

Meeting Summary
Oroville Dam Citizens Advisory Commission
Meeting #15: November 15, 2023
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

This summary provides an overview of the November 15, 2023, Oroville Dam Citizens Advisory Commission (OCAC) meeting and focuses primarily on capturing the comments and questions posed by commissioners and members of the public. It is organized by agenda topic to assist readers in cross-referencing the meeting materials. This document is not intended to serve as minutes of the meeting or a transcript of the discussion. Related materials, including the slide deck and a video recording, are available on the [Oroville Dam CAC website](#).

Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO)
- Water Control Manual Update and Development Process
- Water Control Manual Update Objectives
- Winter Operations Preparation
- Public Comment & Questions

Action Items

Action Items from Meeting 15

- Include an update on piezometer readings during the next dam safety update.
- Present DWR’s plans for the newly purchased Oroville property adjacent to the fish hatchery.
- Present on Water Control Manual process prior to the start of the NEPA process:
- Establish recurring updates on how FIRO is being integrated into the Water Control Manual and how public objectives/input are being considered as part of the process.

Rollcall

As mandated by the requirements set forth in Senate Bill 955 (2018, Nielsen), the Commission comprises representatives from the following agencies and public bodies. Attendance at Meeting 15 on November 15, 2023, is noted in the table below.

Agency or Public Body	Commissioner (or Alternate)	Attendance Status
California Natural Resources Agency	(Chair) Secretary Wade Crowfoot	Yes
California State Senate	Senator Brian Dahle	Yes
California State Assembly	(Vice Chair) Assemblymember James Gallagher	No
Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)	Director Armando Quintero (represented by Superintendent Matt Teague)	Yes
Department of Water Resources (DWR)	Director Karla Nemeth	Yes

Agency or Public Body	Commissioner (or Alternate)	Attendance Status
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES)	Chief Deputy Director Tina Curry (represented by Deputy Director Lori Nezhura)	Yes
Oroville City Council	Mayor David Pittman	Yes
Oroville City Council	Vice Mayor Eric Smith	Yes
Butte County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor Tod Kimmelshue	No
Butte County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor Bill Connelly	Yes
Representative on behalf of Butte County Board of Supervisors	Robert Bateman	Yes
Yuba County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor Seth Fuhrer	No
Yuba Office of Emergency Services	Oscar Marin	Yes
Sutter County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor Mat Conant	No
Sutter County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor Dan Flores	No
California Highway Patrol	Lieutenant Commander Marc Stokes	Yes
Butte County Sheriff's Office	Sergeant Brian Evans	Yes
Yuba County Sheriff's Office	Lieutenant Brandon Spear	Yes
Sutter County Sheriff's Office	Deputy Andre Licon	No

Welcome and Opening Remarks

California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Secretary Wade Crowfoot welcomed commissioners, presenters, and the public to the fifteenth meeting of the Oroville Dam Citizens Advisory Commission. He thanked Commissioners for helping to shape meeting agendas, reviewed the agenda for Meeting 15, and briefly introduced the speakers. As part of the Secretary's opening remarks, he described the State's role in the development of an update to the 1970 Lake Oroville Water Control Manual (WCM) and noted that the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has the final say in its content.

Secretary Crowfoot discussed the importance of maintaining continuity between meetings and reminded participants about the restructured process for updating the Action Item Tracker: After each OCAC meeting, the Commissioners receive a list of the items being proposed for addition to the Action Item Tracker and can provide comments or edits prior to the posting of the updated Tracker to the OCAC website.

California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Director Karla Nemeth provided three updates:

- The piezometers and other instruments at Oroville and the gated spillway performed as expected during the recent precipitation events. There were no unusual readings, and all data is undergoing further analysis to better understand how the dam is functioning. A more detailed update will be provided in 2024 during the dam safety update for the Commission.
- The California Water Commission held its last meeting on September 20, 2023, at Oroville Dam, including a tour of the facilities. Director Nemeth reminded participants that the Water Commission plays an important oversight role for the State Water Project. The tour served as an opportunity for members to better understand the facility and its role in downstream operations.
- Director Nemeth congratulated the City of Oroville and the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency (SBFCA) for their work on levee improvements. She noted ongoing activity with the USACE to continue those improvements.

Secretary Crowfoot invited California State Senator Brian Dahle and his staff to provide any opening remarks. Senator Dahle thanked the Commissioners for their continuation of the OCAC meetings and expressed appreciation for the transparent process.

Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations

Dr. Marty Ralph, Director for the Scripps Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes and a key State partner in the development and application of forecast informed reservoir operations (FIRO), provided a presentation about atmospheric rivers and FIRO with key topics below.

Weather variability and atmospheric rivers

- California experiences the greatest variability in annual precipitation amounts compared to the rest of the country. These variations are driven largely by a storm type called Atmospheric Rivers (ARs), which can result in droughts or floods.
- Scientists can predict ARs approximately five days in advance using Atmospheric River Reconnaissance (AR Recon), which Dr. Ralph leads the development of through a partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Air Force.
 - Last winter, there were 39 total AR Recon missions flown for FIRO purposes. The goal is to ultimately run more than 60 missions in a winter period (Nov. 1 to March 31).
- Two-week forecasting capabilities based on predictions of landfalling ARs allowed scientists to predict the intense consecutive storms California experienced in the winter of 2023.
- There has been significant improvement in the overall quality of probabilistic predictions because of increased model runs and the use of advanced computer techniques such as artificial intelligence. Dr. Ralph gave examples of the forecasted precipitation between different models, and how the ensemble model from Scripps was most accurate.
- DWR's California Water Watch webpage features a tool to view AR landfall probability and scale forecast. This tool and other information generated at the Scripps Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes are frequently used by the National Weather Service.

FIRO Viability Assessment Process

- The assessment will support the USACE's update of the Water Control Manuals (WCMS) for New Bullards Bar and Oroville reservoirs.
- The foundation starts with science and technology, progresses through a preliminary viability assessment, and ends with a final viability assessment including all "lessons learned."
- In the Yuba-Feather system, the viability assessment process is spearheaded by representatives from DWR, the Scripps Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes, Yuba Water, and USACE.
- Dr. Ralph discussed how the amount of flexibility FIRO enables for a reservoir likely will increase as forecast skills improve over time. He provided an overview of the FIRO timeline in tandem with the WCM Update process, including the National Environmental Quality Act (NEPA) environmental impact analysis.
- FIRO has also helped stimulate work in snowfall forecasting and impacts to reservoir operations because of snowmelt and runoff. For the Feather and Yuba River systems, Dr. Ralph highlighted FIRO's role in answering a question about how long it would take to release extra water if it were stored behind Oroville Dam.

For additional information, Dr. Ralph referred Commissioners to his 2022 article in *Scientific American*, [Better Atmospheric River Forecasts are Giving Emergency Planners More Time to Prepare for Flooding](#), a useful resource.

Secretary Crowfoot thanked Dr. Ralph for the presentation and emphasized the importance of FIRO to flood safety and effective storage and other water operations.

Director Nemeth highlighted how Dr. Ralph's scientific contributions to FIRO helped save many lives during the January 2023 storm events in California because the State was able to predict where emergency services were needed and provide safety precautions for residents ahead of time.

Deputy Director Nezhura added that this information in 2023 helped State emergency services preposition resources in advance of storms and save lives. She thanked Dr. Ralph for his work and presentation.

Oroville Mayor David Pittman remarked that Dr. Ralph's FIRO work underscores the community's need for funding to rebuild the orphaned Oroville levee and all other levees to help prepare for future flooding events.

Commissioner Oscar Marin, Yuba Office of Emergency Services, asked Dr. Ralph for clarification about his program's collaboration with other models.

- Dr. Ralph answered that forecasts from international models (such as the NOAA Model and the European Model) are taken into consideration in FIRO modeling through a process called boundary conditioning. The AR Recon data is shared among all the global models.

Bruce Ross, Senator Dahle's District Director, thanked Dr. Ralph for his work to help the State be better prepared for winter events and asked if his goal includes having FIRO eventually help with safe reservoir storage and release during storm events.

- Dr. Ralph answered yes.

Secretary Crowfoot reiterated how FIRO science can help improve reservoir operations, with safety as the top priority.

- Dr. Ralph stated that the fundamental goal for the FIRO study at Oroville was to ensure that the current flood risk mitigation is maintained, and possible safety enhancement explored.

Butte County Supervisor Bill Connelly reiterated the importance of public safety over water delivery, as well as the inclusion of civilian input to assist with forecasting work. He remarked that he is concerned that water delivery is the priority of DWR and residents in Southern California. A mistake made with the new forecast could be more devastating without another spillway.

