

Wildhorse Creek Watershed Project

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.*

Wildhorse Creek Watershed Project

One hundred and seven flood control dams have been constructed in the 420,000 acre Wildhorse Creek Watershed in Stephens, Garvin, Carter, and Murray Counties. The dams were built by the Stephens County, Murray County, Garvin and Arbuckle Conservation Districts with the assistance of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Program.

Flooding was a common occurrence in the watershed before the dams were constructed. Between 1923 and 1942 there were 23 major floods (those with water covering over one-half of the floodplain) and 57 smaller floods. These floods destroyed crops, killed livestock, and washed out roads, bridges and fences causing an estimated \$220,000 in annual damages.

Conservation districts and the Wildhorse Creek Flood Prevention Association requested the assistance of the USDA Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) for assistance in developing and implementing a watershed project that would consist of constructing flood control dams and installing conservation practices in the watershed. A watershed plan was developed in 1950.

Assistance was provided by NRCS through the PL-534 Watershed Program (Flood Control Act of 1944). The City of Duncan and Elmore City also became sponsors of the project because of their need for municipal water. The 107 flood control dams were constructed between 1949 and 1993.

Five dams in the watershed were designed as multipurpose structures to provide municipal water and recreational areas (Duncan Lake, Clear Creek Lake, Lake Humphreys, and Lake Fuqua in Stephens County and Elmore City Lake in Garvin County).



Five of the 107 flood control dams also provide municipal water and recreational areas.

Benefits of the Wildhorse Creek Watershed Project (107 Flood Control Dams)

- Provides \$5.4 million in annual benefits from reduced flood damages
- Provides flood protection for bridges, county roads
- Provides flood protection for 622 farms and ranches
- Impounded water has created fish and wildlife habitat, waterfowl nesting areas
- Sedimentation is reduced by 503,000 tons of soil annually
- 1,236 acres of wetlands have been created or enhanced by the project

The Wildhorse 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 and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.

2,107 NRCS-assisted flood control dams have been constructed in 61 Oklahoma counties. These watershed projects that also include thousands of conservation practices provide over \$81 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 conservation district and NRCS office.