

Project #: 01-1200

Project Name: Beaver Lake Watershed Public Awareness and Education Project

Watershed(s): Beaver Reservoir, HUC #11010001

County(ies): Benton, Carroll, Madison, Washington

Project Type: Education

Pollutant(s): Urban Runoff

Project Summary

The Beaver Lake Watershed was selected in Arkansas' Unified Assessment as "the top priority" for implementation of watershed restoration practices. The geographic region of the Beaver Lake Watershed spans four counties and has an estimated population of 140,000 individuals, while the reservoir serves more than 250,000 as a public water supply.

Currently, the majority of the waters in the state being placed on the ADEQ 303(d) list are due to excess sediment and/or nutrients. The Beaver Lake Watershed is not any different. Confined poultry, swine, beef, and dairy operations may have been a contributor of nutrients. Rural roads, increased construction, streambank erosion, and timber harvest are likely contributors of elevated sediment loads. Intense urban expansion is rapidly becoming a major concern in the watershed, as well. With increased urban development and the accompanying population growth, projects related to water quality education related to urbanization will become increasingly important in the coming years.

Educating and promoting awareness among stakeholders is an initial step in reducing pollutant loads to regional water resources. With urban development, agricultural land is being converted into business parks and housing developments at an accelerated rate. With this development, the watershed has many new stakeholders who depend on the resources of Beaver Lake and have a shared responsibility for protecting water quality. These "new" stakeholders need to be informed and educated about the challenges facing the watershed and their role in improving and protecting Beaver Lake.

This project addresses the need for greater public awareness and education of watershed dynamics and nonpoint pollution prevention throughout the Beaver Lake Watershed and water use area. With this grant, successful outreach and education efforts such as the Urban Home*A*Syst environmental homesite self-assessment program, Fayetteville's Pollution Prevention Partners' "Pollution Prevention Starts at Home" program, and hands-on youth water quality education programs are intensified throughout the Beaver Lake Watershed. In order to have a significant impact, several components must be included: Input and Planning, Public Awareness, Adult Water Quality Education, and Youth Water Quality Education. The goal of this project is to generate community awareness of non-point source pollution potential impacts through public education programs throughout the Beaver Lake Watershed.