



NRCS Assisted Watershed Dams in Texas 10th Congressional District

In the mid-1930s, Congress began looking at ways to complement the downstream flood control program of the Corps of Engineers. It passed flood control acts in 1936, 1944, and 1954 and assigned responsibility of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program to the USDA Soil Conservation Service, now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Since that time, the NRCS has assisted watershed sponsors in construction of nearly 2,000 floodwater retarding structures (dams) in 145 watershed projects across Texas. In addition, the NRCS has assisted watershed sponsors with the installation of land treatment practices, channel improvements, and dikes for watershed protection. Texas watershed projects provide **\$150 million** in annual benefits.

The watershed projects which impact the 10th Congressional District provide **over \$1.5 million** in annual benefits, as well as capturing over 260 thousand tons of sediment annually. These dams protect at least 150 bridges and numerous county and state roads, as well as creating or enhancing 750 acres of wetland.

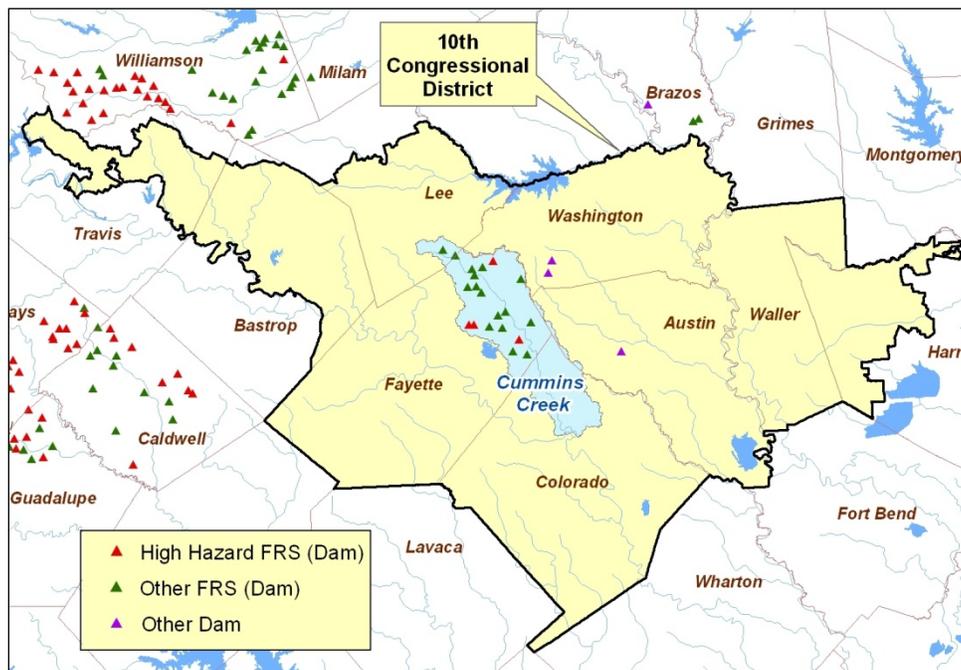
There are **twenty-three watershed dams** in the 10th Congressional District.

Operation and Maintenance of Watershed Projects

The annual operation and maintenance of dams and their components is the responsibility of project sponsors (local units of government, usually conservation districts, city and county governments, and special purpose districts).

See the back of this page for a list of the Cummins Creek Watershed Sponsors.

Operation and maintenance of watershed dams can be expensive and labor intensive, but is necessary to ensure the dams function as designed and remain safe. Maintenance work includes clearing trees from dams and spillways, repairing soil erosion damage, repairing damages after heavy storm events, and keeping the principal spillway inlet clear of debris.



Rehabilitation of Aging Dams

NRCS assistance is available to rehabilitate aging watershed dams. A typical candidate site for rehabilitation was constructed between the late 1950's to the middle 1960's and no longer meets current safety criteria.

There are eighteen dams in the 10th Congressional District that are over 50 years old, two dams that over 40-49 years old, and one dam that is 30 -39 years old.

The majority of the 10th Congressional District was in a rural setting when the watershed projects were planned. Conversion from agricultural to urban land use has taken place and is intensifying. Many dams originally constructed as low hazard are now classified as high hazard, or will soon be high hazard as a result of downstream urbanization. Rehabilitation of these dams is needed to protect lives and downstream property.

Four dams in the 10th Congressional District are classified as high hazard dams. These four dams need to be upgraded to high hazard criteria at an estimated cost of \$6 million including \$2.1 million in sponsor's cost.



Sediments are accumulating in this aging Floodwater Retarding Structure allowing shallow water vegetation to grow.

Annual Watershed Benefits in 2011 Dollars (Entire Watersheds)						
Watershed	Total Dams Constructed	Dams in District 10	Monetary Benefits	Bridges Benefited	Wetlands Created/Enhanced (acres)	Reduced Sedimentation (tons of soil)
Cummins Creek	20	20	\$1,557,000	150	750	267,500
RC&D Dams	39	3	*	*	*	*
Total	59	23	\$1,557,000	150	750	267,500

* Benefits data not available.

Monetary benefits include reduction in flood damages to agricultural lands and rural and urban infrastructure including roads and bridges. Other benefits include soil erosion control, recreational areas, irrigation water, municipal and industrial water supply, and wildlife habitat.

Listed below are the sponsors for the Cummins Creek Watershed:

- Austin County Soil and Water Conservation District*
- Burleson County Soil and Water Conservation District*
- Colorado Soil and Water Conservation District*
- Fayette County Commissioners Court*
- Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District*
- Lee County Commissioners Court*
- Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District*
- Lee-Fayette Counties Cummins Creek Water Control and Improvement District #1*

Information about watershed projects and other conservation programs is available at the local conservation district or NRCS offices. For further information, refer to the Texas NRCS website located at:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/tx/programs/planning/wpfp

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