

## **USDA PROVIDES \$3.2 MILLION FOR NATURAL DISASTER RECOVERY EFFORTS IN UTAH**

WASHINGTON, March 22, 2005—Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns today announced that \$3.2 million in Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) funds will help restore natural resources and protect property damaged by recent flooding in Washington County, Utah.

“The Bush Administration is committed to helping communities recover from devastating natural disasters,” said Johanns. “These funds will provide technical and financial assistance to undertake emergency measures to remove threats to lives and property and restore the environment.”

Earlier this year, heavy rains caused severe flooding along the Santa Clara River in southwestern Utah. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will provide EWP assistance to stabilize streambanks and remove debris. These measures will protect the public and local infrastructure from future flooding, given a snowpack in excess of 300 percent of normal in the upper areas of the river’s watershed. The funding announced today is in addition to \$6 million for emergency environmental restoration work in Utah that USDA announced on Feb. 1, 2005.

Through EWP, NRCS works with local project sponsors to reduce imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, drought, earthquakes, tornados and other natural disasters. EWP projects provide sound erosion control measures that are economically and environmentally defensible and include removing debris, reshaping and protecting eroding banks, repairing levees and reseeding damaged areas.

Information on flooding in Utah can be found on the Web at <http://www.ut.nrcs.usda.gov> and on EWP at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EWP>.

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***Note to editor:** For information on local, on-site EWP work, contact Blake Walbeck at 435-691-7201 (cell). For general Utah media assistance, contact NRCS Public Affairs Specialist Ron Francis at 801-694-0216 (cell).*