

Small Watershed Program (PL-566)



Healthy watersheds benefit everyone. Unfortunately, for the past two years Colorado has received no new financial assistance for this program.

Counties with PL-566 Projects

- Non-agricultural water management
- Ground water recharge
- Water quality management
- Municipal and industrial water supply

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**, in cooperation with local soil conservation districts, individual landowners and others, has installed approximately 152 structures for flood control as well as many irrigation and water quality projects.

Active PL-566 Projects

Trinidad Lake North

This is a land treatment project in **Las Animas County** which addresses erosion on 46,900 acres of rangeland. The sediment generated contributes to a loss of water storage in Trinidad Lake. The project cost is estimated to be \$1.6 million, of which participants contribute about 33 percent.

Limestone-Graveyard Creek

This land treatment project is in **Bent and Prowers Counties**. Its purpose is to reduce agriculture's contribution of pollutants to both surface and ground water. Its focus is on the 27,000 acres of irrigated cropland in the watershed. Participants will contribute approximately 50 percent of the \$4.8 million project cost.

The Program

The **Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (Public Law 83-566)** authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to provide technical and financial assistance to local organizations planning and carrying out watershed projects. This **Watershed Program** works through local government sponsors to help participants solve natural resource and related economic problems of a specific watershed. Projects must address one or more of the following purposes:

- Watershed protection
- Flood prevention
- Agricultural water management

Highline Breaks

This land treatment project in **Otero and Pueblo Counties** is aimed at improving the quality of surface and ground water in the watershed. The intent is to reduce the amount of selenium, uranium, salts, and nitrates—as well as sediment. An estimated 31,000 acres of irrigated cropland will be treated. Participants will contribute approximately \$4 million toward the \$7.4 million project.

Holbrook Lake Ditch

This 28,000-acre land treatment project in **Otero County** will reduce agriculture’s loading toxic trace elements such as selenium and uranium to surface and ground water, and it will reduce salt loading to the Arkansas River. The project cost is estimated at \$2.1 million. Participants contribute approximately 35 percent.

Aging Watershed Infrastructure

More than 50 years ago, USDA was authorized by Congress to help local communities with upstream flood control and watershed protection.

Local project sponsors, with NRCS assistance, have constructed more than 10,000 small flood control dams in America. Many of the dams are nearing the end of their design life. Rehabilitation of these dams is quickly becoming a major issue. It is vital that action be taken to rehabilitate or remove these dams because of public safety.

State	Number of Dams	Number needing Rehab	\$ (million)
Colorado	152	49	\$28

PL-566 Projects in Planning

Beaver Creek

This land treatment project in **Morgan County** consists of 60,000 acres and will reduce nitrate loading from agriculture to the South Platte River alluvial aquifer. Estimated project cost is \$9.3 million, with participants contributing 35 percent. *Project planning is anticipated to be completed in the year 2004.*

Patterson Hollow

This is a flood damage prevention project in **Otero County**. The watershed is 60,000 acres. Total project cost is approximately \$3 million. *Planning is expected to be completed in 2004.*

Bent’s Fort

This is a land treatment project. Portions of the watershed lie in **Bent and Otero Counties**. The project area is 56,320 acres. The main goal is to reduce selenium loading from agriculture to surface water and ground-water systems in the watershed. Reducing irrigation erosion in the watershed is another goal. Total project cost is expected to be \$4.6 million. *Planning is expected to be completed in 2004.*

Pending Funding

Six Mile-St. Charles

This land treatment project in **Pueblo County** consists of 25,000 acres of irrigated cropland. The project is aimed at reducing nitrate and selenium loading from agriculture to the Arkansas River. Estimated project cost is \$4.7 million. Participants will contribute approximately 40 percent. *It is scheduled for completion in 2017.*

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