

MEDIA ADVISORY

USDA Satellite Features Feed

October 22, 2009

Contact: USDA-TV (202) 720-6445 or (202) 720-3319

FEATURE – USDA HELPS MAINTAIN WATERSHED DAM SAFETY

INTRO: Building a watershed dam to prevent flooding is only one step. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more USDA efforts to make sure dams are maintained and working properly. (1:37)

DAMS BUILT IN WATERSHEDS ARE GOOD SAFEGUARDS TO SAVE LIVES AND PROPERTY FROM FLOODING. HOWEVER, IF NOT MAINTAINED, THEY BECOME LESS EFFECTIVE. THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE AND THE NATIONAL WATERSHED COALITION CONDUCT CONFERENCES TO TEACH DAM OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE. A RECENT ONE TOOK PLACE IN OKLAHOMA.

Mike Thralls, Exec. Dir. OK Conservation Commission: They've controlled flooding that took a lot of lives in the early part of the last century. And in order to continue that function they have to be properly maintained. This is the part of our infrastructure that protects and makes this state livable.

N-R-C-S SPECIALISTS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES ATTEND THE CONFERENCES TO LEARN HOW TO GET THE INTENDED LIFESPANS FROM DAMS DESIGNED TO LAST FOR DECADES.

Ronald Hilliard, USDA, NRCS, Oklahoma: It is very important that people at all levels from the districts and all of our partnerships USDA employees to attend so that they can stay abreast of what they need to do and look for to keep these structures in good operating order.

PARTICIPANTS SAY THEY VALUE THE INFORMATION AT THE CONFERENCES AS WELL AS GETTING TO NETWORK.

Ayana Brown, USDA NRCS South Carolina: Conservation districts, the sponsors, NRCS. Everybody is working together because we really do want to provide protection for the farmers and the ranchers and the landowners who live downstream of our dams.

Nena Wells, Upper Washita Conservation District, OK: Just how they maintain them. How they work with them. Get some new ideas for ways to maintain the hundred and seventy four that I have in my county.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES, WITH U-S-D-A ASSISTANCE, HAVE CONSTRUCTED OVER ELEVEN THOUSAND DAMS IN FORTY SEVEN STATES SINCE

NINETEEN FORTY EIGHT. FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
I'M BOB ELLISON.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272(voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD)