

EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) which responds to emergencies created by natural disasters. It is not necessary for a national emergency to be declared for an area to be eligible for assistance.

The EWP Program is a recovery effort aimed at relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural disasters. All projects must have a project sponsor. NRCS may bear up to 75 percent of the eligible construction cost of emergency measures (90 percent within limited-resource areas as identified by the U.S. Census data). The remaining costs must come from the project sponsor.

Type of Work Authorized

EWP is designed for installation of recovery measures to safeguard life and property as a result of a natural disaster. Threats that the EWP Program addresses are termed watershed impairments. These include, but are not limited to:

- debris-clogged waterways,
- unstable streambanks,
- severe erosion jeopardizing public infrastructure, and
- damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

EWP work is not limited to any one set of prescribed measures. NRCS completes a Damage Survey Report which provides a site-by-site investigation of the work and measures necessary to protect life and property from additional flooding and soil erosion. NRCS will only provide funding for work that is necessary to reduce applicable threats. Should sponsors want to increase the level of protection, the sponsor will be responsible for paying 100 percent of the costs of the upgrade and additional work.

EWP funds cannot be used to:

- Stabilize eroding coastline
- Repair damaged infrastructure
- Work on measures installed by another federal agency.



Eligibility

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor.

Sponsors include legal subdivisions of the State, such as a city, borough, conservation district, or any Federally recognized Tribe.

Sponsor's Obligations

Sponsors are responsible for:

- providing land rights to implement repair work,
- securing all necessary permits,
- furnishing the local cost share,
- accomplishing required works of improvement to remove the imminent threat to life and property,
- performing any necessary operation and maintenance.



Severe streambank erosion in Huslia, Alaska.

The rural Alaskan community of Huslia experienced severe soil erosion after rapid ice melt during spring break-up. With assistance from the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP), the Huslia Village Council was able to safely relocate multiple houses and protect lives and property. Photo by Steven Swatling.

Criteria for Assistance

All EWP works of improvement must reduce threat to life and property; be economically, environmentally, and socially defensible; and be technically sound.

How Do I Obtain Assistance?

If your land has suffered severe damage that may qualify for the EWP Program, you should contact your local NRCS office and request assistance. The most common sponsors of EWP projects in Alaska are city, borough, and state governments; soil and water conservation districts; and Tribes.

Emergency Watershed Protection Cost Share

The NRCS contribution toward the implementation of emergency measures may not exceed 75 percent of the construction cost, including work done to offset or mitigate adverse impacts as a result of the emergency measures.

However, if NRCS determines that an area qualifies as a limited resource area, the Federal contribution toward the implementation of emergency measures may not exceed 90 percent of the construction cost of such emergency measures.

NRCS may provide technical assistance as services and/or funds to plan, design, and contract the emergency measures, subject to an agreement between NRCS and the Sponsor.

Purpose	Installation / Construction Cost Share	Engineering / Technical Assistance Cost Share	Real Property Rights Cost Share
Emergency Watershed Protection	Not to exceed 75 percent, or 90 percent for limited resource areas	Not to exceed 100 percent	\$0

More Information

Contact your local NRCS Field Office:

- Delta Junction: (907) 895-4241
- Fairbanks: (907) 479-3159
- Homer: (907) 235-8177
- Juneau: (907) 586-7220
- Kenai: (907) 283-8732
- Kodiak: (907) 486-5598
- Wasilla: (907) 373-6492

Contact Alaska’s EWP Coordinator:

Brett Nelson, State Conservation Engineer
 Phone: (907) 761-7717
 Email: Brett.Nelson@usda.gov