

NRCS Flood Assistance for Nebraska

United States Department of Agriculture



USDA Programs – NRCS

These USDA programs administered by or implemented with NRCS technical assistance may be available to assist farmers and ranchers in the recovery process after a natural disaster:

- NRCS - Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP);
- NRCS - Wetland Reserve Program (WRP);
- NRCS - Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP);
- FSA – Emergency Conservation Program (ECP);
- FSA – Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP).

(EWP and ECP Programs require a disaster declaration and funding appropriation by Congress .)

Emergency Watershed Program (EWP)

- EWP is USDA's primary method of providing financial and technical assistance for repairing measures damaged by floods and other natural disasters.
- The NRCS is authorized to assist project sponsors in implementing emergency recovery measures to relieve imminent hazards to life or property created by a natural disaster that have caused a sudden impairment of a watershed.

Eligible EWP Projects

- Typical repairs include:
 - Levee repair (less than 400 sq.mi. drainage area);
 - Debris removal (Logjam) to restore stream flow;
 - Stream bank stabilization near roads, bridges and buildings;
 - Sediment removal from drainage ditches;
 - Watershed dam repair.

EWP Cost-Share Rates

- Federal funds may cover **up to** 75 percent of the construction costs for most restoration measures.
- Projects range in size from small to very large.



EWP Projects Must Have a Local Sponsor

- Any legal subdivision of state government or Native American Tribe/Tribal organization;
- Cities;
- Counties;
- Natural Resources Districts;
- Drainage Districts.



EWP Sponsor Requirements

- Have a legal interest in or responsibility for the areas threatened by watershed impairment;
- Capable of obtaining the necessary land rights and required permits;
- Capable of carrying out operations and management of project area;
- Administer construction contract;
- Have power of eminent domain.

EWP Eligible Measures

- Must be economically, socially, and environmentally defensible and technically sound;
- Are limited to only measures necessary to reduce threats to a stable condition and to the prior event condition.
- Must have multiple beneficiaries



EWP – Destabilized stream bank

Examples

Eligible

Not Eligible

ROAD
THREATENED



NO PUBLIC
UTILITIES
THREATENED

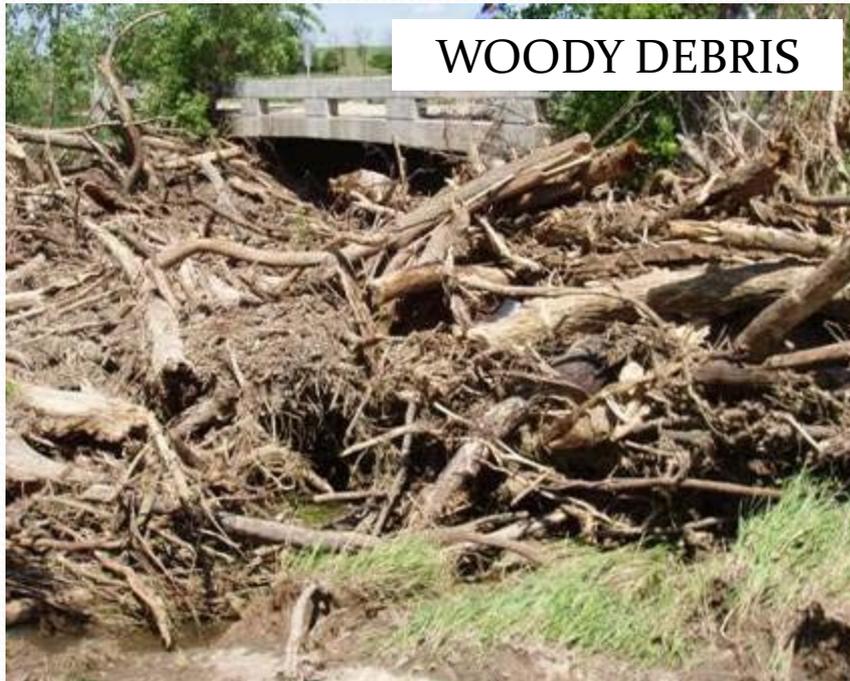


EWP – Debris Removal

Examples

Eligible

Not Eligible



EWP Project Timeline

- Sponsors request assistance;
- NRCS makes an initial eligibility check;
- Sponsor and NRCS conduct damage surveys and gather necessary data.;
- NRCS or Sponsor hired A&E Firm (Architect & Engineering Firm) creates plans and specifications;
- NRCS and the sponsor review the final plans and enter into a Project Agreement;
- Sponsors contract the work.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

- WRP provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring land from agricultural production.



