United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)

Fact Sheet

Type of Assistance Authorized

EWP is a USDA program to assist communities with recovery from watershed impairments, such as:

- Debris-clogged stream channels;
- Undermined and unstable stream banks;
- Landslides and debris flows that significantly impair stream flow
- Jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures; and
- Wind-borne debris removal.

IMPORTANT: The watershed impairments that EWP can address are limited to those that create an emergency by impairing flows and threatening lives, public health, or property such as houses, buildings, roads, utilities, structures and dams. EWP funded measures must also be economically, environmentally and socially defensible; be designed and implemented according to sound technical standards; and conserve natural resources.

NRCS only provides funding for work that is necessary to reduce the eligible damage to pre-storm conditions. NRCS cannot pay for repairs to infrastructure such as repairing roads, water lines, sewers, or bridges.

EWP may also be used to purchase floodplain easements on eligible sites where it is more economical and feasible to purchase an easement than to implement recovery measures. These easements will conserve fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention and ground water recharge, as well as safeguard lives and property from future damage by floods, drought and erosion.

Local Sponsors

Through EWP, NRCS may pay up to 75 % of the construction costs of eligible recovery measures. The remaining costs must come from the sponsor's sources and can be made using cash or in-kind services. EWP is delivered through agreements between NRCS and local project sponsors. A project sponsor can be a legal subdivision of the state, such as a state agency, county, city, town, soil and water conservation district, or an Indian Tribe or a Tribal organization. The NRCS typically does not provide EWP assistance directly to private property owners, with the exception of floodplain easement purchases.

The local project sponsors are responsible for:

- Providing land rights to do repair work;
- Securing necessary permits;
- Procuring services to accomplishing the installation of work;
- Performing any necessary operation and maintenance; and
- Furnishing the local cost share of 25% of the construction cost of eligible measures covered by the agreement

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Requesting Assistance

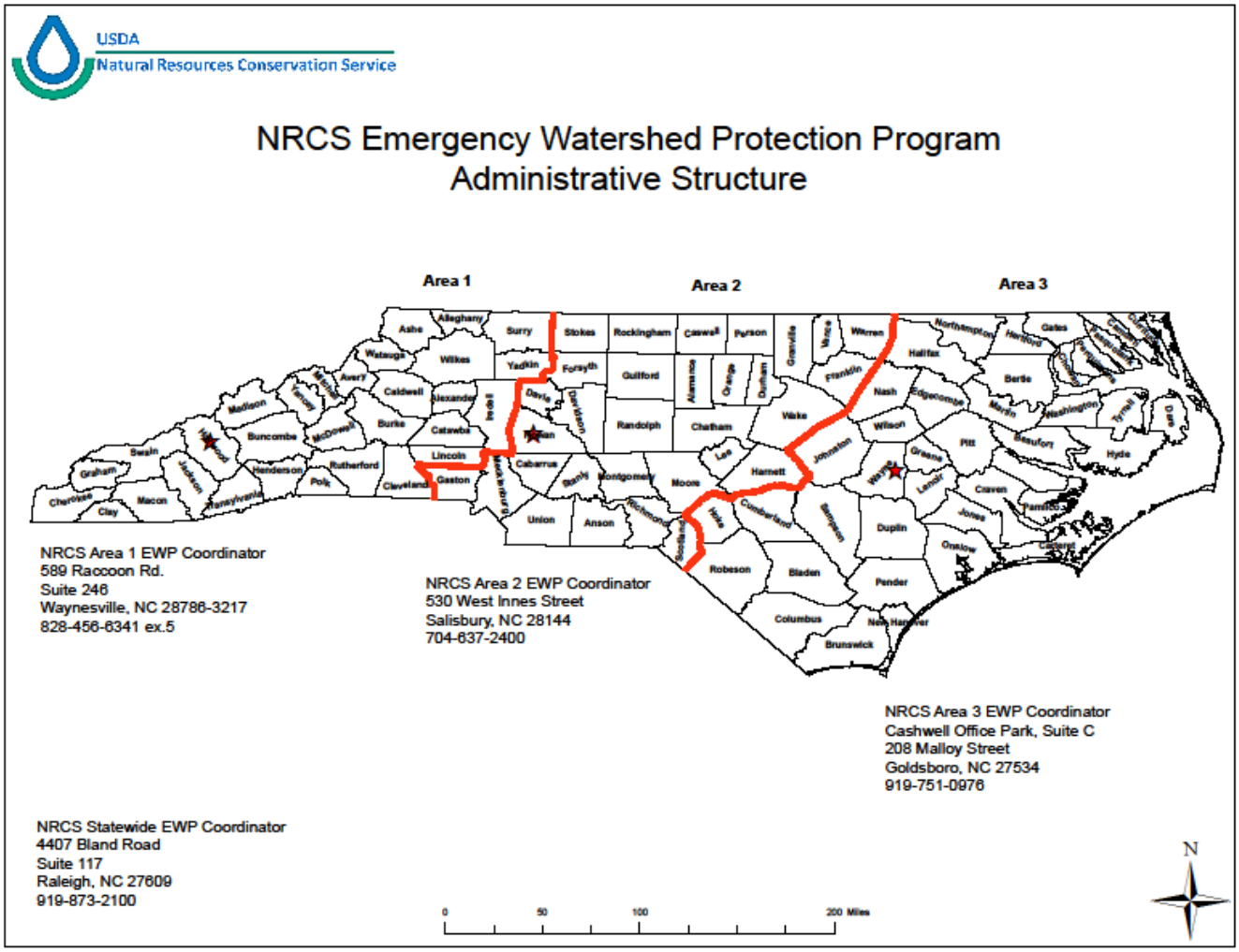
EWP assistance is requested by writing a letter to the NRCS State Conservationist. A sample letter is attached where the event description and sponsor information can be entered. Upon receipt of a written request, the NRCS sends employees to accompany the prospective local sponsor in screening damage sites for EWP eligibility. In cases of large-scale emergencies, NRCS may ask if the sponsors are willing and able to receive training from NRCS and then assist in eligibility screening. Ordinarily, the eligibility screening begins with the most severe damage in the affected area.

