

Lake McClure Dam Update

The following questions and answers are intended to give Walnut Mtn Property Owners information regarding the status of Lake McClure Dam, the actions taken to date, and the possible actions going forward.

Q. What is happening at Lake McClure and its Dam?

A. Everyone, including both internal and external Professional Engineers, our Maintenance Crew and laymen (like so many of us), are in agreement that there is a leak in the lake's drainage system, causing the level of the lake to decrease daily. The drainage system is 40-50 years old and, to our knowledge, it has never been maintained nor used since its original installation.

Q. How long has Lake McClure had a leak in its drainage system?

A. It is felt that Lake McClure may have been leaking for quite some time but that it was not noticed because Little Turniptown Creek, which flows into the lake, has had a sufficient flow of water into the lake to offset any leak. The dry conditions that we have experienced as of late, (which prompted the GA EPD to issue a Level 1 Drought Declaration for N GA and most of the state) has impacted the flow of water into the lake; therefore, the loss of water has become significantly more noticeable.

Q. What has been done about the leak leading to the loss of water in the lake?

A. There has been no attempt to try to repair the leak; any repair would most likely require us to drain the lake dry. In addition to frequent visual checks of the lake and the drainage flow, there have been frequent examinations of the dam itself to determine that the leak is not adversely affecting the dam.

The Board has spoken to, requested, and received a Proposal from Golder Assoc. (the co. used on the Lake Dakwa project). That Proposal outlines the objective of identifying the best way to repair the principal spillway and would evaluate future options for compliance with the Rules for Dam Safety to support budgeting for modifications that need to occur if the dam is reclassified as a Category 1 dam.

Golder's Chief Engineer met with the Program Mgr of GA Safe Dams, who stated that it is likely that Lake McClure Dam will be reclassified from a Category 2 to a Category 1. The Board has also spoken to GA Safe Dams re: the same subject as well as other topics, such as the significance of the downstream land from Lake McClure.

Q. What is the significance of the Lake McClure Dam being reclassified from a Category 2 to a Category 1?

A. A Category 2 dam is one that would not cause a probable loss of life if the dam were to fail, while a Category 1 dam would result in a probable loss of life if the dam were to fail. The significance of downstream land and structures is critical and that determination will be made by GA Safe Dams.

Q. What else do we know?

A. We know that Gilmer County's dams are slated to be evaluated in the next few months, but we do not know exactly when the Lake McClure Dam will be evaluated in that timeframe. The Program Mgr. of GA Safe Dams, said that the law requires that the classification of Category 2 dams be evaluated once every five years. Our dam has been on that list since 2008, one of 469 dams (due to staffing, the Program is a bit behind). We don't know how many of the dams are in Gilmer County and we don't know where our dam ranks on the Gilmer County list. Another kind of study was mentioned that we could pay for, but it would be doing their work, and the total timeframe for the study would probably equal 5-6 months; GA Safe Dams may come and perform its evaluation in that timeframe and we must comply with their evaluation.

Another External Engineer is paying a courtesy visit to our lake and dam the second week of Oct. to share his "opinion." The actual date has not been set, but the outcome will be reported to the Property Owners as will any other additional information we will have gained between now and then.

In summary, we think it is safe to say that our current position is to let nature take its course. We will also proceed under the direction of GA Safe Dams. By the way, it sure would be nice if we were to get some rain!

Thank you for your patience!