

Fact Sheet



Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation
Service

February 2003

Program Objectives: The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program provides assistance to relieve imminent hazards to life and property. Hazards include floods and the products of erosion created by floods, fire, windstorms, earthquakes, drought, or other natural disasters. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for overall program administration and guidance.

Program Sponsors: Local sponsors request assistance for emergency situations through the EWP Program. Program contracts and payments are administered either under Federal contract or through local sponsors. City, county, state, and tribal governments or their political subdivisions sponsor Emergency Watershed Protection 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. Sponsors request a determination of “eligibility” from the NRCS following a natural disaster or event.

Program Funding: The EWP Program provides up to 75 percent of the cost of the watershed treatment or approved structural repairs.

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. The NRCS works with the sponsors to delineate the watersheds that are above identified areas or at-risk, site-specific locations.

Watershed eligibility and applicant funding will be based on an assessment 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 sponsor(s) perform a case-by-case review of each site or work area. Some examples of types of work performed are:

- Debris removal from stream channels, road culverts, and bridge abutments
- Debris removal in upland areas following windstorms and tornadoes
- Reshaping and protection (hard and soft) of eroding stream banks
- Repair of damaged drainage facilities, levees and flood prevention structures
- Reseeding of burned or denuded areas
- Deferred and prescribed grazing practices under drought conditions to assist in watershed recovery

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

Work performed under this program:

- Cannot adversely affect downstream water rights
- Install measures not essential to hazard reduction
- Work on measures installed by another federal agency

How to Get Assistance: All requests for consideration under the EWP Program must be received within 60 days of the disaster for consideration.

Contact your local USDA NRCS for an assistance package and list of potential sponsors in the area. Submit a formal request for “eligibility determination” by letter to the NRCS State Office at 101 South Main Street, Temple, TX 76501.

Conservation Across America

www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov

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