

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why did the Lake Dunlap dam fail and why does it matter to Lake McQueeney?

The Lake Dunlap and Lake McQueeney dams were built between 1927 and 1928 and are mostly comprised of their original components. The failure of the Dunlap dam was in the steel truss-like “gate” on top of the dam that is lowered during a rain event to provide flood management. At the time of this writing, it is believed the lower hinges on the upriver gate failed at the Lake Dunlap dam. Due to the similarity in design, the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) feels the gates on the Lake McQueeney dam should be replaced.

2. Why is the water level on Lake McQueeney lower than it usually is?

Prior to the collapse of the Lake Dunlap gate, Lake McQueeney was lowered approximately 18" for repairs to its gates. During this time, the Lake Dunlap gate failed, raising concern for the McQueeney dam gate's viability. GBRA decided to abandon the repairs on the McQueeney dam due to safety concerns and lower the lake another 6" to minimize water pressure. It is unlikely the lake will be raised back to its normal level until replacement gates are built.

3. Why do we need movable gates? Can't we just build a fixed concrete dam?

A fixed concrete dam without movable gates would cause water to back up and create a larger flood area than exists today. This would change the local FEMA flood maps and create a bigger flood-zone area.

4. Doesn't our dam provide flood control? Can't we get FEMA money?

Because we do not have the capacity to “store” water like Canyon Lake, McQueeney is considered a recreational lake only and not a “flood control” lake. Therefore, we do not qualify for FEMA grants or other federal assistance.

5. How will the dam gates be paid for, maintained, and managed going forward?

Through the efforts of FOLM, the Lake McQueeney Preservation Committee, and community grassroots and contributions, funds were raised to examine the engineering, legal, and financial options for preserving Lake McQueeney Dam. As a result, agreements were established with GBRA and Lake McQueeney Water Control and Improvement District #1 (WCID) was established and confirmed by an overwhelming majority of voters of the district in November, 2020. The taxes on waterfront property owners within the WCID provide a means to pay for bonds and work with GBRA for the financing, management, and preservation of the dam. The WCID has received approval for low interest bonds from the Texas Water Development Board. More information, documents, and details about the WCID are available on its website, <https://www.lakemcqueeneycid1.com>.

6. What is the schedule for the dam reconstruction? How low will the water go during construction?

The latest information about the dam should be available on the WCID website. Generic planning estimates are for the engineering study to be complete by late summer/early fall, 2021, then straight into bidding collection, resulting in awarding the project in early winter. Draining would begin late winter into early spring 2022. Actual construction is expected to take 24-28 months. The current plan discusses lowering the water level another 7-8' with possible fluctuations. This could change based on lessons learned from Lake Dunlap and other contractors assessing the project. Studies continue to determine if the water level can be adjusted and/or the construction time frame compressed.

7. What about tree and bulkhead problems, and dredging possibilities while the water is low?

FOLM is working on all these issues and will post information on our website, as it becomes available.