

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Woonasquatucket River, Johnston, RI



Overview

In June 2023, NRCS approved over \$823,000 in federal funds to restore a storm-damaged section of riverbank along the Woonasquatucket River in Johnston, RI. Federal assistance helped to safeguard lives and property from imminent hazard of flooding, severe erosion and infrastructure loss in future storms.

NRCS requested the federal funding through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program. EWP authorizes project sponsors to:

- Remove debris from stream channels,
- Reshape and protect eroded streambanks, and
- Establish vegetative cover on critically eroding lands

Eligible sponsors include State agencies, Federally recognized Indian tribes or tribal organizations, or units of local government. Program participation is voluntary. NRCS funding covered 75% of actual construction costs, except for infrastructure, for this project.

Background

A significant rainfall event on March 13, 2023, worsened erosion along a section of the Woonasquatucket River's southern bank in Johnston. The erosion undermined mature trees and threatened adjacent electric utility poles, an underground sewer main, and a public-use recreational bike path.

For the Johnston riverbank restoration, NRCS partnered with the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (Project Sponsor) to stabilize and revegetate the riverbank.



Results

The project restored approximately 680 feet of streambank along the southern bank of the Woonasquatucket River from the Manton Dam to a point approximately 200 feet upstream of the Manton Ave bridge crossing.

Restoration included installation of fill, riprap, geotextile fabric, grass seed and erosion control blankets to remediate erosion and provide temporary stability. This phase was followed by revegetation of the riverbank with trees and shrubs to promote long term stabilization.



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