

Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Program

Project Purposes

The Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Program provides technical and financial assistance to local government agencies, tribal organizations, political subdivisions of the state and state agencies for planning and installing watershed projects for the following purposes.

Flood Prevention (Flood Damage Reduction)

Flood prevention or flood damage reduction measures are installed to prevent or reduce damages caused by floodwater. Flood damage reduction is further defined as the control and disposal of surface water caused by abnormally high direct precipitation, stream overflow, or floods aggravated or caused by wind or tidal effects. Flood damage reduction and mitigation measures reduce or prevent floodwater damages by reducing runoff, erosion, and sediment; modifying the susceptibility of improvements in the floodplain to damage; removing damageable property from the floodplain; or reducing the frequency, depth, or velocity of flooding. Measures may also include actions that prevent encroachment into the floodplain.

Watershed Protection

Watershed protection consists of onsite treatment of watershed natural resources concerns for the primary purpose of reducing offsite floodwater, erosion, sediment, and agriculture-related pollutants. Watershed protection plans may include ecosystem restoration type activities. Project measures for watershed protection

include land treatment practices installed by land users to conserve and develop any of the following:

- Soil
- Water quality and quantity
- Woodland
- Fish and wildlife habitats
- Energy
- Recreation and scenic resources

Public Law 83-566 requires that the project sponsor must “obtain agreements to carry out recommended soil conservation measures and proper farm (conservation) plans from owners of not less than 50 percent of the lands situated in the drainage area above each retention reservoir to be installed with Federal assistance.” USDA policy requires installation of land treatment practices necessary to ensure that at least 50 percent of the land upstream from any retention reservoir is adequately protected before beginning construction of the retention reservoir.

Public Recreation

Public recreation developments may be included in a watershed project plan when the project sponsor agrees to operate and maintain a reservoir or other area for public recreation. Project measures must include only minimum basic facilities needed for public health and safety and access to and use of the area. Minimum basic facilities may include picnic areas, sanitary facilities, fishing piers, shelters, cooking grills, parking areas, swimming beaches, access roads, water, and trails. Also included are practices to provide needed access, water, and power.

For More Information

For more information about watershed programs in North Dakota, see Technical Resources > Engineering > Watershed Operations
www.nd.nrcs.usda.gov.

Contact Christi Fisher, State Conservation Engineer, at christi.fisher@usda.gov or 701-530-2091.

Public Fish and Wildlife

Fish and wildlife development areas may be included in a watershed project plan when the project sponsor agrees to operate and maintain a reservoir or other area for public fish and wildlife access. Measures installed for public use of areas developed to improve the habitat or the environment for the breeding, growth, and development of fish and wildlife may be included in a watershed project plan.

Agricultural Water Management

Agricultural water management includes drainage, ground water recharge, irrigation, water conservation, water quality improvement, and agricultural (including rural communities) water supply. Measures planned for these purposes are installed on non-Federal land by the project sponsor to benefit groups of landowners and communities. Measures on Federal land will be installed and maintained in accordance with mutually satisfactory arrangements among the project sponsor, the land administering agency, and NRCS.

Municipal and Industrial Water Supply

Municipal and industrial (M&I) water supply includes measures necessary to provide storage capacity in reservoirs to increase the availability of water for present and future municipal and industrial use. Needed outlet

works and pipelines to convey water from the reservoir to the existing or proposed treatment facilities or water system are also considered project measures. The planning, design and installation of municipal and industrial water wells, water treatment plants, distribution systems, and electric distribution facilities fall outside the scope of the Watershed Program.

Water Quality Management

Water quality management measures provide water storage capacity in reservoirs for regulation of stream flow to improve water quality in streams.

Watershed Structure Rehabilitation

Watershed structure rehabilitation is covered in Public Law 83-566 Section 14, which authorizes financial assistance to local organizations to cover a portion of the costs of rehabilitating dams originally constructed as part of a project carried out under any of the following four authorities—Public Law 83-566, Public Law 78-534, the pilot watershed program authorized under the Department of Agriculture Appropriation Act of 1954, or the Resource Conservation and Development Program authorized by the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

