



Watershed Projects... Havens for Fish and Wildlife

Watershed Projects Provide Thousands of Acres of Fish and Wildlife Habitat

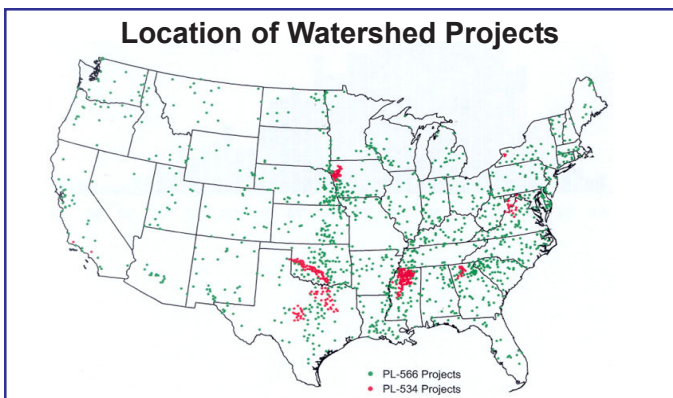
There are 2,000 Natural Resources Conservation Service assisted watershed projects in the United States, with at least one project in every state. Some projects provide flood control, while others include conservation practices that address a myriad of natural resource issues such as water quality, soil erosion, animal waste management, irrigation, water management, water supplies, and recreation.

Whatever the primary purpose, watershed projects have many community benefits such as fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, that sometimes goes unnoticed.



Lakes formed by the watershed dams have created thousands of acres of open water providing excellent fish and wildlife habitat and areas for migrating waterfowl to rest and feed.

Watershed projects are planned and implemented by local sponsors with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The projects are authorized and funded through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (Public Law 83-566) and the Flood Control Act of 1944 (Public Law 78-534).



Over 300,000 Acres of Surface Water Have Been Created by the Construction of 11,000 Watershed Dams.

Some of the best fishing spots in a state can be found in watershed lakes.

Lakes generally range in size from 20 to 40 surface acres and provide a good mix of deep water and shoreline riparian areas. This provides excellent fish and wildlife habitat diversity in many landscapes.



Some lakes have up to several hundred acres of surface water and many have recreational areas developed around them.

Regardless of the size of the lakes everyone benefits from the increased habitat for fish, birds and animals.

Conservation Practices are an Important Component of Watershed Projects



Conservation practices in watershed projects such as buffers, pasture and rangeland management, tree plantings, ponds, conservation cropping systems and conservation tillage provide cover, water, and cover for a variety of birds and animals.

Over Ten Million Acres of Upland Wildlife Habitat Have Been Created or Enhanced by Watershed Projects.

NRCS-assisted watershed projects provide a wide diversity of upland habitat.



Landowners in watershed projects receive technical and sometimes financial assistance in applying conservation practices. Many of these practices create or improve wildlife habitat and protect water quality in streams and lakes.

Enhancing Habitat and Public Access



This Stillwater, Oklahoma watershed project is one example of how project sponsors and landowners enhance habitat created by the construction of watershed dams. Features were included during construction to improve fish and wildlife habitat along with recreational areas.

Underwater structures were placed in the lake during construction for fish shelters. Several small peninsulas and fishing docks were constructed to make it more assessable for fishing and a small island was constructed in the middle of the lake for waterfowl to rest and nest protected from predators.

Thousands of people enjoy fishing, hiking, boating and viewing wildlife in this very scenic setting each year.

Creating and Protecting Wetlands



Over 170,000 acres of wetlands have been enhanced or protected in watershed projects and an additional 162,000 acres of wetlands have been created.

Protecting Water Quality and Fish Habitat



Watershed projects protect stream water quality and fish habitat. Bad Axe Creek Watershed Dam No. 24, Vernon County, Wisconsin, was built on a tributary to Hornby Creek, a Class I trout stream. The dam traps sediment and slows down floodwater flowing into the creek helping to maintain the creek's high water quality.

Watershed Program National Benefits

Acres of upland wildlife habitat	561,768
Acres of upland habitat enhanced	9,475,343
Acres of wetlands created	162,037
Acres of wetlands enhanced or protected	170,651
Acres of public access	142,491
Miles of stream corridors enhanced	23,426

For additional information about watershed projects and their benefits, visit the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service website at: www.nrcs.usda.gov and select "Programs" and then "Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention" or visit a local NRCS or conservation district office.

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