

Watershed Operations

August 2009

Investing in the West Fork Big Creek Watershed, Iowa and Missouri

Introduction

Funding for this watershed project will construct an additional 10 small flood control structures.



West Fork Big Creek Watershed is 187,290 acres in size, covering portions of Missouri and Iowa.

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, this project is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jump-start the economy, and create jobs. NRCS is using Recovery Act dollars to update aging flood control structures, protect and maintain water supplies, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. NRCS acquires easements and restores floodplains to safeguard lives and property in areas along streams and rivers that have experienced flooding.

Project Description

- **Location:** Harrison and Daviess Counties (Missouri), 6th Congressional District; Ringgold County (Iowa), 5th Congressional District
- **Federal Funding:** \$950,000

The West Fork Big Creek Watershed Project plan consists of implementing conservation practices to protect the soil from erosion on cropland, and constructing of a series of small flood control dams and one large multi-purpose reservoir for municipal, industrial and rural water supply, recreation, and flood prevention. To date, 138 of the planned 253 single purpose flood retarding structures and the large multi-purpose structure have been completed or are under construction in Missouri. The watershed is located in northern Missouri and extends into Iowa.

Partners

- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- West Fork Big Creek Watershed District
- Decatur County Soil and Water Conservation District (Iowa)
- Decatur County Board of Supervisors (Iowa)
- Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Harrison County Court

Benefits

This project will have a major environmental benefit on the watershed problems of soil erosion and flood damage. Additionally, this project will also provide an abundant water supply for Harrison County. The entire watershed project will reduce flood damage to 23,316 acres, protect stream channels, wetlands, and farmland from flood impacts, and provide beneficial effects on the quality and extent of wildlife habitat.



Small flood control structures help prevent erosion as seen here in the West Fork Big Creek Watershed.

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Economic Opportunities

When completed, this project will provide \$3.6 million in average annual benefits directly or indirectly in the watershed in Iowa and Missouri. This project will create or save jobs in the area.

Statewide Perspective

Completion of this project will assist in maintaining the state's infrastructure of roadways and railways that are imperative to the success of these rural areas. Flood damages in these areas repeatedly impair water quality and threaten the state's fish and animal populations, including some endangered or threatened species. Economic opportunities for local residents will be enhanced by the reduction of sediment left by frequent flooding on profitable agricultural lands.

For More Information

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To date, 138 of the planned 253 structures, like the one pictured above, have been completed or are under construction in the watershed. Recovery Act funding will allow the construction of ten additional structures.

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