



November 13, 2018

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)

The NRCS Caribbean Area Team is committed to providing emergency assistance to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) via the **Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)**.

EWPP helps conserve natural resources by relieving imminent hazards to life and property. In the Caribbean Area, EWPP is clearing and repairing waterways impacted by hurricanes Irma and María in September 2017. Through EWPP, NRCS is partnering with a growing number of land stewards, land owners and local government agencies to assess and implement conservation practices in priority areas. Partners include municipalities, conservation districts and the PR Dept. of Natural and Environmental Resources. NRCS works with FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers to provide technical support to effectively address local needs. NRCS also works with potential sponsors to conduct outreach and discuss each individual municipality's priorities.

EWP Status Update:

In the months after hurricanes Irma & María, over **1,000** watershed sites were assessed by NRCS teams. Of those, **442** were selected as exigency projects (in need of immediate clearing) and NRCS completed damage survey reports (DSRs) for exigency work to remove debris from these sites at an estimated cost of **\$31 million dollars**. The agency also identified over **383** sites needing non-exigency work for debris removal, erosion control, stream bank stabilization and other conservation practices to restore stream hydrological conditions.

FY 2018 recorded **218** completed exigency projects, **170** projects underway, and the remaining **54** exigency projects sponsored and waiting to start. By the end of the fiscal year, NRCS and partners had cleared about **207,813 cubic yards** of debris from **89 waterways** in the Caribbean Area to protect **4,649** lives and **4,207** properties. For more information, contact NRCS Caribbean Area Director, Edwin Almodóvar, at 787-370-1703 or Edwin.Almodovar@pr.usda.gov.



Above: Secretary Sonny Perdue visits Vega Alta EWPP project with NRCS staff, PR Resident Commissioner, DRNA Secretary, and USDA hurricane lead, on July 31, 2018.
Below: Peñuelas EWPP project 004, completed Sept. 1, 2018.

