

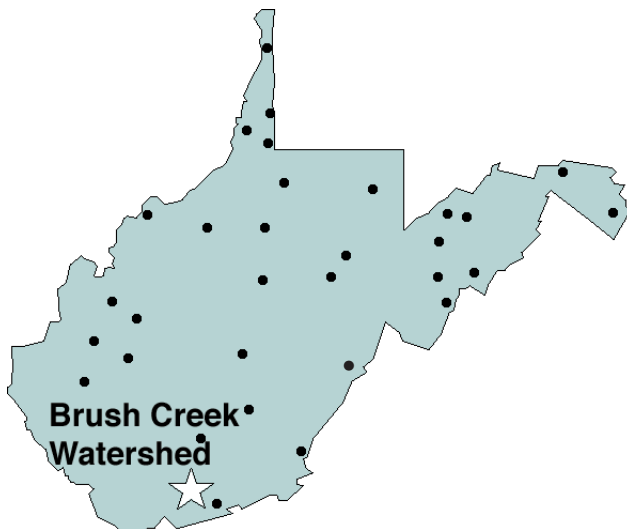
THE CASE FOR REINVESTING IN THE BRUSH CREEK WATERSHED



THE SITUATION: WEST VIRGINIA'S AGING DAMS COULD LOSE THEIR ABILITY TO PREVENT FLOODING, PROVIDE WATER SUPPLY, AND CONTROL EROSION

Above the town of Princeton, West Virginia, there are ten dams holding back 650 million gallons of water. Prior to 1962 when the first impoundment was built in the Brush Creek Watershed, too much water meant Princeton's homes and businesses would be flooded. At other times, too little water was available for daily living.

The Brush Creek Watershed Project helped local citizens manage their water resources more effectively, and still does today. Hundreds of homes and businesses depend on the dams for continuous flood protection and supplemental water supply. Although the dams have blended into the landscape and may go unnoticed by many, they must not be neglected for they are vital to the community.



The Brush Creek Watershed is one of 32 watershed projects in West Virginia. One hundred sixty-two dams in these projects have reduced flooding of homes, businesses, roads, and agricultural lands and have provided dependable water supplies for municipal and industrial use.



PROJECT DATA

- Size: 22,293 acres
- Number of dams: 10
- Date started: 1959
- Date completed: 1985



PARTNERS

- Cities of Princeton and Bluefield
- Southern Soil Conservation District
- Brush Creek Watershed Improvement District
- Green Valley-Glenwood Public Service District
- West Virginia Division of Highways
- Mercer County Commission
- West Virginia Soil Conservation Agency
- United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service

"I don't know what we would have done in this area without the Brush Creek Project. It has allowed economic development that is beyond our dreams . . . The need for water, flood protection, and recreation will increase. We need to ... keep everything maintained to serve the purpose it was designed for."

Dr. James Bailey, Brush Creek Watershed District member and Mercer Co. resident



ONE WATERSHED PROJECT - MANY BENEFITS

The Brush Creek Watershed project is an example of public money well spent. The federal financial investment in Brush Creek is about \$8 million in today's dollars. This investment has been recouped many times over by the benefits the project has brought to Princeton and neighboring Bluefield. Some of the benefits we recognize today were not even considered in the early days of project planning.

- 13 miles of shoreline habitat
- 3,000 acres upland habitat preserved
- creation of wetlands and diverse ecosystems in the watershed
- flood protection for 10 miles of roads and 35 bridges and culverts
- recreation at Glenwood Park with annual visitation of over 30,000
- hospitals, schools, business district, homes and industries protected from floodwaters
- water supply for 6,237 customers, including 237 industrial/business customers
- economic development resulting from a stable water supply

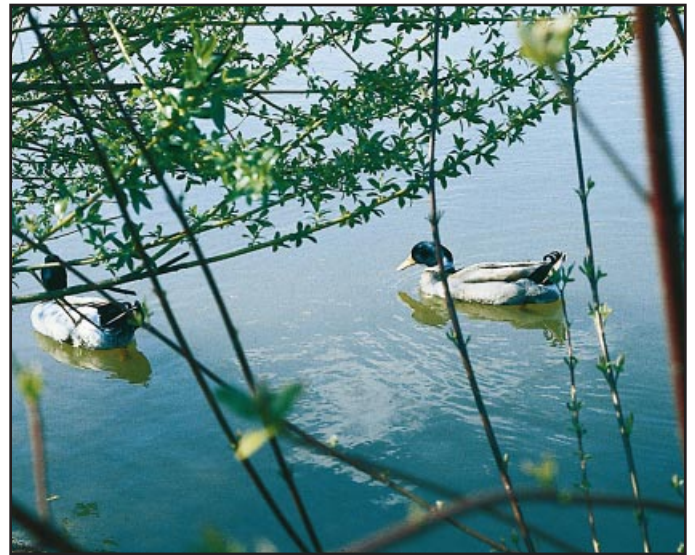
For example, Site #14 offers recreation benefits as well as flood control and water supply storage. The Dean Company, a wood veneer manufacturing plant employing 140 people, is one of many entities that benefits from the water supply in Brush Creek reservoirs.



NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Brush Creek Watershed Project was initiated in 1958 to reduce flooding and provide a constant water supply to residents and businesses. The project has performed its job since construction of the dams in the 1960's. The original goals for the project are just as important today.

In addition to continuing to provide flood control and other benefits, new investments in the project could offer even more opportunities. As the roads, utilities, and other infrastructure in Princeton have grown with the community, the Brush Creek Watershed Project should grow too. More recreation, better water quality, and a more diverse environment can all be part of Brush Creek's future.



One of the benefits of maintaining the Brush Creek Watershed project is the improved wildlife habitat.



STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE ON WEST VIRGINIA'S WATERSHED DAMS

The federal investment in PL-566 or PL-534 projects in West Virginia is over \$250 million. The WV Division of Highways has funded road relocations on numerous projects, and local sponsors have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in landrights, utility relocations, water supply storage and operations, conservation practices, and operation and maintenance costs.

Twenty-five of the 162 dams in these projects were constructed in the 1950's, and 81 were constructed in the 1960's. Some were designed with a 50-year sediment pool, meaning they may fill with sediment over that period of time. Many are approaching their sediment storage design lifespans. Others need repairs or require other rehabilitation.

The investments made over the last fifty years must be protected so communities can continue to reap the benefits. In the Appalachian topography of West Virginia, watershed projects are a key component in natural resource management. Besides traditional flood protection, recreation, and water supply, other new dimensions such as streamflow augmentation and wildlife habitat protection may be added to existing impoundments. Our residents depend on these projects for the benefits they provide now and in the future.

"Kee Dam (Site 19-A) is a godsend for Bluefield. It has supplied much needed water for a stressed system. Water quality has increased, thus reducing treatment cost."

**John Willis, Operations Supervisor
WV-American Water Company**