

Timothy Johnston

The 21st Century has begun as an era of uncertainty, with a heightened focus on security and public safety. ...Gavin Newsom

Located near Leesburg, Virginia in the heart of one of the fastest growing and most affluent areas in the United States, Beaverdam Creek Reservoir is used primarily for water supply; however, development pressure has, in the past decade, transformed the reservoir into a premier recreation destination as a part of a multi-jurisdictional, thousand acre regional park system. Faced with the challenges posed by increased development and public awareness and usage of the reservoir, the dam's owner, Loudoun Water, decided that the need to increase the spillway capacity of Beaverdam Creek Dam provided a timely opportunity to further enhance ongoing public safety efforts at the dam. These efforts were amplified by strategic partnerships with the county government and regional park authority, both of which own and operate park properties adjacent to the reservoir. Public engagement and acceptance was enormously successful. The United States Society on Dams (USSD) recognized these efforts by selecting Loudoun Water as the recipient of the 2016 Award for Recognition of Public Safety Around Dams.

The focus of this paper is to present: (1) the specific actions implemented by Loudoun Water to protect the public around dams; (2) the process that was used to develop and document a public safety plan specific to dam operation; (3) the methods used to ensure conformance with the public safety plan; (4) the public safety education, training and outreach programs implemented by Loudoun Water; and, (5) the additional public safety improvements that are planned to be implemented at the dam as part of the dam improvements construction project that began in November 2016.