



# USACE Dam Safety Facts for Pomme de Terre Dam

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

**Project Location and Description:** Pomme de Terre Dam was designed and built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District and completed in 1961, USACE operates Pomme de Terre Dam for flood control, water supply, conservation storage, navigation, fish and wildlife, and recreation.



The main components of the project are an outlet structure that allows controlled water flow out of the dam, an uncontrolled spillway, and an earthen embankment section, which serves as the main water barrier composed of compacted earth. The uncontrolled spillway, a segment of the structure used to provide additional release of water from the dam during major flood events, is located on the left abutment (looking downstream) and is 170 feet wide with a crest elevation of 874.4 feet<sup>1</sup>. The spillway can pass up to 548,000 gallons per second (73,300 cubic feet per second) or approximately just less than the volume of an Olympic size swimming pool each second. The earthen dam is 4,630 feet long, 155 feet high, and top of the dam is 36 feet wide. The elevation of the top of the earthen embankment is 905.4 feet<sup>1</sup>. The foundation is made up of rock and soil.

During normal operations, the lake is kept at a relatively consistent level (referred to as conservation pool). Should heavy rains occur in the spring or at any other time, surface water runoff is stored in the lake until the swollen streams and rivers below the dam recede and can handle the release of stored water without damage to lives, property or the environment. Sometimes water must be released to protect the dam's integrity even though streams and rivers may have already reached or exceeded their capacity.

**Benefits associated with Pomme de Terre Dam:** This dam has provided \$3,254,000 in annual flood damage reduction since placed into service. Annual visitors to Pomme de Terre Lake to the area are \$2.6 million.

**Risks associated with all dams:** Dams reduce but do not eliminate the risk of economic and environmental damages and loss of life from flood events. When a flood exceeds the reservoir's storage capacity, large amounts of water may have to be released that could cause damaging flooding downstream. A fully-functioning dam could be overtopped when a rare, large flood occurs, or a dam could breach because of a deficiency, both of which pose risk of property damage and life loss. This means there will always be flood risk that has to be managed. To manage these risks USACE has a routine program that inspects and monitors its dams regularly. USACE implements short and long term actions, on a prioritized basis, when unacceptable risks are found at any of its dams.

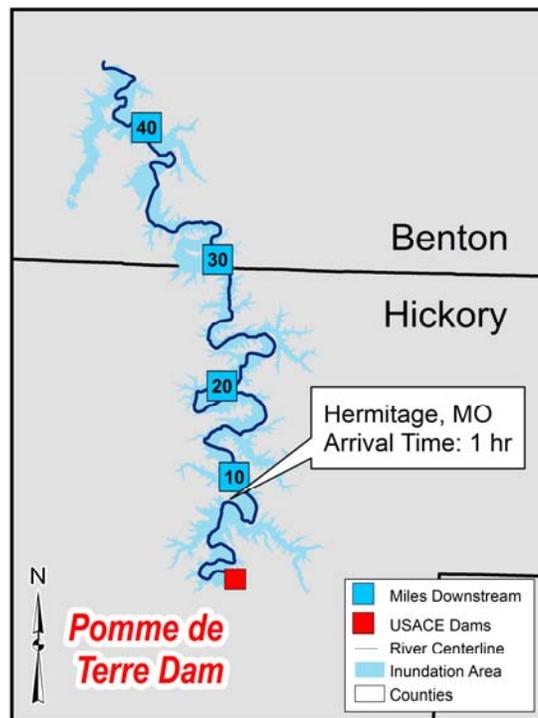
**Risk associated with Pomme de Terre Dam:** Based upon the most recent risk assessment of Pomme de Terre Dam in 2008, USACE considers this dam to be a low risk dam among its more than 700 dams because of the risk associated with internal erosion of the embankment into the foundation.

<sup>1</sup> Mean Sea Level (MSL) is the same as North American Vertical Datum 1988 (or NAVD88)

**What residents should know:** Dams do not eliminate all flood risk so it is important that residents downstream from the dam are aware of the potential consequences should the dam breach, not perform as intended; or experience major spillway/gated outlet flows.. The high risk in Hermitage, MO and the related consequences further downstream warrant increased efforts on the part of USACE, local emergency management officials and residents to heighten awareness of the potential flood risk associated with the dam.

The primary areas impacted should the dam breach with a full reservoir during a rare flood event; or experience major spillway/outlet works flows are shown in the map. The potential for loss of life is highest within a couple of miles of the dam with the loss of life concerns decreasing substantially beyond 60 miles downstream of the dam. Advanced warning of problems and events plays a major role in protecting life and property. See the map for a general flood of flooding with a rare flood event and breach.

**Public Awareness:** Dams are designed to pass large amounts of water on a regular basis and this means there will always be flood risk that has to be managed (see facts below).



Map inundation area displayed is a rare flood event and breach. Map Disclaimer: Actual areas flooded and flood arrival times will depend on specific flooding and failure conditions and may differ from the areas shown on the map.

Recommendations for Residents	Pomme de Terre Dam Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living with flood risk reduction infrastructure comes with risk—know your risk.</li> <li>• Living with flood risk reduction infrastructure is a shared responsibility—know your role.</li> <li>• Know your risk, know your role and take action to reduce your risk.</li> <li>• Listen for and follow instructions from local emergency management officials.</li> <li>• Strongly consider purchasing flood insurance.</li> <li>• Contact your elected local, county and state officials to make sound flood risk management decisions in your area.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated consequences with rare flood event and breach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population at risk: ~1,100</li> <li>• Structures at risk: 895</li> <li>• Land and property at risk: \$90 million</li> </ul> <p><b>Estimated consequences with rare flood event and no breach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population at risk: ~ 660</li> <li>• Structures at risk: No data available</li> <li>• Land and property at risk: \$69 million</li> </ul> <p>Damages prevented to date: \$99.7 million (1979-2008) National Inventory of Dams # MO30201</p>

Residents should listen to and follow instructions from local authorities. For more information, please contact USACE Kansas City district office at (816) 426-6320

For additional information about dam safety and living with dams, please visit:  
[www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Dam-SafetyProgram/](http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Dam-SafetyProgram/)  
[www.damsafety.org/](http://www.damsafety.org/)