Not all removal of storm debris or repair of storm damage is eligible for EWP assistance. NRCS may determine on a case-by-case basis that some storm damage or watershed impairments do not meet the EWP eligibility requirements.

If You Have Questions About EWP in North Carolina

To get answers to your questions about EWP in North Carolina, Contact the NRCS EWP Coordinator designated for your area of the state on the map below, or call the NRCS State Office at (919) 873-2100.

Additional information about Federal assistance programs, safety tips, and updates about USDA's disaster relief efforts throughout the country are described at www.usda.gov/disaster. Information about the U.S. Government's disaster response efforts throughout the country is available at www.ready.gov.



SAMPLE LETTER FOR REQUESTING EWP ASSISTANCE
MUST BE ON SPONSOR LETTERHEAD

<<Enter Date>>

Mr. Timothy Beard
State Conservationist
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
4407 Bland Road, Suite 117
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

Mr. Beard:
We request Federal assistance under the provisions of section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1950, Public Law 81-516 or section 403 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978, Public Law 95-334, to restore damages sustained in [County name] County by [Enter name and/or type of disaster that occurred] on [Enter date disaster occurred]. This work is needed to safeguard lives and property from an imminent hazard of [scope of the problems]. [Explain the assistance needed].

We are a [State, political subdivision of a State, qualified Indian tribe or tribal organization, or unit of local government] with a legal interest in or responsibility for the values threatened by the watershed emergency. We understand, as sponsors of emergency watershed protection measures, that our responsibilities will include (but not limited to):

• Contributing a share of the project costs, as determined by NRCS, by providing funds or eligible services necessary to undertake the activity.

• Obtaining any necessary real property rights, water rights, and regulatory permits.

• Agreeing to provide for any required operation and maintenance of the completed emergency measures.

We have exhausted or have insufficient funding or other resources available to provide adequate relief from applicable hazards. We acknowledge that NRCS will not provide funding for activities undertaken by a sponsor prior to the signing of an agreement between NRCS and the sponsor.

The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the administrative and technical contact persons in our organization are as follows:

[Enter name, title, address, email, and telephone of sponsor's representatives]

Please contact them for any additional information that you might need in assessing our request.

We have attached maps and current photographs of the damage site(s) with captions and location information for your agency to assess.

Sincerely,