

News Release

USDA Invests in 48 Projects in Local Watersheds to Protect Communities and Vital Infrastructure

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Washington, D.C., October 4, 2017 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans to invest in 48 new, multi-year projects that aim to build vital infrastructure while conserving natural resources in 20 states or territories through the [Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program](#). USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with local groups to help prevent floods, protect watersheds, improve agricultural water management and enhance wildlife habitat through this program.

"Protecting lives and property and improving natural resources within our nation's watersheds are critical," NRCS Acting Chief Leonard Jordan said. "Watersheds are nature's natural boundaries. NRCS has made much progress in reducing damages caused by flooding, sedimentation and erosion in watersheds nationwide because of our proactive approach to program implementation once we obtain Congressional funding."

NRCS will invest \$150 million in these 48 new projects, through which NRCS works with project sponsors, such as conservation districts, local governments and American Indian tribes. The projects take place in smaller watersheds that cover 250,000 acres or less. Additionally, this investment also includes funding for 41 existing projects in 11 states.

The projects are owned by the local sponsors. NRCS serves as the primary technical adviser to project sponsors because of its engineering and environmental expertise and ability to deliver science-based technology and knowledge about the watershed's natural resources and ecosystem.

The new, multi-year projects include:

California – Beardsley Watershed Project - The Ferro Ditch Channel

Improvement Project consists of the design and construction of an improved 1,700-foot long channel. This will be the final structure to complete the Beardsley Watershed Project in Ventura County. This project purpose is to restore degraded salt marsh areas, restore failing fish passages to enhance spawning habitat, and to improve water quality in shellfish-growing areas. The project also will improve safety of the Ferro Debris Basin Dam.

Massachusetts – Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project - This project consists of 16 individual projects that include fish passages, stormwater remediation and salt marsh restoration.

West Virginia – Upper Deckers Creek Watershed - This project proposes to treat acid mine drainage along nearly 24 miles of Deckers Creek in Monongalia County to improve water quality. Improved water quality will support aquatic life and restore aquatic habitat in that stretch of the creek. Deckers Creek flows through populated areas of Morgantown.

A full list of the projects is available at:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/landscape/wfpo/?cid=nrcseprd1356244>

Since 1947, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program has helped communities address critical needs on flood control, water management, watershed protection and development. This strong federal, state and local partnership has resulted in the construction of more than 2,000 watershed projects that help communities in every state in the nation and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These watershed projects reflect a federal investment of about \$6.2 billion and deliver an estimated \$2.2 billion in average annual benefits nationwide.

“History has shown us that smart, proactive investment in small watershed and flood prevention projects yield immense benefits for landowners, communities and taxpayers,” Jordan said. “These dams have reduced flooding of businesses, homes, roads and agricultural lands. They have provided dependable water supplies for agricultural, residential and industrial use. They have also increased opportunities for fishing, hiking, birdwatching and the enjoyment of open space.”