

Upper Red Rock Creek Watershed Project

Garfield and Noble 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 Red Rock Creek Watershed Project

The Upper Red Rock Creek Watershed Project consists of forty-three flood control dams in a 197,000 watershed in Garfield and Noble Counties.

The dams were constructed by the Red Rock Conservancy District, Garfield County Conservation District and Noble 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.

Severe flooding occurred in the watershed prior to the construction of the dams. There were 14 major floods (flood waters covered over one-half of the floodplain) and 129 smaller floods from 1935 to 1954. Floods destroyed crops, drown livestock, washed out roads and bridges and eroded the land. One of the most severe floods occurred in 1957, causing over one million dollars in damages to the property of 126 landowners. Families along Red Rock Creek had to be rescued from the flood waters by boat.

After the 1957 flood the Red Rock Conservancy District and the Garfield and Noble County Conservation Districts requested assistance from NRCS in developing and implementing a watershed project which included flood control dams and conservation practices.

The plan was finalized in 1960 and included 56 proposed flood control dams. The first dam was constructed in 1964 and the most recent one in 2006. Forty-three of the 56 planned dams have been constructed (25 in Garfield County and 18 in Noble County).

The most recent constructed dam (Upper Red Rock Creek Watershed Dam No. 52 in 2006) provides flood protection for agricultural land and for Interstate-35. If the remaining 13 planned dams were constructed they would add an additional \$377,000 in annual benefits to the watershed



Upper Red Rock Creek Watershed Dam No. 52 protects I-35 and agricultural land

Benefits of the 43 Flood Control Dams in the Upper Red Rock Creek Project

- Provides \$524,000 in average annual benefits from reduced flood damages
- Provides flood protection for bridges, highways and county roads
- Provides flood protection for 186 farms and ranches
- Impounded water has created fish and wildlife habitat, waterfowl nesting areas and livestock water
- Sedimentation is reduced by 217,000 tons annually
- 1,300 acres of wetlands have been created or enhanced

The Upper Red Rock 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.