

Mid-Pacific Region Folsom Dam Joint Federal Project

Background

Folsom Dam was authorized in 1944 as a 355,000 acre-foot flood control unit and then reauthorized in 1949 as an almost 1 million acre-foot multiple-purpose facility. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) completed construction in 1956 and then transferred the dam to the Bureau of Reclamation for coordinated operation as an integral part of the federal Central Valley Project.

Folsom Dam regulates flows in the American River for flood control, and releases from Folsom Reservoir are used for municipal and industrial water supply, agricultural water supply, power, fish and wildlife

management, recreation, navigation and water quality purposes. Recreation at Folsom Reservoir is managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation under an agreement with Reclamation.



Artist's rendition of the completed auxiliary spillway.

The Folsom Facility

Managed by the Central California Area Office (CCAO), the “Folsom Facility” comprises Folsom Dam and Reservoir, left and right earthfill wing dams, Mormon Island Auxiliary Dam and eight earthfill dikes that protect the surrounding communities and the cities of Folsom and Granite Bay. The Sacramento metropolitan area sits in a valley at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers; the valley is actually a huge floodplain which has flooded countless times over the centuries, and Folsom Dam is the area’s key flood control structure. The Folsom Dam spillway is divided into eight sections, each controlled by a 42-by 50-foot radial gate. The spillway capacity is 567,000 cubic feet per second.

Reclamation’s Safety of Dams Program

Under the Safety of Dams Program, Reclamation is working to reduce hydrologic (flood), seismic (earthquake) and static (seepage) risks at the Folsom Facility. Although these events are unlikely to occur, it was determined that modifications were needed to ensure the protection of the public who live and work next to or downstream of the Folsom Facility.

Flood Damage Reduction – the Power of Partnerships

Under the Joint Federal Project (JFP), Reclamation, the Corps, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board formed an unprecedented partnership to provide enhanced flood protection for the Sacramento area – one of the most at-risk communities in the nation.

The JFP’s new auxiliary spillway is being constructed southwest of the existing main concrete dam. It is the key feature to improving the Folsom Facility’s flood control ability.



When completed in 2017, the auxiliary spillway will include a 1,000-foot-long approach channel beginning in Folsom Reservoir, a concrete control structure with six gates, a 2,100-foot-long auxiliary spillway chute and a stilling basin which will act as an energy dissipation structure as water discharges enter the American River below the main concrete Folsom Dam.

The new facility will allow Reclamation's dam operators to better manage large floods by safely releasing more water from Folsom Reservoir earlier during a large storm through both the spillway gates on Folsom Dam (which sit at elevation 418 ft.) and the new control structure's six gates (which will sit lower in Folsom Reservoir at elevation 368 ft.), thus reducing hydrologic risk and leaving more storage capacity in the reservoir.



Artist's rendition of the completed auxiliary spillway gates.

Construction of the Auxiliary Spillway

After excavating more than 2.5 million cubic yards of rock and soil for the spillway site, Reclamation handed the project over to the Corps' Sacramento District in January 2011. The Corps will eventually remove more than 315,000 cubic yards of earth and construct the approach channel, control structure, concrete-lined spillway chute and stilling basin. The spillway is scheduled to be ready for use in 2017.



Construction of the new auxiliary spillway as of March 2013.

Recreation During Construction

Construction activities at the Folsom Facility are expected to last until 2020, and disturbances at some locations around the reservoir will at times be unavoidable. Reclamation will continue to be as responsive to public interests as possible, while ensuring this critical work is accomplished. The public will be notified of construction activities that impact recreational activities through the use of press releases, flyers, signage and updates to the JFP website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/jfg>.

Questions on the JFP

For questions or additional project information on the JFP, please contact Mark Curney at 916-989-7243 or email jcurney@usbr.gov or call CCAO at 916-988-1707 (TTY 916-989-7285).

For More Information:

MP Region Public Affairs

916-978-5100

www.usbr.gov/mp

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