

## What Is Regular Maintenance?

Regular maintenance consists of:

- Mowing
- Removing brush or trees
- Repairing erosion
- Removing debris from the water control structure
- Repairing or replacing corroded metalwork.

For any additional information on the Small Watershed Program in Alabama, contact your local county NRCS office.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

# Watershed Structures

## What Landowners Need To Know



*Removing debris.*

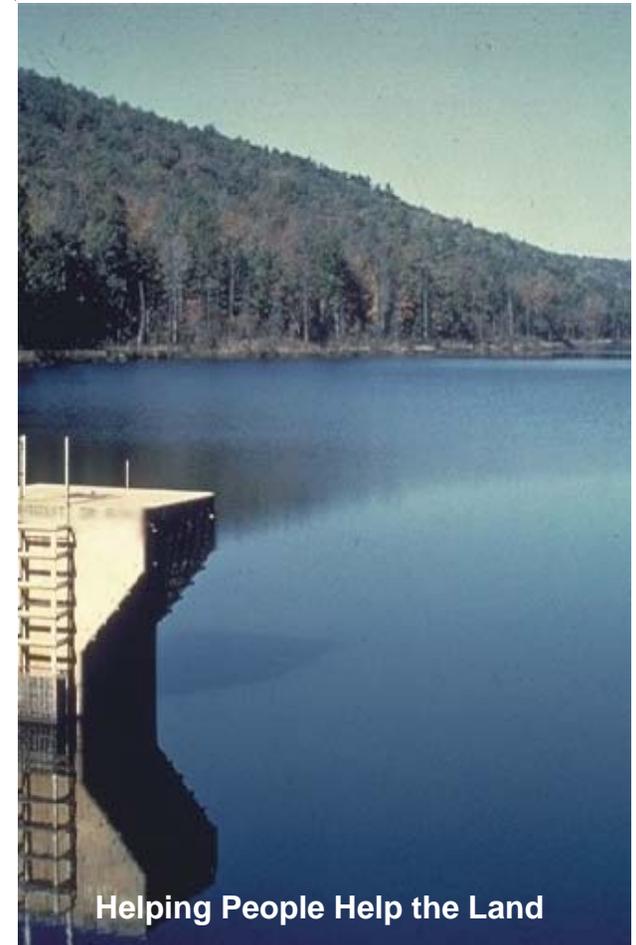
The easement is attached to the deed of the property allowing the local sponsor to have the site constructed and to operate and maintain the structure for its life. In order for structures in Alabama to function as designed, it is extremely important for the landowner to cooperate with the sponsor so routine maintenance can be performed and the dam can remain safe for its entire life.



*Mowing.*



*Spraying brush and trees.*



**Helping People Help the Land**

## What Is A Watershed Structure?

Over 100 watershed structures (dams) were constructed in Alabama between 1960 and 2001. Mostly federal funds through Public Law 566 (The Small Watershed Program) were used to construct these dams.

The primary purpose of a watershed structure is to minimize downstream flooding. The dam collects the runoff from a flood causing rainfall event and stores the water behind the dam causing the pool to temporarily rise. The water is then released over a period of several days reducing the risk of downstream



*A watershed dam creates a scenic reservoir for recreation and water storage.*



flooding. This protects property, roads, bridges, homes, and businesses downstream of the dam.

Catastrophic rainfall events can exceed the storage behind the dam. In these cases, the water must flow around the dam in the emergency spillway.

## Who Owns And Maintains Watershed Structures?

Watershed dams are generally located on private property. The dam and lake behind the dam are owned by private landowners who can use the water for fishing or recreation, as with any other body of water on their property. However, private property owners are not allowed to alter or damage the structure.

They cannot add features to the water control structure to raise the water level.

The emergency spillway is designed to have a permanent vegetative cover without any obstructions. Landowners cannot alter or cause damage to the vegetation.

The emergency spillway cannot be used as a food plot for wildlife. Obstructions in the spillway such as fences or trees are not allowed. Roads or trails going through the spillway should only be located near the pool side of the spillway.

If the structure should fail as a result of the landowner's manipulation, the landowner could be held liable for damages.

In order to construct these dams on private property, a local sponsor (usually a county commission or city) obtains a legal easement prior to dam construction.