

# Rock Creek Watershed Project

## Garvin, Murray and Pontotoc Counties

### 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.*

#### Rock Creek Watershed Project

The Rock Creek Watershed Project encompasses 170 square miles and includes 17 flood control dams. Fifteen dams are in Murray County one is in Garvin County and one is in Pontotoc County. The Rock Creek Watershed drains into the Washita River.

Before the dams were constructed, the Rock Creek Watershed was subject to frequent and severe flooding. There were 109 floods in the watershed between 1924 and 1943, 22 which inundated more than one-half of the flood plain area.

In 1959 the Garvin, Murray County and Pontotoc County Conservation Districts requested assistance from the USDA Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) in developing a watershed plan that included the construction of dams and application of conservation practices to help control the flooding.

The dams were built primarily for flood protection for rural agricultural land, but also provide fish and wildlife habitat, livestock and irrigation water and sediment retention.

Dams Number 15 and 16 are currently being rehabilitated to bring them up to current dam safety standards and to extend their benefits for another 100 years. These dams, located upstream from the City of Sulphur, are considered high hazard dams due to the large number of homes, businesses and roads downstream that could be affected if the dams failed.

#### Rock Creek Watershed Project Benefits –17 Dams

- Dams provide \$386,610 in average annual benefits from reduced flood damages
- Provides flood protection for 337 farms and ranches
- Provides flood protection for houses and businesses in the City of Sulphur and for 10 major bridges and many smaller bridges and county roads
- Created or enhanced 259 acres of wetlands
- Reduces sedimentation of streams and rivers by 41,129 tons of soil annually
- Impounded water has created fish and wildlife habitat, waterfowl nesting areas and livestock water
- Dams and associated conservation practices improve the water quality in the Lake of the Arbuckles and provides protection for the Chickasaw National Recreational Area

The 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.

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 conservation district and NRCS office.



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