Secretary Crowfoot reminded Commissioners that the State's top priority is flood protection and protecting communities downstream. He said that as we make the case to USACE to incorporate this science, it is important to continue to explain this priority. He emphasized that safety will never be compromised for reservoir storage. There may be ways to optimize for both, but safety is always the first priority.

Water Control Update and Development Processes

Director Nemeth introduced Sacramento District USACE Water Management Chief Jenny Fromm, who serves as technical lead of the New Bullards Bar (NBB) Dam and Oroville Dam Water Control Manual updates.

Background

- The Water Control Manual Update process takes approximately four to five years.
- The Oroville Dam WCM was last updated in 1970, Since that time, scientists have developed more detailed hydrologic data, advanced technology, and science (such as FIRO).
- USACE tests the success of various Water Control Manual alternatives against existing conditions, including modeling baseline and historical reservoir operations, and establishing baseline environmental conditions. USACE also must conduct the NEPA process to model environmental effects of reservoir operations alternatives.
 - Ms. Fromm noted that knowing enough details about each alternative that will be evaluated is needed to determine the type of NEPA process (Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)). EA and EIS have different schedules.
- After a review period, the WCM moves into final review and approval. Ultimately, for the New Bullards Bar and Oroville updates, the WCMs will be signed by the Division Commander at USACE South Pacific Division.

Objectives

- The Water Control Manual Update objectives outline operations metrics proposed for New Bullards Bar and Oroville dams, as well as a combination of the two locations.
 - Ms. Fromm explained that a combined set of system operations must be considered since the two locations share a control point, which is the reason the two manuals are being updated simultaneously.
- The objectives, established by USACE, DWR, and Yuba Water Agency, are the items needed to be met for each alternative to be considered for an approved WCM. Ms. Fromm noted that the existing WCMs account for Marysville Dam, which was authorized to be built on the Yuba River and would have provided additional control overflows into the Feather River but was never built. Assumptions about Marysville Dam will be removed in the updates.
- Ms. Fromm reviewed objectives related to the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) Emergency Spillway Release Diagram (ESRD). The associated objective is intended to ensure dam operations utilize the spillway gates for safety purposes, with the goal of not overtopping the dam.
 - PMF is the current design flood event used to prevent failure of dams and is the flood that may be expected from the most severe combination of hydrology and critical meteorology conditions that are reasonably possible in a drainage area.
 - Each agency has PMF-related objectives that identify how to route the PMF with a specific amount of space between the maximum storage and the top of the dam.
- The PMF-related objectives are as follows:
 - The New Bullards Bar Dam Water Control Manual Update will have specific passage of probable maximum flood, including a secondary spillway, with a minimum of two feet of freeboard from the dam crest of 1,965 feet.
 - The Oroville Dam Water Control Manual Update will have specific passage of probable maximum flood with a minimum of three feet of freeboard. This amount of freeboard will be subject to revision pending input from either the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) or the DWR Division of Safety of Dams.

Water Control Manual Update and FIRO

- This is the first instance where the control manual updates and the FIRO Pilot Program are being done in parallel. The two teams working on these two sets of updates held a workshop with two primary goals: to avoid duplication of efforts and to help educate each other and create a shared understanding of the projects.
 - The teams developed a list of common tasks between the projects, noting that the tasks can complement each other while still progressing independently.
 - Completed tasks include defining flood operation objectives and performance metrics and defining alternative development strategy.
 - Tasks in progress include defining existing conditions to compare with alternatives, preparing hydrology, developing models and tools, and conducting basic performance evaluation.

- Tasks still to be addressed include developing system operations for promising alternatives, conducting additional evaluation of promising alternatives, and identifying recommended or selected alternatives.
- Ms. Fromm noted that the coordination between the two project teams has created more communication and knowledge-sharing between the projects and led to the creation of working groups in the following areas: communications, forecast verification, observation, meteorology, hydrology, water resources engineering, WCM alignment leadership, economic benefits, and decision support tools.

Timeline and next steps

- The Yuba Water Agency plans to begin construction on a secondary spillway, called the ARC Spillway, in 2024/2025.
- The FIRO Pilot Program is the FIRO Viability Assessment (FVA) phase, with program implementation scheduled for 2024/2025.
- Water Control Manual updates are expected to stretch into the second half of 2026. The alternatives list will be finalized Spring 2024 for NEPA analysis. USACE welcomes questions from the public through the NEPA process.
- The goal is to develop two fully completed and implemented Water Control Manuals — one for New Bullards Bar Dam and one for Oroville Dam — by late 2026.

