USU Students Win First ASDSO Student Dam Model Competition

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A rendering of the model design with water.

February 4, 2020- USU students Kyler Olsen, Braiden Amata, Jack Tousley, Kathryn Margetts, and their Technical Advisor Dr. Brian Crookston recently won the ASDSO’s first student dam model competition.

The Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) announced their first student dam model competition earlier this year, with the invitation for students to submit their plans for a table-top dam model. The selection criteria was based on the completeness of the application, unique aspects of the model, technical merit, budget and schedule, and their plan for the use of the model.

The USU student group proposed a tabletop model that would provide a hands-on education tool that is focused on public safety at run-of-river dams. The team developed their model with the knowledge that many public safety incidents happen each year at dams and other hydraulics structures, with the majority of reported injuries happening in river settings. Many of these incidents occur because of lack of public knowledge about hydraulic structures and the associated dangers. Once completed, the team plans to display their interactive model in local libraries and public schools to help educate others about hydraulic structure terminology, purpose, benefits, and dangers.

The model will include:

• A demonstration of the dangerous hydraulic roller and potential of entrapment and drowning
• The need for signage and lighted buoys upstream and downstream of the structure

Members of ASDSO’s Student Outreach Committee selected the team from USU based on both the design of the model and how the model would be used to further dam safety and community outreach.

The team of students will now receive funding to build the table-top model on the schedule they provided. The final model will be displayed at Dam Safety 2020. They will also receive complimentary travel and accommodations for up to 2 team members at the upcoming ASDSO Regional Conference, and the chance to present their model as a “lightning talk” at the conference.

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