



## Watershed Dam Rehabilitation Assessments Why They are Important and How Watershed Project Sponsors can Obtain Assistance in Developing the Reports

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has assisted watershed project sponsors since 1948 in the construction of more than 11,845 flood control dams in 1,271 watersheds in 47 States under the authority of the Flood Control Act of 1944 (Public Law 78-534) and the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-566).

Many of these project dams no longer meet current Federal or State dam safety criteria or performance standards which have more stringent requirements than when the dams were constructed. Time has taken its toll on the dams and many dams are also now in a far different setting than when they were constructed. Population has increased; residential and commercial development has occurred upstream and downstream from the dams. These factors increase the possibility of loss of life and property if the dams failed.

Dam assessments provides sponsors an opportunity to obtain information on their dam. Dam assessments provide project sponsors with data on the condition of the dam including all structural components, the designed and current potential hazard classification, the associated risks for loss of life and property risks to the public should a dam fail, and estimated rehabilitation alternatives and costs.

In 2020, NRCS continued to provide funding for assessments of high-hazard dams based on their risk index. The agency utilized \$1,184,000 to fund assessments for 51 dams in 6 states. As of October 2020 1,640 dam assessments had been completed in 43 states.

Assessments also provide local sponsors with data regarding the condition of the dam, risks to the public should the dam fail as well as estimated rehabilitation alternatives and costs.

### **Requesting Assistance for Dam Assessments**

Project sponsors can request assistance from NRCS for a dam assessment. The request may be in the form of a letter to the NRCS State Conservationist.

The request for this NRCS assistance must include the following:

1. Dam name
2. National Inventory of Dams ID number (NID)
3. County
4. Congressional district
5. Original hazard classification
6. Current hazard classification
7. Dam safety or operation and maintenance issues

Requests for assistance with dam assessments can be made anytime during the year. NRCS will rank the dams based on their risk to life and property, As funds become available, NRCS will fund the highest ranked dams.

NRCS will pay 100% of the cost of a dam assessment. Dam assessments may be prepared by NRCS staff, NRCS contract with an Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firm, or an agreement with the Sponsor to contract for the dam assessment.

For additional information about dam assessments project sponsors should contact their NRCS State Conservationist.

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October 2020