



NRCS New Mexico

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)

Rigo Lopez  
Acting State Conservationist USDA-NRCS

# What is EWPP

Emergency Watershed Protection Program

The EWP Program helps landowners, operators, and individuals implement emergency recovery measures to relieve imminent hazards to life or property created by a natural disaster that causes a sudden impairment of a watershed.



# Eligibility

Private entities or individuals may only receive assistance through sponsorship by a project sponsor (A project sponsor is any legal subdivision of a State government or a State agency)

assistance based on a determination that the current condition of the land or watershed impairment poses a threat to health, life, or property.

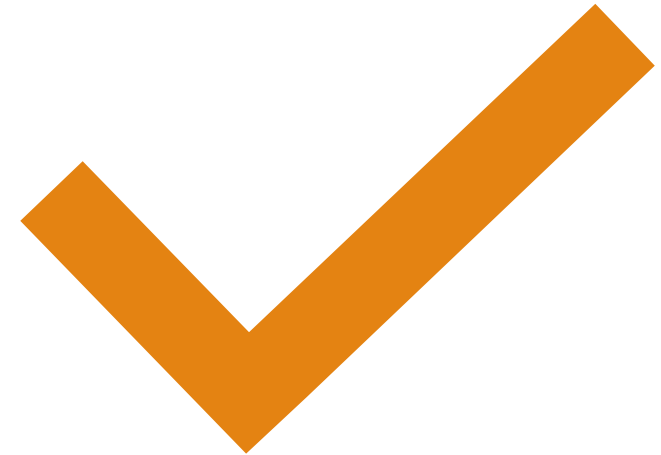
- (i) Assistance includes
  - practices associated with removing threats to public health and safety
  - restoring the natural environment to the greatest extent practical after natural disasters.
- (ii) “Property” is defined as any artificial structure permanently affixed to the land such as, but not 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.**
- (iii) The potential for a threat to life, health, or property may be at the site, upstream of the site, or downstream of the site

# Eligibility Measures (What can we do)

---

NRCS will only provide assistance for measures that

- Reduce threats to life or property from a watershed impairment.
- Provide protection from soil erosion by retarding runoff.
- Remove debris **deposited by a natural disaster** that would affect runoff or erosion. (be aware of preexisting conditions)
- Restore the hydraulic capacity to the natural environment to the maximum extent practical based upon pre-event conditions.
- Are economically, socially, and environmentally defensible and technically sound.
- Be limited to measures or practices that to the greatest extent possible use the least damaging practical construction techniques and equipment that retain as much of the existing characteristics of the landscape and habitat as possible (i.e.: Contour Tree Falling)



# Debris Removal

Ute Park Fire





# Ute Park Flood

---



# Ute Park Flood



# Eligible Sites

---

**NRCS conducts a case-by-case site assessment**

- Investigation of the work necessary to repair or protect a site.
- The individual site assessment documents EWP program eligibility.

**It is important to note NRCS will only provide funding for work that is necessary to reduce applicable threats. If the threat cannot not be removed, NRCS is prohibited from providing assistance**





# Planning Considerations

---

Planning for recovery measures will include the following

- Use of construction techniques and equipment that avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts
- Consideration and documentation of the effect of proposed emergency measures on natural and cultural resources through an environmental evaluation process
- Compliance with NEPA and all other local, State, Tribal, and Federal environmental laws
- Emphasis on measures that are economical and accomplished by using the least damaging practical construction techniques and equipment that retain existing characteristics of the landscape and habitat as possible
- Measures that are technically sound; meet all Federal, State, Tribal, and local laws and regulations; and protect public health and safety
- Alternative solutions must be considered (e.g., structural, nonstructural, bioengineering, and floodplain easement).

