



# Bureau of Indian Affairs

Western Nevada Agency

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## Weber Dam Response

### Key Messages June 26, 2023

The BIA is closely monitoring the Walker River stream flows and conducting daily visible inspections of Weber Dam.

An inspection of the Dam in May 2023 revealed open and offset joints between the Dam’s service spillway slabs and sediment in the service spillway drains, early indications the soil under the service spillway chute may be experiencing erosion.

- The spillway is functioning normally.
- Out of an abundance of caution, engineers and scientists from [BIA’s Safety of Dam’s Program](#) are taking proactive measures to provide for public safety and to protect the structural integrity of the Weber Dam facility.
- Walker River is at Flood Stage. Hydrologists predict the reservoir elevation to remain **below** the emergency spillway crest (between 4204.9’ and 4206.6’) through July 14.

On May 17th, the BIA Superintendent, Western Nevada Agency in Carson City, Nevada declared a Level 1 Response at Weber Dam.

- A Level 1 Response indicates an unusual situation at the Dam that triggers increased levels of monitoring.
- [DOWL](#), an engineering, planning, surveying, and Professional Services Firm with an office in Reno, Nevada is providing 24/7 monitoring services of the facility.

Response Level	Activity at Dam to Trigger Response Level Activation	BIA Response Activities	Community Action
<b>Level 1 (Ready)</b>  Indicates an unusual situation that triggers increased levels of monitoring.	An inspection of the Dam in May 2023 revealed open and offset joints between the Dam’s service spillway slabs and sediment in the service spillway drains, early indications the soil under the service spillway chute may be experiencing erosion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct 24/7 monitoring services of the facility.</li> <li>• Mobilize rock riprap, gravel, and construction equipment to the Dam.</li> <li>• Proactively remove Weber Dam’s fuse plug.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know your flood risk.</li> <li>• Take a household inventory of valuables.</li> <li>• Store important documents.</li> <li>• Pay attention to authorities and safety officials and where to find official information.</li> </ul>

Due to the open and offset joints between the Dam’s service spillway slabs and sediment in the service spillway drains that was also detected in the May inspection, BIA is taking additional precautionary measures.

- BIA is proactively removing the Dam’s fuse plug, a rock embankment feature of the emergency spillway that is intended to wash out in a predictable manner to lower the water elevation of the reservoir should it exceed its holding capacity.
  - Removing the fuse plug should minimize downstream flows in the event the service spillway becomes unusable.
  - Removing the fuse plug reduces the worst case downstream flood potential scenario by 50%.
- BIA is proactively moving rock riprap, gravel, and construction equipment to the site in the event action needs to be taken to slow erosion of the service spillway chute foundation.

- On June 15, BIA awarded a contract to Chiricahua Procurement LLC, a company based in Albuquerque, NM to provide heavy equipment, rock, and gravel to Weber Dam.
- The federal government does not have a contract relationship with subcontractors, only the parent company BIA contracts with. If you have questions relating to work at Weber Dam, please contact Walker River Paiute Tribe's TERO office at PH: 775-773-2306 x2170 or email [tero@wrpt.org](mailto:tero@wrpt.org)
- A BIA Civil Engineer (Construction Specialist) with the Division of Water and Power - Safety of Dams Branch will oversee the removal of the fuse plug.

Chiricahua Procurement LLC began mobilizing equipment and supplies to the site June 21.

**June 21:**

- Project manager and Regional Safety of Dams arrived at the Weber Dam site and met with Chiricahua Procurement representatives. Upon arrival, the contractor was in process of delivering 25 tons of ~36" rip rap, staging it by the service spillway.

**June 22:**

- Additional rip rap delivered. By day's end, approximately 530 tons of the 600 ton order was on site. A Komatsu Dozer was also brought to the site. Crossing over the fuse plug, it will stage downstream of the fuse plug.

**June 23:**

- Contractors worked on the removal of the fuse plug. This was done by a Caterpillar 320 excavator that dug a cutoff trench 8 feet deep and 6 feet wide downstream of the fuse plug which rock and soil from the fuse plug was then moved into.
  - Placing rip rap into trenches is done to create an engineering feature called an erosion cutoff. These are installed as a safety feature to help slow erosion of the emergency spillway should it become active.
- The remaining rip rap and approximately 60 tons of gravel were delivered to the site.

**June 24:**

- Contractor mobilized a crane and continued the work necessary to remove the fuse plug. This was done by excavating a second trench approximately five feet wide by four feet deep and backfilling it.
- Using soil that was excavated from the trench, an approximate two foot tall berm was created along the fish passage channel to assist with directing water flow should the emergency spillway operate. The contractor then leveled approximately 90% of the fuse plug using the bulldozer

**June 25:**

- Completed work necessary to remove the fuse plug.
- A small drainage channel located along the fence in the service spillway was found and filled. This will help prevent the concentration of erosion near the spillway.
- A Dozer built a level pad near the service spillway where a crane will be prepositioned for use should material need to be placed into spillway chute.
- 50 super sacks with sand spoils from the previous trenching using the excavator was filled and placed near the spillway.
  - In total, there will be 100 super sacks prepositioned near the spillway in the event the crane needs to move them quickly into the service spillway.

**June 26:**

- Complete filling the remaining 50 super sacks with sand spoils, transport them to the service spillway for staging.

- Personnel will refuel all machines for staging and perform minor grading in the emergency spillway to smooth the channel of the emergency spillway.