Discussion of Commissioner Water Control Manual Update Objectives

Before the November meeting, Commissioners had requested a discussion on downstream communities' priorities for the Water Control Manual Update process. In advance of the meeting, Commissioner Bateman had shared a document outlining [Water Control Manual Update Objectives](#). The document was posted to the Commission website prior to Meeting 15.

Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Bateman expressed concern that the USACE WCM process was advancing without sufficient community input and asked how to share his Objectives document for consideration in the WCM update process. He also said that prior to this meeting, he was concerned that the process was focused more on increasing water supply than protecting downstream communities. The presentations during Meeting 15 helped him understand that this is not the case. He asked how to get a discussion going on the Objectives from the perspective of the community and the process for the community to present its objectives.
 - Ms. Fromm responded that the USACE Public Affairs Office is best point of contact to submit questions and comments: spk-pao@usace.army.mil or (916) 557-5100.
- Supervisor Connelly pointed out that on May 30, 2016, there was a document that outlined priorities for the Water Control Manual Update that noted the public participation. The Supervisor said that he is concerned now that public comment is seemingly only designated for the NEPA analysis step of the process rather than for the

entirety of the Water Control Manual Process. He said USACE is preparing a manual but then there is a gap for when the public can comment. There has been a notable lack of public meetings. Supervisor Connelly shared that the local community has been directly impacted by operations in the past, and he feels an obligation to protect them from that in the future. The Manual is vital to the safety of the community as well as those downstream from the dam. While not intending to be confrontational, Supervisor Connelly takes on the responsibility of acting as a representative of the public. He also thanked presenters for the scientific updates to the climate forecast, and Ms. Fromm and USACE for sharing the Water Control Manual Process with the public.

- Ms. Fromm responded USACE has been involved with the local flood control districts via the workshops held in 2022 to get a better understanding of where the districts are seeing potential flooding issues, what flows they experience related to overtopping, etc. The districts are aware that the Water Control Manual is being updated and that it's happening in concurrence with the FIRO program. Additionally, these workshops included the county Office of Emergency Services, reclamation districts, and other agencies to get their perspective on what level of flows are beneficial and which are harmful. The information received helps inform the release schedule, among other informative items.
 - Public comments and public meetings are part of the NEPA process. Ms. Fromm said that USACE needs to internally understand proposed alternatives before describing them to the public and making them available for comment.
 - Flood risk management is the ultimate goal for Water Control Manual updates. Water supply may be a secondary benefit.
 - Regarding the process schedule, research on water control operations is being conducted first, followed by the updates to the Water Control Manual. The public will be able to get involved approximately April to June 2024.
- Director Nemeth remarked that the next meeting's agenda should include follow-up information on the Water Control Manual Update.
- Vice Mayor Eric Smith said the City Council recently learned that the levee that protects from the Diversion Pool down to Riverbend Park is described as an "orphan levee." He said this surprised him. He remarked about DWR's purchase of a big strip of land in Oroville from the hatchery down to Highway 70. Environmental work was done using heavy equipment to put in gravel for the fish. He said that he was told the orphan levee is the City's concern, not DWR's. He asked if this activity is being taken into consideration in the WCM update and raised concern about the rock in the river, which can put pressure on the levee and cause other damage. Vice Mayor Smith said his responsibility is the safety of Oroville. He asked if the purchase was being taken into consideration and asked about the impacts on water flows through the Low Flow Channel. He thanked DWR for the river rafting tours and commitment to public environmental education. He said that creating an opportunity for local ownership through a buy-in process could lead to multiple generations of the public caring for the river and community spaces.

- DWR Deputy Director Ted Craddock clarified that the property DWR acquired is directly adjacent to the Feather River Fish Hatchery. DWR envisions that additional efforts will need to be made to help support the fish populations after multiple drought years. Those efforts include modifications to expand the hatchery. A portion of the land is used to access the back of the hatchery and the Feather River. Additional work is planned for run identification, habitat creation, and improvement of spawning conditions. The Oroville Relicensing Settlement Agreement included this suite of work and was agreed to by the parties involved. Deputy Director Craddock suggested this as a topic for further discussion at a future meeting.
- Director Nemeth agreed that this could be an agenda item for a future Commission meeting.
- Commissioner Marin remarked that his County ran into an issue last year with antiquated datum and asked what datum will be used in this manual.
 - Ms. Fromm responded that per USACE regulations, the data being used is NABD 88, which is the current plan for updating both manuals.

