Life Safety Consequences: What are the Resources, Trends, and Key Considerations for Risk Assessment and RIDM? A Panel Discussion with Q&A (presentation only)

Joe Goldstein, P.E. (CA), Geosyntec Consultants

As dam safety regulators and dam owners start to incorporate risk-informed decision making (RIDM) into their policy and guidelines, there is a huge need for not only evaluating existing dam infrastructure but also the potential life safety impacts posed by these dams on downstream populations. With the RIDM approach, we are seeing the emergence of a new technical discipline centered around life safety consequences. The traditional engineering analyses that most of the dam safety professionals were taught in school and are familiar with are not going away. However, the practice of estimating life safety consequences can be a black box to a lot of the engineers in the dam safety community. This panel will convene consequence subject matter experts from both regulators and private industry, to shed light on the assortment of available resources, trends, and key considerations for evaluating life safety consequences in risk assessment.

Although RIDM and specifically life safety consequences have been incorporated into many federal dam safety programs (i.e. USRB and USACE), this is largely new territory for state regulators and dam safety professionals in private industry. The panel will explore various tools available within the industry, and the science under the hood. Also, some trends and lessons learned from past risk assessments will be discussed. What should state regulators know as they start shaping their own state programs? What additional research is still needed? Where is the practice headed and how do we prepare the younger generation of dam safety professionals?

Moderator: Joe Goldstein (Geosyntec Consultants)

Panel members: Eric Gross (FERC, Risk-Informed Decision Making Branch), Jason Needham (USACE, Risk Management Center Consequence Specialist), Denis Mileti (Univ. of Colorado), and David Bowles (RAC)