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Lake Turkana, Kenya

There is much concern among those living downstream from a dam currently under construction along Lake Turkana's primary fresh water supply, the Omo River. At stake is nothing less than the survival of a half-million African farmers, fisherman, and herders living along the lower river and lake shores.

While the Gibe III dam would create a reservoir to supply much needed water to the nearby Ethiopian population, it would considerably restrict inflow to the already saline Lake Turkana, which is located in Kenya. If the rate of evaporation in the lake exceeds the rate of replenishment, water level will go down while the salt concentration goes up.

Critics believe the dam will destroy the lake's ecosystem and lead to the starvation of those who rely on it for sustenance. Those in favor of the dam insist the impact to Kenya will be temporary, and very little will change once the new reservoir reaches stability.

Also worth mentioning is the U.S. Geological Survey's report suggesting that the dam's immediate neighborhood is at a relatively high risk for a magnitude 7 or 8 earthquake. Most scientists concur that dams and earthquakes are mutually incompatible, and the downstream consequences of a failure would be catastrophic.

