

Hydraulic Failures from the Uncontrolled Flow of Water: A Few Examples of Earthen Dam Failures

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The photos below are just logical outcomes that could happen if PolyMet's lagoon's earthen dam upstream or Duluth over-tops and/or dissolves after a heavy downpour and then bursts. Such a catastrophe would inevitably destroy St Louis River, all the fish, all the nearby trees, a lot of lives (and livestock) and who knows how many of the little river towns along the way. Actually the destruction in a worst-case scenario would involve everything near the river all the way down to Lake Superior. Such a catastrophe would seriously affect everybody in Duluth and the northern Minnesota area and create a dead zone and a SuperFund site all the way from Lake Superior upstream.

The following 3 images were taken after the 1976 Teton Earthen Dam Failure

Two small Idaho towns downstream from the Teton Dam, Wilford and Sargar City, were wiped from the map in the flood. Thousands of farm animals were drowned. Hibbard and Rexburg were also largely flooded. In some places houses were under as much as 10 feet of water. Further downstream, the city of Roberts was also greatly affected.





The remaining images are from an assortment of other earthen dam failures just like the one scheduled copper-sulfide lagoon to be built by the PolyMet corporation upstream from the St Louis River. It will be over 200 feet high, which is twice the height of the Mount Polley dam in British Columbia.

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Dr Kohls is a retired physician from Duluth, MN, USA. He writes a weekly column for the Duluth Reader, the area's alternative newsweekly magazine. His columns deal with the dangers of American fascism, corporatism, militarism, racism, malnutrition, Big Pharma's psychiatric drugging and over-vaccination regimens, and other movements that threaten the environment, prosperity, democracy, civility and the health and longevity of the planet and the populace. Many of his columns are archived at

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