

# Fwd: Update on Lake Petit Dam Maintenance (Brian Kemp - Where are you?)

From: <themtnsvoice@aol.com>

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**Big Canoe is a private, affluent gated community in North Georgia. It is home to the 2nd largest Earthen Dam in Georgia. It has a 50 year track record of egregious legal and safety violations.** The Dam is rapidly deteriorating with leaks popping up; the Spillway being undercut by water flow, and the emergency drain not operational. This is a potential "Miami Condo Collapse " in the making, and Governor Brian Kems Office is ignoring it in lieu of politics. Big Canoe POA just put out a community eblast on a recent issue with the dam, and has basically put in writing that we now have NO mechanism for lowering lake levels effectively to anywhere near legal requirements.

**See Big Canoe's Email Update below, but first my NOTE on some of their comments....** that by leaving the "Plug in Place" as the POA is doing, they have effectively eliminated the legal requirement of having an emergency drawdown. But all is good because now Big Canoe residents don't have to have our 4th of July plans disrupted just because of some pesky legal requirement. Good damn thing we have crew at Ga Safe Dams that is willing to ignore legal safety requirements on this 50 year old, 2nd largest, "high hazard", earthen dam in Georgia that hasn't even passed a stability report, and indeed FAILED the only one ever officially accepted 25 years ago, resulting in a Non-Compliance letter - that has NEVER been enforced.

**GREAT JOB EPD!!! So glad we have Richard Dunn at the helm of this important Agency. And of course David Griffin can be proud to be the latest in a long line of Ga Safe Dams Directors to have worked so tirelessly and creatively to find ways to keep this Dam operating illegally, even as it's condition deteriorates.** Maybe this is why our State Agency is listed almost DEAD LAST among all 50 state Dam Safety organizations. I feel so much safer *<sarcasm in case you are missing it>* knowing that this fine crew is hard at work IGNORING LEGAL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS. But what the hell.... Safe Dams has allowed them to be in Non-Compliance for 50 years regarding the Lower Level Outlet testing.... why start paying attention to regulations now? Right? I wonder how many years we can continue to kick this can down the road? Hopefully long enough for the Big Canoe POA to lock in it's 10+ Million dollar Long Range Plan to remodel Golf Courses, add on to the Clubhouse etc. Because silly things like Dam Safety clearly should take second place to the spoiled needs of a private Golf Country Club - even if it does jeopardize regional infrastructure and economy.

**Oh, and by the way.... MY SOURCES tell me that they did NOT get the Gate successfully opened and closed as is claimed in the following eblast from the BCPOA.** That all they did was manage to crack it an inch before they got scared to death that it was going to get stuck open after they discovered the cracks in the stem.... and that the plug could fail due to the constant pressure on it - as it was only designed to be temporary. But I am sure that you at Safe Dams have CONFIRMED that they got the entire thing completely closed? Right? And there is not continued pressure on the plug?

**Also, regarding the following quote, I have a question:**

**Q: With the plug in place, will we be able to lower the lake if needed?**

A: There is a bypass flow line near the spillway that gives us the option of lowering the lake by up to seven feet if necessary.

**This flow pipe they reference, and the 7' limitation on lake lowering? Is that within the legal depths required for emergency drawdown? And do you have any data to support the supposition that "bypass flow line" is anywhere near capable of lowering the lake within anything near the legally required emergency drawdown timeframe requirements? I mean, it took them a week to take it down 1 foot using this method - isn't the requirement something like 30 feet in 10 days? WHAT IS the legal requirement?**

**THE ABOVE ARE 3 DIRECT QUESTIONS I WOULD LIKE AN ANSWER TO!**

I look forward to someones answer, and for any of the news media copied on this.... I assure you there is a BIG political story here if you want to look. Kemp is aware of this. Putting **politics over public safety** is always a good story. **See below for Big Canoe's recent eblast to residents.**

See "[here](#)" for over 20 historical articles on this subject. I have tirelessly tried to contact the Governor's Office to enforce compliance on this situation - but from the top down, they are refusing to deal with this issue due to the impact it may have on their elite, rich supporters in North Georgia's largest and most affluent private gated community.

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## **Update on Lake Petit Dam Maintenance**

Over the past several weeks, the POA has been working with our engineer of record, Geosyntec, to test the operation of the lower-level outlet of Lake Petit Dam.

Below is a breakdown of what happened, what was learned, and what steps are to be taken in the coming months.

***Q: Did the Lake Petit Dam sluice gate work?***

A: The sluice gate operated even after more than a half-century of inactivity. The testing was made possible by the recent installation of a specially tailored plug, which was inserted into the low-level outlet as a backup in case there were any issues with the gate. The plug performed as designed and allowed the reservoir to maintain its normal level while allowing divers to safely operate and inspect the gate. Click the April 27 Board meeting button below and go to the 8:40 mark to watch a video that features a closeup of the plug.

### April 27 Board Meeting

While the gate had no major issues, it was determined that seven of the 37 stem guides that keep the 378-foot-long stem aligned showed cracks during the testing process. (The stem is what pulls the gate open and pushes it closed.) Replacing these weathered, 50-year-old components will involve coordinating and securing new parts with the gate manufacturer and having an underwater contractor install the new parts with the plug in place.

***Q: How much are these new parts going to cost?***

*One of the 37 stem guides bolted along Lake Petit Dam*

A: The parts are not especially expensive, and the gate manufacturer and the POA will determine the correct design for the parts. The new stem guides will have to be custom-made – these are not off-the-shelf purchases – and installed sometime this year.

***Q: Will the ongoing work require the lake to be lowered?***

A: All of the work, which has been mostly conducted below the surface of the lake, will not require the lowering of the lake water. The plug is in place and the gate is closed, ensuring that Petit's summer season, including the July 2 fireworks show, is on schedule. The Marina will continue its operations, the eagles on Eagle Island will be

unaffected, and summer on the lake will unfold as planned.

***Q: Besides the replacement of the seven stem guides, are there additional areas in need of maintenance?***

A: Crews are exploring whether to replace all 37 stem guides. Each of the cast-iron pieces is bolted to concrete piers, which are spaced at 10-foot intervals along the lake side of the dam (*see diagram below*). Whether it's more prudent to replace all of the stem guides at once and to look at also replacing the concrete piers to which they are attached is something that will be explored.

***Q: How much will all of this unanticipated work cost?***

A: The cost of replacing all 37 stem guides and even the concrete piers will be determined by the recent data gathered from diving inspections during the gate test. Geosyntec will work with the POA to determine the extent of the work needed. With parts that are more than a half-century old, the team is looking at what needs to be replaced to provide the best operation in the future.

***Q: With the plug in place, will we be able to lower the lake if needed?***

A: There is a bypass flow line near the spillway that gives us the option of lowering the lake by up to seven feet if necessary. There are no current plans to lower the lake level.

***Q: Is Georgia Safe Dams aware of the test?***

A: Throughout the planning and actual testing phases of this project, we have been keeping Georgia Safe Dams apprised of our work on a frequent basis. They thoroughly understand the results of the test and the next steps we are taking. They have asked for a schedule of the next phase of the project as soon as it becomes available.

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