# Limitation (What we can't do)

## EWP Program funds may not be used to

- Provide assistance on any Federal lands (including Federal-aid highways).
- Provide recovery assistance for structural measures to a site more than twice in any 10-year period (previous fires in area)
- Dispose of animal carcasses
  - Exception: Disposal of animal carcasses (primarily livestock) is eligible when carcasses meet the definition of debris and affect runoff retardation or soil erosion prevention
- Perform O&M, such as the periodic or routine work necessary to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of a measure to perform as originally intended
  - e.g., removing sediment or debris from reservoirs or debris basins

# Limitation (What we can't do) Continued

- Solve watershed or natural problems that existed prior to a natural disaster
- Repair, rebuild, or maintain public or private transportation facilities (e.g., roads, bridges) or correct damage to transportation facilities administered by Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation
- Increase the pre-disaster capacity of a channel by constructing a new channel, enlarging the old channel, or relocating the stream
- Landscaping practices exclusively for aesthetic purposes
- Drill or modify wells, construct pipelines, install irrigation equipment, or purchase portable equipment.

# Limitation (What we can't do) Continued

- Repair or rehabilitate structural, enduring, or long-life conservation practices or measures eligible for funding under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)
- Repair or rehabilitation of nonstructural management practices, such as conservation tillage and other similar practices

# Sponsor/Funding

Must be through a project sponsor who is any legal subdivision of a State government or a State agency

A project sponsor must (among other)—

- (i) Have a legal interest in, or responsibility for, the areas threatened by a watershed emergency.
- (ii) Be capable of obtaining necessary land rights and required permits.
- (iii) Be capable of performing all required operation and maintenance (O&M) responsibilities.
- (iv) Administer contracting when part of a local agreement.
- (v) Responsible for matching funds (Cash or in-kind)

## Prior Work

- Cooperative agreement (project agreement) must be signed prior to any work
- EWP Program funds may not be used to reimburse project sponsors for work performed before agreement is signed



# EWP Process (Prior to Funding)

Funding is based on the availability of funds (not automatic) usually on a first come first serve basis.

NRCS must request funding from NHQ

The following 5 Steps must be completed prior to funds request

Step 1: Conduct a rapid survey to ensure EWP is possible

Step 2: Submit Electronic Disaster Report (EDR) to NHQ if EWP is anticipated

Step 3: Eligible sponsor makes request for EWP within 60 days of gaining access to the site

Step 4: NRCS has 60 days, from date sponsor makes request, to complete Damage Survey Reports (DSRs)

- Site Visits, Estimated Quantities, Estimated Costs, Environmental Evaluation, justifications etc.

Step 5: Submit DSR to NHQ (Request for Funding)

# NM Emergency Recovery Process (If Funded)

## 1. Project Agreement With Sponsor

## 2. Project Design

- NRCS EWP team begin process of completing final survey and designs

## 3. Work Begins/Construction Inspections

- NRCS EWP Team inspects work as projects are ongoing

## 4. Project Completion and Acceptance

- NRCS EWP Team Reviews Projects (Check Out)
- If work is deemed complete project is accepted and payment can be processed

## 5. Payment Process

- Sponsor to obtain all necessary documents (SF 270- In-kind work, Receipts) and submits to NRCS
- Sponsor pays contractor.



## Sum it Up!

- EDS, DSR's Completed
- Prior to any work, NRCS and local sponsor would have to complete a cooperative agreement.
- Sponsor will obtain necessary land right, permits etc.
- NRCS will complete survey, design, cultural clearance etc.
- Sponsor will follow their procurement laws for selecting/awarding projects to contractors, labors etc.
- Projects commence
- Upon completion of a project, NRCS preforms final checkout and provides information to sponsor
- Sponsor requests payment from NRCS (not to exceed 75%) and pays contractor.
- All projects must be completed within 220 days from the day NRCS receives funds.



