

# Sallisaw Creek Watershed

Dam No. 20

Adair County, Oklahoma



Protecting Our People - Protecting Our Natural Resources

*This is one of 2,107\* examples of how local, state and federal government agencies have utilized the Natural Resources Conservation Service Watershed Program to address natural resource needs and improve the quality of life for thousands of Oklahomans.*

## Sallisaw Creek Watershed Dam No. 20 Adair County, Oklahoma

Sallisaw Creek Watershed Dam No. 20 is located approximately four miles south of Stilwell, Oklahoma. The dam, one of 2,107 flood control dams in the state, provides multiple benefits for the citizens of Adair County and surrounding areas.

The dam was constructed in 1963 by the Adair County Conservation District with the assistance of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program.

The 46-foot high dam has created an 18 surface acre lake that provides flood protection for 180 floodplain acres, three homes and the Dahlongegah School that is located immediately downstream of the dam. This K-8 school has an average enrollment of 135 students, 99% of whom are Cherokee Indian. The school's playground is located in the floodplain directly below the dam.

In 2009 the dam was rehabilitated to bring it up to current dam safety criteria and to extend its life for another 100 years. Rehabilitation of the dam will result in \$59,200 of average annual benefits from flood and sediment reduction and water supply benefits and will reduce the potential for loss of life.

The dam is one of 34 constructed flood control dams in the Sallisaw Creek Watershed and together they provide an estimated \$2.6 million in average annual benefits from reduced flooding; water supplies; reduced damages to roads and bridges; and reduced sedimentation of streams and rivers.

Before the dams were constructed flooding was a major problem in the watershed. Between 1938 and 1957 there were 26 major floods (those where floodwaters covered more than 50 percent of the floodplain) and 144 smaller floods. These floods destroyed crops, caused soil erosion and damaged roads and bridges.



Sallisaw Creek Watershed Dam No. 20 during rehabilitation.



The Dahlongegah School is located immediately downstream of the dam.

The Sallisaw Creek Watershed Project is one of 129 projects in Oklahoma that have been planned and implemented by local people with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.

\*2,107 NRCS-assisted flood control dams have been constructed in Oklahoma that provide over \$81 million in average annual benefits.

For additional information about watershed projects in the state visit the Oklahoma Conservation Commission website at: <http://conservation.ok.gov> or visit your local conservation district and NRCS office.



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