

## **Article for BDS Monthly newsletter (11/11/25)**

### **From Reservoir Safety Reform Programme**

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#### **The role of Small-scale Reservoir Owners in Reservoir Safety Reform**

##### **Why the Small-scale Reservoir Owners Group was set up - and why you should get involved**

Many small-scale reservoir owners are part of the agricultural sector, which has been facing significant challenges - from changes in legislation to concerns about feed shortages this season. However, we recognise that small-scale reservoir ownership and management spans a range of sectors and purposes, and these pressures highlight the broader need to ensure all owners' voices are heard.

The Small-scale Reservoir Owners Group was created to support active involvement in Reservoir Safety Reform, provide a space for shared concerns, and help shape future policy and practice. Whether your reservoir supports farming or other uses, your input is vital.

##### **Small-scale Reservoir Owner Volunteer Group (SROG)**

The Small-scale Reservoir Owner (SRO) volunteer group was established in September 2024 following a sector-wide survey, ensuring that the voices of individual reservoir owners are heard as part of the ongoing updating and modernising of the Reservoir Safety Reforms. Over the past year, the group has actively contributed to shaping policy and practice through a series of targeted workshops.

#### **Workshop Highlights**

##### **Learning Lessons from Incidents – January 2025**

Jointly delivered by the Environment Agency (England) and Natural Resources Wales (Wales), this workshop explored key learnings from past reservoir incidents. It generated rich discussions and valuable insights that contributed to the development of the [Reservoir Incidents Knowledge Base \(RIKbase\)](#)

##### **Reservoir Safety Management Plans (RSMPs) Workshops – March 2025**

Two workshops focused on the development of RSMP, facilitated by Mott MacDonald on behalf of the joint England and Wales Reservoir Safety Reform Programme. These sessions saw strong engagement and covered key topics including:

- Introduction to RSMPs
- Registered Information
- History Log
- Operation and Maintenance Plan
- Surveillance Plan
- Monitoring Plan
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Owner Competency
- The Reservoir Safety Case

Feedback from these sessions is helping shape future policy and guidance.

##### **Access to Panel Engineers Workstream – June 2025**

This group is exploring access to Panel Engineer services for single reservoir owners - a critical issue identified in the Independent Reservoir Safety Review Report. Led collaboratively by Defra, the Environment Agency, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales, this workstream aims to improve the future supply of panel engineers across the UK.

## **Strengthening Representation**

In October 2025, six Small-scale Reservoir Owner (SRO) representatives were appointed to participate in higher-level engagement meetings. These individuals represent the broader SRO community, including the volunteer group, ensuring that the perspectives and experiences of single reservoir owners are considered in strategic discussions.

## **Get Involved**

We're proud of the progress made by our Small-scale Reservoir Owner (SRO) volunteer group, which has helped shape key areas of reservoir safety reform through a series of successful workshops.

If you're a single reservoir owner or involved in small-scale reservoir management and want to have your voice heard, we'd love for you to join us by completing the [Get Involved – SRO Volunteer Group](#) form.

By registering your interest, you'll be added to our SRO volunteer database and invited to future workshops and engagement opportunities. You'll also have the chance to share your experiences with your representative, who will raise your views at High-Level Engagement Group (HLEG) meetings - helping influence national policy.

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