

Goose Pasture Tarn/ Boathouse

Goose Pasture Tarn Dam was built of earth and concrete in 1965 by the Theobold family to create a 770 acre-foot recreation area in the Town of Blue River. As Blue River residents, Spruce Valley homeowners have recreational rights to use the Tarn.

The water rights, land under the tarn and the dam are now owned by the Town of Breckenridge. A 5 to 90 foot wide strip around the “Tarn” (measured from the high-water mark), known as the “Theobold Donut”, is still owned by the Theobold family.

The water in the Tarn provides the primary source of water for the Town of Breckenridge. It is also used by the Breckenridge ski area.

In 2004, seepage was discovered in slab joints about a foot below the spillway crest at the Tarn dam. Repairs were made in 2006.

In 2015, higher than normal groundwater pressure readings were recorded and the state was alerted. Repairs were made in 2016. Upon further inspection, Kumar & Associates discovered extensive voids beneath some of the concrete slabs and the water levels in the Tarn were lowered even more.

There are two spillways - the service spillway, which is used to release heavy flows from spring runoff, and the emergency spillway, which was added later and originally built four feet higher than the than the service spillway. The emergency spillway had to be lowered recently during mitigation efforts. This effectively switched the purposes of the two spillways. It also reduced the water level in the Tarn four feet below the normal spillway crest.

Colorado state regulators manage the dam and assess its overall condition and safety. While it has a high classification hazard rating, that is not based on the condition of the dam, but rather on how catastrophic it would be if the dam failed.

The Town of Breckenridge is currently building a new \$50 million water plant which is expected to be completed by 2020. The Town cannot start working on repairing the Tarn dam until the current water treatment plant, which is located at the base of the dam, can be shut off, since the town would then be left with no source of water for its residents.

Breckenridge has agreed to fund the repair of the Tarn dam at an estimated cost of \$30 million.

In a July meeting with Michelle Eddy, TBR City Manager, it was disclosed that the water levels will remain low and be drawn even lower during the time when repairs are actually initiated through the completion date which is now estimated for 2023.

Any work on the Tarn requires a permit as it is included in an environmentally sensitive area with implications extending into a designated wetlands area.