

Hinckley Dam Rehabilitation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1. What is the scope of this project?

This project aims to strengthen flood protection, improve recreational opportunities at Hinckley Lake, raise the height of the existing earthen dam embankment that stretches across the northern portion of the lake, and rehabilitate the existing 150-foot-wide concrete spillway. Concurrent to the dam rehabilitation, Cleveland Metroparks will be removing excess silt deposits in specific areas of the lake that have accumulated over the last century.

Q2. Why is this project happening?

The earthen dam at the north end of the lake is being raised to add additional storage capacity to the lake, and in turn provide improved downstream protection in the event of severe flooding. The concrete spillway structure is being rehabilitated to accommodate for this extra water storage, and to meet modern structural standards. The excess silt removal will allow for proper depths for recreational activities.

Q3. What is the timeline for this project?

The lake will remain open throughout the spring and summer of 2023 including for watercraft rentals at the Hinckley Lake Boathouse & Store, swimming at the Hinckley Spillway, and the return of the Ledges-to-Lake Adventure Race on September 16, 2023.

Following summer activities, on Sept. 18, 2023, the dam rehabilitation will begin with the temporary draining of Hinckley Lake. The project requires that the lake remain drained until the dam rehabilitation is completed which is expected by summer 2026 based on current schedule and funding. The dam will turn 100 years old in 2027.

Q4. How much will this project cost?

Initial estimates put the cost of the dam rehabilitation at approximately \$9-10 million, but the final cost is subject to change as the commencement of work nears.

Q5. Who will be performing the work for this project?

Cleveland Metroparks is working in partnership with a consultant, Michael Baker International, Inc. on the design of the dam rehabilitation. Michael Baker International brings with them a wealth of dam design experience. Once design is complete, the improvements will be constructed by The Great Lakes Construction Company.

Cleveland Metroparks has also been coordinating with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the United States Army Corp of Engineers throughout the project.

Q6. Will the trails around the lake still be open during construction?

Our goal is to keep as much of the trail system around the lake open as possible, but for safety reasons, certain sections of trail may be closed when necessary during construction. Check back with the project webpage linked in Q11 as the project progresses for updates on trail closures.

Q7. Can I walk on the lakebed while it is drained?

No. Hinckley Reservation will remain open throughout the project, but for the safety of our visitors, access to Hinckley Lake will be strictly prohibited once the project commences.

Q8. What is going to happen to all the wildlife living in and around the lake while it is drained and construction is underway?

Cleveland Metroparks has developed a plan for the protection and relocation of key species living in and around the lake, and will also coordinate with Ohio Department of Natural Resources for the duration of the project. Hinckley Lake will be restocked with fish upon completion of the dam restoration and refilling of the reservoir. Freshwater mussels residing in Hinckley Lake will be relocated beginning in summer of 2023.

Q8-A. How does mussel relocation work? What will that mean for my experience at the lake?

Mussel relocation will occur at Hinckley Lake beginning 7/10/23 and continuing for approximately one week. You will see some staff from a consultant, Lawhon & Associates on site performing mussel surveys in the lake. You will see a manned boat and divers in the water, so please do not disturb them while they are working. The crews will be working in clearly marked 100m x 100m areas that shall not be approached in watercraft. If you have any questions about the process while the crews are out there, feel free to approach a crew member on the shore that is not occupied by the surveys.

If you would like more information on the details of the mussel relocation and survey procedure, see Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's detailed document [here](#).

Q9. Where will dredged silt material removed from the lake be transported?

In order to construct the enhanced earthen dam around Hinckley Lake, soils will be taken from a designated area south of the lake near Buzzard's Roost. Following completion of this soil borrow, the excavated area will be backfilled with the lakebed materials removed from dredging operation in the lake.

Q10. I live downstream of Hinckley Lake; is my property going to be impacted by the draining of the lake?

We do not expect dam construction or drawdown of Hinckley Lake to cause any notable changes in the flow characteristics downstream of the lake. Throughout the construction process, water will be released at a controlled rate which should not exceed levels currently seen downstream of the dam. At no point will the existing dam be completely removed.

The release of water and downstream conditions will be closely monitored throughout the project. If any notable impacts are observed, methods will be adjusted.

Q11. How can I get updates on the rehabilitation of the dam over the next few years of construction?

Project updates will be posted to the Hinckley Dam Rehabilitation page on the Cleveland Metroparks website, available here:

<https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/about/planning-design/planning-and-design-projects/projects/hinckley-dam-rehabilitation>