# Contour Tree Felling Dog Head Fire



# Diversion Ute Park Fire





Diversion at Work



# Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

## Is EQIP Right for Me?



### Can You Answer 'Yes' to the Following?

Then EQIP may be a good fit for your operation

- I own or rent, and manage land for agricultural or forest production, such as cropland, rangeland, grassland or forestland.
- I have control of the land such as through ownership or a lease.
- I can prove irrigation history if my conservation work involves water conservation with irrigation system improvements.
- My land complies with highly erodible land and wetland conservation determination provisions (if unsure, ask your local USDA Service Center).
- I established or updated farm records with the Farm Service Agency for me and my operation.
- I have a social security number or employer identification number issued by the IRS.
- My average gross income is less than \$900,000 (does not apply to Indian Tribes).
- If I am a member of an entity or joint operation, I have authority to make management decisions for the business.

### What is EQIP?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers technical and financial assistance for working lands, including field crops, specialty crops, organic, confined livestock and grazing, and non-industrial private forest land.

Rather than take land out of production, EQIP helps farmers maintain or improve production while conserving natural resources on working landscapes.

### What Are the Benefits?

EQIP may provide many benefits, including improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against drought and increasing weather extremes.

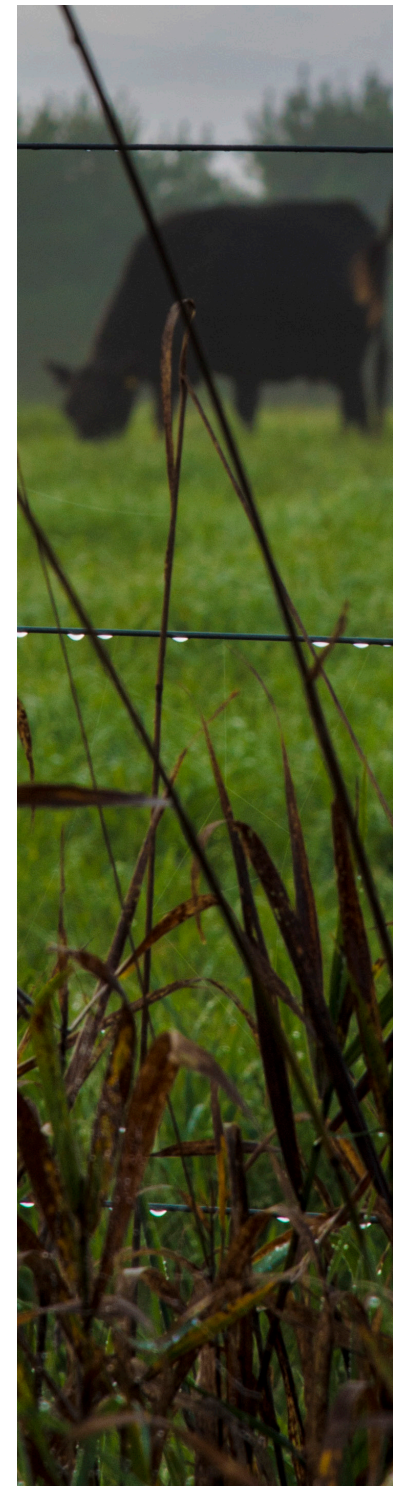
For example, EQIP can help you:

- Reduce contamination from agricultural sources, such as animal feeding operations.
- Efficiently utilize nutrients, reduce input costs and reduce non-point source pollution.
- Increase soil health to help mitigate against increasing weather volatility and improved drought resiliency.

### How Does EQIP Work?

EQIP supports producers who improve and sustain natural resources on their operation by implementing structural, vegetative, and management practices.

For example, if you want to use EQIP conservation practices to improve irrigation efficiency, renovate pastureland or nutrient and pest management on your eligible land,



NRCS offers technical assistance, and EQIP offers financial assistance through a contractual agreement.

If you decide to work with NRCS, you will receive a one-on-one consultation from a local NRCS conservation planner to evaluate your current management system and conduct an assessment of natural resources on your land. You will then work with the NRCS conservation planner to develop a free conservation plan that addresses the identified resource concerns.

