

# PROCLAMATION

## Low Head Dam Public Safety Awareness Month

Adopted April 2021

April 2023 Release

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WHEREAS, the organizations supporting this proclamation hold as paramount the responsibility to apply their resources and dedicate their efforts to the public's welfare; and

WHEREAS, A low head dam is a manmade structure spanning a river or stream channel in which water flows over the top of the dam; and

WHEREAS, Low head dams are identified by a variety of names including weir, diversion structure, diversion dam, falls, jumps, and other names; and

WHEREAS, Low head dams can be difficult to locate and are usually not marked; and

WHEREAS, Low head dams are not easily seen looking downstream, as they blend in with the smooth horizon line where the sky and stream meet; and

WHEREAS, Because of their relatively small size and drop, low head dams may not always appear to be dangerous; and

WHEREAS, Low head dams are deceptively deadly (At times the water around them appears tranquil and inviting; however, moderate to high flows over such dams create strong turbulence and recirculating currents that can push victims underwater, and then pull them back to the face of the dam in a repeating cycle); and

WHEREAS, Even the strongest swimmers and rescuers wearing the best personal floatation devices have drowned at low head dams; and

WHEREAS, 91 percent of drownings and other dam-related deaths occur in the period from April to August; and

WHEREAS, Swimming, boating, and fishing account for the overwhelming majority of incidents at dams in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Would be rescuers account for a number of those killed at low head dams; and

WHEREAS, In the years between 2019 and 2022, nationwide 192 incidents have been identified in the media and 151 people have died with many other incidents not reported in the media; and

WHEREAS, Most low head dams are not regulated, nor is there currently a national inventory of these structures.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT DETERMINED BY THE ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE SIGNED THIS RESOLUTION THAT:

April 2021 and every April hereafter be known as Low Head Dam Public Safety Awareness Month.

The undersigned organizations call for:

Spreading Awareness of the dangers and risks associated with low head dam structures.

Encouraging public assistance in identifying locations throughout the country where these dams are located.

Encouraging people who recreate on or near water to avoid low head dams both upstream and downstream.

Keeping a safe distance away from dams both upstream and downstream to avoid drowning, and if you need to go around them, walk or portage over land to a safe distance downstream.

APPROVED on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March 2021.



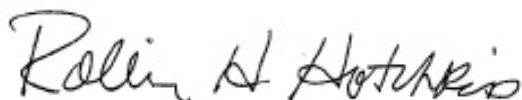
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Environmental & Water Resources Institute  
of the American Society of Civil Engineers



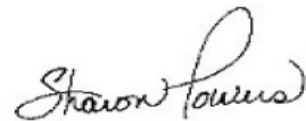
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Association of State Dam Safety Officials



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Brigham Young University



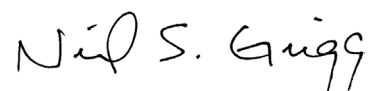
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United States Society on Dams



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American Rivers



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Colorado State University



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Trout Unlimited



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Scouts BSA



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Utah State University



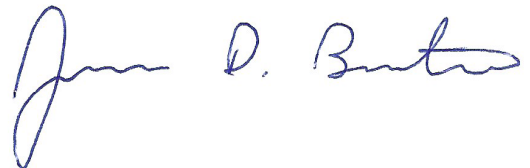
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Wright Water Engineers



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Valparaiso University



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American Academy of Water  
Resources Engineers



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*Captain John Edward Riester*

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Virginia Military Institute

