

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program: What Landowners Can Expect

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program offers technical and financial assistance to help local communities relieve imminent threats to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural disasters that impair a watershed.

This guide contains information on what landowners can expect when obtaining assistance through the EWP, along with sponsor, NRCS staff, and landowner responsibilities.

Landowner Expectations

- ♦ An initial site visit, referred to as a Damage Survey Report (DSR), will be conducted by NRCS. The team will:
 - Determine eligibility based on PA NRCS criteria
 - Take photos, measurements, and determine preliminary restoration plans
- ♦ Landowner will have the opportunity to review and concur on design
- ♦ A pre-bid meeting/site showing will be held between the sponsor, NRCS, and various contractors
- ♦ NRCS will administer quality assurance checks



Timelines

Landowner can generally expect the following timelines (note that timelines may change due to unforeseen circumstances):

- ♦ **Timeline 1 – from Storm Event**
 - Within 60 days of the storm event
 - Find a sponsor; sponsor must submit a request to NRCS on landowner's behalf
 - Within 120 days of the storm event
 - DSR visit to determine eligibility and evaluate restoration plans
 - DSR submitted for review/approval and fund allocation
- ♦ **Timeline 2 – from NRCS receiving EWP funding**
 - Within 60 days of NRCS receiving EWP funding
 - Sponsor shares design with landowner and obtains concurrence
 - Within 75 days of NRCS receiving EWP funding
 - Sponsor obtains landrights from landowner
 - Sponsor collects landowner permitting fees and submits permitting paperwork
 - Sponsor advertises construction and selects contractor
 - Within 180 days of NRCS receiving EWP funding
 - Notice-to-proceed with construction is issued
 - Pre-construction meeting is held
 - Construction is completed

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Landowner Responsibilities

- ♦ Provide land-rights for construction access
- ♦ Pay permitting fees
- ♦ Provide long-term operation and maintenance
- ♦ Cover 25 percent cost share, if needed

Sponsor Responsibilities

- ♦ Serve as the main point of contact with the landowner
- ♦ Schedule the DSR visit with the landowner
- ♦ Inform the landowner as to acceptance into the program
- ♦ Share the proposed design and obtain landowner concurrence
- ♦ Obtain landowner land-rights
- ♦ Submit permitting documents
- ♦ Contract construction, including bidding, award, payment, and close out

NRCS Responsibilities

- ♦ Participate in the DSR visit
 - Determine program eligibility
 - Complete the DSR for review and acceptance into the program
 - Complete any needed cultural resources or threatened and endangered species consultations
- ♦ Enter into a cooperative agreement with the sponsor to:
 - Cover 75 percent of construction costs
 - Complete the design, or provide funding to complete the design
 - Participate in the pre-bid/site showing meeting
 - Participate in the pre-construction meeting
- ♦ Provide Quality Assurance during construction



Before: A major storm severely eroded the streambank near this house.



After: The streambank was stabilized through NRCS's Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program.

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