Once you choose the conservation practices or activities that best fit your needs, and if your application is selected for funding, EQIP offers payments for implementing these practices on your land with the expectation that you will operate while maintaining the practices for the expected lifespan.

## How Long is a EQIP Contract?

The length of an EQIP contract can vary depending on your goals and timeline, but cannot exceed 10 years.

## EQIP Eligibility

### Land Eligibility

#### Q. What lands are eligible for EQIP?

- A. For eligibility purposes in Farm Bill programs, NRCS considers any land on which agricultural commodities, livestock or forest-related products are produced as eligible land.

That land can include cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland and other farm or ranch lands.

EQIP has no minimum acreage requirement; however, EQIP is a competitive program that awards points based on resource concerns to be addressed and other factors.

### Producer Eligibility

#### Q. Who is eligible to apply for EQIP?

- A. Applicants may include individuals, legal entities, joint operations or Indian Tribes that have control of the land and currently manage it for agricultural, forest and livestock production.

## Special EQIP Initiatives

EQIP has a broad delivery system to put targeted conservation on the ground at the local level, across the entire country.



EQIP targets conservation through the following initiatives to address priority natural resource concerns on the most vulnerable lands and high priority watersheds:

- High Tunnel Initiative
- Organic Initiative
- Air Quality Initiative
- On Farm Energy Initiative

## EQIP Payments

#### Q. What types of payments are offered through EQIP?

- A. EQIP offers payments for practices and activities which may be categorized as vegetative, structural, and management practices.

Producers may also apply for Conservation Activity Plans through a Technical Service Provider.

#### Historically Underserved (HU) Participants:

Historically underserved participants are eligible for increased payment rates and advanced payments to help offset the costs of purchasing goods or services. HU participants include socially disadvantaged, beginning, veteran and limited resource farmers and ranchers.

- **Dedicated funds** – at least 10 percent of EQIP funds are dedicated to socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- **Higher payment rates** – up to 25 percent higher than the standard practice payment rates.
- **Veteran Preference** – eligible veterans who compete in the beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers funding pools, receive preference points.



**Q. When are payments made?**

- A. Under the general EQIP payment process, a producer is reimbursed after a conservation practice is certified as meeting NRCS standards and specifications. This process often means that producers must pay up front costs with their own funds, unless the participant opts for the advance payment option.

**Q. Do I have to pay income taxes on my payments?**

- A. Yes. All payments made to you by NRCS are reported to the Internal Revenue Service and should be reported as income on your tax return for the applicable tax year. You will receive a Form 1099 to report EQIP payments on your tax return.

**EQIP Application and Evaluation****Q. How do I apply for EQIP?**

- A. Contact your local USDA Service Center and let them know you are interested in EQIP. A conservation planner will work with you to determine your eligibility.

NRCS accepts EQIP applications year-round and funding is provided through a competitive process.

State-specific application cutoff dates are set to evaluate applications for funding. Cutoff dates can be found at [nrcs.usda.gov/statecutoffdates](https://nrcs.usda.gov/statecutoffdates). If you apply after the application cut-off date, your application will automatically be deferred to the next funding cycle.

If you are new to working with USDA, you will need to establish your Farm Record with the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Establishing a Farm Record requires several forms and documents, so make an appointment with your FSA office as soon as possible.

**Q. How are EQIP applications evaluated?**

- A. Once NRCS completes an assessment of your operation and you choose the conservation practices or activities that you want to implement, NRCS will rank your application to determine how well your current and future management system will address national, state, and local natural resource priorities.

NRCS will rank your application against other similar eligible applications in the same ranking pool, with the highest scoring applications receiving contract offers first.





# FACT SHEET

## Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program

### DESCRIPTION

The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program was created by Congress to respond to emergencies caused by natural disasters. EWP is designed to help people reduce imminent hazards to life and property threatened by excessive erosion and flooding caused by heavy rains, drought, earthquakes, windstorms and other natural disasters.

