

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

This page introduces questions and answers about the Lake Conestee Site and Dam, and the potential consequences of a dam failure. These FAQs are organized by topic.

When the Lake Conestee Dam Fails,

Topic No 1: What is in Lake Conestee, and how might it impact Lake Greenwood ?

Topic No.2: What about Flooding and Flood Damage ?

Topic No.3: What could happen downstream in the Reedy River, Boyd’s Mill Pond, and the Reedy Arm of Lake Greenwood ?

Topic No.4: What is the solution for containing f the hazardous contaminants trapped behind the old dam ?

Topic No.5: What might the economic impacts be for communities along the river, around Boyd’s Mill Pond, and Lake Greenwood, and the region ?

Topic No.6: What do we know about the “forever chemicals” (PFAS) in Lake Conestee, and the Reedy, and how might they impact the downstream communities ?

Prepared for: **LAKE CONESTEE DAM RESTORATION PROJECT**

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Reference as: LCDRP-FAQs – RRD-10.2, 230322-HRI

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

When the Lake Conestee Dam Fails,

Topic No 2: What is the Threat of Flooding and Flood Damage ?

- Q2.1 A huge flood ?*
- Q2.2 Impacts to Conestee Mill ?*
- Q2.3 Impacts to Conestee Road ?*
- Q2.4 Size of initial release of sediment and
contaminants ?*
- Q2.5 Will the entire LC empty after dam failure ?*
- Q2.6 Can contaminants be stopped once released ?*
- Q2.7 Best way to avoid a toxic catastrophe?*

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FAQ: When the Lake Conestee Dam Fails,

Topic No.2: What is the Threat of Flooding and Flood Damage ?

Q

Question 2.1

Will there be a huge wave of floodwaters that will flow to Lake Greenwood and beyond?

A

NO. The LC reservoir is 95 % filled with sediment, not water. With a dam break, flooding and flood damage would be confined to about the first two miles downstream of the dam. Sediment and contaminants will move downriver.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.2. See Q2.1 – Q2.7.

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Question 2.2

Is there potential for flood damage to Conestee Mill, located immediately downstream of the dam?

A

YES. Some mill buildings were built within the river channel and have suffered flooding numerous times. Those located in the floodway and floodplain would be highly vulnerable to high water levels and possible damage.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.2. See Q2.1 – Q2.7.

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Question 2.3

Is there potential for damage to the Reedy River Bridge at Conestee Road, situated 700 feet downstream of the dam?

A

YES. The bridge was built in 1958 with structural piers in the river channel. Dam debris, woody debris, and a massive mudflow could lodge against the bridge piers posing an immediate danger to public safety. With an actual or imminent threat of dam failure this road should be closed.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.2. See Q2.1 – Q2.7.

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Question 2.4

Will there be an initial release of large quantities of contaminated sediment?

A

Very possible. The size of the initial release will depend on the scale of the dam failure, river flow conditions at that time, and high flow events that may follow. Sediment and pollutants will continue to be scoured from the old lakebed and transported downstream until they are stopped.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.2. See Q2.1 – Q2.7.

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Question 2.5

Will the lake empty and release all of the sediments and toxins immediately, in a short duration event?

A

NO. There will be an initial release. But this flushing of contaminants from the old lake will be an ongoing, long-term, slow-motion disaster with prolonged effects. The migration of contaminants downriver will continue for many years.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.2. See Q2.1 – Q2.7.

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Question 2.6

Can the sediment and the contaminants be stopped once they break through the failed dam?

A

Not likely. Once the pollutants are in the river system it will be extremely difficult and prohibitively costly to stop or remove them.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.2. See Q2.1 – Q2.7.

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Question 2.7

What is the best way to avoid dam failure and the pollution disaster that would follow?

A

BUILD A NEW DAM NOW. What is proposed is a strong and durable dam, built to very conservative standards, one that will be effective in holding back the mass of sediment and contaminants.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.2. See Q2.1 – Q2.7.

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