



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
4407 Bland Road  
Raleigh, NC 27609  
[www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nc.nrcs.usda.gov)

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*“Helping People Help the Land”*

## **USDA Emergency Watershed Protection Program Assistance in North Carolina**

### **Introduction**

Through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help communities address watershed impairments that pose imminent threats to lives and property caused by Hurricane Irene.

If your land has suffered damage due to flood, fire, drought, windstorm, or other natural occurrence, please contact your local authorities and/or your local NRCS office to find out if assistance through the EWP program is available.

### **The Facts – The Emergency Watershed Protection Program**

Congress established the EWP program and provides funding for it. Eligibility for the program does not depend upon a federal or state disaster declaration.

Removal of storm debris from certain water bodies may be eligible for EWP assistance where property is threatened from increased flooding or erosion as a result of the storm event.

Property is considered any artificial structure permanently affixed to the land such as, but not limited to, houses, buildings, roads, utilities, structures, dams, etc. Standing timber, orchards, growing crops, other agronomic crops, etc. are not considered property under the EWP Program. If the threat is only to standing timber, orchards, growing crops, other agronomic crops, etc., it is not eligible for EWP Program assistance.

All projects undertaken through EWP, with the exception of the purchase of floodplain easements, must have a project sponsor. Sponsors must be a legal subdivision of the State, such as a city, county, general improvement district, or conservation district, or an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization as defined in Section 4 of the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. Sponsors are responsible for:

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

Through EWP, the NRCS may pay up to 75 percent of the construction costs of emergency measures. Ninety percent may be paid for projects within limited-resource areas as identified by U.S. Census data. The remaining costs must come from local sources and can be made in cash or in-kind services.

All EWP projects must reduce threats to lives and property; be economically, environmentally, and socially defensible; be designed and implemented according to sound technical standards; and conserve natural resources.

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## **Type of Work Authorized**

As mentioned above, the EWP program addresses watershed impairments, which include, but are not limited to:

- Debris-clogged stream channels;
- Undermined and unstable streambanks;
- Jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures; and
- Wind-borne debris removal.

Eligible projects must pose a threat to life, or property such as houses, buildings, roads, utilities, structures, and dams.

The purchase of floodplain easements may also be undertaken for eligible sites where it is more economical and feasible to purchase an easement rather than implement or continue to implement recovery measures. These easements also help conserve fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention, and ground water recharge, as well as safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and erosion. EWP work is not limited to any one set of measures.

NRCS completes a Damage Survey Report that 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.

Sponsors that want to increase the level of protection in a particular project are responsible for paying 100 percent of the costs of the desired upgrade and additional work.

## **How to Apply for EWP**

Project sponsors must make an application for assistance with recovery needed as a result of Hurricane Irene by October 26, 2011.

Application for EWP can be made by sending a letter to:

Mr. JB Martin, Jr., State Conservationist  
USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service  
4407 Bland Rd. Suite 117  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

A sample letter is attached.

## **For More Information**

Contact Mike Hinton, Assistant State Conservationist for more information on EWP in North Carolina by phoning (919) 873-2103.

Additional information about Federal assistance programs, safety tips, and updates about USDA's hurricane relief efforts are posted on the Web at [www.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.usda.gov/disaster). Click on the hurricane relief link. Information about the U.S. Government's hurricane response efforts is available at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

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## SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING EWP ASSISTANCE

<<Enter Date>>

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

Dear Mr. Martin:

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 storms of <<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 <<describe general nature, location(s) and scope of the problem>>.

We understand, as sponsors of an Emergency Watershed Protection project that our responsibilities will include acquiring land rights and any permits needed to construct, and if required, to operate and maintain the proposed measures. We are prepared to provide local <<enter type of local contribution>> of the cost of construction work in dollars or in-kind services. We have applied for assistance with the needed matching funds to the << insert name of source of matching funds>>. Other sources of funds have either been exhausted or are insufficient to provide adequate recovery from the problems described above.

The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the administrative and technical contact persons in our organization are as follows:  
<<enter Name, Title, Address, Telephone, FAX of Sponsor's Representative>>

Please contact him or her for any additional information that you might need in assessing our request.

Sincerely,