

Upper Elk Creek Watershed Dam No. 22 - Elk City Lake



Protecting Our People - Protecting Our Natural Resources

This is one of 2,107 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 Dam No. 22

Upper Elk Creek Watershed Dam No. 22, known as Elk City Lake, was constructed in 1970 by Elk City and the North Fork of Red River 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 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.

A 750 acre park has been developed around the lake with recreational facilities that include picnic areas and pavilions, restrooms, campsites and RV hookups, a fishing dock, two boat ramps, swimming areas, mountain bike and horse trails and a playground.

The dam is one of 35 flood control dams constructed in the Upper Elk Creek Watershed (11 in Beckham County, 21 in Washita County and 3 in Kiowa County).

Flooding was a common occurrence in the watershed before the dams were constructed. From 1941 to 1960 there were 33 major floods (those where over one-half of the floodplain flooded) and 29 smaller floods. Floods washed out bridges, roads and fences; drown livestock; destroyed crops; and eroded crop and pasture land.

In 1964 the North Fork of Red River, Kiowa County and Washita County Conservation Districts requested assistance from NRCS in developing and implementing a watershed project that consisted of constructing flood control dams and applying conservation practices. The 35 flood control dams were built between 1968 and 1990. As the dams were constructed flooding became less frequent and severe.



Upper Elk Creek Watershed Dam No. 22 provides flood control and recreational areas.

Benefits of the 35 Flood Control Dams in Upper Elk Creek Watershed

- Provides \$1.2 million in average annual benefits from reduced flood damages
- Provides flood protection for bridges and county roads
- Provides flood protection for 251 farms and ranches
- Impounded water has created fish and wildlife habitat, waterfowl nesting areas and livestock water
- 925 acres of wetlands have been created or enhanced
- Sedimentation is reduced by 190,000 tons of soil annually

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 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.