

Oklahoma's Watershed Dams Located Within the Cherokee Nation

Sallisaw Creek Watershed Dam No. 1
Adair County, Oklahoma

Oklahoma has 129 watershed projects sponsored by local units of government such as conservation districts and municipalities.

Local watershed project sponsors with the assistance of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have constructed 2,107 flood control dams in 61 counties to reduce flooding, control erosion and sediment, improve fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality and in some cases provide recreational areas and municipal water supplies. Of these, 60 dams are located within the Cherokee Nation.

Several dams are usually constructed in a watershed to trap rainfall and slowly release it through pipes in the dams preventing flooding downstream.

Watershed projects sponsors and NRCS have also worked with landowners to help them install thousands of conservation practices to help control erosion and sediment.

Watershed projects have established a \$2 billion infrastructure that provides \$94 million in average annual benefits from reduced flood damage and other benefits. Dams in the Cherokee Nation provide an estimated \$3.9 million in annual benefits. The flood control dams provide flood protection for houses, businesses, roads and bridges, and productive farmland.

There are seven flood control dams within the Cherokee Nation that have been planned but not yet constructed. Some of these planned dams have not been constructed due to land right issues, land use changes and lack of federal and local funding.

The NRCS provides planning, design and construction of the dams through the USDA Watershed Program. Federal funds for the program are appropriated by Congress.

Local project sponsors provide land rights and easements and are responsible for the operation and maintenance of the dams.

High Hazard Dams

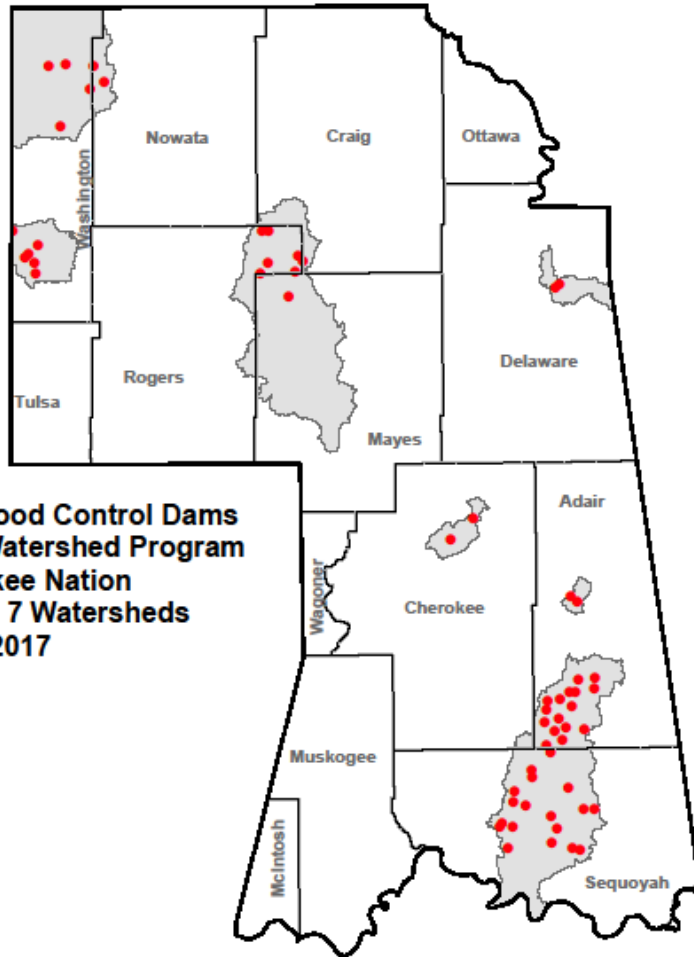
There are 260 watershed dams that are classified as high hazard dams, which mean if the dams should fail, there could be loss of life downstream. Of these, 37 high hazard dams are located within the Cherokee Nation (see map on back).

Rehabilitation of Aging Dams

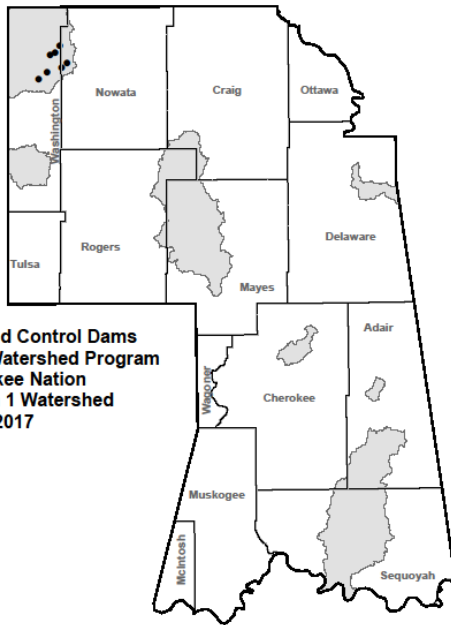
Many dams today are in a far different setting than when they were constructed. Population has grown, homes and businesses have been constructed upstream and downstream from the dams; land uses have changed; sediment pools have filled; and concrete and metal components have deteriorated.

Many dams in Oklahoma do not meet current dam safety regulations due to the adoption of more stringent requirements after the dams were built.

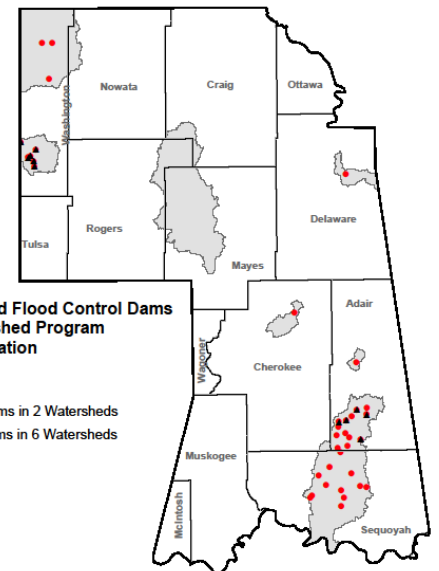
Rehabilitation to meet current safety standards usually requires raising the height of the dam, replacing the principal spillway inlet and conduit and widening the earthen auxiliary spillway. Thirty-six dams have been rehabilitated with 11 of these located in the Cherokee Nation (see map on back).



**Constructed Flood Control Dams
USDA NRCS Watershed Program
Cherokee Nation
60 Dams in 7 Watersheds
2017**



**Planned Flood Control Dams
USDA NRCS Watershed Program
Cherokee Nation
7 Dams in 1 Watershed
2017**



**High Hazard and Rehabilitated Flood Control Dams
USDA NRCS Watershed Program
Cherokee Nation
2017**

- ▲ 11 Rehabilitated Dams in 2 Watersheds
- 37 High Hazard Dams in 6 Watersheds