

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 26, 2005
TO: ASDSO Board of Directors
FROM: Guy Paul
SUBJECT: Certification For Dam Safety Professionals

At the last Board of Directors meeting held in June in San Francisco, I gave an update on my research regarding the possibility of developing a certification program for dam safety professionals. This memo documents that report and provides closure to my efforts.

My initial report on this issue, presented at the Board of Directors meeting held in April in Washington, D.C., basically had a positive tone with a recommendation to pursue researching the concept. Subsequent to that report, however, the following events resulted in additional key pieces of information on the certification concept:

1. I presented this issue at the Western Regional Caucus held in Santa Fe, New Mexico in late April. In the course of the resulting discussion, strong resistance against the concept was voiced by several of the representatives, and there was a notable lack of strong support in favor of the concept. I gauged the overall reaction to the concept to be decidedly negative.
2. Just prior to the June Board of Directors meeting, I was made aware of a certification recently initiated by the American Academy of Water Resources Engineers (AAWRE). My research indicates that this certification actually comes through ASCE. The certification page (<http://www.asce.org/professional/certification/>) of the ASCE website states, in part, the following:

“ASCE has introduced voluntary, post-licensure, specialty certification with the creation of The American Academy of Water Resources Engineers (AAWRE). The Diplomate, Water Resources Engineer credential is a voluntary, post-licensure, specialty certification, that provides recognition of advanced expertise in a technical specialty, superior experience, strong professional ethics and a commitment to life-long learning and continuing professional development.”

At this first level of review, it would appear that this certification is nearly a duplicate to what has been envisioned for the dam safety community.

3. At the Board of Directors meeting held in June in San Francisco, Dan Marks was asked if he had a feel for how AMAC membership might weigh in on the matter. He indicated that AMAC members have discussed the issued - some were for it and some against. He guessed that, overall, the consensus seemed equally divided.

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Conclusion

The conclusion to be drawn from all the information at hand at this time is that there is no need to pursue the concept of certification for dam safety engineers any further. The primary reason being that the concept lacks strong, broad-based support within ASDSO and the dam safety community. The secondary reason is that any new certification specific to dam safety would overlap and perhaps unfavorably compete with the certification for water resource engineers currently provided through ASCE.

With the presentation of this memo, then, my efforts on this issue will cease and the matter can be considered closed.