

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 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 ?

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Reference as: *LCDRP-FAQs – RRD-10.4, 230322-HRI*

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

To avert an environmental catastrophe,

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

Q4.1 Can old dam be fixed ?

Q4.2 Not really just a dam ?

Q4.3 Do we need another engineering study ?

Q4.4 What is the proposed solution ?

Q4.5 Contingencies for problems during construction ?

Q4.6 Why must we take action now ?

Q4.7 What must be done to maintain the new dam, and ensure its performance and security ?

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FAQ: To avert an environmental catastrophe,

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

Q

Question 4.1

Can the existing 131-year old LC Dam be repaired or rehabilitated?

A

NO. Life-extending patches were installed in 2001 and 2012. The structure is in POOR condition, unstable, disintegrating, and extremely vulnerable to failure. It is grossly deficient compared to current design criteria. No amount of money can bring the old dam up to today's standards.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.4. See Q4.1 – Q4.7.

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Question 4.2

What is so special about this dam?

A

WE CANNOT THINK OF THIS AS JUST A DAM. The singular most critical function of the LC Dam today is to contain a massive amount of hazardous substances infused throughout millions of tons of trapped sediment. The old dam was never intended for that purpose.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.4. See Q4.1 – Q4.7.

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Question 4.3

Do we need another engineering study?

A

NO. Six engineering assessments have been conducted since 2001. Five were government funded. Studies in 2008, 2012, 2019, and a re-review in 2022, all reported the only viable solution is a new dam downstream of the old dam. We have the best alternative in hand. We must simply build it. Now!

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.4. See Q4.1 – Q4.7.

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Question 4.4

What is the proposed solution for the new dam?

A

The “RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE” (RA) was selected from ten options. The RA is a new modern cast-in-place concrete dam, downstream of the old dam, anchored deep into bedrock. It will be built to high-hazard standards, to withstand extreme seismic and flooding stresses, and to last 100+ yrs.

This is one of several questions related to Topic No.4. See Q4.1 – Q4.7.

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Question 4.5

Are there contingencies for what could go wrong during construction?

A

The detailed design will define the sequencing of construction steps, with safeguards to address potential flood events, or failure of the old dam during the build. Measures will be in place to minimize releases of contaminants.

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Question 4.6

Why must we take action now?

A

The LC Dam is far beyond its expected service life. The consequences of failure increase every day. Cost estimates have skyrocketed since the first estimates for a ‘new dam’ in 2012.

- ***‘Gambling Every Day’ GVLNews, 20May2020***
- ***‘Dams Don’t Last Forever’ GVLNews, 16Jan2013***

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Question 4.7

What must be done to ensure the new LCDam (a hazardous waste containment structure) is maintained, working as intended, and secure for the next 100 years?

A

The new dam must be inspected regularly by qualified engineers, with reports to SCDHEC. Specific routine maintenance actions must be performed by qualified contractors. Scheduled, and as-needed repairs must be engineered and performed. A vital piece of infrastructure, this dam must be kept secure.

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