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Book Review
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Book review

Reservoir Management

A. Pepper (ed.), ICE Publishing, London, UK, 2019, ISBN: 9780727763570, £100·00, www.icebookshop.com/Products/Reservoir-Management.aspx

What an excellent book. I decided on a different approach with my review of this book. I passed it to my graduate engineer Sam, who is undertaking a project on reservoirs in the Pennines. I thought this would be an excellent opportunity to widen and broaden his knowledge. This proved to be a positive experience which initiated some informed discussions. A good start.

This is an appropriate time for this book too. There have been a couple of major dam stories in the press, which has highlighted very publically the importance of this subject, and most particularly the importance of all who are involved to have both a general and specific understanding of the structures and risks involved. So often, reservoirs are seen by the public as 'gentle giants', more recognised for their recreational benefits than their primary purpose. The public have a low recognition of the potential dangers that they represent. The public is also unaware of the significant efforts that are rightly required by owners and maintainers to preserve public safety. Some of the reservoirs the Act includes, will not actually be recognised as a reservoir by the public, and the book refers to the temporary reservoirs required for flood risk management, there are a growing number of these. This book is very clear and explains in great detail the process of reservoir management and the law related to reservoirs. It also then details the components of reservoirs and their purpose. The principles of design are also included in the context of understanding the limiting factors. All essential to understanding the dangers associated with this important subject area. I was encouraged by the clear and common sense approach to explaining the subject, in simple language, to explain complex concepts. The glossary at the front was also helpful to professionals achieving a good common understanding. I remember, when I previously worked with reservoirs there was a different terminology in each water company. I called a structure a 'reclodge' while it is now much more sensibly called a sedimentation structure. It is vital for all professionals involved in reservoir management to use clear and commonly understood language, and this book goes a long way to achieving this in an unfussy way.

As the title suggests it then proceeds to detail the processes to manage these reservoirs, to preserve the structure and ensure that safety is maintained. They correctly observe that in the UK today, the most likely risk to safety is that of drowning in hot weather, with people swimming for recreation, not recognising the risks. We should always be aware that while uncommon, when reservoirs physically fail they present a serious risk to life, so a careful scrutiny of this book is essential for all whether directly involved in the design and management of reservoirs or of funding and resourcing schemes. We should approach all reservoir projects with a professionally knowledgeable mindset. This book provides the ideal level of information to understand the situation and also explain this appropriately to technical colleagues and in plain English.

I leave the final word to Sam, 'Can I have it back please! There are a few more things I would like to check up on'. In reality there is currently a small queue in the office seeking to be allowed to read this book, once it was noticed sitting on my desk it certainly generated a high level of interest. A worthwhile book to read and to read again for owners, engineers, and maintenance providers, for those who are developing and for experienced engineers.

Veronica Flint Williams