

NEWS RELEASE

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NRCS Announces \$469,500 Available in Disaster Assistance in Minnesota

ST PAUL, MN, March 8, 2012 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced an importance package of disaster assistance to help farmers, landowners, communities and others recover and rebuild after the September 2010 Flood. Funding is provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP).

In Minnesota, EWP has \$469,500 of funds available to the City of Kellogg, Minnesota and Blue Earth County, Minnesota to protect private property and address public safety. . In Kellogg, 3 homes were threatened by bank erosion just east of Highway 61. To-date, one home was removed in 2011 and a stabilization project is being planned for 2 other home sites. In Blue Earth County, stream bank erosion was threatening a township road and a gas line. The EWP funded work for both sites will include bank stabilization work to protect the threatened homes and road. NRCS works with local project sponsors to contract for the heavy construction work, spurring the creation of jobs.

“We look forward to working with the local sponsors to stabilize these sites and help make these communities whole again,” said John Brach, State Engineer, Minnesota NRCS. He gave the assurance that NRCS’s interdisciplinary teams would follow Federal law in evaluating the possible impacts the work might have on natural resources, cultural resources and the socioeconomic effects associated with the possible alternatives.

Brach is working with other federal and state agencies as well as local units of government to initiate an effort to identify bluff hazard areas. Brach added “with proper identification of bluff hazard areas and public education, we can significantly reduce or eliminate these emergency projects in the future”.

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Local sponsors, such as a city, town, county, or Tribe may apply for assistance. EWP funding bears up to 75 percent of the construction costs. The remaining 25 percent must be obtained by the local sponsor and can be in the form of cash or in-kind services.

To apply, a project sponsor must submit a formal letter to the NRCS State Conservationist, requesting EWP assistance. Once the letter has been received, NRCS will visit the damaged site to make an eligibility determination and to complete a Damage Survey Report. All projects undertaken through EWP must have a project sponsor.

For more information about the EWP program, local units of government can visit the Minnesota NRCS [Emergency Watershed Protection](#)

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