

## **Water Control Manual Update Downstream Perspective Presentation to the Oroville Dam Citizens' Advisory Commission (OCAC)**

At the April 10<sup>th</sup> OCAC Meeting, chaired by Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot, the Feather River Advisory Commission (FRRRA) gave the following presentation on behalf of those downstream Commissioners who have been involved in the WCM Update discussions with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and others.

The presentation sets out evidence that neither the DWR nor the USACE are able to fulfill their commitments to 'make safety to top priority' in the WCM Updates because, it seems, of a policy to respect the rules established during the financing of the Dam 60 years ago. It is unclear who decided to adopt this policy.

In the last decade, weather forecasting has immeasurably improved and a Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) study by a team of experts has developed algorithms allowing reservoir operations to use forecasts to maximize the water stored while maintaining an agreed level of risk.

Common sense suggests that the Oroville Reservoir should be operated taking full use of the science, the value of which should not be limited by archaic rules which do not systematically balance water delivery with safety. But this is what the preliminary WCM Update proposes.

Following these rules in the past has led to major floods or risk of downstream inundation every 15 year or so. Other dams do not have the same history.

Since the rules were established, they have been modified by a Wetness Index so that more water can be stored during periods of low precipitation but no adjustment was made during period of high precipitation or for snow pack. So, the principle of adjusting the rules has been established. Not making proper adjustment for snow melt has been a major factor in past floods.

The WCM Update will control the reservoir operation for decades. Now is the time to move towards adopting modern science to offer more water at lower risk. It may be decades before there is another opportunity.

The FRRRA with its allies will continue to do all it can to achieve this result.