

Uncommon Dialogue on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety

Quarterly Update: September 2021

This Quarterly Update provides an overview of progress made by the Uncommon Dialogue on Hydropower, River Restoration, and Public Safety (UCD) since May 2021. Additional information about the UCD can be found here: <https://woods.stanford.edu/research/hydropower>.

Steering Committee

The UCD Steering Committee (SC) met on June 9. The SC heard updates on progress made by the Working Groups (WGs) and discussed tribal engagement, Phase II membership, and the SC Charter.

- The next SC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 6 and will focus on key WG updates and discussion topics.

Working Groups

Updates on the WGs are below. All WGs and subgroups are convened; discussions are underway regarding WG 2: Advocate for Improved U.S. Dam Safety.

WG 7: Policy, Strategy, and Implementation of the 3 R's (Rehabilitation, Retrofit, and Removal)

Over the last few months, WG 7 members have been reaching out to White House and Congressional staff, federal agencies, and others about legislation related to the 3R's. Four pieces of legislation were introduced: House Bill 4375, the *21st Century Dams Act*, which directly reflected four concepts outlined and supported by WG7 members (see the press release [here](#) and the bill language [here](#)); Senate Bill 2356, the *21st Century Dams Act* directly reflecting three of the outlined concepts and supported by WG7 members (See the press release [here](#) and the bill language [here](#)); Senate Bill 2306, the *Maintaining and Enhancing Hydroelectric and River Restoration Act of 2021*, which would create new federal tax incentives to encourage safety, environmental, and grid resiliency upgrades for hydropower dams. (See the press release [here](#) and the bill language [here](#)); and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework bill which was adopted by the full Senate on August 10, 2021] and would, among other things, provide funding for the 3Rs. Currently, WG 7 members are focusing their efforts on conducting outreach to committee members about the Budget Reconciliation process.

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

Members of WG 6 and the Drafting Team subgroup continue to review sections of the Federal Power Act and develop proposed legislative language. WG 6 will work to finalize this legislative package, including review by the SC and opportunities for all participants to sign on in support of the proposal, and then share it with Congressional, White House, and Agency leadership. WG 6 will then shift its focus to regulatory topics.

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

The Enhanced Environmental Performance (EEP) Subcommittee explored the topic of Clean Energy Standards (CES) over several meetings and ultimately decided not to pursue CES within that group.

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Going forward, the EEP Subcommittee will shift its focus to addressing incentives for enhancing environmental performance.

The Co-Chairs of the Grid Valuation Subcommittee met several times over the summer to discuss next steps for this group. The full Subcommittee will reconvene in October. This meeting will include a presentation on the North American Renewable Integration Study (NARIS).

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

The first WG 1 meeting was held on June 16. Members are developing a white paper that describes recommendations on hydropower technology.

The WG1 Co-Chairs have been gathering feedback from various members across the UCD to include perspectives from the 3R's. The Co-Chairs will continue to review all comments received and submit a draft white paper to the full WG 1 and Steering Committee for final review. The white paper will be submitted to the Department of Energy for consideration on new technologies to advance next-generation 3Rs technologies.

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

The WG 3&5 Co-Chairs have been coordinating with the WG 6 Co-Chairs to identify potential areas of overlap or linkages between the two WGs. During their second meeting on September 14, WG 3&5 heard a presentation from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) on mapping resources and continued to discuss potential topics to focus on in the near-term.

Tribal Engagement

The UCD is working on opportunities to increase and enhance tribal participation throughout the entire effort. This includes tribal participation calls, which occur every two to three months. These calls are attended by a cross-section of tribes, some who are actively involved in one or more WGs, and some who cannot be actively involved, but appreciate hearing updates. The most recent tribal participation calls were held on June 28 and September 30.

Methane Workshop

The DOE Water Power Technologies Office (WPTO) and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), in coordination with UCD, convened a workshop on September 9 to jointly explore the topic of methane emissions. The DOE WPTO and ORNL presented on the state of the science and participants discussed future opportunities for cross-stakeholder collaboration. DOE and the Uncommon Dialogue Conveners and Facilitation Team are considering potential next steps. Thank you to everyone who was able to participate!

Recent Media Coverage

- Uncommon Dialogue in the Los Angeles Times: [Hydropower can help solve climate change, groups tell Biden](#)
- 21st Century Dams Act in AP News: [Bill aims to spend billions to fix nation's aging dams](#)
- 21st Century Dams Act in S&P Global: [Environmental, industry groups unite around US Senate bill to bolster hydropower](#)

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- Stanford publication: [Improve or remove: Funding for U.S. dams](#)
- Op-Ed on The Hill: [Don't be fooled: Hydropower is an essential part of a US climate solution](#)

Contact Us

If you have questions or would like to get involved in the Uncommon Dialogue process, please reach out to Dan Reicher (dreicher@stanford.edu) or Kelsey Rugani (krugani@kearnswest.com).