Flood Control Dams in McCurtain County

Oklahoma has 2,107 flood control dams in 61 counties. These dams have been constructed through conservation districts with financial and technical assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) authorized through Public Law 78-534 (Washita River Watershed) and Public Law 83-566 Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program.

The primary purpose of flood control dams is to reduce flooding. The secondary benefits of the dams address a myriad of public needs such as water supply, water quality, soil health, water management, wetland enhancement, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreation. Flood control dams improve public safety, contribute to a healthy economy and support a strong nation.

Watershed projects also include the installation of natural resource conservation practices such as terraces, waterways, ponds, gully repair, and pasture and rangeland plantings. These conservation practices improve water quality and soil health and reduce sedimentation into the lakes formed by the dams.

Operation and Maintenance of Dams

The annual operation and maintenance of dams is the responsibility of project sponsors (local units of governments such as conservation districts).

Operation and maintenance of dams can be expensive and labor intensive, but is necessary to ensure the dams function as designed and remain safe.

Maintenance work includes removing trees from dams and spillways, repairing erosion damage, repairing damage to the spillway and dams after heavy rainstorms, and keeping the principal spillway inlet towers cleared of debris.

Operation and Maintenance Needs

An estimated $6 million per year is needed to meet the operations and maintenance needs of the 2,107 flood control dams.

Annual Benefits

The 2,107 flood control dams and conservation practices in watershed projects provide $85 million in annual benefits. Listed on the back page are the average annual benefits from watershed projects in McCurtain County.

Rehabilitation and Dam Safety

Some dams will need rehabilitation to remain safe and protect the people that live or work downstream. There are 249 high hazard dams with 63 that meet current dam safety criteria either through original design or rehabilitation.

It is estimated that $653 million will be required to rehabilitate the remaining 186 high hazard dams to comply with federal and state dam safety laws.

More dams will become high hazard as long as residential and business development is allowed downstream of the dam in the breach flood area.

NRCS can provide 65 percent of the rehabilitation costs and technical assistance to rehabilitate high hazard dams. Local project sponsors provide 35 percent of the cost and obtain any needed additional land rights.

As of January 2015 thirty-four dams in the state have been rehabilitated to meet state and federal mandated dam safety regulations and 18 dams are in various stages of planning, design or construction.

Average Annual Watershed Benefits (Entire Watershed)

Watershed Name	Dams in Watershed	Dams in McCurtain County	Monetary Benefits	Farms/ Ranches Benefited	Bridges Benefited	Wetlands Enhanced/Created (acres)	Reduced Sedimentation (tons of soil)
Waterfall Gilford Creek	11	11	$111,923	215	47	167	21,768
Whitegrass Waterhole Creek	9	9	$1,389,415	148	9	191	24,581
Total	**20**	**20**	**$1,501,338**	**363**	**56**	**358**	**46,349**

Conservation Districts are a primary sponsor of most watershed projects in Oklahoma. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the federal agency that administers the watershed program and provides technical and financial assistance to the local project sponsors.

More information about the USDA Watershed Program and projects in McCurtain County is available from the following:

Little River Conservation District
201 N. Central, Room 124
Idabel, OK
580-286-7645
littlerivercd@conservation.ok.gov

Valliant Conservation District
410 N. Dalton Ave.
Valliant, OK
580-933-4704
valliantcd@conservation.ok.gov

Oklahoma Conservation Commission
2800 N. Lincoln Blvd. Suite 160
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4210
(405) 521-2384
info@conservation.ok.gov
http://www.ok.gov/conservation

Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts
P.O. Box 2775
Oklahoma City, OK 73101-2775
http://www.okconservation.org

Natural Resources Conservation Service
100 USDA, Suite 206
Stillwater, OK. 74074-2655
(405) 742-1204

This Publication is issued by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission as authorized by 65 O.S. 2001 §3-110.
Copies have not been printed but are available on the agency website. January 2015

OKLAHOMA CONSERVATION COMMISSION