Winter Operations Preparation

DWR Operations & Management Assistant Division Manager John Leahigh presented the Lake Oroville 2023-2024 Winter Operations Plan.

Water Year 2023 brought relief to California and the West Coast after three severely dry years. The region experienced over 20 atmospheric rivers ranging from moderate to exceptional. Central California received record-breaking precipitation levels. The Feather River received significantly above-normal precipitation levels. As of the beginning of Water Year 2024, California is no longer classified as being in drought.

Lake Oroville storage levels recovered completely by late spring 2023. DWR is currently using water released from storage to meet Delta water quality requirements and make fall deliveries to local farmers. Lake Oroville is currently releasing at the minimum required level into the Feather River to conserve storage in case the dry conditions seen during fall 2023 continue through the winter. Precipitation levels are currently at 30 percent of average rainfall levels since the start of Water Year 2024 began October 1, with an additional 1.2 million acre-feet storage than was available at the start of Water Year 2023. Lake Oroville is currently two-thirds full, equating to approximately 134 percent of average levels for this time of year.

Mr. Leahigh showed a graph depicting actual storage levels alongside storage capacity and explained that flood releases are required if actual storage levels at the reservoir exceed capacity. He explained that the allowable storage line varied depending on precipitation. DWR plans to continue implementing the enhanced flood pool for winter 2023–2024.

Mr. Leahigh reviewed the anticipated winter conditions associated with the current El Niño year. During an El Niño year, ocean temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean are warmer than usual, typically leading to wetter conditions for the Southwest U.S. and drier conditions for the

Northwest U.S. For Northern California and the Sierra Nevada mountains, El Niño years can bring either very wet or very dry winters.

Mr. Leahigh recognized the difficulty with California water management lies in the dependence on individual storms, as stated in a previous presentation by Dr. Marty Ralph, UC San Diego. NOAA is forecasting slightly wetter conditions for most of the state and along the Interstate 80 corridor, like those seen in winter 2022–2023. Statewide, warmer-than-average air temperatures are forecasted for December through February.

Mr. Leahigh summarized with the following points:

- Water storage levels are much improved going into Water Year 2024;
- DWR continues to plan and prepare for extreme wet or dry conditions;
- Releases are currently at the minimum required level in order to conserve storage; and
- DWR will continue to employ the enhanced flood pool.

Public Comment

Terra Alpaugh, Kearns & West Facilitator, opened the floor to public comment.

Michael Bessette, Executive Director, Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency (SBFCA), provided the first comment with two relevant updates:

The City of Oroville levee repairs

- The City and SBFCA have entered into a service agreement, and the City has requested technical assistance from SBFCA to evaluate the one-mile “orphan” levee and to provide advanced design and permitting needed for repairs. The City has issued the first task order to SBFCA, which is to identify and pursue funding. SBFCA submitted an application to USACE to initiate a feasibility study. If the City of Oroville is selected, the process could take a minimum of three years to complete, and then the City would have to obtain a Congressional authorization for the project and seek appropriations through Congress.
- This drawn-out process is the “Plan B” strategy. Plan A is to seek State funding. Mr. Bessette has been coordinating with DWR Deputy Director Gary Lippner on possible funding opportunities.

Floodplain inundation mapping

- DWR amended the planning contract for the Oroville Wildlife Area to add an additional function to perform floodplain inundation mapping for the City of Oroville.
- SBFCA has advanced those efforts and will have draft maps available next month.
- SBFCA will meet with the city of Oroville mayor and Commissioners to demonstrate the modeling and incorporate their feedback. Once complete, SBFCA will meet with DWR project managers to review that information.

