NRCS Assisted Watershed Dams in Texas
34th Congressional District

In the mid-1930s, Congress began looking at ways to complement the downstream flood control program of the Corps of Engineers. It passed flood control acts in 1936, 1944, and 1954 and assigned responsibility of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program to the USDA Soil Conservation Service, now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Since that time, the NRCS has assisted watershed sponsors in construction of nearly 2,000 floodwater retarding structures (dams) in 145 watershed projects across Texas. In addition, the NRCS has assisted watershed sponsors in installation of land treatment practices and channel improvements for watershed protection. Texas watershed projects provide **$150 million** in annual benefits.

The watershed projects which impact the 34th Congressional District provide **$1,334,000** in annual benefits, as well as capturing over 373,900 tons of sediment annually. Eighty-five bridges and numerous county, state, and federal roads are protected.

There are **11 constructed watershed dams** in 3 watershed projects in the district. *See the table on the back of this page for the annual benefits provided by watershed projects in the 34th Congressional District.*

Operation and Maintenance of Watershed Projects

The annual operation and maintenance of dams and their components is the responsibility of project sponsors (local units of government, usually conservation districts, city and county governments, and special purpose districts).

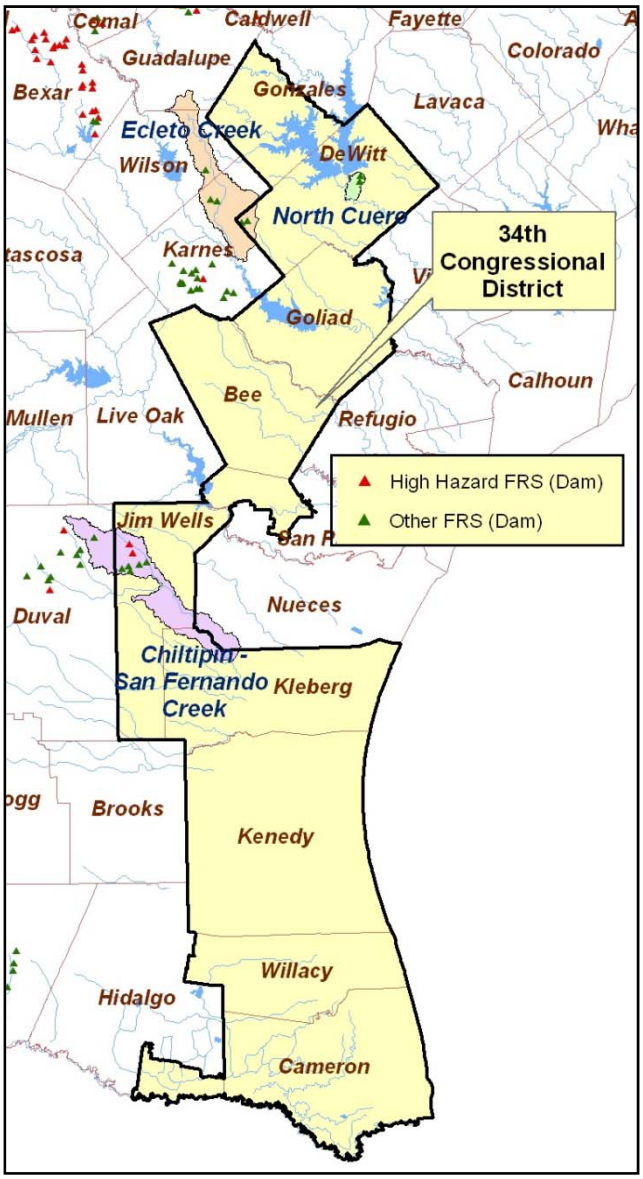
See the back of this page for a list of the watershed sponsors in the 34th Congressional District.

Operation and maintenance of watershed dams can be expensive and labor intensive, but is necessary to ensure the dams function as designed and remain safe. Maintenance work includes clearing trees from dams and spillways, repairing soil erosion damage, repairing damages after heavy storm events, and keeping the principal spillway inlet clear of debris.

One dam in the 34th Congressional District is in need of repair at an estimated cost of $7,600.

Rehabilitation of Aging Dams

NRCS assistance is available to rehabilitate aging watershed dams. A typical candidate site for rehabilitation was constructed between the late 1950's to the middle 1960's and no longer meets safety criteria. Three dams in the 34th Congressional District are over 50 years old, four dams are 40-49 years old, and two dams are 30-39 years old.



The majority of the 34th Congressional District was in a rural setting when the watershed projects were planned. Conversion from agricultural to urban land use has taken place and is intensifying. Many dams originally constructed as low hazard are now classified as high hazard, or will soon be high hazard as a result of downstream urbanization.

Rehabilitation of these dams is needed to protect lives and downstream property. Two dams in the 34th Congressional District are classified as high hazard dams. These dams need to be upgraded to high hazard criteria at an estimated cost of $3 million, including $1 million in sponsor's cost.

Sediments are accumulating in this aging Floodwater Retarding Structure, allowing shallow water vegetation to grow.

Annual Watershed Benefits in 2011 Dollars
(Entire Watersheds)

Watershed	Total Dams Constructed	Dams in District 34	Monetary Benefits	Bridges Benefited	Wetlands Created/Enhanced (acres)	Reduced Sedimentation (tons of soil)
Chiltipin – San Fernando Creek	8	7	$781,000	35	441	152,900
Ecleto Creek	5	2	$325,000	40	230	190,700
North Cuero	2	2	$228,000	10	46	30,300
Total	15	11	$1,334,000	85	717	373,900

Monetary benefits include reduction in flood damages to agricultural lands and rural and urban infrastructure including roads and bridges. Other benefits include soil erosion control, recreational areas, irrigation water, municipal and industrial water supply, and wildlife habitat.

Listed below are the sponsors for watersheds located in the 34th Congressional District:

City of Bishop
City of Cuero
Comal-Guadalupe Soil and Water Conservation District
DeWitt County Commissioners Court
DeWitt County Drainage District #1
DeWitt County Soil and Water Conservation District
Duval County Commissioners Court
Ecleto Creek Watershed District
Jim Wells County Commissioners Court
Jim Wells County Soil and Water Conservation District
Karnes County Soil and Water Conservation District
Kleberg-Kenedy Soil and Water Conservation District
Nueces County Commissioners Court
Nueces Soil and Water Conservation District
San Antonio River Authority
Wilson County Soil and Water Conservation District

Information about watershed projects and other conservation programs is available at the local conservation district or NRCS offices. For further information, refer to the Texas NRCS website:
www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/tx/programs/planning/wpfp

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