

# Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

## USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Program Objectives:** The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program helps remove threats to life and property that remain in the nation's watersheds in the aftermath of natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, drought, and volcanic activity. Threats include debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks, jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructure, and damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought. EWP is administered by the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides technical and financial assistance to local sponsoring authorities.

**Program Sponsors:** Local sponsors request assistance for emergency situations through the EWP Program. City, county, state, and tribal governments or their political subdivisions sponsor EWP 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 percent of the construction cost. The 25 percent can be cash or in-kind services.

**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. Submit a formal request by letter to the NRCS State Conservationist at 220 East Rosser Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58501. Contact your local USDA, NRCS office for assistance.

For more information, visit the North Dakota NRCS website at <http://www.nd.nrcs.usda.gov/programs>.

**Eligibility:** The NRCS works with the sponsors and other partners to identify structures, property, and other values that are at increased risk from flooding or erosion. Identified risks include human safety, property damage, water quality, threatened and endangered species, critical wildlife habitat, and cultural resources.

Watershed 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 the EWP Program is not limited to a set of prescribed measures. The NRCS and sponsors perform a case-by-case review of each site or work area. Some examples of types of work performed are:

- Storm debris removal from stream channels, road culverts, and bridge abutments.
- Reshaping of eroding streambanks.
- Protect destabilized streambanks.
- 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.

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