

WATERSHED AND FLOOD PREVENTION OPERATIONS

NRCS Watershed Programs in Virginia

The Flood Control Act of 1944, Public Law 78-534, also known as PL-534, authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to work with local sponsors to install watershed improvements that provide flood protection within designated river basins. The Potomac River Basin which includes the Shenandoah River drainage area was included in PL-534. Protection under this program has been provided through the construction of dams, dikes and channel work, and to a lesser extent through the relocation, elevation, and flood-proofing of property and vital infrastructure.

Modifications made to the program in the early 1980s permitted the NRCS to also provide technical and financial assistance to private land users in the installation of conservation practices on their private lands. Thus the original flood prevention focus of the program was broadened to allow for improvements that protect long-term productivity of on-farm resources and at the same time protect water quality. The installation of conservation practices on private lands within sub-watersheds of the Potomac River basin is also referred to as land treatment.