

Oklahoma Town Depends on Watershed Lake for Water Supply

When the Caney Coon Creek Watershed Project was developed in 1958 the population of Coalgate, Oklahoma was 2,300 and growing. Thirteen water wells had been drilled between 1910 and 1953 for the town water supply, but only five wells were still producing and they were only providing 160,000 gallons per day. Like all towns water is essential for their survival and it can be a challenge for a small town to develop adequate water supplies for a growing population due to the high cost.

Drilling more wells was not an option and the Town didn't have the resources to build a dam large enough to provide a new water supply.

The answer to their problem came in the form of a watershed project being planned by the Coal County Conservation District and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help control flooding in the county.

The Town of Coalgate joined the Coal County Conservation District as a sponsor of the Caney Coon Watershed Dam No. 2M project and worked with the NRCS in planning one of the three dams in the watershed project as a multipurpose structure providing both flood control and a water supply for the town.

The Town paid for an additional 3,000 acre feet of water storage beyond that needed for flood protection to be added to the flood control dam for a water supply. The NRCS paid for the other cost of constructing the dam and the conservation district worked with landowners to obtain needed easements.

The lake created by the dam, known locally as Coalgate Reservoir, is located two miles north of Coalgate, Oklahoma. The dam was constructed in 1965 by the City of Coalgate and the Coal 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 dam was originally designed as a low hazard dam with a 50-year design life. It was reclassified as a high hazard dam due to development downstream. Because of its age and it no longer met current high hazard dam safety criteria, the dam was rehabilitated in 2013.



Rehabilitation included removing and disposing of the existing concrete principal spillway and constructing a 300-foot-wide roller compacted concrete auxiliary spillway over the top of the dam.

Rehabilitation of the dam extended the life of the dam for another 100 years.

The lake will continue to provide a quality water supply for over 80 percent of Coal County's population and it will continue to provide flood protection for the City of Coalgate, agricultural land and roads and bridges

The dam is one of three dams in the Caney Coon Watershed project, all in Coal County. These dams provide over \$357,000 in average annual benefits. The dams provide flood protection for 53 farms and ranches and numerous county roads and bridges.

There are many flood control dams across the nation constructed with assistance of the NRCS Watershed Program that have been designed as multi-purpose structures to not only provide flood control, but also water supplies and recreational areas. For more information about the NRCS Watershed Program go to their web page at: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

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The dam was rehabilitated in 2013 to add a 300-foot wide roller compacted concrete spillway