

Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Dam Owner Workgroup
Meeting Summary

B.A.R.N Facility
11851 West James Anderson Hwy
Buckingham, VA 23921
March 23, 2018

I. Group Discussion – Proposed Dam Safety Agricultural Exemption Requirements

The workgroup discussed the revisions (December 6, 2017) to the Guidance Document on Agricultural Exemptions. The Agricultural Exemption Requirement guidance document is issued Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management (Division).

The Agricultural exemption applies to impounding structures operated primarily for agricultural purposes that are less than 25 feet in height or that create a maximum impoundment capacity smaller than 100 acre-feet. Agricultural use dams that meet these size requirements are exempt from the operations and maintenance requirements set out in the Impounding Structure Regulations.

Historically, the Division has not required that proposed dams that meet the agricultural exemption be built to the standards required by the Impounding Structure Regulations for newly constructed dams. Recent interpretations of the law has indicated the exemption does not apply to the dam until it is being operated for agricultural production.

The proposed guidance document clarifies that the exemption does not extend to dam construction or reconstruction and that only after a dam is operating for its intended purpose is an exemption granted. The proposed guidance document outlines the requirements of the construction or reconstruction of dams intended for agricultural use.

Some of the major themes and concerns discussed were:

- Development of a Roll-out Plan
- Education and outreach to involved parties
- Impact on existing impounding structures with an agriculture exemption
- Cost of compliance
- Downstream Safety
- Future Use

The Division is currently not enforcing these construction standards outlined in the proposed guidance document. The Division is looking to further define when the agricultural exemption takes effect for newly constructed and reconstructed dams. The Division will continue discussions on the proposed Guidance Document revisions to ensure all comments and concerns are considered. Any revisions to the Guidance Document will be approved by the Virginia Soil and Water Board prior to implementation.

II. DCR Update - Small Repair Program for Division Dams

The FY2018 Small Dam Repair Grant Agreements have been mailed to the Districts for signature.

Charles Wilson (DCR-District Dam Engineer) provided an update on the Dam Riser Structure Assessment project. DCR contracted with Stantec for the Dam Riser Structure Assessment project.

Phase 1 covered Blue Ridge SWCD, Mountain Castles SWCD, and Robert E. Lee SWCD owned dams. Field work was completed in December. DCR is still waiting for the Final Report on each Dam.

Phase 2 will cover Peter Francisco SWCD, Piedmont SWCD, and Southside SWCD owned dams. Fund for phase 2 has been secured. Phase 2 will commence once DCR has received and approved the Reports for each Phase 1 Dam.

III. DCR Update - Rehabilitation Plan for Virginia SWCD Dams

Amanda Pennington (DCR-District Engineering Services Manager) provided the group with an update on the Rehabilitation Plan.

The Rehabilitation Committee held a meeting on March 15, 2018. The Final Report is due October 2018. The David Warriner (DCR-Dam Rehabilitation Engineer) is in the process of finalizing the prioritization list. DCR staff will be scheduling visits with District that have the top five ranked dams once SITES analysis has been completed.

IV. DCR Update – Dam Safety Inventory System (DSIS)

Charles Wilson (DCR-District Dam Engineer) provided the group with an Update on the Dam Safety Inventory System (DSIS). All Dam Safety Submittals made by the District Dam Engineer are using DSIS. Dam Safety is in the process of scanning and uploading files to DSIS. Dam Safety is in the process of allowing participants to have access to DSIS. Participants will be able to upload files to the system such as Owner Inspections and Emergency Action Plans (EAPs). Districts will need to start planning who at the District will need DSIS access. The District Dam Engineer will coordinate the District so that Local Emergency Managers will have DSIS access to district dams.

V. Group Discussion – Engineering Term Contracts

The group discussed the possibility of doing a joint procurement process for an engineering term contract. Only the Districts that participate in the joint procurement would be able to use the term contract. In addition, a district procurement policy may need to be revised to allow for joint procurement. All interested Districts are asked to talk to their boards about participation by May 1st.

Charles Wilson (DCR-District Dam Engineer) will contact each District in May to generate a list of what Districts are interested and to schedule a follow-up meeting for those Districts interested in a joint procurement.

VI. Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting date is tentatively scheduled for July 19, 2018.