

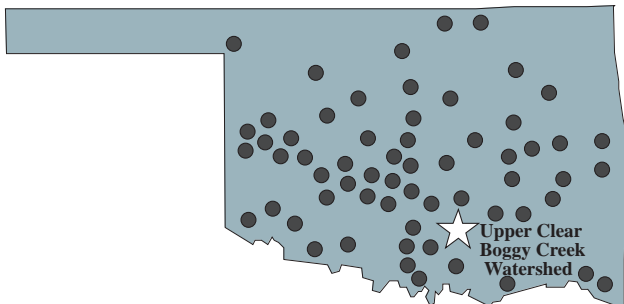
# THE CASE FOR REINVESTING IN THE UPPER CLEAR BOGGY CREEK WATERSHED

On April 14, 1935, the worst single storm of the Dust Bowl picked up acres of Oklahoma soil and blew it so far dirt settled on cities several states away. World War I had encouraged food production and more acres than was needed was plowed up. What topsoil did not blow away was washed away by rains that easily eroded the barren landscape. Streams, creeks, and rivers were clogged with sediment and prime farmland and towns were flooded. The birth of the Soil Conservation Service in 1935 spawned a national movement of conservation land treatment to reduce erosion on the uplands, and flood control dams to reduce flooding in the lowlands. Not just a state but a national infrastructure of conservation measures was put in place to protect our natural resources and way of life.



## THE SITUATION: NEARLY 40-YEAR-OLD DAMS ARE APPROACHING THE END OF THEIR DESIGNED LIFE.

Forty-nine dams were constructed in the Upper Clear Boggy Creek Watershed between 1961 and 1980 to control flooding and reduce erosion. These 49 upstream flood control dams are part of the 2,094 dams that have been built in Oklahoma under the small watershed program. These structures have prevented millions of dollars of flood related damages to crop and pasture lands, roads, and bridges. The structures were designed to last no more than 50 years. This infrastructure is an investment in Oklahoma's future worth protecting for generations to come.



*Upper Clear Boggy Creek Watershed is one of 131 Oklahoma watersheds completed or still in construction. These combined projects represent a 2 billion dollar infrastructure in Oklahoma. Local project sponsors have invested over 25 percent of the costs.*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Size:** 162,240 acres in Pontotoc, Coal, and Johnston Counties
- No. of dams:** 49
- Project start:** 1961
- Project end:** 1980
- Design life:** 50 years
- Primary purpose:** Control flooding and sedimentation, and reduce erosion
- Population served:** 4,000

## PARTNERS

- Pontotoc County Conservation District
- Coal County Conservation District
- Johnston County Conservation District
- Upper Clear Boggy Conservancy District
- United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service

*"We have built 20 sites on Upper Clear Boggy in Coal County and the flood damage has been reduced significantly. My only complaint is that we need more sites built.*

**Johnnie Belletini**  
Chairman, Coal County Conservation District

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*“I bale a lot of hay out of the Clear Boggy Watershed. My hay fields are not under water near as much since these structures were built.”*

**Larry Krebs**  
**Rancher and member of the Coal County Conservation District Board**

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## UPPER CLEAR BOGGY CREEK - REINVESTING IN OKLAHOMA'S FUTURE

The Upper Clear Boggy Creek Watershed was constructed under the authority of Public Law 83-566 (PL-566). Through PL-566, Congress invested \$15.6 million (current dollars) in the construction of the 49 dams in the Upper Clear Boggy Creek Watershed Project. The local sponsors have invested \$1 million (current dollars) in the project for the past 38 years.

The monetary benefits of the project have exceeded the project costs at the rate of 2.8 dollars of benefits for every dollar of cost. Other benefits of the project have resulted in positive impacts for the watershed communities and the environment.

-  Improved fish and wildlife habitat, livestock water, and recreation opportunities.
-  Safer and longer lasting roads and bridges.
-  Cultural resources protected.
-  77,000 acres of improved grassland.
-  1,094 acres of wildlife habitat improvement.

## **The Bottom Line:**

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**THE COST OF LOSING THIS IMPORTANT INFRASTRUCTURE FAR EXCEEDS THE COST ASSOCIATED WITH REINVESTING IN EXISTING WATERSHED PROJECTS: PROTECTING PLANNED BENEFITS, ENHANCING INCIDENTAL BENEFITS, AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES THAT IMPROVED WATERSHED STRUCTURES COULD OFFER.**



## NEW OPPORTUNITIES:

The Upper Clear Boggy Creek Watershed Project has been a local success in controlling flooding and associated damages, reducing erosion, and establishing improved grazing land habitat in the upland areas. The project has protected farm and ranch lands, roads, bridges, and other community assets, while providing a sense of security and well-being to watershed residents. The need to protect this project for future generations is paramount when considering the monetary and environmental losses associated with the alternative.

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*“I spent many hours working to secure land rights so these sites could be built because of the flooding problems we were having with Clear Boggy. The flood problems are definitely better now.”*

**Harvey Carter**  
**Retired member of the Coal County Conservation District Board and local rancher**

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By reinvesting in Upper Clear Boggy Creek Watershed, we will be able to maintain our current benefits as well as enhance fish and wildlife habitat, provide more recreation and rural fire protection, improve water quality, and provide sources for rural water supply. “East-Central Oklahoma Water Supply Study,” a 1989 report prepared under Congressman Wes Watkins, indicates that future water supply demands will exceed available safe drinking water supplies. Rural economic development opportunities should be an integral part of rebuilding and improving Oklahoma’s existing watershed infrastructure.



## STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE ON OKLAHOMA'S AGING WATERSHED DAMS

Two thousand ninety-four (2,094) dams have been built. Some were built as early as 1948. Most were designed with a useful life of 50 years. Only a small number of these dams are in critical need of rebuilding or repair at this time, but many were built over a short time span and will soon reach their 50-year designed life. These dams provide many incidental benefits to Oklahoma, which has no natural lakes. Over 40,000 acres feet of water and more than 1,000 miles of shoreline are created by these dams. An organized approach is needed to analyze the extent of repair and rebuilding needed, to prioritize those with the greatest need, and to make necessary repairs or improvements.