The purpose of EWP is to help communities with a common problem. All projects undertaken must be sponsored by a political subdivision of the State such as a city, county, or a flood control district.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is responsible for administering the program, working through local units of government.

### ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

There are two types of assistance available:

**Urgent and Compelling** – An imminent threat to life and property exists and requires immediate federal action. Work must generally be completed within 10 days of accessing the site in order to protect life and property.

**Emergency** – A situation where the threat to life and property is high enough to constitute an emergency, but the situation is not considered urgent and compelling. Work in this category does not require immediate action, but should be completed as soon as possible (within 220 days from starting work).

NRCS can pay up to 75 percent of emergency measures. The remaining 25 percent comes from local sources and can be in the form of cash, in-kind services, or a combination of both.

### CRITERIA FOR ASSISTANCE

All EWP work must reduce threats to life and property. Work must be economically, socially, and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint. EWP work must yield benefits to more than one person. All work must represent the least expensive environmentally sound alternative. All projects must be related to a sudden watershed impairment and erosion control.





## ELIGIBILITY

The project sponsor must be a public agency of a state, county, city government, or a conservation district. Sponsors are responsible for providing land rights to do repair work and for securing all necessary permits. Sponsors are also responsible for furnishing the local cost share and for implementation of work. The work can be done either through local contracts administered by the sponsor, or the sponsor can use their own equipment and personnel. If sponsors do not have capability to do the work by either of these options, work can also be done by Federal Contract.

## TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

EWP funds cannot be used to solve problems that existed before the disaster. Nor can they be used to improve the level of protection above that which existed prior to the disaster. EWP cannot fund operation and maintenance work or repair private or public transportation facilities or utilities.

EWP work cannot adversely affect downstream water rights, and EWP funds cannot be used to install measures not essential to the reduction of hazards. In addition, EWP funds cannot be used to perform work on measures installed by another federal agency.

## APPLYING FOR ASSISTANCE

If your area has suffered severe damage and may qualify under the EWP program, you are encouraged to contact your County Judge or city official to request assistance. City and county governments and flood control districts are the most common sponsors of EWP projects.

The sponsor's application should be in the form of a letter signed by a qualified representative of the sponsoring organization. The letter should include information on the nature, location, and scope of the problem for which assistance is requested.

Information is available from NRCS offices which explain the eligibility requirements for the EWP program. Send applications for assistance to the local NRCS field office or to the NRCS state headquarters in Temple. All applications should be submitted as soon as possible after the event.



101 SOUTH MAIN STREET | TEMPLE, TEXAS 76501 | 254.742.9800 | [WWW.TX.NRCS.USDA.GOV](http://WWW.TX.NRCS.USDA.GOV)

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information on assistance under the EWP program, contact the local USDA NRCS office serving your county. Your USDA Service Center is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture. Contact information can also be obtained on the NRCS Texas website at: [www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov)

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
*Helping People Help the Land*



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



## News Release

Contact: [leonard.luna@usda.gov](mailto:leonard.luna@usda.gov)

### USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to New Mexico Farmers and Livestock Producers Impacted by Wildfires and Drought

**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., May 10, 2022** —The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help New Mexico farmers and livestock producers across New Mexico recover from recent wildfires and ongoing drought. Producers impacted by these events should contact their local USDA Service Center to report losses and learn more about program options available to assist in their recovery from crop, land, infrastructure and livestock losses and damages.

#### USDA Disaster Assistance for Drought and Wildfire Recovery

Producers who experience livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality due to wildfires may be eligible for the [Livestock Indemnity Program \(LIP\)](#). To participate in LIP, producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to their [local Farm Service Agency \(FSA\) office](#) within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent.

