

Another Conservation Success Story...

Gilmer County, Georgia

October, 2006

Emergency Conservation Program Helps Gilmer County Recover From the Storm

September 16, 2004 introduced Gilmer County Georgia to Hurricane Ivan. At this meeting, 14 inches of rain fell in less than 10 hours at the head, and throughout Clear Creek in the Cartecay Watershed.

Homes, bridges, roads, and all types of agricultural operations were destroyed. Trees, weakened by a pine beetle infestation, fell and blocked streams.

Streambeds were filled with rock and rerouted into new channels while other streams were clogged by blockages of trees, tires, and even lawnmowers.

People were trapped in their homes and not sure if the house would stay or float.

Luckily, there are programs available to Americans to help them after the storm.

Everybody has heard of FEMA, and their involvement with the aftermath of storms, but who picks up where they leave off?

Ag lands have the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) to assist; but who takes the debris out of the stream, off the banks, and helps prevent further destruction and potential loss of life when the next storm event occurs?

The answer is the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP).

EWP provides funding to project sponsors for such work as clearing debris from clogged waterways, restoring vegetation, and stabilizing river banks.

After the 2004 storm in Gilmer County, a team of NRCS personnel visited sites designated disasters by the Gilmer County government.

Contractors and engineers spent hours preparing contracts and practice specifications. The county obtained signatures from landowners involved with each project site.

When all of the documents were completed according to NRCS policy, and all of the signatures were obtained by the county, the project was released to contracting companies for bids.

NRCS provides inspection staff for quality and safety assurance as the project is completed.

The EWP program helps avoid the disaster after the disaster



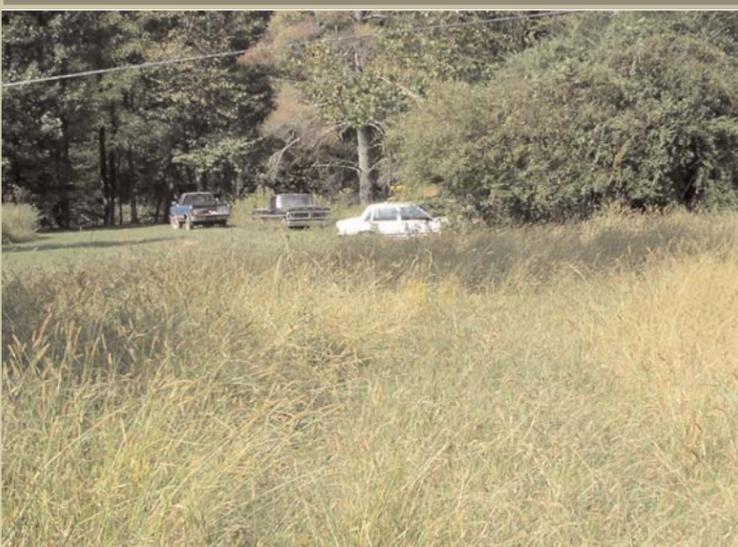
Above: Old streambed filled with stone.

Below: Stream returned to original course and reestablished in grass.



Above: Streambed filled with stone and diverted towards a house.

Below: Stream put back in place and area reestablished in grass.



Emergency Watershed Protection Program

The purpose to the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program is to undertake emergency measures, including the purchase of flood plain easements, for runoff retardation and soil erosion prevention, to safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion on any watershed whenever fire, flood or any other natural occurrence is causing or has caused a sudden impairment of the watershed.

It is not necessary for a national emergency to be declared for an area to be eligible for assistance. The program objective is to assist sponsors and individuals in implementing emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property created by a natural disaster.

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