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## What Watershed Project Sponsor Board Members Need to Know About NRCS Assisted Watershed Projects

As a board member of a unit of government that serves as a sponsor for a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assisted watershed project, you should be well informed about the project, its history and how the project provides benefits, as well as the role and responsibilities of project sponsors and partners.

### Watershed Projects

There are more than 2,100 active or completed NRCS assisted watershed projects in the U. S. Many include conservation practices that improve water quality, conserve irrigation water, provide water supply, manage agricultural waste or provide recreational benefits. More than 11,800 flood control dams have been constructed in these watersheds, but not all projects have flood control dams.

### Project Sponsors

Watershed project sponsors represent the local interest in NRCS assisted watershed projects. Sponsors must be a unit of local government such as a conservation district, a city or a county government agency. Sponsors request assistance from NRCS in addressing flooding or other natural resource issues and enter into an agreement with NRCS that may include watershed planning, engineering design and financial assistance for the project. In addition to NRCS, project partners may include city, county or state government agencies, as well as other non-governmental organizations.

Once the project is completed, an agreement outlines the sponsor's responsibilities for operation and maintenance of constructed structures such as dams. This agreement should be reviewed periodically to ensure these responsibilities are being met.

### Watershed Work Plans

Watershed work plans are developed for each project, providing a history of flooding or other conditions prior to the watershed project, allocation of costs, description of the watershed and projected future economic benefits.

### Responsibilities of Watershed Project Sponsors:

- Obtaining easements and required permits
- Conducting public meetings
- Securing and providing the local share of funds to install works of improvement
- Securing and providing funds for ongoing operation and maintenance of constructed structures such as dams
- Monitoring easement encroachment
- Developing and updating emergency action plans
- Working with regulatory agencies such as state dam safety agencies
- Scheduling and conducting regular inspections of dams
- Maintaining relationships with landowners
- Working with NRCS at all levels to maintain relationships and the partnership that is essential to the watershed program

Find more educational resources for sponsors at:

- [www.watershedcoalition.org](http://www.watershedcoalition.org)
- [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)