
USDA-NRCS EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

Through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help communities address watershed impairments that pose imminent threats to lives and property. If your land has suffered damage due to flood, fire, drought, windstorm, or other natural occurrence, please contact your local authorities and/or your local NRCS office to find out if you qualify for the EWP program.

The Facts – The Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Congress established the EWP program and provides funding for it. Please know that eligibility for the program does not depend upon the declaration of a national emergency.

All projects undertaken through EWP, with the exception of the purchase of floodplain easements, must have a project sponsor. Sponsors must be a legal subdivision of the state, such as a city, county, general improvement district, or conservation district, or an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization as defined in Section 4 of the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. Sponsors are responsible for:

- Providing land rights to do repair work;
- Securing necessary permits;
- Furnishing the local cost share;
- Accomplishing the installation of work; and
- Performing any necessary operation and maintenance.

Through EWP, the NRCS may pay up to 75 percent of the construction costs of emergency measures. Ninety (90) percent may be paid for projects within limited-resource areas as identified by U.S. Census data. The remaining costs must come from non-Federal local sources and can be made in cash or in-kind services.

All EWP projects must reduce threats to lives and property; be economically, environmentally, and socially defensible; be designed and implemented according to sound technical standards; and conserve natural resources.

Type of Work Authorized

As mentioned above, the EWP program addresses watershed impairments, which include, but are not limited to:

- Debris Removal
- Bank Stabilization
- Restore Hydraulic Capacity
- Wildlife Rehabilitation
- Levee Repair
- Watershed Structure Repair
- Purchase Floodplain Easements

Floodplain easements for restoring, protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the functions and values of floodplains, including associated wetlands and riparian areas, are available through



EWP. These easements also help conserve fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention, and groundwater recharge, as well as safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and erosion. EWP work is not limited to any one set of measures.

NRCS completes a Damage Survey Report that provides a case-by-case investigation of the work necessary to repair or protect a site. NRCS will only provide funding for work that is necessary to reduce applicable threats.

Sponsors that want to increase the level of protection in a particular project are responsible for paying 100 percent of the costs of the desired upgrade and additional work.

Additional information about Federal assistance programs, safety tips, and updates about USDA's disaster relief efforts are posted on the Web at www.usda.gov/disaster.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)