

## **ABSTRACT**

The North Carolina Dam Safety Program strives to prevent property damage, personal injury and loss of life from the failure of dams through the administration and enforcement of the Dam Safety Law of 1967 and the North Carolina Administrative Code Title 15A Subchapter 2K as amended. We carry out this objective through: (1) a comprehensive dam permitting and certification program, (2) periodic dam safety inspections by our regional and central office staff, (3) enforcement actions as provided for under the Dam Safety Law, and (4) improving public awareness and education with regard to dam safety.

## **DETAIL**

As our mission statement asserts, the purpose of the North Carolina Dam Safety Program is “To prevent property damage, personal injury and loss of life from the failure of dams”. We carry out this objective through the administration and enforcement of the Dam Safety Law of 1967 (hereinafter referred to as the Law) and the North Carolina Administrative Code Title 15A Subchapter 2K as amended (hereinafter referred as the Rules).

In the Law and Rules, we are provided the following means to accomplish our mission:

1. Permits and Certification (reference §143-215.26 and §143-215.27 of the Law and NCAC 15A Subchapter 2K Section .0200 of the Rules) – The Law requires that prior to constructing, altering or repairing a dam, the dam owner must file an application with and receive approval from the Division of Land Resources for the proposed work. We provide a comprehensive review in an effort to improve the safety of dams by requiring acceptable construction standards and practices and preparation of emergency action plans (EAP’s) for high hazard dams prior to issuing final approval for their operation. Application processing fees apply (reference §143-215.28A of the Law and Sub-section .0222 of the Rules).
2. Dam Safety Inspections (reference §143-215.32 of the Law and Sub-section .0301 of the Rules) – Land Quality Section staff perform over 1,600 visual inspections annually on dams that are under the jurisdiction of the Law. In this way, we hope to identify and point out to dam owners any detectable safety problems with their dams so that they may be addressed prior to becoming a significant hazard to the downstream public.
3. Enforcement (reference §143-215.36 of the Law and Sub-section .0302 of the Rules) – In cases where there is deemed a significant risk to public safety, enforcement may be necessary using those means provided for in the Law. Those means include criminal penalties, civil penalties, and injunctive relief.

We also strive to educate the public about dams and encourage each dam owner to become knowledgeable about the importance of proper maintenance and regular inspection of their dam. Dam owners should also be aware of changes in downstream development that might affect the hazard potential classification of their dam (reference Sub-section .0105 of the Rules). To that end, we provide the Law and Rules, application forms and other helpful information at our Internet website. Also available at our website and of particular importance for dam owners is the Dam Operation, Maintenance, & Inspection Manual that describes many of the common problems that may develop with a dam. In addition, we are available to meet with dam owners to discuss any concerns they may have and educate them about dams and their responsibilities under the Law. We encourage the general public to make themselves aware if they own property or live in a residence that could potentially be affected by failure of a dam.