



## Ellis County Protects its Citizens through TSSWCB's Flood Control Infrastructure Projects

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TEMPLE—Across the state of Texas there are over 2,000 flood control structures, Ellis County is home to 84 of those structures in its 952 square miles.

Over the past 70 years, the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) have built these dams through federal programs in Texas. The primary purpose of the structures is to protect lives and property by reducing the velocity of floodwaters and releasing flows at a safer rate. The dams provide over \$151 million in average annual benefits to citizens across Texas.

These earthen dams exist on private property and 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 (SWCDs) which are subdivisions 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/upgrade continues to grow each year.

“It takes strong commitment and partnership to maintain the flood control structures. The Ellis-Prairie SWCD is proud to have Ellis County as a co-sponsor to assist with maintenance and repair efforts,” said Scott Born, Ellis-Prairie SWCD Chairman.

Ellis-Prairie SWCD and Ellis County partnered together to employ a technician to help oversee regular maintenance as well as assess the condition of the dams in order to keep the structures in good condition and ensure that they meet state dam safety criteria.

During the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislature, \$150 million was appropriated to the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) from the Economic Stabilization Fund for dam infrastructure projects. As a result of this, work is underway in Ellis County on the following 18 flood control projects: 4 dams in the planning/design phase for federal rehabilitation, 6 dams under construction for repair, 4 dams in the design phase for repair and 4 dams in the design phase for upgrade to high hazard criteria.

In addition to state and federal dollars, Ellis County has committed \$1.4 million of its tax dollars to protect their citizens and property through improving and maintaining its flood control structures.

“Ellis County is proud to partner with the Ellis Prairie SWCD, TSSWCB, USDA-NRCS and local landowners to protect our citizens and their property,” said Todd Little, Ellis County Judge.

For more information on the agency’s program, visit: <https://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/programs/flood-control-program>