

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
(**Hillsborough/Pinellas**) District Conservationist Report

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HSWCD Board Meeting Date: 10 / 5 / 2024

NRCS Farm Bill Programs:

Program Titles:

- **EQIP and CSP** applications deadline for FY2025 will be **November 1st, 2024.**
- **Emergency Watershed Protection Program** due to Hurricane Helene is available. The Program is designed to help people and conserve natural resources by relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural occurrences.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)



EWP FACT SHEET



Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) – The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program, which responds to emergencies created by natural disasters. The Program is designed to help people and conserve natural resources by relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural occurrences. EWP is an emergency recovery program. All projects undertaken, with the exception of the purchase of floodplain easements, must be sponsored by a legal subdivision of the State, such as a city, county, general improvement district, conservation district, or any Native American tribe or tribal organization as defined in section 4 of the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. NRCS is responsible for administering the program.

Criteria: All EWP work must reduce threats to life and property and must be economically, environmentally, and socially defensible and sound from a technical standpoint. **NRCS may bear up to 75 percent of the construction cost of emergency measures. The remaining 25 percent must come from local sources and can be in the form of cash or in-kind services.**

Public and private lands are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor. Sponsors are responsible for providing landrights to do repair work and securing the necessary permits. Sponsors are also responsible for furnishing the local cost share and for accomplishing the installation of the work.

EWP work is not limited to any one set of prescribed measures. A case-by-case evaluation of the work is made by NRCS. **EWP work can include: removing debris from stream channels, road culverts, and bridges; reshaping and protecting eroded banks; correcting damaged drainage facilities; repairing levees and structures; reseeding damaged areas;** and purchasing floodplain easements to restore, protect, maintain, and enhance the functions of wetlands and riparian areas; conserve natural values including fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention, ground water recharge, and open space; and safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion. Funding for EWP is subject to congressional appropriations.

A request for EWP assistance must be received within 60 days of the natural disaster, or 60 days from the date when site access becomes available. NRCS will not provide funding for activities undertaken by a sponsor prior to the signing of an agreement between NRCS and the sponsor.

How to apply for assistance: Contact the Florida NRCS State Office at (352) 338-9500.

For additional information, see Florida NRCS web page:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/ewp-emergency-watershed-protection/florida/emergency-watershed-protection>