

Oak Creek Watershed Dam No. 5

Lake Vanderwork Washita County, Oklahoma



Protecting Our People - Protecting Our Natural Resources

This is one of many 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.

Oak Creek Watershed Dam No. 5

Oak Creek Watershed Dam No. 5, also known as Lake Vanderwork, was constructed in 1968 by the Mountain View Conservation District* and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) with the assistance of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Program (PL 534).

The dam was built for flood control and fish and wildlife habitat. The ODWC provided funds to add 711 acre feet of water storage above that needed for flood control for fish and wildlife. The 135 surface acre lake and six miles of shoreline is open to the public for fishing and recreation. Recreational facilities include a boat ramp and dock, tent camp sites and restrooms.

The dam is one of 14 dams built in the 46,000 acre Oak Creek Watershed in Washita County. Flooding was common before the dams were constructed with severe floods occurring annually (those with flood waters covering over one-half of the floodplain) and minor floods occurring several times a year. An estimated \$46,000 in average annual damages was occurring to crops, fences, roads, and bridges.

In 1963 the Mountain View and Washita County Conservation Districts requested technical and financial assistance from the Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) in developing and implementing the Oak Creek Watershed Project. The 14 flood control dams were built between 1965 and 1969 with the assistance of the NRCS Watershed Program (PL 534-Flood Control Act). Thousands of conservation practices were also applied in the watershed as part of the project to reduce erosion and sedimentation.

*The Mountain View Conservation District was consolidated into the Washita County and Kiowa County Conservation Districts in 2010.



Dam No. 5 provides flood control and fishing, hunting, camping and picnicking opportunities.

Oak Creek Watershed Project Benefits (14 Flood Control Dams)

- Provides \$572,000 in annual benefits from reduced flood damages
- Provides flood protection for bridges and county roads
Provides flood protection for 62 farms and ranches
- Impounded water has created fish and wildlife habitat and waterfowl nesting areas
- 221 acres of wetlands have been created or enhanced

The Oak 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.



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