NRCS Assisted Watershed Dams in Texas
27th 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).

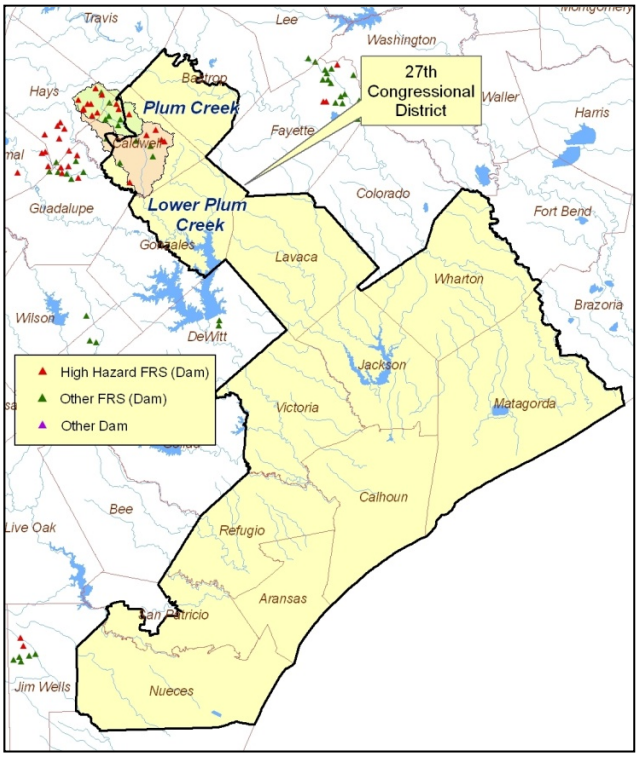
Since that time, NRCS has assisted watershed sponsors in construction of nearly 2,000 floodwater retarding structures (dams) in 145 watershed projects across Texas. In addition, NRCS has assisted watershed sponsors with the installation of land treatment practices and channel improvements for watershed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

Texas watershed projects provide over **$150 million** in annual benefits.

The watershed projects which impact the 27th Congressional District provide **over $1.5 million** in annual benefits, as well as capturing over 459,000 tons of sediment annually. Over 140 bridges and numerous county, state, and federal roads are also protected.

There are **11 watershed dams** in two watershed projects located in the district. *See the table on the back of this page for the annual benefits provided by each watershed project in the district.*

Encroaching Development on Plum Creek 6



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).

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.

One dam in the 27th Congressional District is currently in need of funding for repairs at an estimated cost of $454,000.

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 seven dams in the 27th Congressional District that are over 40 years old, and four dams are 30-39 years old.

The majority of the 27th 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. Six dams in the 27th Congressional District are classified as high hazard dams. Five of these dams need to be upgraded to high hazard criteria at an estimated cost of $7.5 million, including $2.6 million in sponsor's cost.

Annual Watershed Benefits in 2011 Dollars
(Entire Watersheds)

Watershed	Total Dams Constructed	Dams in District 27	Monetary Benefits	Bridges Benefited	Wetlands Created/Enhanced (acres)	Reduced Sedimentation (tons of soil)
Lower Plum Creek	10	10	$778,000	75	426	207,000
Plum Creek	18	1	$801,000	73	962	252,300
Total	28	11	$1,579,000	148	1,388	459,300

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 watersheds located in the 27th Congressional District:

Caldwell-Travis Soil and Water Conservation District
Hays County Soil and Water Conservation District
Plum Creek Conservation District

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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NRCS