

# **NEW Application Information**

## **Voluntary Buyout Program Elkhorn Creek/Tug Fork River Watershed McDowell County, West Virginia**

Owners of select properties within the Elkhorn Creek/Tug Fork River Watershed in McDowell County are eligible to apply for a *voluntary* floodplain buyout offered by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and local sponsors.

Payment to sellers will be based on **fair market value** of the applied for property. An **additional incentive of up to \$25,000** will be available for properties with residential structures. Displaced renters may be eligible for incentives of up to \$5,000. You have received this application because your property appears to be eligible.

**Application period closes soon: January 31, 2023.** Applications must be received by email or postmarked by the deadline. Enclosed is an application.

**Applying DOES NOT commit property owners to participating in the buyout. Project planners encourage owners of eligible properties to apply and review no-risk buyout offers.**

**Application assistance is available by phone, email, and in-person.** Contact Staci Thornsby at (304) 293-8840 or [elkhornwatershed@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:elkhornwatershed@mail.wvu.edu) with questions or to make an appointment to meet with one of the project planners at the Welch Public Library to discuss the application process.

**Fair market value will be determined through an appraisal process.** A certified appraiser will determine the value of the property through an appraisal paid for by NRCS. If the property owner disagrees with the appraisal value, the property owner may obtain an independent appraisal within 60 days of receiving the buyout offer. A review appraisal process will then determine the final offer.

**Repetitive flooding in the Elkhorn Creek/Tug Fork River Watershed is dangerous and destructive.** This program offers residential property owners the chance to sell flood-prone property and move from harm's way. An estimated 128 residential properties are eligible for buyout consideration, and **about 30 properties will be purchased.** Eligibility has been determined based on flood risk and severity.

**Applications will be prioritized through an objective ranking process.** Owners of selected properties will be notified about next steps, including appraisals, title examinations, offer letters, and sale of the property.

On properties that are purchased, all structures, including homes, will be demolished, and the land will be placed in public ownership. The land will be returned to natural floodplain conditions and will be subject to deed restrictions that limit any future development. There may be limited post-buyout opportunities to use the land for community benefit.

**All applications should be mailed and/or e-mailed to the following:**

**Attn: Voluntary Buyout Program  
WVU College of Law  
101 Law School Drive  
P.O. Box 6130  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6130**

**OR**

**[elkhornwatershed@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:elkhornwatershed@mail.wvu.edu)**

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**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

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**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**WVU**LAW

**Land Use and Sustainable Development Law Clinic**