



NRCS Assisted Watershed Dams in Texas 31st 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 in 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 31st Congressional District provide **over \$5.4 million** in annual benefits, as well as capturing over 755,000 tons of sediment annually. Over 700 bridges and numerous county, state, and federal roads are also protected.

There are **86 watershed dams** in 5 watershed projects in the district. *See the table on the back of this page for the annual benefits provided by watershed projects in the 31st Congressional District.*

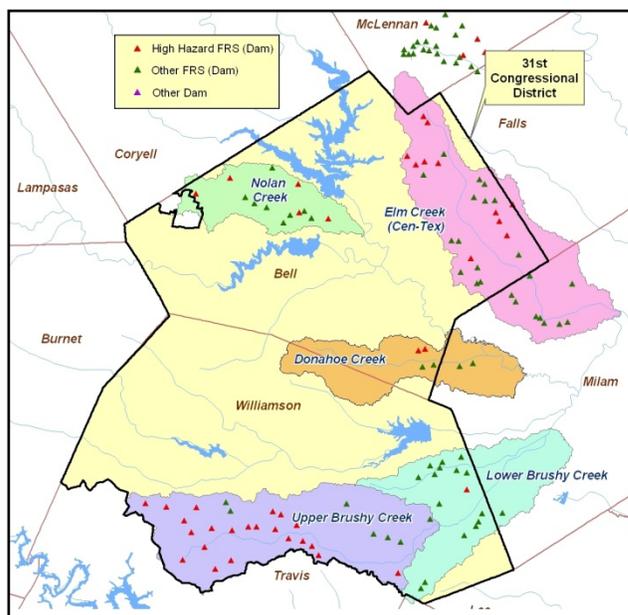
Operation and Maintenance of Watershed Projects

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 watershed sponsors in the 31st Congressional District.*

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.

Three dams in the 31st Congressional District are in need of funding for repairs at an estimated cost of \$848,000.



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 25 dams in the 31st Congressional District that are over 50 years old, 30 dams that are 40-49 years old, and 8 dams that are 30-39 years old.

The majority of the 31st 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. Forty dams in the 31st Congressional District are classified as high hazard dams. Thirty-three of these dams need to be upgraded to high hazard criteria at an estimated cost of \$48 million, including \$16.8 million in sponsor's cost.

Rehabilitation projects have been completed on one Upper Brushy Creek Watershed dam. Rehabilitation planning has been authorized on two additional Upper Brushy Creek dams. Rehabilitation has been completed on one dam in the Nolan Creek Watershed.

Annual Watershed Benefits in 2011 Dollars (Entire Watersheds)						
Watershed	Total Dams Constructed	Dams in District 31	Monetary Benefits	Bridges Benefited	Wetlands Created/Enhanced (acres)	Reduced Sedimentation (tons of soil)
Donahoe Creek	6	4	\$165,000	22	173	87,600
Elm Creek (Cen-Tex)	34	24	\$1,235,000	69	1,096	136,900
Lower Brushy Creek	17	16	\$1,444,000	40	515	147,400
Nolan Creek	13	13	\$999,000	70	224	94,200
Upper Brushy Creek	29	29	\$1,685,000	500	858	289,000
Total	99	86	\$5,409,000	703	2,866	755,100

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 31st Congressional District:

*Bell County Commissioners Court
Bell County Water Control and Improvement District #6
Central Texas Soil and Water Conservation District
City of Bartlett
Donahoe Creek Watershed Authority
Elm Creek Watershed Authority
Falls County Commissioners Court
Little River-San Gabriel Soil and Water Conservation District*

*Lower Brushy Water Control and Improvement District
McLennan County Commissioners Court
McLennan County Soil and Water Conservation District
Milam County Commissioners Court
Taylor Soil and Water Conservation District
Upper Brushy Creek Water Control and Improvement 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