

Emergency Watershed Protection

Rhode Island



What is the Emergency Watershed Protection Program?

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. 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 you qualify for the EWP program.

The Facts – The Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Congress established the EWP Program and provides its funding. Eligibility for the program does not depend upon the declaration of a national emergency; however, a disaster must be declared before EWP funds are available.

All projects undertaken through EWP, with the exception of the purchase of floodplain easements, must have a project sponsor. Eligible sponsors include States or political subdivisions thereof, Federally recognized Indian tribes or tribal organizations, or units of local government. Sponsors must have a legal interest in or responsibility for the values threatened by a watershed emergency, as well as the capability to obtain necessary land rights and carry out any operation and maintenance.

- Sponsor has 60 days after the storm event to request assistance through a

letter to the Rhode Island NRCS State Conservationist.

- Sponsor has 220 days after funding arrives to complete an EWP recovery project.
- Sponsor has 10 days after funding to complete an EWP exigency (i.e., debris removal) project.
- Sponsor must work closely with NRCS staff to meet all EWP requirements.



Belfield Drive in Johnston experienced recurrent flooding from the Pocasset River that made the road impassible. (BEFORE)



The roadway was raised to allow safe access and a box culvert was installed to allow storm water to flow under the road and back to the Pocasset River. (AFTER)

Contact Your Local NRCS Service Center or Conservation District Office

Visit us at:

60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46
Warwick, RI 02886

Eastern Rhode Island

Serving Bristol & Newport counties

NRCS District Conservationist:

Ghyllian Alger

O: 401-822-8835

C: 401-255-6210

ghyllian.alger@usda.gov

Conservation District Office:

401-934-0842

info@easternnrconservation.org

Northern Rhode Island

Serving Providence county

NRCS District Conservationist:

Ghyllian Alger (Acting)

O: 401-822-8835

C: 401-255-6210

ghyllian.alger@usda.gov

Conservation District Office:

401-934-0840

mallard.nricd@gmail.com

Southern Rhode Island

Serving Kent & Washington counties

NRCS District Conservationist:

Jameson Long

O: 401-822-8837

C: 401-793-0230

jameson.long@usda.gov

Conservation District Office:

401-661-5761

sricd.info@gmail.com



Sponsors are responsible for:

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

Through EWP, NRCS may pay up to 75% of the construction costs of emergency measures. 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.

Type of Work Authorized

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

- Debris-clogged waterways.
- Undermined and unstable streambanks.
- Public infrastructure jeopardized by severe erosion.
- Wind-borne debris removal.
- Damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

Where structural solutions are not cost-effective or beneficial, EWP may instead be used for property buyouts. Once NRCS determines that buying a flood-prone property is the preferred course of action, EWP may provide sponsors up to 75% of property costs (based on an appraisal of the fair market value), relocation, and site

restoration. Any land use is potentially eligible for an EWP buyout, and the sponsor-acquired land is then deed-restricted in perpetuity to remain open space.

Floodplain easements (FPE) for restoring, protecting, maintaining, and enhancing the functions and values of floodplains, including associated wetlands and riparian areas, are available through EWP. These federally-held easements may also help conserve fish and wildlife habitat, protect water quality, provide flood water retention, or recharge ground water, as well as safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and erosion. EWP-FPE work is not limited to any one set of measures.

For EWP recovery projects, 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.

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

More Information

- Details about the NRCS Emergency Watershed Program can be found online at www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov.
- Additional information about federal assistance programs, safety tips, and updates about USDA's hurricane relief efforts are posted online 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.

