



Dam Safety Program
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201



South Carolina Dam Safety News

ISSUE 6

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A Message from Jennifer Hughes — Chief, Bureau of Water

Hello, I would like to introduce myself, I am Jennifer Hughes. In December 2021, I was excited and honored to be selected to serve as the Chief of the Water Bureau. In my new position I see a few similarities to you, the dam owner. “How so?”, you may be wondering. We both have the responsibility to maintain and protect. For me, I am charged with maintaining and protecting the water resources of our state. For you, it’s maintaining your dam and protecting those below your dam. Lucky for both of us, we have a dedicated team and outstanding programs that can assist us with our formidable responsibilities.

I have been with DHEC for more than two decades, with most of my time spent in the regional office, and have had the pleasure of working with dam owners. I have firsthand experience knowing the importance of the partnership between you and the Dam Safety Program. No one will ever forget the historic rainfall event of 2015 and all the tropical storms and hurricanes which have since impacted our state. Those impactful events have resulted in DHEC’s Dam Safety Program receiving much needed resources which enabled us to increase our technical staff and improve the tools, education, and training for dam owners.

As we all know, a partnership is only successful when both parties collaborate and work together. By working together, we can help ensure your dam is maintained in a safe condition. It is important for you to know our technical staff and all the resources available to assist you. Some of the resources we provide include technical support, inundation mapping, ReadyOp service, assistance in developing updated Emergency Action Plans, dam breach modeling, precipitation tracking and most importantly providing dam training and education to you. We are here to assist you and we look for every opportunity to connect and work with you.

We both know how important it is to keep dams in a safe condition. We both have been charged with maintaining and protecting. For my part, I will continue to make the Dam Safety Program a priority and I will listen to you, the dam owners, for how we can continue to assist you to the best of our ability. I look forward to continuing our partnership. Inside this newsletter you will see the commitment the Dam Safety Program has made to provide you with a wealth of information and resources to assist you in maintaining your dam in a safe condition and protecting your neighbors. Thank you for being responsible dam owners and I look forward to working with you.



Jennifer Hughes — Chief, Bureau of Water

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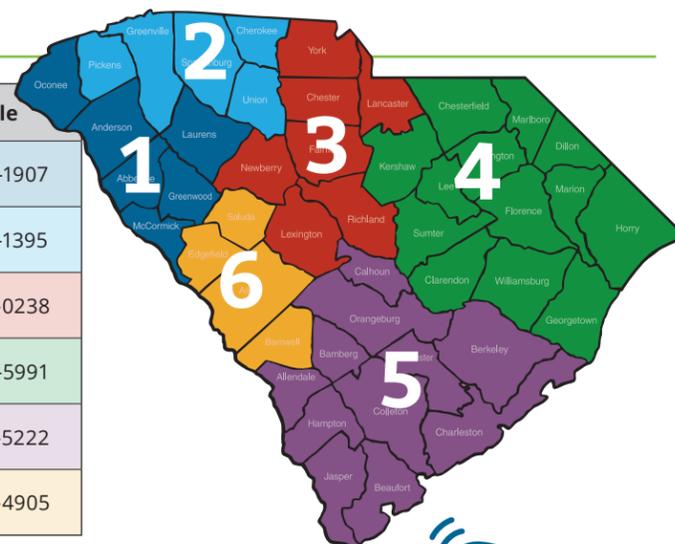
Notices/Reminders

Preparing for Summer Storms/Hurricane Season

It’s that time again! The Dam Safety Program wants to remind dam owners that with a new hurricane season already here, all dam owners should ensure they and their dams are as prepared as possible for the extreme rain events that can be caused by tropical systems. This is a good time to ensure your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is up to date. If you have any questions or require assistance concerning your EAP, please contact us by email at response@dhec.sc.gov. Also keep in mind that summer thunderstorms can drop several inches of rain in a matter of hours, and often come with little or no warning. After

DHEC Regional Staff Listing

Area	Office	Staff	Office	Mobile
1	Anderson	Hannah Vinson vinsonhm@dhec.sc.gov	864-260-5585	864-276-1907
2	Greenville	Chuck Owens owensc2@dhec.sc.gov	864-372-3273	864-561-1395
3	Columbia	Ryan Sullivan sullivrd@dhec.sc.gov	803-896-9548	843-992-0238
4	Florence	Jared Woodard woodarjc@dhec.sc.gov	843-673-6684	843-687-5991
5	Orangeburg	Dani Felkel felkeldh@dhec.sc.gov	803-533-5490	803-614-5222
6	Aiken	Crystal Robertson* robertc2@dhec.sc.gov	803-642-1637	803-522-4905



*Brian Young left DHEC Dam Safety Program in April, Crystal Robertson is the interim contact in the Aiken office.

We're On Call: 803-898-1939

Dam Safety Program Staff are available 24-7 in the event of an emergency situation.



VIEW PAST ISSUES OF THIS NEWSLETTER AT SCDHEC.GOV/DAMS.

Notices/Reminders (CONTINUED)

any rainfall event, the incoming flow from the upstream watershed can continue to flow into your pond for hours – or even days - after the rainfall stops. In fact, you may not even receive a drop of rain at your dam, but rain in the upstream watershed will eventually flow into your pond and cause the water level to rise. When such an event is forecast or has occurred, dam owners should:

- Evaluate the water level in the pond/lake and determine if water levels can be safely lowered to make room for incoming flows.
- Coordinate with dam owners and/or property owners downstream.
- Routinely clear debris from spillways.
- Review your Emergency Action Plan (and update as necessary).
- Keep alert! As the storm passes, watch for rising waters.
- Report any concerns to the DHEC Dam Safety Program staff at **803-898-1939** (We are available 24/7 at this number.)

