

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

Updated 8/5/26

Tuesday, October 6, 2026	
Time	Event
8:00-8:30 am	Continental Breakfast
8:30-10:00 am	Annual Dam Inspection Techniques: "Avoiding Operational Excitement" through Proactive Observation & Documentation <i>Presenter: Cole Peebles, PE</i> Five Year Inspections - Cooney Dam <i>Presenters: Josh Gilstrap, PE & Peri Turk, PE</i>
10:00-10:30 am	Load Buses
10:30-11:30 am	Travel to Cooney Dam
11:30-12:00 pm	Lunch onsite
12:00-3:00 pm	Dam Inspection Training -- Cooney Dam 1. Seepage: The Silent Indicator 2. Structural Integrity: Cracks and Movement 3. Mechanical & Spillway Readiness 4. The "Lived Experience" of Dam Vegetation 5. 'That Looks Different': Baseline Documentation as a Shield <i>Presenter: Cole Peebles, PE & Josh Gilstrap, PE</i>
3:00-4:00 pm	Travel from Cooney Dam to Billings Hotel & Convention Center
5:30-6:30 pm	Social Hour
6:30-8:00 pm	Prime Rib Dinner <i>Included with registration for attendees. Guests may attend for additional cost.</i>

Wednesday, October 7, 2026	
Time	Event
8:00 am	Introduction & Welcome <i>Presenter: Jeremiah Theys, Great West Engineering - MADCS President</i>
8:10-9:30 am	Dam Safety Update <i>Presenter: Brent Zundel, DNRC Dam Safety Program</i>
	Montana DNRC Dam Safety: Hazard Classification Technical Guidance Update <i>Presenters: Abby Repko, GFT & Brent Zundel, DNRC Dam Safety Program</i> DNRC Dam Safety provides guidance for determining hazard classification in <i>Technical Note 6: Downstream Hazard Classification Procedures for Montana Dams</i> . The updated Technical Note 6 outlines the regulatory requirements for determining

	hazard classification, guidance for using two-dimensional hydraulic models to conduct a hazard classification, and tips for creating dam breach models with the USACE's Dam Screening Tool (DST) web application. Updates to Montana's Operations and Maintenance Manual Guidelines and Template <i>Presenters: Karl Kingery, Hydrometrics & Brent Zundel, DNRC Dam Safety Program</i> The State of Montana's Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Manuals guidelines and templates were updated in early 2026. These guidelines and templates have recently been posted to the Montana DNRC Dam Safety Program's website and are currently available for dam owners to use when making updates to their dam's O&M Manual as part of the 5-year permit renewal process. This presentation will discuss the updates made, the reasons for the changes, and will run through a brief example of the development of an O&M Manual using the new guidelines and template. When LOL Means Loss of Life: Updating Montana's Dam Failure LOL Estimation Practices <i>Presenter: Andrew Johnson, DOWL</i> Montana's spillway capacity standards are risk-based, meaning that as the potential for loss of life due to a dam failure increases, the inflow design flood increases. The Montana DNRC Dam Safety Technical Note 2 (TN2) provides guidance for estimating the potential loss of life downstream of Montana high-hazard dams. DOWL engineers partnered with Jason Needham of HDR – one of the architects of LifeSim and the DST – to update TN2. This presentation will highlight the methodology differences between RCEM and LifeSim and provide an overview of the TN2 changes coming in the fall of 2026.
9:30-10:00 am	Morning Break - Vendor Area
10:00-10:30 am	What is the Montana State Water Project? An Introduction to the Rock Creek Project <i>Presenter: Jillian Hendrix, DNRC State Water Projects Bureau</i> This presentation discusses the history of just one of the projects owned and operated by the State Water Projects Bureau of the DNRC. Starting with the formation of the State Water Conservation Board in the 1930s, (the predecessor of State Water Projects Bureau), this presentation will go through all the steps that led to construction and ultimately the formation of the Rock Creek Project which includes Cooney and Glacier Lake dams and reservoirs in Carbon County. Milestones and lesser-known components of State Water Project Management will be discussed.
10:30-11:00 am	30 Years Later: A Review of the East Fork Dam Incident <i>Jessica Rudd, HDR</i> In June 1996, a volunteer campground host for the U.S. Forest Service observed unusual conditions at the dam, including cloudy seepage on the downstream slope. Responders quickly concluded that the seepage threatened embankment stability, prompting DNRC to initiate controlled reservoir drawdown while continuously monitoring the dam. On July 4, a sinkhole formed above an existing drain above the location of the initial seepage, triggering evacuation of downstream residents and recreationists. This presentation will describe the 1996 East Fork Dam incident through firsthand accounts, contributing to the ASDSO Dam Incident Database and supporting the Decade Dam Failures series.
11:00-11:30 am	Rehabilitation of the East Fork of the Rock Creek Dam <i>Presenter: Troy Benn, DNRC State Water Projects</i> East Fork of Rock Creek Dam needed significant rehabilitation to extend its safe operation. Built in 1938, the dam's components suffered from age and outdated design like other Montana storage facilities. This presentation reviews the entire rehabilitation process from feasibility study and environmental permitting through design and construction. Attendees will gain valuable insight useful when faced with large-scale infrastructure rehabilitation projects.

