

WATERSHED AND FLOOD PREVENTION OPERATIONS

NRCS Watershed Programs in Virginia

Public Law 106-472 – “The Dam Rehabilitation Program”

The Small Watershed Rehabilitation Amendments of 2000, also known as the **Dam Rehabilitation Program** is actually an amendment to PL-566 authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to provide assistance to owners of public dams installed previously under PL-566, PL-534, the RC&D Program and the Pilot Watershed Program. This program was created in view of the more than 11,000 aging dams built with NRCS assistance across the country since 1948 with a growing number in need of rehabilitation to maintain the multiple benefits they provide.

In Virginia, 150 dams have become part of the state’s landscape/infrastructure through the PL-566, PL-534, and Pilot Watershed programs. Approximately one-third of these dams need repairs that, if not corrected, could result in significant adverse environmental, economic, and social impacts. Most of the dams were originally built to protect agricultural lands and small communities from the devastating effects of flooding. In addition, many have also provided local communities with water supply and recreational opportunities. All of these dams have provided wildlife habitat and they have enhanced our aquatic resources by protecting water quality. However, human health and safety concerns now exist downstream of several of these dams as a result of residential and commercial development that has occurred in the downstream floodplains.

Detailed studies have been conducted for five dams in Virginia (Marrowbone Dam in Henry County, Inch Branch, Robinson Hollow and Toms Branch in Augusta County and Lake Royal in Fairfax County). Construction was completed on the Marrowbone Creek dam in 2005 at a cost of \$2.6 million. The construction of Robinson Hollow will be completed in 2007. Inch Branch and Royal Lake will be constructed in 2008. The design of Toms Branch will be completed in 2008 and construction will follow soon thereafter. The cost of rehabilitation varies for each site depending on the alternative selected.

Additional rehabilitation planning is underway for 2 sites in Fairfax County (Lake Barton and Woodglen Lake). Requests for planning assistance have been received on 1 more dam in the Pohick Creek Watershed in Fairfax County, 4 dams in the Johns Creek Watershed in Craig County, 4 dams in the South River Watershed in Augusta County, 1

dam in the Upper North River Watershed in Augusta County, and 1 dam in the Stony Creek Watershed of Shenandoah County.

Additional requests for planning assistance are expected for several more NRCS assisted dams in Virginia. Site assessments and dam rehabilitation studies are needed on these dams to determine the extent to which homes and businesses could be in harm's way. Once the technical studies are completed, decisions regarding rehabilitation are made by the local sponsors and NRCS, and corrective actions are then implemented.