

Emergency Watershed Protection Program EWP



New York Fact Sheet

September 2011

Overview

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. Most EWP work is for the protection of threatened infrastructure from continued stream erosion. Please contact your local authorities and/or your local NRCS office to find out if your project qualifies for the EWP program.

The Facts

Congress established the EWP program and provides funding for it. Please know that eligibility for the program does not depend upon the declaration of a national emergency. 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 (25 percent); and*
- *Performing any necessary operation and maintenance for a 10 year period.*

How it Works

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. No work done prior to a project agreement can be included as in-kind services or part of the cost share. 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.

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;*
- *Wind-borne debris removal.*

Floodplain easements for restoring, protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the functions and values of floodplains, including associated wetlands and riparian areas, are available through EWP. 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 (DSR) 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. A project agreement is completed including NRCS and sponsor responsibilities. Sponsors that are capable are encouraged to do the design, contracting and construction inspection. This can be reimbursed up to 7.5 percent of the total construction cost.

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

View the NRCS New York web page on EWP
<http://www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ewp/index.html>

Contact your local USDA office:
<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=NY>

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. Click on the hurricane relief link. Information about the U.S. Government's hurricane response efforts is available at www.ready.gov.