Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Bureau of Reclamation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, both of the U. S. Department of the Interior, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to further the cause of dam safety. The purpose of the memorandum, according to Commissioner of Reclamation R. Keith Higginson, is to identify those areas where Reclamation can provide technical expertise to assist BIA in developing formalized program for dam safety.

The memorandum points out that the BIA will retain ownership of its darns and continue to be responsible for their safety. The responsibility for correcting any safety problems will also be that of the BIA.

Services to be provided by Reclamation upon request would include:

- Technical expertise for review of existing structures including studies of hydrology, hydraulics, geology, seismology, seepage, inundation maps and structural stability.
- Technical expertise to perform inspections of dams with recommendations for corrective work if necessary.
- Technical training to establish a program for periodic surveillance.
- Recommendations for establishing emergency preparedness plans, installing monitoring instruments, developing communication and warning systems.

Similar Memorandums of Understanding between the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service respectively, are currently under consideration.