The [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#) provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees, and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, including losses from wildfires on non-federally managed grazing lands, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. For drought-impacted areas, ELAP also covers above normal costs to transport feed and water to livestock or haul livestock to forage or other grazing acres. For ELAP, producers will need to file a notice of loss within 30 days and honeybee losses within 15 days.

Livestock producers may also be eligible for the [Livestock Forage Disaster Program \(LFP\)](#) for 2022 grazing losses due to drought when grazing land or pastureland physically located in a county rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 intensity for eight consecutive weeks, D3 drought intensity or greater. FSA maintains a list of [counties eligible for LFP](#) and makes updates each Thursday. LFP benefits may be available for loss of grazing acres due to wildfires on federally managed lands on which a producer is prohibited, by a federal agency, from grazing normally permitted livestock.

Additionally, eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers may be eligible for cost-share assistance through the [Tree Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#) to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines lost during the wildfires or drought. This complements [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program \(NAP\)](#) or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. For TAP, a program application must be filed within 90 days.

#### [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

New Mexico State Office  
100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 602  
Albuquerque, NM 87109  
Phone: (505) 761 - 4402

“When you can safely assess the wildfire impact or the ongoing drought effect on your operation, be sure to contact your local FSA office to timely report all crop, livestock and farm infrastructure damages and losses,” said Jonas Moya, State Executive Director for the FSA in New Mexico. “To accelerate the FSA disaster assistance process, please be prepared to provide important documents, such as farm records, herd inventory, receipts and pictures of damages or losses”

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed [farm loans](#), including operating and emergency farm loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low-interest [emergency loans](#) to help them recover from production and physical losses. Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs. Additionally, FSA has a variety of loan servicing options available for borrowers who are unable to make scheduled payments on their farm loan debt to FSA because of reasons beyond their control.

### **Risk Management**

Producers who have risk protection through [Federal Crop Insurance](#) or FSA’s [NAP](#) should report crop damage to their crop insurance agent or FSA office, respectively. If they have crop insurance, producers should report crop damage to their agent within 72 hours of damage discovery and follow up in writing within 15 days. For NAP covered crops, a Notice of Loss (CCC-576) must be filed within 15 days of the loss becoming apparent, except for hand-harvested crops, which should be reported within 72 hours.

“Since we never know when a natural disaster will strike, our crop insurance coverage can help producers manage risk,” said Jim Bellmon, Director of Risk Management Agency’s (RMA) Regional Office that covers New Mexico. “The Approved Insurance Providers, loss adjusters and agents are experienced and well trained in handling these types of events.”

### **Conservation**

Outside of the [primary nesting season](#), emergency and non-emergency haying and grazing of [Conservation Reserve Program](#) (CRP) acres may be authorized to provide relief to livestock producers in areas affected by a severe drought or similar natural disasters. Producers interested in haying or grazing of CRP acres should contact their county FSA office to determine eligibility.

The [Emergency Conservation Program](#) and [Emergency Forest Restoration Program](#) can assist landowners and forest stewards with financial and technical assistance for replacing or restoring fences as well as removing debris from farmland. FSA provides cost-share payments of up to 75% of the cost to implement approved restoration practices, and up to 90% for producers who certify as limited resource, socially disadvantaged or beginning farmers or ranchers. ECP sign-up periods will be announced by county, but producers can submit applications before signup begins.

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is always available to provide technical assistance in the recovery process by assisting producers with planning and implementing conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by natural disasters. The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) can assist with financial incentive payments to implement conservation practices addressing natural resource concerns. Long-term damage from wildfires includes forage production loss in pastures and fields and increased wind erosion on crop fields not protected with soil

#### [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

New Mexico State Office  
100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 602  
Albuquerque, NM 87109  
Phone: (505) 761 - 4402

health practices. Producers should visit their [local USDA Service Center](#) to learn more about these impacts, potential recovery tactics and how to take steps to make their land more resilient to drought in the future.

