

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

Program Objectives: The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program provides assistance to relieve imminent hazards to life and property and to remove impairments that may cause additional damage. Hazards include floods and the products of erosion created by floods, fire, windstorms, or other natural disasters. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for overall program administration and guidance.

Program Sponsors: Local sponsors request assistance for emergency situations through the EWP Program. City, county, state, and tribal governments or their political subdivisions sponsor Emergency Watershed Protection projects. Eligible sponsors must have the ability and legal authority to enter into contracts and obtain any needed land rights, water rights, and permits for the lands they sponsor. Program contracts and payments are administered either under Federal contract or through local sponsors. Sponsors are responsible for 25% of the construction cost. The 25% can be direct cash expenditures or the value of in-kind materials and/or construction services. Construction services include costs associated with materials, equipment, and labor.

Program Funding: The EWP Program provides up to 75 percent of the cost of the watershed treatment or approved structural repairs. Funding must be provided by Congress and may not be immediately available. Work undertaken before Congress approves funding is ineligible for funding. Applications must be prepared for consideration.

How to Get Assistance: All requests for consideration under the EWP Program must be received within 60 days of the disaster for consideration. Contact your local USDA NRCS office for assistance.

Eligibility: The NRCS works with the sponsors to identify watershed impairment that threaten life and/or property. Property means significant infrastructures such as dwellings, office buildings, utilities, bridges, and roads. Land is not defined as property for the EWP program.

Eligibility and applicant funding will be based on an assessment by NRCS of watershed conditions, identified values being threatened, potential damage costs, estimated treatment costs, social considerations, and environmental considerations.

Types of Work: Work under EWP is not limited to a set of prescribed measures. The NRCS and sponsor(s) perform a case-by-case review of each site or work area. Some examples of types of work performed that reduce threats to life and property are:

- Storm debris and sediment removal from stream channels, road culverts, and bridge abutment to restore the hydraulic capacity.
- Reshaping of eroding stream banks.
- Protect destabilized stream banks.
- Repair of damaged drainage channels and public flood prevention structures.
- Establish cover on critically-eroding lands.

Program Limitations: EWP funds cannot be utilized to solve problems or remedy conditions that existed before the disaster or event occurred. This would include:

- Restoring conditions attributed to a lack of maintenance.
- Raising the level of protection from that which existed prior to the emergency.
- Providing operation and maintenance work or repair private or public transportation facilities or utilities.