



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Corps' San Francisco District works closely with partners to ensure safe operations of Northern California dams

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) San Francisco District operates and maintains Lake Mendocino/Coyote Valley Dam and Lake Sonoma/Warm Springs Dam. These dams were constructed with local county agency partners, and USACE works closely with its partners to operate and maintain them. The partners are the Sonoma County Water Agency and the Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District. Both of these dams have and continue to perform as designed with no issues to report.

Both dams provide significant, multiple benefits to the nation—its people, local businesses, critical infrastructure and the environment. These benefits include flood risk management, water supply, hydropower, environmental stewardship, fish & wildlife conservation and recreation. Both projects operate through USACE policies and procedures enumerated in a water control manual unique to that dam. Portions of these manuals are updated annually (or more frequently if needed), and dam operators are trained annually on these manuals.

While it is difficult to draw direct comparisons between USACE dams and others, the unique technical constraints governing the underlying priorities and operational procedures have positioned Coyote Valley and Warm Springs Dams to be more capable at accommodating unusually heavy rain. For perspective, Coyote Valley and Warm Springs Dams are operated primarily for flood risk management and reserve approximately 60% to 45%, respectively, of the reservoir for that purpose this time of year. By contrast, the Oroville Dam reserves approximately 20% of the reservoir for this same purpose.

Our agencies employ a robust inspection and monitoring program that services both active and potential maintenance and dam safety concerns. Our annual dam inspections include detailed inspections of the spillways. Annual vegetation and pest control is another key aspect to ensuring the dams and their spillways are fully functional and any erosion issues are minimized. The vegetation control is accomplished via controlled burns by the local fire departments and removal of all woody vegetation. Pest control is accomplished in a safe and non-environmentally harmful manner. After every major storm event, we accomplish a series of inspections designed to catch any small change/damage to a critical system such as a spillway.

Each project includes full-time trained and certificated dam tenders to maintain, operate and inspect the facilities. In addition, this staff is supported with onsite and offsite engineers and technicians to provide real-time monitoring of conditions and to identify actions where appropriate. Typically all information, no matter how miniscule, is disseminated to both onsite and offsite engineers and others at the district charged with ensuring the dam safety mission is achieved. USACE also informs its sponsors of these

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projects (Sonoma County Water Agency and the Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District) with any concern.

To date, USACE and its partners continue to monitor conditions at both dams and have not identified any areas of concern that would impact the performance of either facility.

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