



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Kansas City District

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# News Release

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*For immediate release*

## **Public meeting to discuss Harlan Lake dam options**

REPUBLICAN CITY, Neb - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials will seek public comments on Harlan County Dam safety at a public information meeting 7 p.m. May 16 in the Franklin County Fair Grounds Agriculture building, Franklin, Neb.

The Harlan County Dam is being evaluated under the Corps' ongoing Dam Safety Assurance Program, as required by Corp's safety regulations.

Current information indicates that in the event of what water-control experts define as a Probable Maximum Flood, the 50-year-old dam does not provide adequate safety, which could have far-reaching affects on the Republican and Kansas Rivers, according to Corps' experts. Harlan County Dam is currently operating under a five-year interim plan which calls for retaining a smaller amount of water in times of higher levels on the Republican River in order to maintain adequate safety levels.

The Corps is studying the dam and will prepare a Harlan County Lake Dam Safety Assurance Evaluation Report and Environmental Assessment to address existing operating issues and analyze alternative solutions for restoring the dam to its design purpose. Of key importance is bringing the dam in alignment with the changes in design and construction criteria as they have evolved in the last 50 years.

Updated design criteria and recent periodic dam inspections indicate that significant rainfall upstream of Harlan County Dam could result in potential operating issues for the 50 year old dam in three major areas: floodgate operability, hydrologic flood control adequacy, and stability of the dam's spillway. Specifically the "tainter" floodgates are of an older design that has failed on other dams, the berm and spillway are too small under current design standards and geotechnical inspections have identified a fault beneath one end of the dam's supports.

### **Alternatives Under Evaluation**

Several alternatives are being evaluated to address the identified deficiencies, as follows:

- No Action. The current deficiencies would be allowed to continue to deteriorate with no attempt made at repair.
- Dam Removal or Dry Dam. Completely removing the structure would return the Republican River to its natural course with no impoundment of water for irrigation or flood control. The dry dam option would leave the dam in place but remove all control gates, allowing the river to flow with no impoundment for irrigation but providing a minimal level of incidental flood control.

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- Tainter Gate Replacement. The original spillway gates would be replaced with new gates of updated design and construction.
- Spillway Anchoring. Additional anchors would be installed in the spillway to prevent movement of the concrete sections during periods of high flow.
- Raise Dam. Raising the dam to provide additional storage capacity in the lake during periods of high flow. This could be accomplished by either raising the elevation of the existing road crossing the dam, or by constructing a floodwall on the upstream side of the road.
- Construction of Auxiliary Spillway. A secondary spillway constructed either in, or adjacent to, the dam would provide additional capacity through the dam during periods of high flow.
- Lower Existing Spillway. Lowering the elevation of the existing spillway to increase flow through the dam during periods of high flow.

Each of these alternatives addresses at least one of the issues of concern. A combination of alternatives will be developed to address all the deficiencies and produce the greatest project benefit at the lowest cost. These alternatives are in a preliminary stage of consideration and additional alternatives may be identified.

Comments or questions may be directed to Mr. Eric S. Lynn, project manager, by phone at 816-389-3258, by e-mail to [Eric.S.Lynn@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eric.S.Lynn@usace.army.mil) or by writing to him at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Attn: PM-PF, 601 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Kansas City, Mo., 64106-2896. Additional information on the Harlan County Dam evaluations may be viewed on the Internet at [www.nwk.usace.army.mil/projects/hcdsap/index.htm](http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/projects/hcdsap/index.htm).

For more information, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, and Public Affairs Office at (816) 389-3486.