



NRCS Assisted Watershed Dams in Texas 28th Congressional District

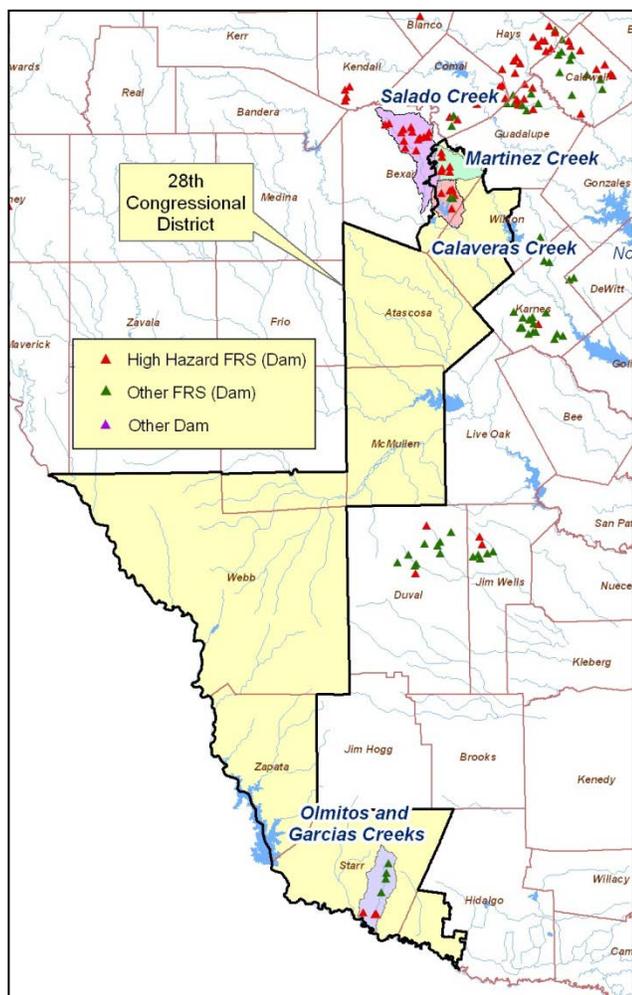
In the mid-1930s, Congress began looking at ways to complement the downstream flood control program of the Corps of Engineers. It passed flood control acts in 1936, 1944, and 1954 and assigned responsibility of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program to the USDA Soil Conservation Service, 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 **over \$150 million** in annual benefits.

The watershed projects which impact the 28th Congressional District provide over **\$1.2 million** in annual benefits, as well as capturing over 317,000 tons of sediments annually. Over 240 bridges and numerous county, state, and federal roads are also protected.

There are **20 constructed watershed dams** in three watershed projects in the 28th Congressional District. **Fourteen additional dams** immediately upstream provide protection to a portion of the district. *See the table on the back of this page for the annual benefits provided by each watershed project in the 28th Congressional District.*



Encroaching development on Martinez Creek 5 in Bexar County

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 28th Congressional District is in need of funding for repair at an estimated cost of \$682,000.

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 28th Congressional District that are over 50 years old, and an additional thirteen dams that are over 40-49 years old.

The majority of the 28th Congressional District area 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. Fourteen dams in the 28th Congressional District are classified as high hazard dams. Nine of these dams need to be upgraded to high hazard criteria at an estimated cost of \$14.5 million, including \$5 million in sponsor's cost.

Three dams in the Martinez Creek Watershed have been rehabilitated. A rehabilitation study has been completed on one dam in the Olmitos and Garcias Creeks Watershed. Planning studies are currently underway for one dam in the Calaveras Creek Watershed and three dams in the Martinez Creek Watershed.

| Annual Watershed Benefits in 2011 Dollars (Entire Watersheds) | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| Watershed | Total Dams Constructed | Dams in District 28 | Monetary Benefits | Bridges Benefited | Wetlands Created/Enhanced (acres) | Reduced Sedimentation (tons of soil) |
| Calaveras Creek | 7 | 7 | \$427,000 | 35 | 304 | 110,000 |
| Martinez Creek | 6 | 6 | \$589,000 | 209 | 237 | 126,800 |
| Olmitos and Garcias Creeks | 7 | 7 | \$298,000 | 4 | 428 | 81,000 |
| Total | 20 | 20 | \$1,261,000 | 248 | 969 | 317,800 |

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 28th Congressional District:

Alamo Soil and Water Conservation District

San Antonio River Authority

Starr County Commissioners Court

Starr County Soil and Water Conservation District Wilson County Soil and Water 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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