NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

How do I get assistance?

If your area has suffered severe damage and may qualify under the EWP program, you are encouraged to contact your local flood control district or County Supervisor to request assistance. City and county governments and flood control districts are the most common sponsors of EWP projects.

The sponsor's application should be in the form of a letter signed by a qualified representative of the sponsoring organization. The letter should include information on the nature, location and scope of the problem for which assistance is requested.

Information is available from NRCS offices which explains the eligibility requirements for the EWP program.

For more information contact:

Luis E. Laracuente, State Conservation Engineer
(530) 792-5622, Luis.Laracuente@ca.usda.gov

OR

The District Conservationist at your local
NRCS Field Office or Service Center

www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

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EWP

REDUCING IMMINENT HAZARDS TO LIFE AND PROPERTY

Revised Aug. 2015
A summary of program requirements and assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

What is the Emergency Watershed Protection program?

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program, EWP, was created by Congress to respond to emergencies caused by natural disasters. The program is designed to help people reduce imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fire, drought, earthquakes, windstorms and other natural disasters.

The purpose of the EWP program is to help communities with a common problem. It is generally not an individual assistance program. All projects undertaken must be sponsored by a political subdivision of the State such as a city, county, or a flood control district.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for administering the program.

What kind of assistance is available?

There are two types of assistance available:

Exigency – An imminent threat to life and property exists and requires immediate federal action. Work must generally be completed within 10 days of accessing the site in order to protect life and property.

Non-Exigency – A situation where the threat to life and property is high enough to constitute an emergency, but the situation is not considered urgent and compelling. Work in this category does not require immediate action, but should be completed as soon as possible (within 220 days from starting work).

NRCS can pay up to 75 percent of emergency measures. The remaining 25 percent comes from local sources and can be in the form of cash, in-kind services or a combination of both.

What are the criteria for assistance?

All EWP work must reduce threats to life and property. Work must be economically and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint.

EWP work must yield benefits to more than one person. All work must represent the least expensive environmentally sound alternative.

Who is eligible?

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor. The project sponsor must be a public agency of a state, county, or city government, or a special district.

What does the sponsor have to do?

Sponsors are responsible for providing landrights to do repair work and for securing all necessary permits.

Sponsors are also responsible for furnishing the local cost share and for implementation of work. The work can be done either through local contracts administered by the sponsor, or the sponsor can use their own equipment and personnel. If sponsors do not have capability to do the work by either of these options, work can also be done by Federal Contract.

For projects where the sponsors or their consultants prepare designs and contract documents, these documents shall be provided to NRCS for review and approval prior to advertising for bids or starting work. Technical assistance costs born by the sponsor for design and/or inspection will be compensated as an "in-kind service" toward 25 percent cost share as defined in the project agreement.

NRCS will not allow work to be done in streams outside the time limits specified in the necessary permits.

What kind of work can be done?

EWP work is not limited exclusively to any one set of prescribed measures. A case-by-case investigation of the needed work is made by NRCS. EWP work can generally include:

- debris removal from stream channels, road culverts and bridge abutments;
- reshaping and protection of eroding banks;
- correction of damaged drainage facilities;
- repair of levees and structures;
- reseeding of damaged areas.

What EWP cannot do

EWP funds cannot be used to solve problems that existed before the disaster. Nor can they be used to improve the level of protection above that which existed prior to the disaster.

EWP cannot fund operation and maintenance work or repair private or public transportation facilities or utilities.

EWP work cannot adversely affect downstream water rights and EWP funds cannot be used to install measures not essential to the reduction of hazards. In addition, EWP funds cannot be used to perform work on measures installed by another federal agency.