

# NATIONAL IMPACT OF THE 1976 TETON FLOOD DISASTER



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The Teton Dam remains one of the largest dam failures in U.S. history that forever changed federal programs relief and design

IDAHO  
Gov. Cecil Andrus  
Frank Church  
George Hanson  
...AND MANY OTHERS



= 1976 Volunteer States & Countries

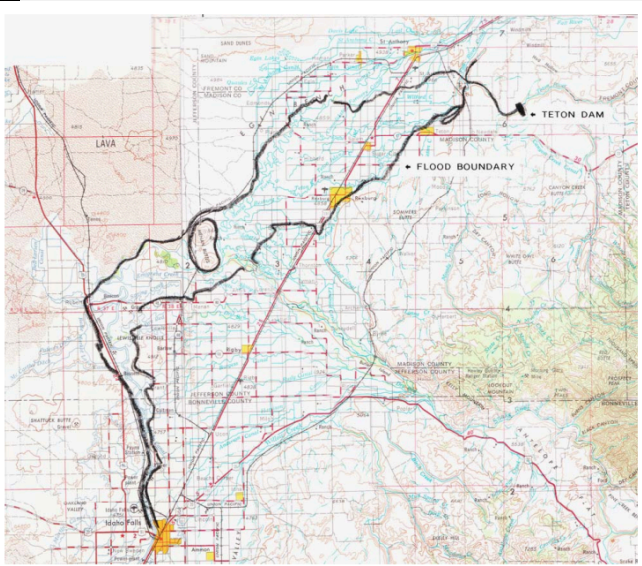


Figure 2 – Teton Dam Failure Inundation Map from Teton Dam to Idaho Falls

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For sources, bibliography

## Quick Facts

Approved: 1964  
Build Started: 1972  
Completed: Nov 1975

Base of Dam Leak:  
June 5, 8:30 am  
Dam Failure:  
June 5, 11:57 am

Height: 305 ft tall  
Reservoir:  
17 miles long,  
holding 80 billion  
gallons of water

Warning: only minutes  
for closest towns  
Speed: 1-2 billion  
ft/second

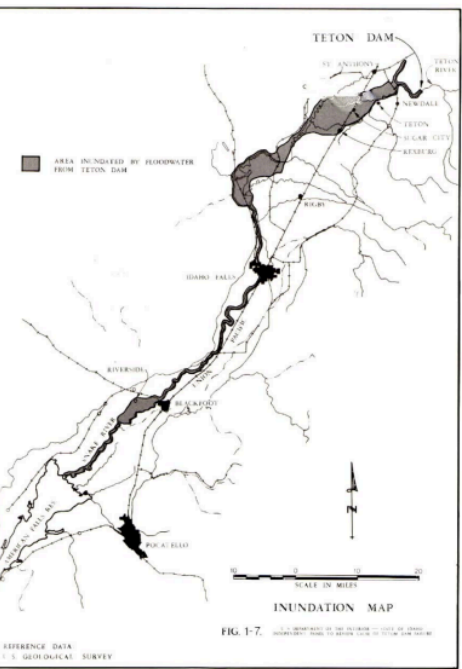


Figure 1 – Teton Dam Failure Inundation Map

Dam Failure to  
containment:  
3 days, 100+  
miles  
(Teton to  
American Falls)



Leo Ryan  
Congressman,  
CA



Flooded  
FASTER than  
Niagara Falls  
flows

Gilbert Gude  
Congressman,  
MD



Conclusion: Federal programs  
relief and dam design were  
improved or created to  
address the Teton Dam and  
future disasters

Total cost estimated in ranges from  
\$300,000 (initial cost) to 2 billion

**Bureau of Reclamation**  
1<sup>st</sup> dam failure in  
75 years

Result: Restructuring,  
increased on-site  
supervision, Safety  
Evaluation of Existing  
Dams (SEED) program

**Federal Emergency  
Management Agency  
(FEMA)**

Teton named as 1 or 3  
disasters to create FEMA

Result: 1979 Executive  
order by President  
Jimmy Carter

**National Weather  
Service  
(NOAA)**

Only tracked flood by  
rainfall measures

Result: 1st time tracking  
flooding by dam  
breakage



50 Year Anniversary  
June 5, 2026