

Watershed Project Sponsor Board Members...

What You Need to Know About Your NRCS Assisted Watershed Projects

As a board member of a unit of government that serves as a sponsor for a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assisted watershed project you should be well informed about the project, its history and how the project provides benefits. It is important to be aware of project sponsor responsibilities and to understand the role and responsibilities of partners involved in the project. The partners include NRCS and may include others such as city, county and state government agencies and possibly non-governmental organizations.



Over 11,000 flood control dams have been built in 47 states with the assistance of the NRCS Watershed Program.

Watershed Projects

There are over 1,300 active or completed NRCS assisted watershed projects in the U. S. Over 11,000 flood control dams have been constructed in these watersheds, but not all projects have flood control dams. Many include conservation practices which improve water quality, conserve irrigation water, provide water supply, manage agricultural waste or provide recreational benefits.

Project Sponsors

Watershed project sponsors represent the local interest in NRCS assisted watershed projects. Sponsors of projects must be a unit of local government such as a conservation district, a city, or a county government agency. Sponsors request assistance from NRCS in addressing flooding or other natural resource issues and enter into an agreement with NRCS which may include watershed planning, engineering design and financial assistance for the project.

Once the project is completed, there will be an agreement for operation and maintenance of constructed structures such as dams. This agreement outlines the responsibilities of the sponsor for maintaining proper operation of the structure. This agreement should be reviewed periodically to ensure these responsibilities are being met.

Watershed Work Plans

Watershed work plans are developed for each watershed project which provide a history of the flooding and/or other conditions prior to the watershed project; allocation of costs; description of the watershed; and projected future economic benefits.

Responsibilities of Watershed Project

Sponsors Include:

- Obtaining easements and required permits
- Conducting public meetings
- Securing and providing the local share of funds to install works of improvement
- Securing and providing funds for ongoing operation and maintenance of constructed structures such as dams
- Monitoring easement encroachment
- Developing and updating emergency action plans
- Working with regulatory agencies (state dam safety agency)
- Scheduling and conducting regular inspections of dams
- Maintaining relationships with landowners
- Working with NRCS at all levels to maintain relationships and the partnership that is essential to the watershed program

Additional Educational Resources for Sponsors at www.watershedcoalition.org

- Watershed Projects; Helping Communities Solve Natural Resource Issues
- A Guide to the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program
- Managing Operation and Maintenance Agreements on Watershed Dams
- Development Downstream of Dams - A Growing Concern for Watershed Project Sponsors
- Meeting Today's Resource Needs
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program - Helping Communities Conserve Natural Resources
- Operation and Maintenance of Watershed Dams
- How a Watershed Dam Works
- Actions Watershed Project Sponsors Should Take When a NRCS-Assisted Dam is Reclassified as High Hazard

Additional information is also available on the NRCS website at: www.nrcs.usda.gov. Click on Programs & Services on the left side of the home page, then scroll down to Water Resources Program.

