



# Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board

## Flood Control Program

Protecting infrastructure, private property, and lives of Texas through rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance of the State's 2,041 flood control structures.

### History

Over the past 70 years 2,041 floodwater-retarding structures, or dams, have been built by the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) through federal programs in Texas. These dams' primary purpose is to protect lives and property by reducing the velocity of floodwaters, and thereby reducing flows to a safer rate. These dams provide over \$151 million in average annual benefits to the people of Texas.

These are earthen dams that exist on private property, and they were designed and constructed by the USDA-NRCS, with the understanding that the private property owner would provide the land, the federal government would provide the technical design expertise and the funding to construct them, and then the local sponsors would be responsible for maintaining them into the future. Local sponsors include Soil and Water Conservation Districts (a subdivision of state government), cities, counties, water control improvement districts, river authorities, and other special purpose districts. With aging dams and rapid urbanization in many parts of Texas, the need for maintenance, dam repair, and rehabilitation continues to grow each year. Currently, 641 dams are classified as high hazard, meaning there is a potential loss of life if the dam fails; however, only 123 of these meet high hazard criteria. That means that 514 need rehabilitation and upgrade to meet safety criteria that will adequately protect lives downstream.

With continuing urbanization, this number is only expected to grow. In recognition that these dams will continue to serve as a critical protection for our state's infrastructure, private property, and lives, the Texas Legislature appropriated funds to the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) for grants to local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) beginning in 2010 for operation, maintenance, and structural repairs. These grants are administered through two programs, the Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Grant Program, and the Structural Repair and Rehabilitation Grant Program.



Photo Credit: City of McKinney

## By the Numbers

### 2,041 Flood Control Dams

641 High Hazard Dams that have potential for loss of life if dam fails

514 High Hazard Dams not meeting standards

21 Average number of structures reclassified from low hazard to high hazard each year

181 Dams in need of repair

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