

# A Watershed Approach

## Benefits of Watershed Projects in Texas

### History of the USDA-NRCS Watershed Program

To complement the downstream flood control program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Congress passed flood control acts in 1936, 1944, and 1954 and assigned responsibility of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

### Watershed Projects in Texas

NRCS has helped construct  
**2,044** floodwater dams in  
**145** watershed projects

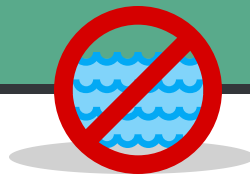
#### Results:

- Floodwater storage
- Water quality improvement
- Water supply
- Wildlife habitat



### Earthen Dams Reduce Flooding by:

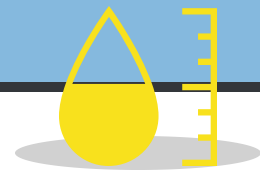
- Temporarily storing floodwater after heavy rains.
- Slowly releasing through a pipe in the dam called a principal spillway.
- Reducing the amount of water that reaches creeks and rivers immediately after heavy rains.



### How Large is a Watershed Dam?

A typical dam -

- **600 to 3,000** acre drainage area
- **25 to 40** feet in height
- **500 to 1,500** acre-feet of detention storage



### Flooding Protection Saves Texas Money Each Year

Agriculture  
**\$63.1 million**

Non-agriculture  
**\$64.4 million**

Total annual benefits  
**\$127.5 million**



### Who Built and Manages these Dams?

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to plan and build watershed projects.

**Project sponsors** (soil and water conservation districts, special purpose districts, city or county governments) take care of the annual operation and maintenance of dams.



### Watershed Rehabilitation

Since rural areas have become more populated, many dams are now classified as high hazard and require rehabilitation to meet current safety standards.

Rehabilitation may cost between

**\$4 million** and  
**\$8 million** per site.