Change of Dam Ownership/Change in Contact Information

It is critically important that DHEC has both **correct** and **current** ownership and contact information for all owners of state regulated dams. This is especially true in times of emergency when lives may be at risk. Not only is this information critical to DHEC, but the law also requires it. The Dams and Reservoirs Safety Act (SC Code Section 49-11-150) states that, “The owner of a dam or reservoir shall inform the Department in writing within 30 days after title to the dam or reservoir has been transferred from his ownership.” The Department generally does not penalize dam owners for neglecting to provide this information – we only mention the Act to emphasize how critically important this information is to our mission.

If you’ve recently sold your dam, or changed your address, telephone number, or e-mail address, please let us know so we can update our records. We are also happy to verify the contact information we currently have on file for you. The Dam Safety Program can be reached at **803-898-4050** or via email at response@dhec.sc.gov.

News/Information

ReadyOp Emergency Notification

The Dam Safety Program utilizes the ReadyOp Emergency Notification system to send scripted telephone calls (robocalls), text messages, and emails to owners and operators of regulated dams. ReadyOp is used in a targeted manner, where alerts are sent to dam owners in counties which may be affected by a given weather event. Only under certain circumstances, such as a hurricane approaching the state with a large cone of uncertainty, do we send an alert state-wide. Once a year, the Dam Safety Program conducts a test alert to all owners of regulated dams. This year, our test was conducted on May 31. If you did not receive the test alert and/or would like to be registered for ReadyOp alerts, are not sure about your registration status, or want to change registration details, dam owners may register themselves and/or a desired emergency contact by contacting the Dams and Reservoirs Safety Program at **803-898-4050** or by emailing us at response@dhec.sc.gov.

“Dams & Inundations” Web Application

The DHEC Dam Safety Program and Geographic Information System (GIS) staffs jointly developed a Dams & Inundations Web Application displaying all regulated dams and potentially inundated areas in the event of dam failure. This web application is available to the public and is used by the Dam Safety Program and emergency management officials during emergencies to quickly locate dams and assess potential impacts downstream. The Dams & Inundations Web App displays:

- All current state regulated dams in South Carolina along with their name, location, and hazard classification.
- The potentially at-risk area that may be impacted if the dam were to fail.
- The estimated depth of flooding at any point within that at-risk area.

Inundation areas displayed in the application come from failure simulations created with the DSS-WISE™ Lite model. For more information on inundation modeling and DSS-WISE™ Lite, please check the reference document available at: gis.dhec.sc.gov/water_web_docs/scdams/Inundation_Methods.pdf

You can access the Dams & Inundations web app at: gis.dhec.sc.gov/scdams

A tour and demonstration of the web app by its developer, Jeannie Eidson, Ph.D., can be viewed at: youtu.be/dIA_pw_abig

News/Information (CONTINUED)

New Funding for Dam Upgrades and Removals

The passage of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is making unprecedented levels of funding available for safety, environmental, and hydropower improvements to dams and rivers nationwide. Federal funds are being made available through multiple federal and state programs. While there are complex eligibility requirements and restrictions on the uses of these funds, the Dam Safety Program wants to make all dam owners aware of this once-in-a-generation funding opportunity and briefly describe the different pots from which funds are (or will be soon be) available. For a summary of the dams-related benefits of the IIJA, read below and visit: constructiondive.com/news/federal-infrastructure-act-iija-pump-3b-into-nations-ailing-dams/610898

• US Dept. of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- » **\$585,000,000** increase in funding to FEMA’s Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams (HHPD) Program. Program administered by SCDHEC for rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential dams in South Carolina. Includes \$75,000,000 dedicated to dam removals. Funds are distributed to states that submit applications to FEMA, with the amount of grants to each state proportional to the number of grant-eligible dams in a state. SCDHEC is currently awaiting guidance from FEMA on how and when the new IIJA funds will become available. More info available at: scdhec.gov/BOW/dams-reservoirs/high-hazard-potential-dams-rehabilitation-grant

• US Dept. of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- » **\$118,000,000** for the NRCS’s Watershed Rehabilitation Program. More info available at: nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/landscape/wr

• US Dept. of Commerce - Fish and Wildlife Service

- » **\$200,000,000** for the National Fish Passage Program for dam removals aimed at restoring, enhancing, and managing fish and wildlife habitats. Information on FWS grants through IIJA is currently very limited. Stay tuned as FWS develops its funding plans!

• US Dept. of Commerce – National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration

- » **\$400,000,000** for anadromous (*i.e., migratory*) fish passage improvements (dam removals). Information on NOAA grants through IIJA is currently very limited. Stay tuned as NOAA develops its funding plans!

• US Army – Corps of Engineers

- » **\$64,000,000** added to the Corps Water Infrastructure Finance Program (CWIFP), a new low interest loan program for dam safety improvements. More info available at: www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Infrastructure/revolutionize/CWIFP
- » **\$115,000,000** added to the Section 206 Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Grant Program for dam removals. More info available at: www.sas.usace.army.mil/Missions/CAP/Section-206-Aquatic-Ecosystem-Restoration

• US Dept. of Energy

- » **\$5,000,000** for dam safety improvements at existing hydropower dams.
- » **\$125,000,000** to add hydropower capability at existing nonpowered dams.
- » **\$75,000,000** for efficiency improvements at existing hydropower dams.

Information on USDOE grants through IIJA is currently very limited. Stay tuned as USDOE develops its funding plans!