Matt Mentink, former member of the Ad Hoc Committee, and citizen representative of the Oroville Comprehensive Needs Assessment, provided the second public comment on several topics:

Water Control Manual Update

- Mr. Mentink plans on submitting several questions regarding the Water Control Manual Update process to the USACE's Public Affairs Office.
- Mr. Mentink asked Ms. Fromm if she received a copy of the draft of downstream stakeholders' objectives.
 - Ms. Fromm responded that she received the document and Ms. Alpaugh confirmed that the document was shared with Commissioners and posted on the Commission website in advance of the November meeting.
- Mr. Mentink said that USACE's Joe Forbis, in a prior Commission presentation, emphasized the importance of bringing the public into the process at an early stage, not just to provide input on the environmental aspect. Mr. Forbis said that it was especially important for downstream stakeholders who have endured major flooding events, including those that occurred in 1986 and 1997, to provide perspective and potentially guide the FIRO objectives.
- Mr. Mentink mentioned that there has been discussion about attempting to meet the 260,000 acre-feet of storage that never-built Marysville Reservoir was going to provide, but people have yet to hear what that will look like exactly.
 - Mr. Mentink described one proposal discussed that would reduce the flows at Marysville to be three feet lower in the levee; however, both levee failures, in the opinion of the locals, were caused by an uncontrolled ramp-down below Englebright Dam. Another related question is whether the ramp-downs will be controlled to avoid the levee slouching when levees are at full capacity. Mr. Mentink wanted to question the reason why the water that we try to save for increased water storage through the soil wetness index does not include snowpack. Studies came out in the FIRO Viability Report that revealed a big portion of flood space could be consumed by mis-estimating snowmelt. Mr. Mentink said he had questions that he wanted to submit early enough to have responses incorporated into this presentation.

Communication

- Mr. Mentink asked if communication will be improved between commissioners and meeting presenters to allow for more bottom-up meeting agendas in the future.

Dr. Ralph's presentation:

- Mr. Mentink praised the FIRO Viability Assessment Report and presentation but expressed concern regarding the information in Chapter 9 in relation to how it could be incorporated into the Water Control Manual. His questions include:
 - How is hindcast forecasting used to determine how accurate we were on categories such as landfall, snowmelt, or freezing levels?
 - If our margin of error was 20 percent, then what does that mean for releases? Do we err on the side of flood versus water supply?
- Mr. Mentink said that while serving as a citizen representative for the Oroville Comprehensive Needs Assessment, a lot of time was spent discussing future infrastructure projects that could enhance resiliency, redundancy, and operations for climate change adaptability going forward and to prevent the previous flood incidents

from reoccurring. The group came up with 10 alternatives, which included a low-level outlet at Oroville Dam.

- Mr. Mentink shared his personal experience with flooding impacts, including multiple evacuations and a business that suffered because of flooding. He asked how others can best track and follow the incorporation of all the FIRO viability information that was put out, such as the new studies, the margin of errors, and the accuracy rates, and ensure it is adequately incorporated into the Water Control Manual. Mr. Mentink said that the public wants to be involved in this component, not just that of the environmental NEPA process.

Responses to Mentink's questions:

- Dr. Ralph thanked Mr. Mentink for his comments and questions. He responded that Mr. Mentink's last question about the Manual process is better directed at Ms. Fromm. He stated that Ms. Fromm, in her presentation, noted the coordination between the Water Control Manual and FIRO processes. The integrated work teams are generating this connection.
- Ms. Fromm added that the start of the NEPA process and discussion of the alternatives would be an ideal time for Mr. Mentink to provide feedback on the operations.
- Dr. Ralph also shared that in another FIRO program, where the final viability assessment was very favorable and other work had been done with the operators on deviation, a research side has been added to the Water Control Manual update team to maintain connection and continuity through individual and organizational engagement. Dr. Ralph anticipates a similar alignment with Ms. Fromm and USACE as they move forward.
- Ms. Fromm responded that while the Water Control Manual process is a process governed by USACE regulations, the incorporation of FIRO is being developed and refined as they progress through the project. FIRO fundamentally sits with USACE in their efforts to deploy flood control technology.
 - She outlined two working paths for this project: USACE working front and center, and DWR to develop ongoing communications around flood safety and FIRO and how to interact more effectively with the public.
 - She reiterated that questions should be submitted through the Public Affairs Office for review and thanked Mr. Mentink for his comments.
- Dr. Ralph added that Joe Forbis filled the position created by USACE as the FIRO Integration Manager. The position is specifically intended to ensure a strong connection and coordinate staffing.

Adjournment

Director Nemeth thanked the public for their engagement, the presenters, and commissioners at OCAC Meeting 15. The next Commission Meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 1, 2024.
