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Broken dam isolates some Cary Lake residents

About 15 residents use a makeshift road to get to their homes, cut off when dam failed
Road repairs will have to wait until dam is rebuilt, Transportation Department says

Flood insurance? 'I think I'll keep it'





Richland County flooding has led some residents to carve their own new routes in and out of neighborhoods.

BY CASSIE COPE

ccope@thestate.com

ARCADIA LAKES, SC

To get to their homes, some Cary Lake residents now have to use a makeshift passageway.

Normal access to their homes was lost when Cary Lake dam was washed away in the Oct. 4 flood.



Residents along Arcadia Lakes Drive East, Lake Arcadia Lane and Skii Lane had no way into or out of their neighborhood after flood waters blew out the dam and only road to their homes, over Cary Lake. A road was cut in an easement between two houses so they could have access until the dam and road are replaced. Here resident Don Golightly drives the new, roundabout way to his house on Skii lane. **Tracy Glantz** tglantz@thestate.com

Now, they drive on a makeshift road, created by removing a chain-link fence and using gravel to extend a driveway onto a nearby street, to get to work or shop.

The residents in about 15 homes on Skii Lane, a portion of Arcadia Lakes Drive East and Lake Arcadia Lane lost access to nearby Trenholm Road when the Cary Lake dam failed, taking with it the road that was atop.

“I knew we were trapped,” said Jimmy Adams, a retired minister who lives on Cary Lake.

On Oct. 4, flood water in the rising Cary Lake threatened homes in the area. It drained like a bathtub when the dam broke, Adams said.

But the broken dam also left the residents stranded.

To get out of the area now, residents drive on Lake Arcadia Lane to what was previously a dead end. There, residents use the makeshift road that carries them out onto a nearby street.

The state Transportation Department will repair the road atop the Cary Lake dam once the dam's owner, the Cary Lake Homeowners Association, repairs that structure, said Transportation Department spokesman Pete Poore.

The Transportation Department says the repairs will happen after Thanksgiving.

But area resident Don Golightly, an architect, expects it to take a lot longer to rebuild the dam and road.

Now, area residents face a challenge in directing others into their suddenly isolated neighborhood.

For example, a package company couldn't get in to make a delivery, Golightly said. In response, the architect sketched a map showing the new route to access his house, using the cut-through.

Garbage contractors also could not find a way into the area.

A pile of debris, including TVs and a mattress, sat Wednesday next to road-closure signs just before the broken dam.

Arcadia Lakes Mayor Mark Huguley said the garbage contractor couldn't find a way to get to the trash.

Huguley has ensured emergency dispatchers know how to direct police, fire and emergency officials into the neighborhood, if necessary.

Despite the inconvenience of their makeshift road, the neighbors consider themselves lucky, compared to others who suffered much more from the flooding.

"We're fortunate," said Adams, who lost a restored aluminum boat that was swept away during the flooding. "Last time I saw it, it was heading for the dam."

Golightly's lakefront home — which he designed for a sister around 1970 and later bought — now overlooks mudflats.

Water flooded Golightly's basement, damaging the flooring and furniture.

But he's saving a few important items. "I refuse to throw away my jukebox," Golightly said, adding his pool table is staying, too.

Adams moved into his house in 2010, when he retired, never thinking flooding would be a concern.

When his house was assessed a few years ago, Adams learned it was in a flood plain. He bought flood insurance.

"Now, I think I'll keep it," he added.

Reach Cope at (803) 771-8657.

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