

Press Release

The Carroll County Water Authority continues its efforts to recover from the effects of the devastating storm that struck Carroll County last week. The storm dumped in excess of 10-inches of rain, damaged numerous utilities and caused wide-spread utility outages in the area. The heaviest impacts of the storm were seen in eastern and southeastern Carroll County.

One of the hardest hit areas was the Snake Creek drainage basin which includes Lake Seaton. Lake Seaton, the drinking water reservoir for the Authority's water treatment plant, received unprecedented flows that most likely will not be repeated for generations to come. The water level at Lake Seaton, which was almost one foot below full pool in mid-September, rose about nine feet during the height of the storm. Lake Seaton was not the only lake to be impacted by the historical rain event. Many lakes throughout the region were affected including Treasure Lake within Fairfield Plantation and the Dog River Reservoir in Douglas County.

Much of the stormwater runoff from the northern half of the Snake Creek basin, about 2,100,000,000 (2.1 billion) gallons, was absorbed by Lake Seaton as the reservoir's water level increased. After several hours of intense rain, the water overflowed into the emergency spillways which allowed the additional water received by the reservoir to be released over an extended period of time. Emergency spillways are designed to protect a dam by keeping floodwaters from overflowing the dam in severe storm events. As the storm raged on, floodwater flowing through one of Lake Seaton's emergency spillways began eroding the slope downstream of the spillway's control section. A deep erosion cut was formed by the time the storm had ended.



Authority personnel were concerned by the erosion and performed an inspection of the dam early in the day on Monday. Schnabel Engineering, engineers experienced in the design and construction of dams, arrived onsite less than twelve hours after the heavy rains had stopped to inspect the dam and spillway. Representatives from Schnabel said that the dam suffered no damage from the storm because the emergency spillways had functioned as designed. In addition to the inspections performed by Schnabel representatives and Authority personnel, Georgia Safe Dams performed an aerial inspection of the dam on Monday, September 21. Authority personnel also requested that Georgia Safe Dams perform an onsite inspection of the dam and spillway. According to CCWA Executive Director, Matt

Windom, “We asked for an additional inspection of the dam and spillway to be absolutely sure that there was no risk of failure. We wanted to be absolutely certain.”

Georgia Safe Dams representatives arrived at the dam early this week and performed a thorough assessment of the site including inspection of the dam, spillways and discharge structures. During their site visit, Safe Dams personnel gave the Authority no directive to lower the water elevation or perform any immediate emergency actions. Safe Dams personnel indicated that any repairs to the eroded slope would need to be designed by qualified engineers. The state would then review and approve the engineering design. A Schnabel representative attending the inspection stated that they are already working on a preliminary design for the repair. The design and repair work should take several months to complete but according to the Schnabel representative there is no threat of the dam failing due to the erosion that occurred at the spillway.

According to Windom, “Following the inspection of the dam by professional engineers and state personnel, we are confident that the dam is sound. The reservoir received an enormous amount of water from the heavy rains and we are pleased that the dam functioned as designed.”