



## **Notes About the Woodlake Dam**

*From the WHOA President*

The most important — and potentially most costly — amenity owned by our HOA is the Woodlake Dam. My intention is not to alarm anyone, but rather to help all HOA members better understand the responsibility that comes with owning and maintaining a dam.

### **The HOA Owns the Dam**

The dam is owned collectively by the HOA — meaning all homeowners share responsibility for this critical asset.

When I first began trying to understand our dam, I started with very little knowledge. I did not even know the terminology needed to ask the right questions. The resources below provide a much easier starting point for anyone who wants to learn more.

### **Recommended Educational Resources**

#### **Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO)**

[damsafety.org](http://damsafety.org)

This site offers two free courses that I will recommend for current and future board members. I also encourage interested homeowners to take advantage of these resources.

### **Why This Matters**

I encourage every homeowner to become a more informed dam owner and not assume someone else will handle the responsibility. After reviewing past HOA records and recent inspection information, I concluded that the dam received very little attention in prior years. Inspections were infrequent or nonexistent, and we have not historically had a hydrologic engineer serving on the board.

Unfortunately, this is another example of delayed maintenance creating larger long-term risks and expenses.

## Woodlake Is Classified as a High-Hazard Dam

Woodlake Dam is classified as a **high-hazard dam**. This classification does **not** necessarily mean the dam is likely to fail. Rather, it means that if a breach were to occur, downstream flooding could result in loss of life. Because of this classification, the dam represents the HOA's single greatest risk exposure and requires serious attention and ongoing oversight.

## North Carolina Dam Safety Program

### [NC Dam Safety Program Overview](#)

As I researched further and communicated with state officials, I learned that North Carolina's Dam Safety Program appears significantly understaffed relative to the number of dams in the state — more than 3,600. This may help explain how Woodlake received limited regulatory attention for many years.

## National Inventory of Dams

### [National Inventory of Dams \(USACE\)](#)

This database contains information on dams throughout the United States and can provide additional background and context for homeowners interested in learning more.

## Final Thought

The purpose of sharing this information is awareness and education. Understanding the responsibilities, risks, and maintenance requirements associated with dam ownership is important for every member of the HOA community.

## Dams of North Carolina

<b>3,642</b> Total Dams	<b>66 years</b> Average Dam Age	<b>60%</b> High Hazard Potential Dams with an EAP	<b>3%</b> Federally Regulated Dams
		<b>3%</b> Dams with Hydropower	<b>57%</b> State-Regulated Dams

### KEY FACTS

The National Inventory of Dams (NID) has catalogued the more than 92,000 dams on America's waterways.

Each state has hundreds of dams within its borders.

Approximately 65% of dams are privately owned. Approximately 31% of dams are owned by federal, state or local governments. The rest are owned by quasi-governmental utilities or unknown ownership.