

Upper Elk Creek Watershed Project

Beckham, Kiowa and Washita Counties, Oklahoma

Protecting Our People - Protecting Our Natural Resources



This is one of 129 examples of how local, state and federal government agencies have worked together to utilize the Natural Resources Conservation Service Watershed Program to address natural resource needs and improve the quality of life for thousands of Oklahomans.*

Upper Elk Creek Watershed Project

The Upper Elk Creek Watershed Project includes 35 flood control dams, Twenty-one dams are in Washita County, 11 dams are in Beckham County and 3 dams are in Kiowa County.

Before the dams were constructed, the Upper Elk Creek Watershed was subject to frequent and severe flooding. During the years of 1940-1960 there were 33 major floods which covered more than 50 percent of the floodplain and 29 minor floods. These floods destroyed roads, bridges, crops, and fences and eroded the land. Flooding cost landowners and county governments thousands of dollars each year.

In 1964 the North Fork of Red River Conservation District, Kiowa County Conservation District, Washita County Conservation District, City of Elk City and Town of Sentinel developed a work plan for the watershed with the assistance of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that included the construction of flood control dams and land treatment practices.

The 35 flood control dams were constructed between 1968-1990.

Upper Elk Creek Watershed Dam No. 22, known as Elk City Lake, was constructed in 1970 by the City of Elk City. The dam was built for flood control and recreation. The city paid for an additional 1,248 acre feet of water beyond that needed for flood control for recreational use when the dam was constructed. The dam creates a 250 surface acre lake.

Upper Elk Creek Watershed Project Benefits –35 Dams

- Dams provide \$1.3 million in average annual benefits from reduced flood damages
- Provides flood protection for 251 farms and ranches
- Provides flood protection for 27 major bridges and many smaller bridges and county roads
- Created or enhanced 925 acres of wetlands
- Reduces sedimentation of streams and rivers by 192,226 tons of soil annually
- Impounded water has created fish and wildlife habitat, waterfowl nesting areas and livestock water

The Upper Elk Creek Watershed Project is one of 129* projects in Oklahoma that have been planned and implemented by local people with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

2,107 flood control dams have been constructed in 61 Oklahoma counties. The watershed projects that also include thousands of conservation practices provide over \$90 million in average annual benefits.

For additional information about watershed projects in the state visit the Oklahoma Conservation Commission website at: <http://conservation.ok.gov> or visit your local



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