11:30 am -12:30 pm	Lunch - Vendor Area
12:30-1:30 pm	Ask an Engineer/Dam Owner Discussion <i>Panelists: Benjamin J Cope, Morrison-Maierle; Jim Keenan, Butte-Silver Bow; Russ Reed, DOWL; Brent Zundel, DNRC</i> Who do you call if your dam is overtopping in the middle of the night? Let's talk about who's in charge and recent case studies. Why are inspection reports written the way they are and why certain information is required? How do you hire an engineer or scope an engineering project? The panel will discuss important topics facing dam and canal owners and provide an interactive opportunity for your questions to be answered. Come with questions for dam owners, consulting engineers, and regulators.
1:30-2:00 pm	Using Risk Assessments to Support Dam Safety Decision-Making <i>Presenter: Jessica Rudd, HDR</i> This presentation will provide a general overview of dam safety risk assessment practices and their role within modern dam safety programs. The presentation will highlight the benefits of risk-informed approaches for dam owners, regulators, and consultants, including improved communication, enhanced transparency in decision-making, and more effective prioritization of dam safety investments. Practical examples and lessons learned will illustrate how risk assessments can support both site-specific decisions and broader portfolio management objectives.
2:00-2:30 pm	Lessons Learned from EAP Development and TTX Facilitation <i>Presenter: Tim Diedrich, HDR</i> The presenter has developed numerous emergency action plans (EAP) for dam owners and tailings storage facilities throughout the United States and will share some lessons learned based on his experience, and the jurisdictions where he has worked. This presentation will elaborate on key individuals/agencies to include in your emergency action plan and associated notification flowcharts, and will provide important lessons learned from emergency action plans and tabletop exercises completed.
2:30-3:00 pm	Afternoon Break - Vendor Area
3:00-3:30 pm	Automated Irrigation Control <i>Presenters: Pete Parsons/Dennis Burgard, M.E.T.</i> By deploying tailored SCADA and telemetry systems, Helena-based MET automates real-time stage and flow monitoring across dams, headgates, and canal networks. Continuous, remote data eliminates measurement lag and sensor errors, equipping water managers with the data needed to confidently streamline water administration and eliminate delivery disputes. In this presentation, MET will share two to three discrete irrigation challenges and showcase real-world SCADA implementations that helped operators successfully overcome them.
3:30-4:00 pm	Grant Funding: Availability and Requirements <i>Presenter: Autumn Bahr, CARDD</i> Multiple funding opportunities are available to dam and canal owner/operators from the Conservation and Resource Development Division of the DNRC. This session will provide an overview of the funding, requirements, and timelines of availability. The new Dam Inspection Assistance Grant Program will be highlighted.
4:00 pm	Closing Remarks and MADCS Business (Board Member/Officer Positions)/Adjournment <i>Presenter: Jeremiah Theys - MADCS President</i>