



## Answering the Most Important Question of 2017

One day, Thursday, April 6

From the agricultural practices that led to the "Dustbowl" of the 1930s to the onset of the environmental movement in the 1970s and since, various facets of the U.S. and the global economy have struggled to incorporate "environmentally sustainable" practices in their operations. Even Wall Street, as an expression of its understanding of the power of the term, "environmentally sustainable," started offering "sustainable" investment strategies to consumers.

***Christopher Gleadle has written in Environmental Leader, "...there has been a dislocation of trust between companies and the global communities they serve. Emerging from the recession, any company wanting to repair such dislocation has used sustainability as the model to achieve best results.***

***Whether it is customers companies want to engage, or investors through the reduction of risk, or employees to improve team cohesion, drive innovation and attract the best talent from the ascendant eco-boomers, sustainability connects all the interdependent functional areas in a more holistic manner, driving down costs and delivering on-going value through the introduction of a continuous cycle of improvement.***

***Companies showing a lack of understanding as to the business model and value opportunities of sustainability run the high risk of stunted growth and make the course of any economic upturn more treacherous."***

Every issue that USSD members face today from the media to policy-makers to the general public is tied directly to the question of the environmental sustainability of the projects we create or operate. There is no more important question to address and the very future of our work depends on how we approach the answer.

To dam and levee professionals this is a complex question without a short, easily defined answer. To those who operate in the media and public affairs or political realm, the answer is either a simple Yes, or No - it either is or isn't. How do we bridge the gap between engineering reality and communications necessity?

### ***How do we define an environmentally sustainable project?***

Numerous definitions of “sustainability” exist, which results in varying degrees of understanding what sustainability is in the context of dams and levees as sustainable water resource systems. Owners, agencies, NGOs, and project stakeholders must understand the concept of environmental, social, and economic sustainability in order to better collaborate and advocate for specific projects. This workshop has four primary purposes:

1. Involve workshop participants in defining “environmentally sustainable;”
2. Contribute to our understanding of what we consider "environmentally sustainable" projects to be, and what others believe them not to be and why;
3. Learn about existing environmentally sustainable projects through case studies;
4. Advance our understanding about **advocating** for sustainable projects; **educating** stakeholders on how to develop and support sustainable projects; **collaborating** with other entities, including NGOs to advance the concept and practice of sustainable development; and **cultivating** best practices through a discussion of case studies in sustainability;

- Engineers live in a world of documents in the dozens and hundreds of pages of material. Communications live in the world of Twitter where one expresses a thought in 140 characters. Learn how we bring the two together.
- Who is our audience? The media, public policy officials, the general public, educators K-12, students. If the average person interacting with media today has an attention span of eight [8] seconds, gain the skill to communicate important information easily, quickly and with maximum effect in eight [8] seconds.
- Everything USSD does is tied directly to defining "environmentally sustainable." Every media story about dams and levees carries questions or concerns about what is, or is not, perceived as environmentally sustainable.
- DON'T BURY THE LEDE! What is most important to communicate first, within eight [8] seconds, and get attention to our side of the story.
- Introduction to the tools USSD will put in your hands that will develop a powerful, nationwide grassroots campaign to communicate the value of the environmentally sustainable water projects we bring to the nation and the value of dams and levees to society.

Participants will enjoy an interactive and engaging workshop designed to involve you in defining environmental sustainability. Participants will also hear different perspectives on environmental sustainability from federal agencies, NGOs, and owner/operators. Finally, participants will be exposed to case studies. The morning part of the program focuses on # 1, 2 and 3 of the purposes outlined above. The afternoon part of the session focuses on #4.

## **The Schedule**

### ***Morning Agenda – 3.5 hours***

8.30am – Workshop Opening – Overview of the workshop and objectives, Kelly R. Schaeffer, Senior Regulatory Advisor, Kleinschmidt Associates

8:45 AM – Moderated Panel (2 hours and 5 min)

Kelly R. Schaeffer - Introductions and Overview – 5-10 min

Speaker 1 – Tim Randall, Manager, Sedimentation and River Hydraulics Group at Bureau of Reclamation – 20 min

Speaker 2 – Tara Mobley – The Nature Conservancy – 20 min

### ***AM Break – 15 min***

Speaker 3 – Dan Wade – San Francisco Public Utilities Commission - 20 min

Speaker 4 – Nicholas Agnoli, P.E, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (pending approval from FERC) – 20 min

Speaker 5 – (TBA)

11.40am – 12.00pm Audience Questions and Answers

12.00pm - 1.00pm Lunch

### ***Afternoon Agenda – 3.5 hours - Now That We've Defined It, Can We Be Heard By Communicating It?***

Gene Guilford, Executive Director, USSD and Kelly R. Schaeffer, Kleinschmidt Associates - Overview – 5-10 min

1.00pm to 4.30pm Audience breaks up into groups of six to eight each, separate tables with easels, pads, and markers for communications exercises. Each group appoints a spokesperson to share the results of the exercise[s] done in their group.

**Exercise One.** Having selected one example from the panel presentations in the morning session, we have been told that a CNN news crew is in the front lobby of the hotel and wants to give us 20 seconds of airtime within which we need to describe an environmentally sustainable dam or levee project in the context of the one example used from the morning. Each group needs to write the 20-second script [35 words] for Gene to use with the news crew. You have 15 minutes to write the script, then each group posts and reports its results.

**Exercise Two.** Having selected one example from the panel presentations in the morning session, we need to post a Tweet in the USSD Twitter account that, within 140 characters, describes an environmentally sustainable dam or levee project in the context of the one example used from the morning. Each group needs to write a 140 character tweet [without a link to other material]. You have 15 minutes to write the tweet, then each group posts and reports its results.

***PM Break – 15 min***

**Exercise Three.** We have been invited to present testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Committee on the subject of what environmentally sustainable dam or levee projects are, and how policy makers should shape legislation providing direction to Executive Branch agencies and the private sector for how to incorporate best practices that lead to environmentally sustainable dam and levee projects. We have three [3] minutes for introductory remarks to the committee, or about 390 words. Each group needs to write the 390 words and be prepared to deliver the introductory remarks for critique by the other groups. You have 20 minutes to write the 390 words and be prepared to deliver the presentation to the other groups. The groups will rank order the quality of the other presentations as we work toward selecting what we collectively believe is the best three [3] minute presentation of this issue.

**4.30pm** Wrap-Up and Take-Away Evaluation.

Within this one day of presentations and exercises, we will have brought to light just how important it is to define what "environmentally sustainable" means, and how challenging it is to communicate our belief of how to best define and describe it across three different communications media.

As we strive to make the world a better place in which to live and bring to the country our vision of how to best accomplish that, what we will do today sets the stage for our communications to work from this day forward.

Total Classroom Hours: 6.5