

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Implementing emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property created by natural disasters.

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ewp

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, 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 occurrences. All projects undertaken, with the exception of the purchase of floodplain easements, must have a project sponsor. NRCS may bear up to 75 percent of the construction cost of emergency measures. The remaining cost must come from local sources and can be in the form of cash or in-kinds services. Funding for the program is provided through congressional appropriations.

Type of Work Authorized through EWP

EWP is designed for installation of recovery measures to safeguard lives 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 stream channels
- Undermined and unstable stream banks
- Jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures
- Wind-borne debris removal
- Damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought

The program can include purchasing floodplain easements. These easements restore, protect, maintain, and enhance the functions and values of the floodplain, including associated wetlands and riparian areas. They also conserve natural values including fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention and ground water recharge, as well as safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the results of erosion.

EWP work is not limited to any one set of prescribed measures. NRCS completes a damage survey report which provides a case-by-case investigation of the work necessary to repair or protect a site. 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 cost of the upgrade and additional work.

Right: An excavator completes streambank work at EWP site in Barnett Vermont.



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Eligibility for EWP

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

Sponsors include state governments, legal subdivisions of the State, such as a city, county, general improvement district, conservation district, or any Native American tribe or tribal organization as defined in section 4 of the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

Sponsor's Obligations

Sponsors are responsible for:

- Providing land rights to do repair work
- Securing the necessary permits
- Furnishing the local cost share
- Accomplishing the installation of work
- Performing any necessary operation and maintenance

Criteria for Assistance

All EWP work must reduce threat to life and property, be economically, environmentally, and socially defensible, and be sound from a technical standpoint. Assistance is provided for as many qualified sites as possible, within the limitation of the disaster relief funding available.

How Do I Get Assistance?

If your land has suffered severe damage that may qualify for the EWP program, you should contact your local sponsor and request assistance (see above for eligible sponsors). More information on EWP is available from NRCS offices throughout Vermont. Please see right for NRCS EWP primary contact information by county.



Before and after photos of a Vermont structure that qualified for the EWP program.



Contact NRCS:

Addison County: (802) 388-6748

Bennington County: (802) 775-8034

Caledonia County: (802) 748-2641

Chittenden County: (802) 951-6796

Essex County: (802) 334-6090

Franklin County: (802) 527-1269

Grand Isle County: (802) 527-1269

Lamoille County: (802) 527-1269

Orange County: (802) 828-4493

Orleans County: (802) 334-6090

Rutland County: (802) 775-8034

Washington County: (802) 828-4493

Windham County: (802) 689-3037

Windsor County: (802) 295-7942

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