WRP

Wetland Benefits:

- Provide habitat for fish and wildlife;
- Improve water quality;
- Reduce flooding;
- Recharge groundwater;
- Protect biological diversity;
- Provide educational, scientific and recreational opportunities.

WRP Eligibility Requirements

- Farm Bill rules apply:
 - Federal income limits;
 - Must have owned the land for seven years prior to enrollment;
 - Must be hydric soils (minimum 50 percent).

WRP Enrollment Options

- **Permanent easement** – USDA pays 100 percent of easement value and up to 100 percent of restoration costs
- **30-year easement** – USDA pays up to 75 percent of easement value and up to 75 percent of restoration costs
- **Restoration cost-share agreement** – USDA pays up to 75 percent of the restoration costs; no easement on enrolled acres

WRP Enrollment Options

- **Reserved Grazing-Rights: Permanent or 30-Year Easement** - The easement payment is based off of the standard permanent or 30-year easement value that is then reduced by a predetermined amount for the retained grazing rights. USDA pays up to 100 percent of the restoration cost for permanent easements and up to 75 percent of the restoration cost for 30-year easements.
- **30-Year Tribal Contract** - Contract payments through this option are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. USDA also pays up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.

EWP Floodplain Easements

- This amendment to EWP provides for the purchase of floodplain easements as an emergency measure.
 - Eligible for floodplain lands impaired within the last 12 months or with history of repeated flooding (at least two times within past 10 years).
 - Expand the floodplain;
 - Reduce long-term federal disaster assistance;
 - Safeguard lives and property.

EWP Floodplain Easement

- Easement provides NRCS authority to restore and enhance floodplain's functions and values.
- NRCS may pay **up to** 100 percent of the restoration costs.
- NRCS may pay **up to** 75 percent of the cost of removing buildings when appropriate.
- Landowners retain rights
 - Control of public access
 - Undeveloped recreational use of land

Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP

- EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.
- Conservation practices implemented through EQIP reduce soil erosion, improve efficient use of water, improve grazing land, wildlife habitat and water quality.

EQIP

- Conservation practices within the inundated levee system could be impacted by flooding.
- Follow-up Financial Assistance and Technical Assistance might be needed to repair damages.
- May be opportunities for more immediate assistance by modifying existing contracts.
- Producers may apply for new contracts at any time.

EQIP - Potential Practices Impacted by Flooding

- Conservation Cover (Grass Seeding)
- Critical Area Planting
- Field Border
- Filter Strip
- Irrigation Land Leveling
- Irrigation System, Sprinkler
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment

Emergency Conservation Program - ECP

- **Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers this program**
 - FSA provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters.
 - NRCS provides technical assistance to help landowners implement approved emergency conservation practices.

For more information contact the FSA office in your county.

www.ne.fsa.usda.gov

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program - CCRP

- **Farm Service Agency administers this program**
 - FSA provides financial assistance and an annual rental payment for 10 to 15 years to implement conservation practices on cropland within the 100 year flood plain and some pasture areas near streams or rivers which would restore the area to permanent vegetation.
 - NRCS provides technical assistance to plan and design the CCRP program approved conservation practices.

For more information contact the FSA office in your county.

www.ne.fsa.usda.gov

CCRP Practices

Examples of eligible CCRP practices include:

- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Tree / Shrub establishment
- Field border
- Wetland restoration or enhancement
- Filter Strip



For more information contact the NRCS office in your county.

www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov

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