

Frequently Asked Questions: Stampede Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project

1. What is being planned for Stampede Dam?

The Bureau of Reclamation plans to raise the existing dam and dike 11.5 feet using mechanically stabilized earth construction techniques. The spillway crest structure will be modified to accommodate the raised embankment crest road and limit peak flows through the spillway to maintain current flood operations on the Little Truckee River. Two small earthen dikes will be constructed in low lying areas on the south rim of the reservoir.

2. Why is this being done?

Recent investigations indicated that Stampede Dam modifications are needed to prevent potential overtopping of the dam. The threat of overtopping the embankment could possibly lead to failure of both Stampede Dam and Boca Dam (6 miles downstream of Stampede Dam). Failure of both dams could result in significant downstream loss of life, property damage and environmental impacts to the city of Reno and surrounding populated areas.

3. Are there plans to store additional water in Stampede Reservoir?

No. The Reclamation Safety of Dams (SOD) Act does not allow for additional project benefits such as storage. Floodwaters flowing into the reservoir will be released as quickly as the water can pass through the spillway and outlet works in accordance with standing operating procedures.

4. What would happen if you just left the dam alone?

During an extreme flood, Stampede Dam could be overtopped by floodwater resulting in dam failure or breach. The downstream population would continue to live with elevated risk of dam failure during a significant hydrologic event. Reclamation's role is to prevent a breach.

5. When would construction start? How long will this take?

Initial construction activities are scheduled for the fall of 2016. It is estimated that up to two construction seasons will be required to complete work due to significant snowfall and cold temperatures during the winter months.

6. What effect will this project have on nearby residents and businesses?

Traffic and noise will temporarily increase during the construction period. Traffic control and noise abatement issues are addressed in the construction solicitation.

7. What effect will this project have on downstream water users?

There are no short-term or long-term changes proposed in normal operations of Stampede Reservoir as a result of the SOD modification project. Upon completion of the project, the downstream residents will no longer be exposed to risks in excess of Reclamation's Interim Public Protection Guidelines from Stampede Dam.

8. What effect will this project have on recreation downstream and in the reservoir?

The road across Stampede Dam and the Stampede Reservoir Vista Point will be closed for the anticipated 2-year duration of construction. However, the reservoir and other recreation facilities will remain open and be accessible from the west via State Highway 89 and the Dog Valley Road. Reclamation proposes to chipseal the currently unpaved segment of the Dog Valley Road during the construction period to facilitate public access and emergency response to Stampede Reservoir and its recreation opportunities.

9. What effect will this have on the environment?

Reclamation prepared a Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project and determined that implementation of the preferred alternative will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on May 11, 2012. The Final EA/FONSI is available on Reclamation's website at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=8182.

10. Have earthquake hazards been considered in the project design?

Yes. The design of project features took into consideration the potential for a significant earthquake event at Stampede Dam. Similar to flood studies, Reclamation's Seismotectonics Group uses current engineering practices for establishing earthquake potential at the site including evaluations of all known faults based on the most recent fault mapping of the region. Recent investigations include updating and revising earthquake ground motions and loadings, field explorations to better define foundation material properties, and reevaluating the potential for liquefaction and the magnitude of potential deformations. The reevaluation of seismic risks at Stampede Dam resulted in diminishing justification to take action to reduce the risk of dam failure associated with an extreme seismic event.

11. Where can I get more information on this project?

For additional information, please email mpsod@usbr.gov or visit <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/sod/projects/stampede/index.html>.