

Watershed Plans

A watershed plan is developed for each project that includes environmental impacts, costs and benefits, planned conservation practices and the responsibilities of involved parties. A variety of agencies and organizations can assist local project sponsors in plan development.



NRCS and others assist in plan development.



This Deer Creek Watershed lake is a good example of how the watershed program can benefit a community. The Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma, lake provides flood control, rural and municipal water, recreational areas, and fish and wildlife habitat. The conservation practices applied in the watershed protect the land from erosion and improves water quality.



Watershed plans are developed to meet the needs of the community and the watershed.

For additional information about the watershed program contact any local NRCS field office or visit the NRCS web page. (www.nrcs.usda.gov), click on programs.

The National Watershed Coalition (NWC) is a nonprofit coalition made up of national regional, state and local organizations, associations, and individuals, that advocate using watersheds as the planning and implementation unit when dealing with natural resource problems and issues. For more information about the coalition, visit our web site. (www.watershedcoalition.org)

This publication was developed by the NWC in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program



Helping Communities
Conserve
Natural Resources



National
Watershed
Coalition

Watershed Program

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-566) has been used as an effective tool to conserve natural resources by thousands of local communities for over 50 years. This watershed program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

There are 2,000 watershed projects in the nation, with projects in all 50 states. Watershed plans have been carried out in these projects that have included thousands of conservation practices, 11,000 flood control dams and other measures that provide multiple benefits to thousands of citizens including:

- ◆ Reduced flooding
- ◆ Erosion control
- ◆ Reduced sediment in streams and rivers
- ◆ Reduced agricultural related pollutants
- ◆ Municipal and rural water supplies
- ◆ Water quality protection
- ◆ Recreational areas
- ◆ Wildlife habitat
- ◆ Groundwater recharge



Local Leadership

Watershed projects are planned and carried out jointly by local, state, and federal agencies with support of community landowners and citizens in the watersheds.

Communities identify resource problems to be addressed, practices to be installed, and carry out major portions of a watershed plan, such as obtaining easements, rights of ways, permits and local cost-share funding.



Project sponsors obtain public comments and input throughout the planning process.

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to local project sponsors. Federal assistance is available for engineering and construction costs of flood control measures; conservation practices for water quality, erosion and sediment control; and for municipal and industrial water supplies and recreation facilities.

Entities of state and local government or a tribe may apply for USDA assistance. Application details are available from NRCS offices or go to the NRCS web site and click on programs. (www.nrcs.usda.gov).

Photos provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Everyone lives in a watershed. Watersheds are the area of land drained by a particular surface stream system and that outlets at a common point. Watershed projects are developed for watersheds 250,000 acres or smaller. Some have flood control dams built on tributaries to larger streams or rivers. Other projects may only have land and water conservation practices.



Conservation Measures

A project can consist of a combination of conservation practices such as flood control dams and conservation practices like terraces, waterways, grade stabilization structures, animal waste management, and wetlands restoration. Other measures can also be used such as zoning, enforcing building codes, land acquisition, and emergency flood warning systems.

Water Management

Management of both agriculture and nonagricultural water supplies can be a significant component of watershed projects. Measures to increase or conserve present and future water supplies in rural areas, improve water quality impacted by pollutants, and ground water recharge can be part of a watershed plan. Management for nonagricultural uses such as municipal and industrial uses, recreational uses and improved fish and wildlife habitat are other opportunities in watershed projects.