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# News Release

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## **NRCS Offers more than \$200 Million in Emergency Funding to Restore Flood-Prone Lands**

**Arkansas 1 of 11 states identified to invest in floodplain easements, state to receive \$2.8 million**

**LITTLE ROCK, August 8, 2019** – In response to recent flooding impacting many parts of the United States, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announces \$217.5 million has been reserved to fund conservation easements on certain lands damaged by flooding and other natural disasters. Currently, \$98.3 million has been allocated to 11 states.

Arkansas NRCS is set to receive more than \$2.8 million to purchase and restore easements. Landowners interested in applying for the program have until Sept. 27, 2019, to submit applications to their local NRCS office.

Funds are made available through the floodplain easement component of the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP-FPE). The 11 states currently identified for funding include: Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin.

“Landowners across the United States have faced—and continue to face—significant challenges from flooding and natural disasters,” said NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr. “To provide relief and assist agricultural landowners during this difficult time, this easement program offers an option that alleviates the stress of operating in a floodplain while still retaining ownership of their property.”

On June 6, 2019, President Trump signed an emergency supplemental appropriations bill providing relief and support to America’s farmers and ranchers. This bill provides \$4.5 billion to the Department of Agriculture (USDA) for agricultural-related losses, emergency timber restoration, farmland repair and watershed recovery work to help America’s farmers and ranchers.

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The EWPP-FPE program is a voluntary program through which eligible applicants agree to sell a permanent conservation easement to the United States through NRCS. Compensation is based on the value of the easement as determined by an appraisal or market analysis. These easements may occur on public or private agricultural land or residential properties damaged by flooding and natural disasters.

“Once the easements have been established, NRCS will fund conservation work necessary to restore the land to its natural state,” said Mike Sullivan, NRCS state conservationist in Arkansas. “Restoring floodplains to a natural state ensures they function properly – conserving and improving fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention, ground water recharge, and open space; reducing long-term federal disaster assistance; and safeguarding lives and property from floods, drought, and erosion.”

Individuals and communities in any state are encouraged to contact their local NRCS field offices for more information on these floodplain easement opportunities.

Property owners interested in applying for EWPP-FPE can review program information on the Floodplain Easement webpage on the NRCS web site at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov). More information about the EWPP-FPE can be obtained from your local USDA NRCS Field Office.