

U.S. dams aging; many don't have emergency plans

By Benjamin Spillman, Tracy Loew and Jill Castellano, USA Today

As the nation's 84,000 dams continue to age, a growing number of people downstream of these structures are at risk, according to experts and data of the nation's dams.

It's a problem highlighted this week as nearly 200,000 people evacuated the area near Oroville Dam, which suffered a potential failure of its emergency spillway.

The *USA Today* Network reviewed the latest data in the National Inventory of Dams, which is compiled by the Army Corps of Engineers and shows 15,498 dams across the United States are characterized as high hazard, meaning the loss of at least one human life is likely if the dam were to fail.

The average age of the 84,000 dams in the country is 52 years old, according to a 2013 report by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

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