For 30 years, the Federal government has used the National Dam Safety Program (NDSP) to protect Americans from dam failure. The NDSP is a partnership of the States, Federal agencies, and other stakeholders that encourages and promotes the establishment and maintenance of effective Federal and state dam safety programs to reduce the risks to human life, property, and the environment from dam related hazards.

FEMA NDSP began to publish this series to showcase essential NDSP accomplishments that occurred during the past fiscal year (FY). It provides the dam safety community, as well as the public, a heightened understanding of the Program’s objectives: to reduce the risk associated with dams and promote the benefits of dam safety.

TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE DAM SAFETY, FEMA COORDINATES WITH FEDERAL, STATE AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS THROUGH:

- The National Dam Safety Review Board, comprised of Federal, State and private sector partners, advises FEMA’s Administrator in setting National dam safety priorities and considers effects of National policy issues affecting dam safety.
- The Interagency Committee on Dam Safety, comprised of Federal agencies having an involvement with dams, was founded in 1980 to encourage the establishment and maintenance of effective Federal programs, guidelines and policies to enhance dam safety and security.

LAKE OROVILLE DAM SPILLWAY

In mid-February 2017, the Lake Oroville Dam spillway failed. Heavily inundated by seasonal weather, dam operators, following standard practices, opened the gates to relieve pressure. However, this intentional release led to the main spillway crumbling along one side and water to escape. Over 200,000 people were displaced in the resulting floods. The Lake Oroville Dam incident highlights NDSP’s emphasis on a holistic approach to dam safety.

2017-2021 NDSP STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan for the NDSP for FY 2017 through 2020 was developed on behalf of the Administrator of the FEMA, as required by the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-121). The Plan presents three strategic goals and eleven objectives established by FEMA and its partners in the NDSP to reduce the risks to life and property from dam failure in the United States. To achieve the goals and objectives, the Plan identifies supporting activities in the Program areas funded under the Dam Safety Act of 2014.

OFFERED EMI COURSES

EMI NDSP Technical Seminar, “Interim Risk Reduction Measures” was conducted in February 2017. The EMI field offering of the Integrated Emergency Management Course, “Community Dam Safety: Preparedness and Mitigation” in San Juan, Puerto Rico, was conducted on October 18–22, 2016.

COOPERATIVE TECHNICAL PARTNERSHIP WITH ASDSO

In FY 2017, FEMA entered into a partnership with ASDSO that provided state dam safety officials unlimited access to ASDSO’s Web-Based Training Program live webinars held between October 2017 and September 2018 at no cost to the state dam safety program. In addition, state dam safety officials will have unlimited access to ASDSO’s archived webinars. This partnership also includes financial support to ASDSO for maintaining and updating the Dam Failure and Incidents website.

HURRICANE MATTHEW NORTH CAROLINA DAM RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT

This report assesses dam safety within the context of the post-Hurricane Matthew environment in North Carolina. The intent is to promote resiliency and reduce future dam-related risks in North Carolina and throughout the country. The findings demonstrate the importance of a coordinated approach towards managing risks associated with dams.