



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Jan. 3, 2018

### **Parks & Rec reopens North Greenway and Walter Hill Park**

*TDEC and City Evaluation of Walter Hill Dam Clears Public Access to City Property*

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** — The City of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Department reopened the North Murfreesboro Greenway and Walter Hill Park today (Jan.3) following a structural assessment of Walter Hill Dam. The city properties had been temporarily closed Dec. 26, 2017- Jan. 2, 2018, pending an evaluation of the dam by engineers and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) Safe Dams personnel.

Authorities were advised by a citizen that water was reportedly spilling out of a small hole in the northern side of the wall approximately four feet from the base of the dam. It is now believed that the “unusual flow patterns” observed at the dam were caused by a man-made structural ledge in the dam wall, which is part of a former concrete low-level drain plugged in 1983.

Personnel from TDEC and engineering firm Smith Seckman Reid, Inc. (SSR) visited Walter Hill Dam Wednesday, Dec. 27 to make a site inspection and evaluate the dam’s condition.

The inspection was requested by City authorities after some suspected that the dam had sustained damage from high river flows during heavy rainfall the weekend of Dec. 22-23. No permanent structures along the Stones River were believed to be in danger of flooding from an unlikely dam failure. However, recreational activity, including fishing, was restricted downstream of the dam until a more detailed assessment could be completed.

City engineers observed “unusual flow patterns” on the base of the dam near the former powerhouse. Engineers and State inspectors made fuller assessment of the dam Dec. 27 to determine its structural integrity and a plan of action.

**-(MORE)-**

Out of an abundance of precaution, the City of Murfreesboro closed Walter Hill Park and Trailhead and the North Murfreesboro Greenway until the dam could be fully assessed. Engineering firm Smith Seckman and Reid, Inc. (SSR) had already been contracted to provide an engineering assessment of the City-owned dam. The Water Resources Department had planned remedial work on the dam based on previous inspection work.

The City biannually assesses the 100-year-old dam for structural integrity as required in the City's 2-year operating permit issued in Sept. 2017 under the Tennessee Safe Dams regulations.

For City News online, visit [www.Murfreesborotn.gov](http://www.Murfreesborotn.gov).

**Photos Attached:**

1. *Walter Hill Dam.jpg*
2. *Walter Hill Dam ledge, Aug. 2009.jpg*.
3. *Walter Hill Dam, Sept. 2008.jpg*.
4. *City Parks & Rec Logo.jpg*.

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