



# Cameron Run / Holmes Run Watershed Feasibility Study e-Newsletter



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## Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of the Cameron Run / Holmes Run Watershed Feasibility Study electronic newsletter! This edition provides an overview of Lake Barcroft and the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District (LBWID). Lake Barcroft was created in 1915, and drains a 14.5-square mile area of the Cameron Run watershed. The lake is named for Dr. John W. Barcroft, who owned and operated a mill on Holmes Run during the mid-1800s.

The LBWID was established in 1973 and is governed by a board of three trustees who are local residents, and are approved by the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. These two entities also approve LBWID's annual budget. For additional information on Lake Barcroft and its history, please read on below.

## Lake Barcroft WID History

- 1913 – The Alexandria Water Company starts construction of the Lake Barcroft Dam to create a drinking water reservoir for the City of Alexandria.
- 1915 – Construction of the dam is completed. The resulting 620 million-gallon reservoir is put into service.
- 1942 – The Alexandria Water Company installs 24 gates at the top of the dam to raise the spillway elevation five feet. Reservoir size is raised to 800 million gallons.
- 1949 – Lake Barcroft ceases to be a water supply reservoir, as the City of Alexandria begins to draw its drinking water from the Occoquan Reservoir.
- 1950 – Colonel Joseph Barger and Associates purchase the reservoir, dam, adjacent 680 acres of land for \$1 million from the Alexandria Water Company.
- 1951 – Barger and Associates start developing the 680 acres into a residential community.
- 1969 - 1970 – Community residents purchase the lake, dam, and common grounds for \$300,000; the Lake Barcroft Association (LBA) is established.
- 1972 – The peak flow from Hurricane Agnes tops the dam and washes out its western earthen section.
- 1973 – Residents vote to establish the LBWID (a state political subdivision) to raise funds to repair the dam. The LBA grants a permanent easement to the LBWID to carry out its duties of repairing, operating, and maintaining the dam, as well as dredging the lake.
  - LBWID begins to generate revenue from a tax on the 1.045 community property owners.

- 1974 – LBWID completes \$1.5 million in dam repairs.
  - The 24 small gates were removed.
  - A 152-foot wide, 12-foot tall bascule gate is installed to maintain lake level. The gate is operated by an automatic controller.
  - The dam's earthen section is rebuilt.
- 1974 – LBWID petitions the Fairfax County District Court to refill the lake and operate the dam. The Court authorizes the lake's refilling and mandates that the dam be operated to maintain a constant lake level.
- 1974 – The lake refills and is usable by summer.
- 1974 to present – Over the past 30+ years, LBWID has spent almost \$3 million for dredging and disposing of approximately 420,000 cubic yards of sediment.

## Current Projects

LBWID is working to reestablish partnerships with Fairfax County, the City of Alexandria, and the City of Falls Church. LBWID hopes to operate more transparently so that the local governments and citizens know that the dam is being operated properly.

- LBWID, Fairfax County, and the City of Alexandria have partnered to cost-share upgrading the dam's remote monitoring system and the installation of a 60-kilowatt back-up generator for the dam.
  - Remote monitoring will allow local governments to know the discharge from the dam at all times.
  - Dam discharge data will enable local governments to monitor stream flow levels in lower Holmes Run and Cameron Run. Local governments also can monitor the dam with a webcam.
  - The 60-kilowatt generator will allow the dam to operate automatically during power outages and will also ensure that the remote monitoring system is always operational.
  - LBWID manually operates a gas-powered hydraulic pump during power outages, which requires a person to be on site. The back-up generator keeps the automatic computer-operated gate controller functioning even without an emergency operator on site.
- LBWID has participated in meetings related to the Cameron / Holmes Run Watershed Feasibility Study.

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