



NRCS-Assisted Watershed Projects

Gering Valley Drain Project

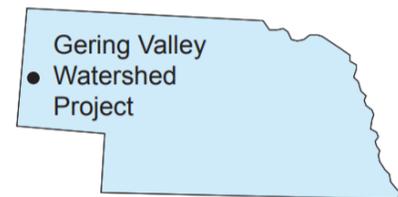
There are 2,100 watershed projects in the nation established by local units of government with the assistance of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed Program (Public Law 78-534 and Public Law 83-566). These projects consist of over 11,000 flood control dams and thousands of conservation practices that provide over \$2 billion in annual benefits in flood prevention, water supplies, recreational areas, and other benefits. The following is just one example of how the Watershed Program is benefiting local communities and the nation.

Gering Valley Drain Project

This on-going project initially started in the 1960s and is one Nebraska's most extensively engineered PL-566 projects. The project protects a 57,600-acre watershed south of Gering in Scotts Bluff County and consists of several dams and flood control channels designed to control the water flowing out of the surrounding canyons before it can enter the town of Gering.



Gering Valley is sponsored locally by the North Platt Natural Resources District (NRD) and funded by the USDA's PL-566 watershed and flood control program. It is a joint effort of the NRD, Scotts Bluff County, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Department of Defense Corps of Engineers.



The Gering Valley Watershed Project is located in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska.

Structurally, Gering Valley includes nine floodwater retarding structures, 10 miles of diversions, 31 miles of channel improvement, and 35 miles of surface water disposal channels. Underground pipes and land treatment measures also are a part of the project. Dam H and the Yensen Drain, constructed in 2011-12, was the final piece in the Gering Valley Drain Project.

The project cost has been about \$7.6 million, with PL-566 funds making up \$4,756,400 of that. For every dollar spent, \$1.50 was returned in the amount of benefits gained. In 1998 dollars, the average annual benefits of the Gering Valley Project are \$1,660,300.

Operation and maintenance of the Gering Valley project are carried on by a joint committee made up of the NRD, Scotts Bluff County, Gering-Fort Laramie Irrigation District, Gering Irrigation District, and Central Irrigation District

Nebraska statute gives NRDs the power to “develop and execute, through the exercise of powers and authorities granted by law, plans, facilities, works and programs relating to 12 specific purposes”, including: Prevention of damages from flood water and sediment, flood prevention and control and drainage improvement and channel rectification

The North Platte NRD has had a part in developing several projects in the basin, usually working with partners such as the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Natural Resources Commission.

For additional information to the North Platte NRD web site at <https://www.npnrd.org/>

December 2021