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## **Another View: Where is the justification for Centennial Dam?**

By: Jack Sanchez

Centennial Dam does not appear to be carefully planned or thought through by the leadership of NID, the public agency desiring to build this unneeded dam in this Age of Dam Removal.

NID has had public meetings but none in Placer County and much of the information given to the public is inconsistent. At the early meetings, NID said the dam would be paid for by funds brought in by its hydropower plant. In the later meetings a hydroelectric plant was omitted probably because NID is in the process of applying for a renewal of its FERC relicensing which would provide it with up to fifty years of being allowed to sell the peoples' water to its paying customers. If a hydroelectric plant is included in the dam, then FERC is involved. That is one of the many inconsistencies but space precludes describing others, though there are many.

The dam would be the fourth dam on the Bear River which already has three existing dams: Rollins, Combie, and Camp Far West. Since the Bear shares a small portion of the waters gathered by the Yuba and American Rivers, its gathering on the crest of the Sierra is much smaller than that of its sister rivers. Native Americans called the Bear River the "Sleeping River" because of its gentle nature created by its limited water supply. Many experts believe there is simply not enough water in Bear River to fill another dam.

If that is so, the Centennial would basically be largely a dam with muddy shorelines exposed for most of the year with little water storage, which is the main reason put forth for building this dam. The dam would create an eyesore in what is now a rather pristine reach of the Bear River and would destroy Colfax Campground, a major recreation facility for that area.

Not only would the dam destroy beautiful woodlands, but many homeowners would lose their homes and property, probably through eminent domain though NID has said most property owners will be willing sellers. The current discernible numbers are 25 homes and 120 private property parcels would be taken and be underwater. When NID was asked to provide a list of properties inundated by the dam, no list was forthcoming. Would anyone willingly sell his home and property to build a dam that is controversial at best? In addition, Dog Bar and Taylor Crossings of the Bear would no longer exist. Nevada County traffic would need to be re-routed through Meadow Vista, adding to its congestion.

To create room for the dam's hypothetical water storage, a bath tub ring would be created for the water storage area which in itself would destroy thousands of acres of prime mixed oak woodlands with fish and wildlife habitat in addition to loss of the recreation areas.

Camp Far West Dam is owned by South Sutter Water District (SSWD) and without this new Centennial Dam, it is rarely full of water. Centennial Dam would put downstream water users at risk. No thought so far has been given to exploring an agreement between NID and SSWD to fill Camp Far West without building a questionable new dam.

Nothing has been planned for Centennial Dam to increase ground water storage or the negative effects on downstream waterways and users and the Sacramento River Delta. These questions should be asked and answered by NID before it is allowed to continue with Centennial Dam. Nothing so far has definitively been put forth to support the building of this dam.

The main question to ask is why taxpayers and rate payers must pay over \$300 million for a dam which has, so far, no clearly stated way to pay for it and no clearly articulated reason for building it.

The planning is lacking, with no clear purpose and no clearly stated reason for building this Centennial Dam. Everyone should have clear answers to these questions before this dam even reaches the planning stage.

Ask why?

Jack Sanchez of Auburn is a retired high school teacher and coach.