“NRCS is ready to help landowners recover from current natural disaster events and build long-term resiliency when faced with future events,” said Rigoberto Lopez, acting State Conservationist for NRCS in New Mexico. “Our employees will work with landowners, to make damage assessments and develop methods that focus on effective recovery of the land.”

### **Assistance for Communities**

Additional NRCS programs include the [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#) program, which provides assistance to local government sponsors with the cost of addressing watershed impairments or hazards such as damaged upland sites stripped of vegetation by wildfire, debris removal and streambank stabilization.

Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns, any federally recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization and Natural Resources Districts. Sponsors must submit a formal request (via mail or email) to the state conservationist for assistance within 60 days of the natural disaster occurrence or 60 days from the date when access to the sites become available. For more information, producers should [contact their local NRCS office](#).

“EWP provides immediate assistance to communities to mitigate potential hazards to life and property resulting from the fires and particularly the severe erosion and flooding that can occur after the fire,” Lopez said. “We can work with a local sponsor to help a damaged watershed so that lives and property are protected while preventing further devastation in the community.”

In addition to EWP, Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) is another valuable service that NRCS can provide following a wildfire. NRCS technical assistance can help fire victims with planning cost-effective post fire restoration practices.

### **More Information**

Additional USDA disaster assistance information can be found on [farmers.gov](#), including USDA resources specifically for producer impacted by [drought](#) and [wildfire](#) and the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#). For FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, producers should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). For assistance with a crop insurance claim, producers and landowners should contact their [crop insurance agent](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](#).

#

[Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

New Mexico State Office  
100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 602  
Albuquerque, NM 87109  
Phone: (505) 761 - 4402



## News Release

Contact: [alicia.rodriquez@usda.gov](mailto:alicia.rodriquez@usda.gov)

### USDA Provides Emergency Watershed Protection Disaster Funding To New Mexico Communities Impacted by the Hermit's Peak and Calf Canyon Wildfire

*First Step: Aerial Seeding on Fire-Impacted Lands*

**Mora, N.M., July 12, 2022,** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will direct over \$133 million of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding to cover 100% of the cost of post-wildfire recovery efforts in communities impacted by the Hermits Peak and Calf Canyon wildfire. NRCS, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, will use [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\) program](#) BIL funds to implement much-needed aerial seeding — a successful post-wildfire conservation practice that helps reduce soil erosion, restore ground cover and establish native plant species.

“Our New Mexico staff are working with our partners and landowners to provide immediate relief in every way we can. We have expertise on the ground and funds on the way to get help where it is needed to expedite restoration work on the land,” said NRCS Chief Terry Cosby.

EWP is designed as a recovery effort to assist communities impacted by floods, fires, windstorms and other natural disasters. Wildfire recovery efforts are being locally led by Western Mora and Tierra Y Montes Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Communities affected by the wildfire are encouraged to contact their local [NRCS office](#) to request assistance. [Requests for assistance](#) must be made within 60-days after a disaster.

NRCS recently [announced a waiver of the cost-share requirement for EWP](#) assistance in areas of New Mexico impacted by recent wildfires. Today’s announcement further builds on NRCS’ strategic, watershed-focused wildfire recovery efforts in the state, and the Biden-Harris Administration’s broader effort to invest in infrastructure through its watershed programs, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and other efforts.

#### More Information

This \$133 million investment for the Hermits Creek and Calf Canyon wildfire builds on \$586 million invested in watershed recovery and prevention projects across the country this year through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Since their enactment in 1948, NRCS’ watershed programs have designed and built 11,000 dams, constructed water storage structures, flood management systems, bank stabilization, moved towns, redirected stream flows, re-established wildlife habitat and more to save lives and protect watersheds.

[Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

New Mexico State Office  
100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 602  
Albuquerque, NM 87109  
Phone: (505) 761 - 4402



USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).



###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

[Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

New Mexico State Office  
100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 602  
Albuquerque, NM 87109  
Phone: (505) 761 - 4402