in 2022 including collaborative work, information sharing and process considerations. The Planning Group (PG) will consider SC input and will share updates on the 2022 path forward early in 2022.

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

In 2021, WG1 developed a white paper summarizing opportunities for technology innovation and advancement across the 3R's. WG1 will submit a final version of the white paper to the Department of Energy (DOE) in January, with sign-on from interested WG1 and SC members to inform future hydropower-related research, development, demonstration, and deployment (RDD&D). In 2022, WG1 plans to take a "sabbatical" but will be poised to activate as new topics emerge. WG1 will coordinate with WG7 and others in Infrastructure Bill implementation and funding for technology research and development.

WG 2 Dam Safety

A subset of members of WG2 have met a few times throughout 2021 to discuss potential focus areas. In 2022, WG2 plans to explore dam removal in addition to dam safety, potentially convene a workshop or a series of one-on-one or small group conversations centered around dam safety and removal needs and consider collaborative opportunities or actions for the UCD to explore.

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

During 2021, WG3/5 members identified potential focus areas within the broader topics of basin-scale planning, off-site mitigation, and data. They received a presentation from Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) on basin-wide data for relicensing decision-making. WG3/5 plans to establish a basin-scale

subgroup to explore a potential pilot, establish an off-site mitigation subgroup, and continue to provide opportunities for data sharing during 2022.

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

- In 2022, the Enhanced Environmental Performance (EEP) Subcommittee will explore developing a series of “two-pagers” with brief summaries and recommendations on:
 - Grid Valuation: Flexibility and Reliability
 - Incentivizing hydropower that goes “above and beyond”
 - Life Cycle/GHG Emissions
- During 2021, the Grid Valuation Subcommittee received a presentation on the North American Renewable Integration Study (NARIS) from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). In 2022, the Subcommittee will explore developing a two-pager on grid valuation and flexibility/reliability.
- The Power Evaluation Tool (PET) Subcommittee is continuing its development of a Power Evaluation Tool to allow for transparent and portable usage and to aid in the long-term resource planning and relicensing process and will continue this effort in 2022.
- WG4 will meet as the full Working Group moving forward and not in the specific Subcommittees, although it will be made clear when meetings will focus on a specific topic.

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

WG6 has been developing a revised Federal Power Act (FPA) package to be vetted with legislators, the White House, and federal agencies, and to explore a Congressional and/or Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulatory process to enact recommend changes. WG6 will share the Draft FPA Redline document with WG3/5 and the SC for review and comment. The WG6 Drafting Team will finalize the package and share with all participants for “sign-on”. In 2022, WG6 will continue next steps on the FPA package and identify other issues and solutions that can be addressed through regulatory policy.

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

During 2021, WG7 developed the “April Infrastructure Recommendations” package and 13 Uncommon Dialogue participants signed-on in support. WG7 conducted expansive legislative and communications outreach in support of the 3R’s that led to adoption of 3Rs provisions in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, with more than \$2.3 billion in funding. In 2022, WG7 will focus on implementation of the Infrastructure Bill, the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Request, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), coordinating with WG6 on licensing, and incorporating the 21st Century Dams Act in identified legislative processes.

Tribal Engagement

Work in 2021 featured outreach to over 100 Tribal groups. Currently, there is active participation from Tribal representatives in various Working Groups, especially WG6 and WG7. Quarterly Tribal participation calls have included updates, feedback on documents and work products, and discussion of Tribal interests. In 2022, Tribal engagement will continue, including convening a Tribal Participation Group, finalizing funding support for regional tribal entities, and holding a Tribal listening session.

Communications

The Communications Team has convened as a subgroup to WG7 to develop consistent messaging, share resources and examples, and coordinate on media outreach. The group has successfully increased external communications and media coverage on the 3R's effort, including a [Los Angeles Times article](#) in May 2021, among others. During 2022, the Communications Team will develop a 2022 Communications Plan, continue coordinating on outreach and message development, and build a database of resources and examples to assist in region-specific outreach.

On behalf of the Uncommon Dialogue convenors and facilitation team, we look forward to working with you and new participants in 2022 and thank you for your hard work on the Uncommon Dialogue in 2021.

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