

# Dam...from Page 1A



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

**L to R: Union County resident Bobby Lance, Vogel State Park Manager Jack Becker and Engineer Fred Halterman. Lance attended a Wednesday, Feb. 28, meeting on emergency preparations hosted by Becker and Halterman.**

impending or actual failure of the dam," said Becker.

Continued Becker: "Right now, there are 26 residents down below the dam, 19 businesses, three farms and two county properties that would be affected if the dam were to fail."

The dam at Vogel State Park is a 48-foot high earthen dam that was built in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and because of its location relative to residents and businesses downstream, it has been classified as a Category I dam.

"To be considered a Category I dam, the improper operation or failure would result in a probable loss of human life," according to Georgia EPD.

The EAP for the dam at Vogel State Park includes information on the varying levels of potential dam distress and what the state would do to address critical dam issues should they arise, and the dam receives quarterly inspections

to ensure it remains in good health.

Another purpose of the meeting was to get residents and business owners who live and work below the dam signed up for the Union County Wireless Emergency Notification System.

UCWENS is a system that allows Union County first responders to notify residents of emergency conditions in their area, such as impending wintry weather, incoming thunderstorms, and trouble at the dam so that people could get to higher ground in time.

Union County EMA Director and Fire Chief David Dyer also spoke in the Feb. 28 Vogel dam meeting, and he said it was imperative for residents to prepare for worst case scenarios, which includes signing up for UCWENS.

Signing up for the notification program can be done easily online by navigating to [TinyURL.com/UCWENS](http://TinyURL.com/UCWENS), at which point residents just need to complete the form that

comes up.

It's important to completely fill out the form to include a local address, so that localized emergency notifications can reach the proper residents.

Bobby Lance was the only resident who attended the meeting, and he signed up for UCWENS that evening.

Lance lives a little more than a mile downstream of the dam, and if the dam were to fail, roughly a foot-and-a-half of water would hit his house half an hour after the break.

Of course, there's no reason to think the dam that holds back Lake Trahlyta is going to fail, though Lance said he was glad the state and county held the meeting to let people know their options.

"This just shows that everybody cares, and that it's a forward-thinking plan to alert people in case something was to happen, which we don't think will," said Lance. "It's very good that we've got people to look at that and look

out for us."

Because of its Category I status, Vogel State Park is required by the Georgia Safe Dams Act of 1978 to have an EAP in place.

The Safe Dams Act

became state law following the failure of the Kelly-Barnes Dam in 1977, which killed 39 people in Toccoa.

Also in attendance for the meeting were Vogel State Park Assistant Manager Cali

Snider, State Parks Region I Manager Joe Yeager, and Fred Halterman, who is the Georgia Safe Dams Engineer of Record for the Vogel State Park dam.

## Gold Star Son works to honor Vietnam Veterans

By Mark Novak  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

For more than 30 years, Wayne A. Jones of Blairsville, a Gold Star Son, has honored the memory of his father by volunteering his time to recognize Vietnam Veterans.

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Wayne E. Jones of the 18th Aviation Company died on Aug. 17, 1967, when the plane that he was piloting crashed into Dragon Mountain, Pleiku, Vietnam, in severe weather.

Jones' father served as a U.S. Marine from 1950 to 1954, and in 1958, the Jones family moved to Alaska. There, Jones' dad became a state trooper and flew as a private pilot from 1960 to 1964.

"When the Army was looking for pilots in 1964, my dad volunteered for the Army Warrant Officer Flight School," said Jones. "My father was awarded the Air Medal 16 times in the seven months he was there. An Air Medal is awarded for every 25 hours of combat flight. He was also posthumously awarded the Bronze Star."

As a youth growing up, Jones heard many of the negative comments from others about the Vietnam War and about his dad's participation in the war, so for 20 years, he didn't speak about his father in public.

"I had never talked about my father," said Jones. "Like most Vietnam Vets, it wasn't accepted. Most of these guys came home to an ungrateful nation."

On Memorial Day in 1987, in Houston, Texas, Jones marched in the parade and was able to see the Moving Wall honoring the Vietnam Veterans, including his dad, whose name he found on the wall.

Finding a name on the wall was not easy, and Jones started volunteering to help people find their family and friends' names on the wall.

"I didn't have a place amongst all the different Vietnam Veterans groups there, so I hung around the volunteer tent," said Jones. "There are 58,318 names on the wall, and eight of them are women. That's both killed in action and missing in action."

Through his repeated interactions with other children whose fathers had been killed in Vietnam, he began to wonder how many others like him were out there.

"I am one of the founding members of Sons and Daughters in Touch, SDIT.



Photo by Mark Novak

**Wayne Jones is a Gold Star Son whose father died in Vietnam. Here he is in the Veterans Room at the Blairsville Restaurant.**

org," said Jones. "It is a national organization of people who lost their father in Vietnam.

"My estimate is between 10,000 and 12,000 children lost their dads in Vietnam, based on the research I've been doing."

Sons and Daughters in Touch was established in 1990, eight years after the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Jones volunteers his time at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington D.C., and he has been doing so for the last four years.

Jones also unofficially presents the Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin to any living U.S. veteran that served in the U.S. Armed Forces between November 1, 1955, and May 15, 1975.

The pin is a lasting memento of the nation's thanks for their service to their country.

"When I present a pin to a veteran, I tell them, on behalf of a grateful nation, I would like to thank them for their service," said Jones. "There is no way we could repay the debt to the men and women who served during that period of time."

The Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #1101 will be meeting on March 15

at 12 p.m. at the Maj. Leon Davenport Veterans Center off Georgia 515 in Blairsville.

As a reminder, National Vietnam Memorial Day is on March 29, 2018.