



Maintaining Watershed Project Records

National Watershed Coalition

www.watershedcoalition.org

It is important to maintain thorough and accurate records on watershed projects. While sponsors might not need to look at the records often, when a question comes up about an easement or land ownership, or information is needed for maintenance of a dam, or a request for information is requested from the media or there is a problem with the functioning of the dam, it is important for project sponsors to be able to quickly access the needed information.

Watershed files organized in one location in an office where everyone knows where they are makes the files easier to find and utilize.

Organized records are particularly valuable to new employees or new board members who may not be familiar with the watershed projects.

Some project sponsors have their watershed files in binders for each dam organized by categories for easy location of the various records. Others use electronic storage. Computer based records should be secure and backed up and they should contain scanned copies of important paper documents. Critical paper documents which are more than 3 years old should be clearly marked in the files as important to keep and preserve.

Categories of information that could be included about specific watershed dams include:

- Watershed project maps
- Historical documents
- Easements
- Correspondence
- Operation and Maintenance Reports
- Annual Inspection reports
- Information about any repairs made to dams
- Site specific expenditures

- Landowner names and contact information
- As built plans
- Emergency Action Plans
- Notes on dams such as: are there locked gates and if so who has the keys; directions to the dam; information about the landowner like do they live on the property; description of any potential problems like seepage, and dates and reasons for the last visit to the dam.
- Photos
- Public information documents specific to individual dams

Sponsors should remember that these files may be open to the public for review. Confidential information and other sensitive information not meant for public view should be labeled as such and filed accordingly.

In situations where there is conflict or litigation involved sponsors should consult their legal counsel concerning access, viewing or release of files or information.

It takes time and effort to pull together all the information on watershed dams from multiple locations and put it in a binder, single file or digital file, but it can save valuable time in the long term when the information is needed.

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