

Caston Mountain Creek Watershed Project LeFlore County, 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.*

Caston Mountain Creek Watershed Project

The Caston Mountain Creek Watershed is located in the eastern part of LeFlore County. The town of Wister is in the lower reaches of the 47,000 acre watershed.

The watershed project consists of five flood control dams and the installation of conservation practices. The project was planned in 1965 and implemented by the LeFlore County Conservation District with the assistance of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program.

The five dams were constructed between 1972 and 1975. Flooding was a common occurrence before the dams were built with major floods occurring on an average of every five years (floods that cover more than one half of the floodplain) and smaller floods occurring annually. Annual storms destroyed crops, damaged pasture land, washed out roads, bridges, and fences, and deposited silt.

A 15-year frequency storm would cause flooding in the town of Wister. A storm in May 1961 flooded 104 acres of Wister and closed Highways 270 and 271. This storm caused \$405,000 in damages.

The dams now protect Wister and agricultural land from flooding and has reduced erosion and sedimentation in the watershed.

Caston Mountain Creek Watershed Project Benefits

- Provides \$845,000 in average annual benefits from reduced flood damages
- Provides flood protection for the City of Wister
- Provides flood protection for 1,700 acres of floodplain
- Provides flood protection for bridges and county roads
- Provides flood protection for 219 farms and ranches
- Impounded water has created fish and wildlife habitat, waterfowl nesting areas and livestock water
- Sedimentation is reduced by 35,000 tons of soil annually
- 150 acres of wetlands have been created or enhanced

The Caston Mountain 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.

