

Airlie Dam Provides Critical Secondary Water Supply

The Airlie Dam was constructed in the early 1990s for flood control and as a secondary source of municipal water supply for the Town of Warrenton, Virginia. It was constructed by the John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District and the Town of Warrenton with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Watershed Program.

The dam is located three miles north of Warrenton, Virginia and is operated by the Town of Warrenton. The 55-acre lake has been a critical water source for the town during several droughts when the primary water source, the Warrenton Reservoir, couldn't supply the needed water for the town. One hundred and ninety-three million gallons of water are available from the Airlie Reservoir for water supply.

"The Airlie Reservoir is a valuable asset and without we would have had to go to mandatory water restrictions during several drought periods for maybe as long as six months," said Edward "Bo" Tucker, Warrenton Director of Public Works.

The dam and reservoir are under a permit from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The permit requires annual inspections and needed operation and maintenance. The dam and reservoir must be recertified every five years to maintain its operational permit.

Thirty-eight acres of wetlands were constructed as part of Airlie Reservoir which along with the main body of the lake has become an important resting and feeding area for waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway.

"This is but one example of how local communities have utilized the NRCS Watershed Program to meet critical resource needs such as flood control and water supply," said Mark Gilbert, Chairman of the National Watershed Coalition (NWC).

A video with an interview with Edward Tucker, Director of Public Works, Warrenton, VA. about the dam and reservoir is available on the National Watershed Coalition Web Page: www.watershedcoalition.org. under the video tab.



Local communities have developed 2,000 watershed projects and constructed 11,800 flood control dams in 47 states since 1948. These projects are organized and planned by local units of governments such as conservation districts, city and county governments, and special water districts with the assistance of NRCS Watershed Program. The projects provide over \$2.2 billion in annual benefits.

While many of the dams were constructed primarily for flood control they also provide other benefits such as soil and water conservation, fish and wildlife habitat, and livestock and irrigation water. Many of the dams like the Airlie dam were also designed to include solutions for other specific needs of communities such as lack of an adequate water supply or a need for a recreational area.

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December 2016