

Waterlines Express - News from DNR Division of Water

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Q&A with Inspectors from the Dam & Levee Safety Section

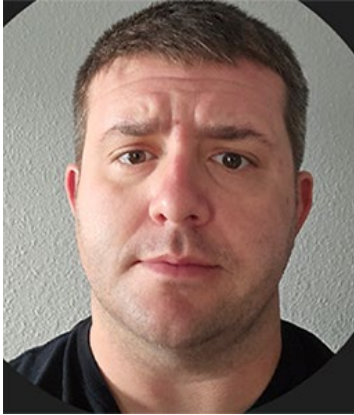
Dam owners are legally required to maintain their structures in a safe and operational condition, considering the protection of life and property, while adhering to sound technical principles and exercising prudence.

To support these practices, the Dam & Levee Safety Section conducts regular inspections with its experienced team. The inspection schedule is as follows:

- Significant hazard dams: at least once every 3 years
- Low hazard dams: at least once every 5 years
- State-owned high hazard dams: at least once every 2 years

Note: For high hazard dams not owned by the state, owners are responsible for hiring a licensed professional engineer to inspect the structure at least once every 2 years.

The inspection team consists of three dam inspectors: Scott Hines, Steve Bannon, and Paul Hood; one geologist: Greg Waltz; and an engineer.



Pictured (L to R) is Paul Hood, Greg Waltz, and Steve Bannon

To provide insight into their work, the team has put together this Q&A session, which offers more details about their tasks and responsibilities.

Preparation

What should I do before an inspection takes place?

Once an inspection date is scheduled, the entire dam and embankment should be mowed, and debris should be removed. This will help us more easily inspect the structure and identify potential deficiencies.

On the day of the inspection, please unlock any gates or remove any obstacles that would prevent us from accessing the property. Please secure any pets that may be wary of someone on the property.

Should I plan to attend the inspection?

It is highly recommended that you be present for the inspection, but it is not required.

About how long will it take?

Inspection time varies depending on condition, dam design, and other variables. An average inspection takes one to two hours. It usually takes two hours to inspect the state-owned high hazard dams.

Inspection

Do you have a specific process or procedure that guides the inspection?

The inspection process is guided by a standard inspection report. This inspection sheet differs for earthen embankment dams and in-channel dams.

What typical equipment do you use?

Typical equipment used during the inspection process can include elevation equipment, slope measurement tools, soil moisture probe, stadia rod for scale, measuring tape, camera/pipe

inspection equipment, drones, personal protective equipment, and digital devices that provide apps such as context cameras, documentation services, etc.

What are some issues that you may encounter in the field?

We frequently have issues with property access (like locked gates), wildlife/personal animal encounters, and common field problems like poison ivy, ticks, chiggers, etc.

After an inspection, what happens next?

What if I have questions about the recommendations made on the report?

Please contact the dam inspector who performed your inspection.

How long do I have to complete the required action items?

Deficiencies/repairs should be completed quickly in order to return the dam to safe conditions. We will verify that these repairs have been completed by next inspection or will follow up to check on the progress of major safety issues.

I'm not sure what some of the terms mean on the inspection report. Are there some additional resources that may help me figure this out?

For more information about dams in general and our dam safety program, please visit our [website](#).

Comprehensive [glossary](#) of dam terminology.



Photos of dam inspections

Interested in joining our team?

The Dam & Levee Safety Section currently has a vacant hydraulic engineer position. This position will lead the inspections of state-owned high hazard dams and review private high hazard dam inspection reports. Other primary roles include reviewing applications for the construction of new dams and modifications to existing dams and using hydraulic modeling to create dam breach inundation maps.

The job posting can be viewed in the State of Indiana's [Job Bank](#).

Contact us for additional information: DOWDams@dnr.IN.gov or 317-232-4160, option 3

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