

Maintenance

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Project Title:
Evaluation of Unmanned Surface
Vessel-Based Topographic and
Bathymetric Survey System in Flood
Conditions

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Evaluation of Unmanned Surface Vessel-Based Topographic and Bathymetric Survey System in Flood Conditions

Investigate the use of unmanned survey system for use in hydraulic studies.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

The California Department of Transportation (DOT) (Caltrans) conducts topographical and bathymetric surveys vital for modeling channel water flow and early detection of bridge scour. Deep water surveys can be especially hazardous under wind and flood conditions such as fast flowing currents, submerged and unobservable debris, blockades, sensitive habitats and the potential of getting stuck on mud.

A small Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) platform with integrated topographic and bathymetric mapping sensors will enable surveys to be conducted in challenging environments such as high-flow flood conditions and shallow water where using a manned boat is unsafe.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

A research team specializing in technologies such as laser scanning, multi-beam echosounder (MBES), and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), will develop a teleoperated unmanned surface vehicle (USV) with topographic and bathymetric sensing system.

WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The goal is to improve efficiency and safety by developing a fully integrated bathymetric mapping system on a USV that can be deployed rapidly and safely in shallow and deep water conditions.



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WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

The USV mapping system will enable Caltrans to perform early detection and identification of bridge scour. It will improve the safety of the traveling public, reduce the hazards and exposure of sending manned boats and/or divers into swiftly flowing water.

WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

The project started with the Kick-off meeting on January 20, 2022.

The researchers have begun conducting the feasibility study on the requirements of a USV operated in flood condition. These include power, control, and hardware requirements as well as the requirements of remote operation.

Next steps will include the findings and understandings of literature review, exploration of available vendors and their products.

A discussion will be conducted with project panel in the application of USVs in hydrographic survey tasks.