

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to communities to restore watersheds ravaged by natural disasters. Through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, NRCS helps safeguard people and property following natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

Assistance Available

NRCS provides technical assistance to prevent damage from flooding, runoff, and erosion--reducing the threat to life and property. Measures include removing debris and sediment from streams, controlling gullies, and protecting streambanks.

This assistance protects homes, businesses, and other properties from further damage in the event of subsequent storms. NRCS provides up to 75 percent financial assistance of construction costs of eligible emergency treatments; up to 90 percent in limited resource areas.

Eligibility

Through the EWP program, NRCS assists public agencies and others to protect communities from the threat of additional flooding and erosion following a natural disaster. Local sponsors, such as a city, county, or conservation district, may apply for assistance.

Sponsors

Local sponsors of EWP projects determine priorities for emergency assistance and

coordinate work with other federal and local agencies. They are responsible for obtaining the necessary permits, paying a percentage of the construction cost, and providing operation and maintenance of completed emergency measures. These sponsors may provide their share of construction costs in the form of cash or in-kind services, such as labor or equipment.

Questions and Answers

When will damage assessments begin?

Attending to the safety of flood victims is always a community's first priority. As soon as victims are attended to and floodwaters recede, damage assessments can begin.

Who can receive EWP assistance?

EWP work can be done on private property. All projects must have a government sponsor such as a Soil and Water Conservation District, city, or county. The program is intended to help groups of people, not individuals. All EWP work must reduce threats to life and property, and be economically and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint. All work must represent the least expensive alternative. Requests for assistance must be submitted within 60 days of the event.



A heavy rain event created an active gully in Coffee County, Alabama. A riprap flume was used to stabilize the gully.

How can we become a project sponsor?

All EWP work must have a project sponsor. The sponsor must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a state or a legal subdivision of a state government, a local unit of government, or a qualified Indian Tribe or Tribal organization;
- Must be able and willing to obtain needed land rights and permits;
- Must supply the required financial assistance or in-kind services for needed construction work;
- Must agree to provide for the operation and maintenance of emergency measures when completed.

How does NRCS help?

NRCS employees monitor flooding and communicate with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, county officials, and other sponsors about the EWP program and its use. When potential projects are identified, staffs work with sponsors to prepare damage survey reports (DSR's) as the first step in providing EWP assistance.

How does the EWP program protect the environment?

When the situation allows, an inter-disciplinary team, including biologists,

geologists, resource conservationists, and engineers, evaluate all of the impacts of a proposed measure to ensure that it is environmentally sound.

An interagency approach is used when necessary to coordinate efforts with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal and state agencies.

For Assistance

For additional information, contact the local NRCS office or your local county USDA Service Center. NRCS offices are listed in the telephone directory under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture or visit the Alabama NRCS website at: <http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov>.

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Helping People Help The Land